

Brazil News



No. 78
November 1997

Editorial

When the Ship Sinks

The waves sent out by a sinking ship rapidly transmute into headlines that can be read around the world. The greater the loss, the larger and bolder the typeface.

We scan the paper for numbers: How many victims? How many barrels of crude oil spilled? The size of the ship? The value of the ship? The value of the cargo? We find all this interesting. We regret the loss of lives. But so far as the ship and the cargo, we sort of shrug that off. It was probably insured with Lloyd's of London, or some other company.

It's true that with modern vessels and navigational technology, shipwrecks are rare indeed. Annual cargo losses are infinitesimal.

But it didn't use to be that way. Throughout all of human history, until the sail gave way to mechanical means of propulsion, losses were astronomical. Especially during the fifteenth, sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, it wasn't unusual for a squadron of a dozen or more vessels to be decimated by fierce storms. Maidens marrying a mariner, for all practical purposes, took their vows over an open casket.

When the Portuguese explorer and navigator, Vasco da Gama, reached India by water in 1497-1498, the practical repercussions of this discovery were immense. Spices and other precious goods laboriously brought to Europe in homeopathic doses by land route, could now be transported by ship in much larger quantities.

The men financing these expeditions took fearful risks. Since payment was made largely in gold bullion, the first risk was that of the galleons sinking before they even got to their destination. The second risk, obviously, was that of losing the cargo on the return voyage.

So much was at stake that in most cases a safe voyage meant wealth, and shipwreck, bankruptcy.

The many months consumed by a round trip voyage to the Indies must have been

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nerve-wracking for the investor(s) giving the financial backing for these projects. For many of them, literally everything was at stake.

For these investors, the decision to stake all they had, including their reputation, on a trip to the Indies, certainly wasn't easy. In some cases it must have involved "selling all." This could include inheritances. It could include properties and businesses acquired through many years of labor, through a lifetime of shrewd dealing.

The waters that swallow a sinking ship have no conscience, they make no apologies and grant no favors. They are no respecters of persons. As the ship gurgles downward, they dispense the same treatment to the royalty in the stateroom as to the rats in the hold. Molded bread and ingots of gold both are unceremoniously ushered to the bottom of the sea.

Glaring headlines recently announced the sinking of the HMS Princess Diana, causing the world to reel in disbelief. The cargo losses were enormous.

Diana Spencer longed for happiness. Her radiant smile, more often than not, was a mask to hide her deep frustration. And yet, for those looking on, it seemed that aboard her ship there was everything that one could possibly desire to be happy.

Diana was rich. She was born rich. She married rich. She spent rivers of money on herself. Her suitor was rich. All these riches sank together with her ship.

Diana was famous. That's an understatement. She was "famosíssima." Her marriage to a prince, the future king of England, was touted as the "wedding of the century." To say that thereafter she was in the limelight is also an understatement. If a tally could be made of every photograph ever published of Princess Diana, if every image of her ever shown on TV could be added to this amount, what kind of stack would we have? It boggles our imagination. When Diana's ship sank, so did her fame.

Diana was beautiful. Had she been a common mortal, she wouldn't have been so exceptionally pretty. But by having at her disposal the best beauticians, by spending hundreds of hours exercising, by dedicating herself to being beautiful, she became regal. But when her ship sank, so did her beauty.

Diana was generous. Her philanthropy seems to have been more than a publicity stunt. She was genuinely concerned about the poor and suffering. We need not in any way detract from the merit of her good works. Yet when her ship sank, so did all her charity.

Just a word to the reader who has taken exception to what we have said.

When Diana took her last breath surrounded by doctors and nurses, she became just as poor as the most penniless beggar dressed in rags who lives in the streets.

It is said that one of the queens of England, on her deathbed, declared that she would give all that she had for just 10 more minutes of time. If Princess Diana could have had the privilege of making one last request before her death, she would have probably offered not only her riches, but her fame as well, for just a little more time to live. True, her fame may be important to others today. But to her it isn't.

Princess Diana's beauty will be viewed by millions until the end of time. But she won't be aware of this.

Oh, someone says, but her good works will live on. Will they? True, Jesus said that someone who will give so much as a drink of cold water will get his reward . . . Or is that what He said? No it isn't. He said, in my name. We ask, in whose name did Princess Diana visit the sick? Did they see the tender princess or did they see the tender Shepherd? In whose name did she hug orphan children? Will they someday feel an urge to get converted because the princess held them? Folks let's face it, unless she did her good works in the Master's name, they will have sunk together with her ship.

What a shipwreck!

We all have some of the same natural tendencies that Princess Diana had. There are certain things we would like so much to bring aboard our ship. True, our want list is mighty small compared to hers. But even so, some of our "little" wants are very important to us, very dear. Maybe just as important and dear as her "big" wants were to her.

The little ship in which we sail life's sea has a very small cargo hold. We are told we should take food and raiment. We assume this means whatever it takes to have a comfortable life. And that's where we run into trouble. As time goes on, as we get older, it seems like it takes more and more to keep us comfortable.

That's not all. It isn't only tangible things that weigh our ship down. Sometimes we take ideas aboard that weigh a ton. We strew the deck of our ship with opinions as to how things should be done in our congregation, or maybe in our family. We take grudges aboard, offenses. Sometimes we begin believing in something that isn't true. That's pure lead.

The ship wallows low in the water. Then the phone rings and someone asks, "Have you heard the news . . . ?" All the comforts, ideas, opinions, grudges, offenses and beliefs sank with the ship.

We are losing our vision of the other shore, of the harbor where someday we want to tie up our ship, let down the gangplank and walk ashore. We are becoming overconfident of the seaworthiness of our craft. Like the British, who believed the Titanic to be unsinkable, we fail to recognize that our vessel is made of clay. Actually, it is highly sinkable.

We must renew our vision of that harbor. That is where our reward is—and not in the hold of our ship. We must realize that in the very severe storms of life, even a little bit of excess weight in our hold may be just enough to tip the balance.

The modern belief that death should be a joyful time for the survivors is repulsive. It's pagan. It's the equivalent of having a party to celebrate the sinking of a ship.

Nevertheless, when someone passes on with a sure testimony of salvation, through our tears we should rejoice that one more ship has tied up on the far shore. If, five minutes after going ashore that loved one could come back and tell us what he or she has seen and heard over there, and if five minutes after a ship has sunk the lost soul could return and give us a report, it wouldn't be necessary for people like me to write about when the ship sinks. ▲

The School Mailbox

Indians in Brazil

By: Jakelline dos Santos Lima, School: Monte Alegre

Grade: Sixth, Age: 11

Teacher: Miss Laura Costa

Parents: Adejenes & Aparecida Lima

I would like to tell you about the Indians in Brazil.

When the Europeans reached the South American continent, they discovered there were a lot of Indians in Brazil—between three and four million.

The main groups of Indians here in Brazil are: Tupis, Jês, Nuaruaques and Caraílas. They are of varying stature, but all are strong. Their hair is thick, black and straight, but the men don't have a beard. They are darkly tanned. They like to paint their bodies.

Indians love a free life, which is strongly influenced by their habits and traditions. Generally speaking, they are a happy-go-lucky people, very dedicated to their religious rites. They are hard workers and affectionate with their families. They love children, but are distrustful of strangers. Like all Indians, they love nature and feel they are a part of it.

Each group of Indians is subdivided in smaller groups called tribes. Each tribe is divided into villages in which everyone speaks the same language and follows the same customs.

Some villages are protected by a wooden fence called a *caçara*. Their houses are called *ocas* and the villages are *tabas*.

In the middle of each *taba* there is an open area known as an *ocara*, which is the community meeting place, as well as where they have their *festas* and religious rites.

Before Brazil was colonized, the men fished, hunted and opened small fields. When at home, they made utensils, arms and canoes. In times of war, they, of course, were the warriors.

The women helped take care of the fields, cooked, made *farinha* (a coarse manioc flour), wove and prepared the beverages which they drank.

The children were free, happy and felt at liberty to go into any house in their village at any time they wished.

The chieftain was chosen by the people.

We Brazilians learned from the Indians how to make *farinha de mandioca* (manioc flour), *beiju* (another kind of flour), as well as a number of other foods made of corn. They taught us how to prepare foods like squash and sweet potatoes, and to appreciate fruits like cashew and pineapple. They taught us how to use medicinal herbs. It was from the Indians that we learned how to sleep in hammocks. Hundreds of words and names of places are of indigenous origin.

A few of the Indians were cannibals. In the Yanomani tribe, to eat the ashes of a dead friend was seen as proof of respect and affection.

We have a tribe of Indians called the Panarás. They are very tall. There is record of a man who was 6' 8". And there was a woman who was 6' 3". A man in this tribe decided to become a medicine man. He wanted to discover the secret of how the white man cures sicknesses, so he drank a cocktail of gasoline and Merthiolate. He was taken to a nearby hospital where he nearly died. This tribe was found way out in the jungle in northern Mato Grosso. They hid from civilization for more than 200 years.

Now in Brazil we have a government organization that protects the Indians from the whites. It is called FUNAI (Fundação Nacional do Índio). ▲

Trip Reports

by Rufus Schrock

Traveling Through Mexico (Part II)

We ran up on this hotel out in the country called "El Corral." I went to check on the possibility of staying, but the price was too much. As I turned to leave, it dawned on me that the price was in pesos and not in dollars, so I went back and asked the man and he told me they were peso prices. We stayed and slept. Good, clean place, but no air conditioner.

The humidity is worse than in Mississippi. At 8:20 a.m. we were again on the road heading for Vera Cruz.

We stopped at this little fruit stand. The lady was very friendly and helpful with her coconuts. She opened a few and we drank the milk, then ate the rest. Her little stand was made of saplings and the roof was coconut leaves. It was raining and we just got in under the roof.

We left our little breakfast stand and found a place to eat a real breakfast about two hours down the road. The name of this place was La Estrella. Our breakfast here was good, if you like shrimp with your eggs, only most of us didn't cater to shrimp.

We were around this place a while. Some had to find an outhouse and do things you do while traveling beside driving. I had a little extra time, so I handed out a few tracts to people that were lying and sitting around. Later I went inside again. Standing around I read some of their plaques and writings on the wall. One writing had a distinct message about their dedication to Catholicism and their animosity toward Protestant interference. I didn't go and ask for my tracts back, though.

Driving through the little town of Naranja, we had speed bumps about every 100 yards or so. Down off in the valley below people had their dwelling places. Up over the top of the mountain went rows of orange trees as far as one could see.

This was our second day in Mexico and around noon we crossed the Tuxpan bridge. We traveled along the East coast. The Gulf of Mexico comes in view every once in a while. We stopped at a nice spot for a while and let the water run over our feet, or rather we let the waves come in over us. The waves terrified our little boy Kevin.

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The girls have been doing some needle work as a pastime, so now they have some doo-hickeys that they want to sew together.

At 4:40 p.m. we stopped at another fruit stand and bought a cluster and a bag of bananas. Since it was a long time since breakfast, the whole gang goes bananas over something to eat. Very soon there are no more.

About 6:00 p.m. we stopped for gas in Vera Cruz, lost the road, found it again, but we just couldn't pass up these dried fruit stands, so we stopped and bought some more fruit, only this time they were dried.

Just after 9:00 we stopped for supper. After supper we put the bed down and started out through the night toward Acayupan. After midnight we stopped at a truck stop for a nap. We left this truck stop a little before a rain started, so we had the opportunity to drive in the rain in the night. There was this friendly truck driver who volunteered to direct me on the best route to take. An hour or so later, we stopped at one of his landmarks to get some coffee and some wanted to use the restroom. They were surprised and disgusted when they met these other occupants. There were worms and a crab on the floor, something new for the girls.

Early morning we again stopped at a fruit stand. We were now more or less traveling in mountains. Men were cleaning along side the mountain roadside with blades. It was misting just slightly and we stopped along side the mountain where we could pull over. Mark and I threw a ball back and forth a few times and the girls went exploring. It just happened that where we had parked there was a waterfall coming down the mountainside. Soon there was talk about taking a bath, and that is just what we did. Mark and I went down through a big culvert that passed under the road, while the ladies went uphill and we were all refreshed.

Flora even gave the van a cleanup. We drove out the of the valley below and started climbing. As we looked back to our right, we could see how the water we were playing in came from a long way up. Oh, the wonders of God's creation.

The girls think we are higher than high and the bottom is far away. Sandra thinks we should reach the clouds one day, and of course we did.

Stopped again and bought some things from Indians. They farm right on the side of the mountain. I don't know how they gather the crops or what they do if they slip one time, but the crops look nice.

We arrived in Comitán in the early afternoon. Here we were hoping to find the Corza family and spend a little time with them. We had Naomi's address. She is the old grandmother and stabilizer. As we drove through town, checking on street names, he we saw this little Mennonite girl walking on the sidewalk. We just stopped and talked to her a bit and she got in the van and showed us the way. This was a nice young sister and just left her cousin she was walking home with and came with us. We met most of the family and I am impressed with the courage they seem to have with all the trouble and hardship they have had to endure. The mission house is empty now, so we got to stay in it.

We left some of our clothes at a laundry to wash, to be picked up the next day at 1:30 p.m. We went to the mission chapel and sang a few songs together with the brethren and came back, packed and left for Guatemala.

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We arrived at the border early evening. Our papers were all fine for leaving Mexico, but then the Guatemala officials didn't like the idea of us not having a visa. So off we go back to Comitán for our visa. My traveling pamphlet had informed me of the need of a visa, but I was hoping we could slide on that, but it didn't work. When we arrived at the consul's office, he wouldn't open the door, so we had to go back and sleep in the mission house. After we got the keys from the Corza family, we found us a place to eat supper.

In the morning then we got back to the consul for our papers. A few hours later and one hundred twenty dollars poorer, we again set out for Guatemala.

Following is a little writing someone wrote while weary.

Betsy From Pike

The Schrocks from Mississippi

Oh, have you heard tell,
of the Schrocks in the van,
With 12 heads of humans,
and one leaky A.C.
A bunch of luggage
and one big green box.
They drove up the mountain
and down,
And along bumpy roads.
They gobbled up mangos
and choked on tortillas,
Through all sorts of misery
dry and wet.
If they haven't come home,
they're traveling yet. ▲

To be continued

The U.S. as Seen by a Brazilian

Laura Costa recently toured the US with Jake & Betty Loewen. Those of you who met her will have noticed that all things to her are yea or nay. None of this maybe stuff.

I asked Laura what impressed her most in the US. "The roads!" was her immediate answer. Not only was she impressed by the excellent quality of the roads, but also by the roadsides. Instead of seeing litter scattered all over, she frequently saw beds of flowers.

Equally impressive is the respect that Americans have for traffic laws. The police are respected, not only because they are the "law," but because they are the motorist's friend. Laura couldn't get over how they helped stranded motorists.

It's understandable that she would place roads at the top of the list. After all, roads are a national disaster in Brazil. Southern Brazil and São Paulo State are better than average, but even they don't begin to come up to the N American standard.

Laura switches to another subject. "A lot of people say that Americans are a colder

people than Brazilians. Maybe they say this because Americans don't go around patting others on the back. I found just the opposite to be true. Americans are a warmer people than Brazilians. When they see you on the street, they greet you. This is what impressed me the first time I walked into a Wal-Mart store."

She hooks a little complaint onto this one. "What messed me up was the coins they use. Some of the smaller ones are worth more than the bigger ones. But the girl who waited on me helped me out."

Now she jumps to Michigan. "When we got to Michigan, I was disappointed by their fields. I'm used to enormous fields in Brazil, but all I saw was tiny little plots. I couldn't imagine how anyone could make a living on such small farms, but Betty said that they have a job or do something else to help make ends meet."

The food. "I enjoyed the food, probably because I am used to American food. But the best food over there is in Calvin's restaurant in Kentucky. I enjoyed the fresh fruit, especially the peaches. I had never eaten white peaches before."

Laura was impressed by church services there. Even with her somewhat limited English, she says she understood almost everything that was said. "What I liked was how the children sit with their parents, instead of sitting by themselves. The order in the services was really impressive. No one could come in while a song was being sung."

Back to her limited English, she says that "the older ones had a lot more patience with me. The youth were different. Some of them looked at me like I was some strange animal that had wandered out of the woods. I always felt at home with the older ones."

What I appreciated most of Laura's report was her vision of what it takes to make a living in N America. It's easy for a foreigner to see the nice homes, the nice cars, the many comforts, and feel everything is easy there. Here is what she says, "I noticed that it takes a real effort to make a living there. People have to work hard. For them to do something for the Lord is a sacrifice. They have to take time off from their work."

She adds, "Over here things are easier. It isn't as much of a sacrifice to take time off for the Lord's work."

Laura was impressed with sisters who pay regular visits to the women's prison, I believe in Georgia.

She ended by saying that she was impressed by the respect that the younger showed for the older. ▲

News from Japan

Cold Technology

Several months back we mentioned that Marilsa Akemi Nakayama, the lady who has proofread much of our literature, moved to Japan, together with her husband and two small children. She promised to send me her impressions of the country of her ancestors, which she did in a lengthy fax. Following are excerpts of what she has to say:

Pardon me for not having written sooner, but life here in Japan is both fascinating

and hectic. It's too early to give any definite conclusions on life here, so I'll just answer your questions.

There is a big contradiction in the way Brazilians look at Japan. They feel it is a paradise (which is how they feel about all modern nations) and fail to see the potential of their own country. If they would love it as they should, Brazil would be a great nation, maybe not technologically, but in human warmth and consideration. It's exactly this warmth that is lacking over here in Japan. People shy away from any sentimental attachments.

The Japanese are hard workers, but unfortunately they are slaves to a little apparatus we call a clock. Here time is worth gold. They can't waste time grieving when a loved one passes on. They have no time to give a farewell party to someone who has worked in an establishment for years and decides to quit or retire.

I'm not trying to judge how they do things. All I know is that to me it is important to feel wanted and protected. But to them protection is the time they have at their disposal to work and be productive. Once a Japanese grows too old to be productive, he loses his protection. He becomes a nobody and falls into a social limbo. The reasoning for this is simple. Anyone who isn't productive is a liability to the country. So much for this.

What do I do? I work in a factory that does assembly work for a larger company. I can't really define what I do, because here they want their workers to know how to do different jobs. That way if someone doesn't show up for work, another worker takes over and production doesn't slow down. I spend considerable time helping assemble computer monitors. Also I am involved in their total quality program.

The language. Yes, we are having difficulty with the language, but I believe it is but a question of time until we will overcome this problem.

The food. We would be in a real pinch if we had to eat only Japanese food. Sometimes I get the impression that we are living in a miniature Brazil here. We can buy over here practically anything that can be bought there. My cousin, Massayuki knows where all the Brazilians live, so he goes from place to place selling food, Portuguese language newspapers, magazines, etc.

Likes and dislikes. It's too early to say too much about this. What I know is that our wages are very good. We are here to work and to save, but if we wanted to spend what we make, we could have a high standard of living, have many luxuries that we can't afford in Brazil.

That's enough, isn't it?

By the way, tell me about Perdigão and about the Holdeman kidnapping.

Um abraço a todos, Marilsa Akemi Nakayama



Colony News

More on the Kidnapping

As time goes by and people manage to sort their thoughts out, interesting little details emerge on the recent kidnapping episode.

Frances, Mrs. Duane Holdeman, Caleb's mother, was to the literature center the

other day to get photocopies of a letter she wrote on her impressions. I asked if I could use it in BN, and she agreed. Following are some excerpts, slightly adapted for clarity:

“This past week, starting Wednesday night of the 24th of September, at a few minutes past 2:30 a.m., was quite different than anything Duane and I have ever experienced so far in life. We had a welcome at the Monte Alegre social hall for the Daniel Kramer family, that was returning from the mission in the Northeast. As we were driving home around 10 o’clock, I noticed that the lights were on at Caleb’s. I’m sure as I was looking toward their place, the men were in there, probably tying them up.

“We didn’t drive right by their place, but Lester (Caleb’s brother) and his wife did. Caleb heard them and wished they would come rescue them, and yet he felt it might have aggravated the men. Harold (another brother), who lives close by, also saw the place was all lit up and couldn’t figure out why. Later at night when he saw the lights were still on, he just couldn’t figure it out. But it happens that the lights were all left on when they left with the kidnappers.

“When we got home we went to bed. Duane went right to sleep, but I couldn’t get comfortable. I twisted and turned and I don’t believe I went to sleep much before 2:00 o’clock. At 2:30 when Caleb drove into our yard, I must have just dozed off.”

What happened from here on was reported in the last issue of BN. So now we jump to the time when Caleb was out alone with the hundred thousand ransom, which was to be paid on a road to a neighboring town. This, as the police confirmed, was the most dangerous part of the entire event. On his first try he didn’t find the kidnappers. He returned to Rio Verde, called home and said he was going to make another try. Frances tells about it:

“At 7:30 Caleb called to say he had not found the men and what should he do? Duane and Caleb decided, by phone, he should go back again on the same road and look again. So that is what he did.

“It was a tense time not knowing anything for sure. But we believed God would do all things well. At the same time, we remembered some incidents in N America in which things didn’t turn out as people wished. We had to admit that it isn’t always God’s will to spare lives.

“When Caleb called at 7:30, we knew it would be at least two hours before he would call again.

“Two hours went by and no call. Another half hour and still no call. Our living room was full of men. All the ministers and deacons were in there. But every little bit Duane had to jump up and answer the phone. Either it was a call from N America, from around here, or from the US Embassy. Everyone wanted to know if the family had been freed yet.

“Then finally at approximately 10:15 the phone rang and I heard Duane say, ‘Oh, you did? Really? The family is with you? That’s good.’

“You should have seen the men come to life (some had been dozing). Everyone was smiling. It was such a relief. We all stood and gave God thanks for all He had done for Caleb’s and for all of us.

“They called from a filling station in town and then came right home. We were watching for their lights and when they turned into our lane, we all went out to meet them.

“They were so tired looking and disheveled. Their hair had not been combed for two nights and a day. Their clothes were dirty, especially the bottom parts of their dresses and trousers from having walked in mud. It was a sort of swampy place they had to walk through to go to the river, where they spent the day, so their shoes got all wet. Winfield had taken his shoes off at home before they were seized. So he had to walk through the swamp in his stocking feet.”

A question that runs through everyone’s mind is: Why did the kidnappers choose the Caleb Holdeman family? The delegado de polícia informed Caleb that the kidnappers said they had no one in particular in mind. In fact, I don’t believe they even knew anyone on the Colony. As they were walking down the main road, they got to the crossing where to the left it goes to Duane’s place and to the right to the Holdeman brothers. Frances continues:

“Had they turned left, it would have been us they got. Oh, how awful that would have been had we come home from church and been face to face with those six nervous men with their guns and knives. I wish Caleb had not told me that. Thursday, Friday, Saturday and Sunday nights I felt so spooked I couldn’t go to sleep. My mind just kept thinking: What if? What if? What if they had turned left, how would we have taken it? I would have had to be alone with those men while Duane was released to get the money. I shuddered to think of it. I prayed a lot and told Duane how I felt. By yesterday evening this feeling had left me, thank God.”

We don’t know what all God had in mind when He permitted this kidnapping. One visible result is that the brethren have begun having services in our local jail. Caleb is responsible for this project.

Two of the men are still at large. Since they had approximately half of the money, it hasn’t been recovered yet. ▲

Zigzagging Around

El Niño

I don’t know what we would do without El Niño. If it doesn’t rain, it’s El Niño. If it rains too much, it’s El Niño. If a roof blows off, it’s El Niño.

And so it was El Niño that did some damage here on the Colony Sunday afternoon, the 26th of October. When we got to church that evening, we saw a big hole in the middle of the social hall roof. Since the storm came accompanied by a heavy rain, things inside were a real mess.

Just a little explanation on how our roofs are made here. We have basically three types of roofing material: clay tile, asbestos sheets or tin.

The tile is held in place by its own weight and by the fact that it is slightly interlocking. Of the three roofs, the tile roof is the easiest to repair.

Good, strong asbestos is quite resistant to storms, but when it does begin to peel, depending on the direction and intensity of the wind, the flying pieces bounce along poking holes in the roof as they go. These roofs are more difficult to repair than a tile roof.

A good tin roof, with a minimum overhang, is probably the best roof. At least for a shed. But when they do start to peel, step aside. No explanations need to be made about what the wind can do with a light sheet of tin.

Most of our houses on the Colony are covered with either tile or asbestos. The sheds have either tin or asbestos.

Besides the hole opened in the social hall roof, a number of trees were badly damaged, so on Monday there was a workday to patch up the roof, trim trees and haul off the branches.

John Unruh had the edge of his tin shed roof torn off and some machinery damaged by falling trees. The wind ripped some of the clay tile off of Leo Dirks' house, making a mess inside. Different ones helped with the clean up work at both places.

On a broader scale, it is being predicted that there will be a lot of flooding in southern Brazil and that the northeast will be dry. Since we're right in the middle, what will happen to us? It is believed that our weather will be erratic. There should be enough rain, but not necessarily when we need it.

Until just recently we never heard or read about tornadoes in Brazil. But more and more they are showing up in the news. With almost no basements and no storm shelters, no one is prepared for this type of storm. We hope El Niño doesn't bring an epidemic. ▲

Telephones

We have at different times written about the exorbitant price charged in Brazil for a telephone, as well as for services rendered.

In the past a telephone line cost anywhere from \$1,500 – \$3,000. And then it could take over a year for it be installed. Because of this telephones became a commodity, that is, an article to be bought and sold. People made a business of buying up phone lines and then reselling them for a profit. They might cost twice as much as what the phone company charged, but they could be installed the next day. For someone opening a business, for example, this could be quite important. Small loans were made using the borrower's phone line as collateral.

All that has changed. Today a phone line can be purchased for a little over 70 dollars. There can be up to a month waiting period to have it installed, but so what? Our brethren in town who couldn't even dream of owning a phone, today are getting phones.

Cellular phones are so commonplace that they have ceased to be a status symbol. Those who acquired them for this reason when they first came in, today probably no longer have them. It was too expensive a plaything.

By July we should be having digital cellular technology. ▲

Virtuality Without Virtuosity

The Internet has come in strong here in Brazil, bringing with it the virtual situations for which the net is famous. VEJA reports on one of them which took place in the last several weeks:

Once upon a time a “bunny” decided to make new friends on the net, but ended up in the clutches of the big, bad wolf. Carla Patrícia Coelho, who calls herself Coelhinha (—“Bunny,” a play on her last name, which means rabbit), spent three weeks on the beautiful beaches of the northeast, and then a night in jail. The big bad wolf spent five days in jail before getting out on bail.

The bunny, 29, and the big bad wolf, 35, met on the net on September 20. During the next 10 days they spent 80 hours exchanging messages, some of which were anything but virtuous.

Things went fast. The big, bad wolf told the bunny he was a rich rancher from Goiânia with immense holdings, that he took in both national and international rodeos, that his mode of transportation was an executive jet and that he owned a number of imported cars.

The bunny, on the other hand, sent the wolf pictures of herself when 10 years younger and 20 kilos (44 pounds) lighter, quite a good looking girl.

Wedding plans were made, with the blessing of the bunny’s mother, who felt that Flávio de Oliveira e Silva—the wolf—was the man she had been asking God to send to her daughter. But first the wolf wanted to take the bunny on a pre-nuptial trip to the northeast, after which they would get married in a white tent, on a red rug, just like the bunny had always dreamed.

With virtuality about to turn into reality, the bunny knew that her additional 20 kilos would be rather evident. So she confessed. The wolf, generously forgave, telling her that it was what she had inside that really mattered. The bunny was moved by this undeserved kindness, not realizing that he was probably referring to what she had in her bank account, and not in her heart.

At the wolf’s request, the bunny bought a ticket from Campo Grande, Mato Grosso to Goiânia—and some expensive clothes, which he didn’t have time to buy because of vaccinating cattle—where they met. He soon told her of the misfortune he suffered when all his checkbooks and credit cards were stolen. They would have to use hers until his accountant could get him some new ones.

Even though she made less than \$300 a month working in a paint store, she was glad to let him use her credit cards.

For three weeks the bunny and the wolf lived it up in five star hotels and the best restaurants. And then the law caught up with them—after having spent over ten thousand bucks. In an interview the bunny stated, “I was the most loved and the most deceived woman around.”

As it turned out, the wolf didn’t so much as have a job. He lived off of his dad’s retirement pension, a first class freeloader.

People’s first impulse is to feel just a wee bit sorry for the bunny, but as someone said in the Goiânia paper, “One skunk smells another.” ▲

This & That

September 1 was the beginning of the new school year for the Rio Verdinho School. The teachers are: Paula Schultz, Milcah Schrock, Luciene Rosa. The board members are: Jair da Costa, Dennis Kramer, Daniel Martin, Dean Mininger, Chris Stoltzfus. There are 17 students.

Sept 7 was Dave Miller & Roxy Schultz' wedding at the Rio Verdinho Congregation. Dave is Enos and the late Clara Miller's son, and Roxy is Lynn & Kathy Schultz' daughter. They are both from the Rio Verdinho Cong.

Visitors for the wedding from the US were: Wayland & Rita Loewen; Linda Mininger and son Vance; Abe & Sara Troyer.

On Sept 14 Keith Schultz & Valdirene dos Santos Andrade got married at the Rio Verdinho Cong. Keith Schultz is Paul & Carol Schultz' son. He spent much of his childhood in Brazil together with his folks. They now live in Michigan. Valdirene made her home with Jair & Connie da Costa. She is Connie's sister. Since Keith no longer has a permanent visa, he had to come on a tourist visa. As they are finding out, it isn't complicated for a Brazilian to marry a foreigner. What is complicated is to get papers in the US Consulate for an American to take his Brazilian back to the US. Today, a month and a half after the wedding, I think they are having a bit of a hard time calling all this a honeymoon. When they finally have everything in order and can board the plane, they will probably skip up the steps three at a time and then poke their head into the cockpit and tell the pilot to step on the gas.

Visitors from the US for this wedding were Keith's parents, Paul & Carol Schultz.

Daniel & Anna Kramer and daughter Fayanna returned from the northeast after spending some time on the mission in Acaraú. Natã, a young brother from there, came with them. He will be working on the Colony for a while. Work is very, very difficult to find in Acaraú. Since he is a good mechanic, his skills will be useful on the Colony.

Revival meetings were continued in Rio Verde the last of September. The ministers were Dennis Unruh and Mark Loewen.

The Myron Kramer family spent Sunday, Sept. 28, in Bom Jesus, a town some hundred miles from Rio Verde. Bom Jesus is where Jake Loewen's hired man, José Carvalho and his wife Viviene are from. Since they got converted, their relatives are showing interest in salvation. So Bom Jesus is becoming sort of a home mission project with different ones going there for visits and services. José & Viviene, of course, go out there quite often. It's a little project with good promise.

On Sept 30 a number of ladies got together to sew uniforms for Cristiane and Raquel Garcia, who will be spending some time working at the Bethel Home. They left for the US on Oct 6, on the same flight that Dennis U took to return to his country.

Christ & Edna Stoltzfus have returned to Brazil. To stay. Since they have several sons (Elias & Chris) living here, they can work out their permanent visa from this end. They are making their home at the Rio Verdinho Congregation.

Brazil ¹⁵ News

On Sept 25 Clinton & Marie Unruh had a little boy, Carlen Thomas. The grandparents are John & Joan Unruh and Daniel & Anna Kramer.

Dean & Esther Lou Mininger spent the Oct. 5 weekend at the Boa Esperança Congregation in Mato Grosso. Dean Mininger and Duane Holdeman try to make periodical visits to that area.

On Oct 6 Luiz & Maria Duarte and daughter Lucélia left for the mission in Acaraú, to temporarily fill the vacancy created by the Kramers. Their son Marcos is working for Dean Mininger.

Of our four missions in Brazil, three are temporarily being manned by Brazilian couples.

Oct 19 was a special day in the Pirenópolis Congregation. Two new members were added, Gilson & Viviane David—he is Paulo David's brother, and a young sister was reaccepted. That makes a total of 15 members, all Brazilians with two Brazilian leaders. Mark Loewen is pastor responsible and visits them on a regular basis. To visit this congregation gives one a special feeling. We are planning on visiting Pirenópolis with the tour group that is to be coming the 26th of Nov. Different ones from the Colony were there for the baptism.

Johanna Schmidt went to the US to attend her sister's funeral, Mrs. Orville Friesen.

Jon & Sheila Coblentz and son spent the Oct 26 weekend on the Mirassol, São Paulo mission, where Edinei & Janete Alves are stationed.

For those of you who are acquainted with the Colony, looking out over the Monte Alegre River, we can now see a new cellular telephone tower. Once it goes into operation, hopefully in December or January, we should be able to use mobile cellular phones most anyplace on the Colony. Others who now live in low spots and can't have a stationary phone without an enormous antenna, should be able to install phones. At the rate we're going, it won't be too long before everyone on the Colony will have a phone. That will be another big step forward for us.

Bill & Hillary Clinton spent a few days in Brazil and Argentina. To say that their visit was a roaring success would hardly be true. The American presidency, when on foreign soil, brings with it an aura of arrogance that generates neither respect nor confidence. The entourage, or better, the miniature army, which lands sometime before Air Force One to prepare the way for the president, unceremoniously sweeps aside local authorities and creates a virtual America wherever it goes. In a joint press conference in which both presidents were to answer questions, American journalists totally ignored President Cardoso and asked their own president six questions—not one related to his trip to S America. But this is news from another kingdom...