

# Brazil News

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Editorial

## **Saturation**

When Rear Admiral Richard E. Byrd spent the winter at the South Pole, this solitary adventure almost ended in tragedy. He developed a headache that slowly got worse and worse. Byrd surely would have lost his life if he hadn't discovered the problem: toxic fumes escaping through a tiny hole in his heater chimney, that were slowly saturating his organism.

We are living in a very small world and sometimes our head aches desperately. We grope around for answers, not realizing that we, like Admiral Byrd, are living in an extremely polluted environment from not one, but many punctured chimneys.

As we drive down the road we see billboards advertising everything from Toyotas to Tylenol and from Master Card to Colgate toothpaste.

The advertisements we see on billboards, in magazines or flyers, all have something in common. They were carefully designed to invade the mind and manipulate our thinking. The secret is association.

A product is associated with a plot or situation. A van is shown on a scenic highway. We are lead to believe that if we purchase the van (which we can't afford) we will be able to drive down similar scenic highways (which we also can't afford – especially if we purchase the van), and that this will be happiness.

A youth wearing a particular brand of jeans is the center of attention in a party. The idea is that clothes do make the man.

Several executives are shown on the balcony of a luxurious foreign hotel near a beach. Papers on a table show an important deal has just been closed. They are celebrating with X brand of whiskey – which, of course, all successful businessmen drink. We see these things day after day. Saturation.

It's true that the whiskey ad doesn't make us feel like drinking whiskey and a lot of other things we see aren't a temptation per se. But slowly our perception of things changes.

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Anyone who has worked in a non- or semi-religious environment knows what saturation is. Foul language is the order of the day. It's repulsive. And yet, after so long a time, our own mind begins to react to a scare, a sudden pain, or a novel situation, with the same language that is heard daily. No, the words aren't actually spoken, but like cattle in a crowded holding pen, trying to get out, so they press against our lips. Saturation.

Even worse is the reasoning we are exposed to in worldly circles. Problems we agonize over, they solve so easily, so naturally. We realize their solutions don't agree with what we have been taught, but then, is it necessary to take everything so seriously like we do...? Saturation.

We have a well defined code of behavior for conduct both before and after marriage. We believe that this code is based on God's universal will and is valid for everyone – not only for Mennonites. And yet, as pre-marital intimacy, living-in, divorce and remarriage become the rule and not the exception, we find it hard to keep our balance. When a young couple begins living together, maybe even has a child or two, and seem to be faithful to each other, we are tempted to give their union a certain legitimacy. We make vague remarks about common law marriage. But when they break up, we say, "Well, at least they weren't married." In other words, each one can now go his own way, find another partner, and legally marry, if they so desire. Does it make sense? Can they have their cake and eat it too? Saturation.

Something that has impressed me when visiting the US – and which may come as a surprise to you N American readers – is the price being placed on human life. A price that neither individuals nor the nation can afford. Medical emergencies are handled by paramedics in high-tech ambulances. Hospitals swallow up these victims and several thousand dollars later regurgitate them into waiting helicopters to be rushed to more specialized medical facilities. There, attached to machines and gauges, surrounded by doctors and nurses, the sky is the limit on what will be done to save a life.

Is there anything wrong with that? Shouldn't we do absolutely everything possible to save the life of a loved one? No matter what it costs?

Actually, dollars and cents aren't the real issue here. We're talking about something much more subtle. Are we rowing so hard because we forget the Master is in the boat? When men develop an excessive fear of death, they forget how to live. Have we been saturated by this fear?

We don't believe in evolution with its millions and billions of years. And yet we constantly read of new scientific discoveries – even in serious magazines like National Geographic and Reader's Digest – that give credence to the theory. Finally we begin to concoct our own theory of Mennolution, suggesting that perhaps the first three words of the Bible, "In the beginning..." refer to a period of many millions of years, and that the creation in Genesis was actually sort of a recreation. We are fast approaching the time in which to believe that the earth is six thousand years old will be paramount to believing the world is square. Maybe we are already in that time. Saturation.

Admiral Byrd repaired his chimney and stopped the saturation. What do we

do? We're not talking about someone grabbing us by the collar and trying to cram something down our throat, to make us believe something we know isn't true.

Not at all. We're talking about a way of life to which we are exposed. We're talking about a spiritual pollution that permeates the air we breath. The danger isn't that we will one day announce, "I believe in evolution," but rather that we will begin to put little question marks on the story in Genesis. We won't begin to dress like people in the world, but we will begin to confuse modesty with tradition.

We will see our lifestyle and religion as having many advantages over others, but the conviction that it's really necessary to live this way will be weak or lacking.

Saturation is a deadly foe. It does to us what Sodom did to Lot. Lot didn't quit believing in God. He didn't give up his religion. He didn't practice the vices the people of his day practiced. He was "vexed with the filthy conversation of the wicked." Or paraphrased, "he was saturated with the polluted environment of the wicked."

Lot was saved through divine intervention. But most of his family was lost. In fact, even he was almost lost. If the angel hadn't "laid hold on his hand," he would have chosen to remain where he was.

We have mentioned but a few of the chimneys that today are silently spewing their toxic fumes into the air we breath. Can we survive? Can our children survive?

The pollution is global. Unlike Lot who fled Sodom, we have no place to which we can flee. The world is Sodom. But wait! God has promised to be with His children to the end. So there must be a way.

In the book *The Shining Sword*, the King's soldiers had to at times march through a toxic fog. The solution was for each soldier to hold his sword – the Sword of the Spirit – in front of his face, thus neutralizing this noxious fog.

If we believe we will over a period of time create a resistance to saturation, that it will no longer bother us, there is a good chance we have already succumbed. There is no human solution to this problem. There is no one strong enough to stand up to the constant bombardment of mind and heart to which the present day Christian is being exposed. In fact, of all the dangers we face today, saturation is probably one of the most terrible.

The King's soldiers survived by knowing how to make use of the Sword of the Spirit. And that is how we will survive. ▲

## Communications

### **From Nothing to Renac to Cellular**

Without telephones there could be no skyscrapers. In fact, there can be little progress of any kind without telephones.

In N America and different European countries, there was rural telephone service already in the early part of the century. In Brazil, on the other hand, there are still precious few rural phones.

There are especially three reasons for this.

Contrary to most European peoples, Latins despise the soil. To farm, that is, to do the actual work, is considered menial, a job reserved for the peões – workers. The fazendeiro – the owner of the farm – lives in town, or better, lives it up in town. Depending on the distance to the farm, he might drive out every day, or maybe only occasionally, to give orders. These rich land owners in the past saw no reason to have a telephone.

The second reason for not having telephones was the fact that the country was sparsely populated and many of the farms quite a distance from town. It would have been a tremendous job to build a line 30 or 40 miles long for only one farm.

Thirdly, it would have been an impossibility to keep the phone in operation. Lightning is a problem. But much worse is the habit of cutting down phone lines to be able to sell the wire. Obviously the bulk of the population won't do this, but the few that do can make it impossible to have a rural phone.

Three or four miles out of Rio Verde, going towards the Colony, there is a seed processing plant. They strung up a wire for a conventional telephone. I understand that there are times they have to pay someone to patrol this stretch of highway at night to keep the wire from changing hands.

When, about 10 years ago, the Renac system came into existence, it was heralded as a system that would probably, in time, be used over much of Brazil. Rio Verde was one of the communities chosen to test the system.

The Renac system was a logical approach. To begin with, it was radio operated, thus solving some of the problems we just mentioned. Also, since all calls would go through a manual switchboard, the operators could take messages for farmers in case they weren't at home (which they often did for us).

The idea was good and when the system was operating at peak efficiency, we got a lot of good out of it. Alas, all too often the system wasn't at peak efficiency. There were basically three things that could go wrong. The operators could mess up on transferring a call, our radios could develop problems, or – and ninety percent of the time this was the problem – there would be problems at the switchboard or the transmitting tower in town.

And this is where a lot of our problems came from. The operators would know when something was wrong with the switchboard, but they weren't allowed to tell us, so we would assume the problem was in our phone. That would mean calling the technicians out from Goiânia, paying an expensive bill, and still having a phone that didn't work, since there was nothing wrong with our unit.

The Renac system could be especially frustrating for anyone in a hurry to use the phone. Sometimes it would take 30 minutes or more just to get through to operator. And then, once we got through to the party we were calling, “the line would fall.” That's a direct translation of how it is said in Portuguese, and it's also how a lot of the Americans here say it in English. It means we would get cut off. Then another 30 minutes to get through to operator.

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There was the added problem of getting a good line. The Renac system could operate with a maximum of five lines. Often only three or four were operational. And of these, sometimes only one would give a good clear connection. So sometimes when you folks called from N America and couldn't hear, you got a bad line, or canal, as we say in Portuguese. It wasn't unusual to have to call three or four times to finally get our business done.

The phones were expensive, costing around US\$6,000. Even so, we got our money's worth out of them in the last nine years. If it didn't do anything else, it kept us in contact with N America. There were literally hundreds of international calls made.

Why is the Renac system shot? Because the technology is outdated and parts are hard to come by. And since most of the users of that system have gone cellular, it is definitely a losing proposition to have operators on duty 24 hours for possibly a dozen people. So the idea now is to give bad enough service to where everyone gets out and the system can be shut down.

The grand opening for the cellular phone system was on November 23. In just a short time over 800 mobile units were sold and at least 40 rural phones.

The mobile units are imported and cost approximately R\$500. By buying together as a Colony, we got our rural phones for R\$1,500. The normal price is R\$2,000.

Our units are mounted on the wall and have an external antenna. Some of us who live down lower have to mount the antenna on a tower. We use ordinary phones and can have extensions. Since our antennas are beamed in on the base tower, we have excellent reception.

We pay air time only for calls we make. On incoming calls the caller picks up the tab. (Somewhere I read that there is no air time charge on international calls.) For the first 150 minutes of air time we pay a flat rate of R\$11. From there, up to 450 minutes, we pay R\$0,07 (7 cents) a minute. And beyond that it's R\$0,22 a minute. The amount paid monthly is directly proportional to the amount of teenage daughters living in one's house.

Mobile rates are much higher. So high that no human being with a teenage daughter should even consider getting a mobile phone. And while we're on the subject, of the 800 plus mobile phones sold here, I sincerely believe that 700, give or take a few, are strictly for status. Right now to be seen in public with a little Motorola dangling from your belt means one of two things. Either you're quite important or you think you are.

Here's a listing of the new and old numbers on the Colony that we were able to come up with. Those we have missed in this round will be included in the next issue. The area code for all the Colony numbers is 062. To call here from N America, dial 011 55 and our area code minus the first zero, plus the rest of the number, of course. To call the Literature Center, dial 011 55 62 613 9008.

Arlo Hibner	613 9026
Caleb Holdeman	613 9006
Calvin Hibner	613 9016
Carman Loewen	621 4898

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Charles Becker	613 9002
Clifford Warkentin	613 9003
Daniel Kramer	613 9014
Dean Mininger	613 9039
Dennis Loewen	613 9013
Duane Holdeman	613 9009
Duane Miller	613 9029
Edna Loewen	613 9005
Eldon Penner	621 4377
Elias Stoltzfus	613 9015
Errol Redger	631 3536
Frances Schultz	613 9025
Glenn Hibner	613 9017
Jake Loewen	613 9018
Jesse Loewen	621 4604
João Souto	621 3185
John Unruh	613 9007
Literature Center	613 9008
Mervin Loewen	613 9022
Paul Yoder	613 9010
Reno Hibner	621 1701
Richard Mininger	613 9019
Stacy Schmidt	613 9012
Stanley Holdeman	613 9011
Stanley Schultz	613 9001
Now for the missionary numbers.	
Arlen Friesen	085 661 1055
Cameron Goertzen	062 242 0001
Samuel Coblentz	083 421 5007



## Missions

### **Mirassol**

In the article A Mission is Born (BN no. 40), Valentina Caldana Bonifácio's conversion experience was published. Several weeks ago we had the privilege of driving to Mirassol, São Paulo, and spending an extended weekend on this mission.

From Rio Verde there are two main highways to Mirassol. One is through the state of Minas Gerais and the other through Mato Grosso do Sul. Either way it's approximately 320 miles. We chose the Mato Grosso route because the highway is better and because we wanted to cross the Ilha Solteira lake on a barge.

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The lake is artificial, resulting from the backed up water of an enormous hydroelectric dam. At the place where the barges cross, the lake appears to be at least a mile wide.

A normal load on the barge is possibly a dozen to 15 vehicles, of which three or four are trucks. As can be seen in the diagram, the tug is attached to the barge laterally with an enormous hitch pin, a rather ingenuous setup. After the barge is loaded, the tug backs up far enough to get into deeper water and then simply swivels around 180° and begins pushing toward the opposite shore.

I don't know the population of Mirassol. It looks like it could be 20-30 thousand inhabitants. It's an interesting city in that it has no stoplights. Nor does it have any speed limit signs. But then it doesn't need any. The place is loaded with sharp dips, especially on the intersections, and with "sleeping policemen" – speed bumps – which cross the streets at a 90° angle. Many of them are high enough that one must barely edge over them, especially if the car is heavily loaded. The result of these speed bumps is quite orderly traffic.

I was impressed by the economic, social and spiritual situation in Mirassol. In fact, if there is such a thing as an ideal place for a mission, I believe it is there.

The wise man asked, "Give me neither poverty nor riches . . . Lest I be full, and deny thee... or lest I be poor, and steal, and take the name of my God in vain." We could ask, "Give us a mission field where there is neither poverty nor riches..."

Our brother Luís and his wife, sister Tilde – she a sister to Valentina – live in their own house right on the edge of Ruilândia. The house, built on a large lot, is roomy and practical. They have their own garden and raise rabbits and fryers. Since he used to work as a mason, he does his own building. In fact, right now he is gathering more building materials to add another room to the house. They have the basic conveniences, which include a refrigerator and a freezer.

Luís works at a large filling station in a neighboring town. He has his own car, an elderly flivver, but very usable. However, he doesn't have to drive it to work since his boss furnishes transportation. A VW Kombi picks him up at his doorstep and brings him back after he has worked his shift, which is from midnight until 8:00 A.M.

Apparently Luís makes decent wages. He said there was a time he was dissatisfied with his wages, that he wanted to get ahead faster, but he came to the conclusion that that wasn't what the Lord wanted for him, so now he is happy with the way things are.

In the service on Sunday, in his house, he told of a dream he had. There was famine in the land and he heard of a place where there was free food. To get there he had to walk through a woods. As he got nearer, he could smell the food. Finally he even got close enough to see people walking around with plates of food. Suddenly he realized he was naked and couldn't go to where the food was. He then made a good spiritual application for this dream.

Valentina and her husband work on a large grade A dairy farm near the neighboring

town of Ruilândia. Since the owner furnishes housing for all his workers, it's almost like a miniature village. The houses are very comfortable, set in among shade trees.

The dairy is a modern operation. Two hundred and some cows are rapidly run through a herring bone milking parlor equipped with Westfalia pipeline milkers. The milk is then processed, packaged and distributed in neighboring towns.

Valentina showed us a large barn where they raise their calves born of surrogate mothers. The embryo implants are done by their own vets. I was impressed by the organization and hygiene of Fazenda Benson, as the place is called.

Valentina and her husband, João work together in the milking parlor, where the cows are milked three times a day. They have time off between milkings and work every other day.

The other sister is Aparecida, also a sister to Valentina. She and her husband work on a fazenda which is a combination cattle ranch, rubber and coffee plantation. Contrary to Fazenda Benson, this fazenda was low on organization. During our last dry season, which was the driest and coldest in a long time, part of the cattle died and the coffee and rubber trees aren't expected to produce much during the next year. Since Aparecida and her husband get a percentage of the fazenda income, this has put them into a difficult situation.

We paid Aparecida a totally unexpected visit. I doubt if they even knew we were in the area. It's these unexpected visits that many times give us our most lasting impressions of people. It's the small details we notice.

When we got there it was mid-morning. She came out from behind the house, where apparently she had been working. Her hair was neatly combed and she was wearing her covering. Because of the nature of her work, she must wear slacks, but she wears a modest dress over top. Those are little things, but they do tell us that her religion is not a "missionary" or "Sunday" religion.

The missionaries, William & Miriam Coblentz live on a quiet street right on the edge of town, together with the Portuguese teacher, Janete Duarte, from the Monte Alegre Congregation. They have a beautiful challenge. It's a mission with potential for solid growth. ▲

## Linguistics

### **Three Plates – A Sample**

Remember that article about Three Plates in BN no. 28? A Gospel Tract board member sent me a letter they received which is a beautiful sample of one of those plates described.

This letter will be transcribed exactly as it was written. It is not meant to amuse. Rather, reflect on the rueful truth that anyone who learns a foreign language goes through a stage in which he expresses himself on this level.



MRS OF GOSPEL TRACT. BIBLE SOCIETY

J HOPE THAT RECIVED MY LETTER YOURS ARE ALL RIGHT JOYFULLY OF THE BLESSING OF PART OF GOD.

THE REASON OF MY LETTER IS FOR THANKS FOR YOURS FOR TO BE READERS OURS LETTER AND GIVE GOOD RECEPTION.

WICHT THIS PRESENT TO SOLICIT; PAMPHLETS, BOOKLETS, TREATYS, BOOKS,NEWS TESTAMENTS AND EVERY CLASS OF LITERATURE CHRISTIAN AND TOO HELP MATERIAL ( RUDE ) THAT BEFORE GIVING SO PLEASE BECAUSE OURS CHURCH IS POOR IN RECURS AND SENDS THAT SOLICIT FOR OUR.

TESTIMONY OF MY BROTHER.

J HAVE ONE SICK(DEPRETION \_ CRAISY )AND LIFES IN DARKNESS IN IGNORANCE THE DOCTERS GIVE ME EVERY PILLS DAY AND NIGHT BUT J NEEDS PILLS FOR MY SOUL AND IMPLORE PRAY AT GOD WICH ALL MY HEART FOR PITY LISTEN MY PRAY.

J TELL MY HUSBAND THAT J TO TAKE AWAY AT ONE TEMPLE FOR TOUCH MY HEAD AND GOD J WILL BE HEAL WE TO TEMPLE AND WAS TO SEE AT SHEPHERD. THE SHEPHERD TAKE MY HEAD IN NAME OF GOD J SAW CLEARNESS AND MY SUFFERING DESAPPEARANCE. J KNOW THAT GOD FORGIVE ALL MY SINS.

MY LIFE WAS CHANGE FOR EVER.

AMEN.

P.D. PLEASE EXCUSE MY BAD WRITTEN ENGLISH

GOD BLESS YOU BROTHERS.

[Signed] PASTOR



International

## Finally

Finally some good news on the little boy Bradley & Jolene Koehn have been wanting to adopt. Bruce Dean Koehn, age 6, is now theirs. It's hard to know who is happier, the boy or the parents.

When a couple have a child, it's obviously the mother who gets the roughest end of the deal. I suppose most mothers sometime or other wish their husband could get just a little taste of what they are feeling. At least for a day or two.

That's one nice thing about adopting a child. Dad and Mom can share the pain on a 50-50 basis.

I won't go into all that Brad & Jolene went through in adopting Bruce. To say the very least, it was painful. It was expensive. And it was nerve-wracking.

But I have noticed that even though a mother suffers a lot while carrying a child, and even though it is born premature and/or with complications, and possibly becomes somewhat expensive, once out of danger, the parents feel it was worth it.

We hope that is how Brads feel about Bruce.

We have the tendency of thinking about what the child will do to the parent's lives. When an adoption really gets messed up and complicated, we wonder if it is worth it all. Should the whole thing be dropped? After all, do the parents need a child that bad?

But there is another side to the coin. What does it mean to a child to be adopted? What kind of feelings are involved? Let's notice some of Bruce's feelings.

We first learned about Bruce through the Children's Council in Rio Verde. At the time Bruce was living with his 80 year old grandmother. His parents are separated and he had very little contact with either of them. It was a neighbor man who took him to the Children's Council to see if they could find him a home.

Sérgio, the man on duty when he was brought in, has told me the story a number of times. I get the feeling he has a hard time controlling his emotions as he remembers that scene. He said Bruce (Wanderlei then) came up to him and said, "Uncle (a term of respect used on elders), I want you to find me a daddy and a mommy."

If there is one thing a normal child wants, it's to have a daddy and a mommy. The different "rights" movements defend everything under the sun, but never have I heard anyone say a word about a child's rights to a daddy and a mommy.

Sylvia and I went to see Wanderlei. We immediately saw it wouldn't be hard to find a home for him. But wanting to talk it over with Faith before bringing him home, we left him there. Several days later Brads called and wanted to know if we knew of a little boy that might be up for adoption. When we told them about Wanderlei, they made their decision right there on the telephone. They wanted him.

When I went back to get him, he was no longer available. Another couple had taken him. We were disappointed.

Knowing how disappointed we were, Sérgio called the man back to see if they really wanted to keep him. The man thought he did, but said his wife was uncertain. "In that case," Sérgio told them, "you're better off letting someone else have him who is absolutely certain. To take in a child is a big responsibility. If you're unsure of yourselves, it probably won't work." The man agreed and brought him back.

Wanderlei came to live with us. Right from the beginning he understood that his stay with us was temporary, that a daddy and mommy from the Estados Unidos would come and get him.

He absolutely believed that someplace he had a daddy and a mommy. Just that hope kept him buoyant. Finally the day came that he learned to know his daddy and mommy. To say the least, it was a happy day.

But things didn't go like we had hoped and Brads had to go back to the US without Wanderlei. This hit him hard. Brads came back a second time and had to go back without him again. Even though he wouldn't openly admit it, he was one worried little boy. He knew that sometimes children stay at our house for a few days or weeks and go back to town. He asked someone about that, but didn't go so far as to ask if he would be the next one.

Finally the day came when his papers were all through. Brad & Jolene came to get him. Even so he was still just a bit tense. Would something still go wrong?

This time nothing went wrong. Tomorrow they plan on leaving for Rio, where they will get his American visa at the US Consulate.

Both Brads and Bruce have gone through a lot. But as you see them together in the US, decide for yourselves if it was worth it.

Personally, I tip my hat to people like Bradley and Jolene who are willing to sacrifice so that a little boy can have a daddy and mommy.

Just a few words on adoptions in Brazil. It isn't only foreigners who have a rough time. Even Brazilians get the run around. For them it isn't as bad since they live here. Or for those of us who live here, for that matter, we can afford to wait a year or two.

We have had judges here who were sympathetic and did all they could to make things work out. This isn't the case with our present judge. The biggest losers, unfortunately, are little boys and girls who would like to have a daddy and a mommy. ▲

## This Month on the Colony

### **Crops**

The sun and the clouds are taking good care of farmer's crops. What they don't do is the cultivating.

Some of the corn is tasseling. At least one patch of sweet corn is about ripe. The soybeans are looking good.

The rains are coming just about right. I suppose if we could regulate them, we might ask for a little more, but it's a fact that we seem to make better crops when the rains are on the shy side, then when we have too much, like several years ago when we averaged an inch a day for the month of December. That's too much. ▲

## A Brazilian Story

### **Tigrero!**

Several days ago Jake Loewen handed me a book "that I think you will like," he said. He might as well have said, "that I'm positive you'll like," because for someone who lived in this country while it was still in the rough, it would be impossible to not like it.

Tigrero!, written by Sasha Siemel. The Nashville Tennessean wrote:

“In Brazil the jaguar is called a tigre, and in the jungles of that country Sasha Siemel is known as TIGRERO – the man who kills tigrés with a spear.”

In America you have the legendary Wild or Far West, which existed during the eighteenth hundreds.

Frontier life still exists in remote areas of the Amazon basin. The story Sasha tells is about a period when much of Brazil was still frontier. He and his brother Ernst, apparently Germans of Russian descent, lived in the Pantanal in the present states of Mato Grosso and Mato Grosso do Sul.

Sasha’s story deals with especially two aspects of frontier life: The natural dangers and the dangers of living in a society governed by men who applied to themselves the divine injunction, “Vengeance is mine; I will repay.” In fact, it was to this human justice (or injustice) that Ernst lost his life.

Sasha and Ernst made their living as traveling repairmen. In most villages their first job was to repair firearms, for as Sasha says, if there were 200 inhabitants, there would be 200 revolvers. They fixed anything from sewing machines to revolvers to sugar cane presses on the large fazendas.

While yet in the state of Rio Grande do Sul, a one-eyed thief catcher told Sasha about an Indian in Mato Grosso who hunted jaguars with a spear. The desire to meet this Indian became an overwhelming obsession. As the two brothers worked their way toward Mato Grosso, fixing whatever was broken, Sasha began finding people who had heard about the old Indian.

Finally the area was reached where Joaquim – that was his name – hunted for the local fazendeiros (fazenda owners). When Sasha found Joaquim in a miserable little hut in the middle of the jungle, the old Indian was stone drunk. After he sobered up, he took Sasha on his first jaguar hunt.

Sasha was an excellent student and the old Indian knew it. He spared no pains to transmit his knowledge to his young disciple. And a good disciple he was. During Sasha’s 30 years as a professional hunter, he killed over 300 jaguars, many times narrowly escaping death. And like his mentor, the majority of these hunts were carried out all alone, except for a small pack of hunting dogs.

Once when giving a lecture in Philadelphia, a young lady confronted him afterwards. He tells it like this:

“It was splendid, Mr. Siemel,” she said, regarding me with deep brown eyes, in which there was the faint suggestion of a smile. “We are quite gullible here in Philadelphia, you know – we are quite glad to believe anything.”

After being reprimanded by her startled mother, the girl continued, “Obviously you have killed these jaguars, Mr. Siemel,” she said. “But killing them with a spear – when you could use a rifle – is a little fanciful, don’t you think?”

We may think the same.

Sasha goes into detail to explain why many times – not always – he hunted with a spear.

To begin with, the Pantanal, where he did his hunting, is jungle. Many places the ground is spongy, covered with a lattice of roots and branches. This means that often it is impossible to move rapidly. The jungle, of course, is dense, sometimes impenetrable. And where the jungle becomes sparse, tall grass grows. Obviously the tigre holds a definite edge over the hunter in this setting.

Because of the dense vegetation, at times the cat had to be killed, literally, at arm's length. As the cat would spring, there might be time for one shot. And what if the cartridge in the chamber of the gun didn't fire? It could happen only once in the life of a hunter. Walking through the boggy jungle, stalking a cat, it was more than possible to trip on a root or vine and the rifle land in the muck. To face a man-eater with a soaked, mud caked firearm wasn't a pleasant situation. The spear, on the other hand, was impervious to water and mud.

In a typical hunt, some fazendeiro would notify Sasha of a tigre that was killing his livestock, or worse, had killed someone. Long before sunup, Sasha and his dogs would be moving through the jungle. Finding the tigres tracks, he would stop and carefully study them. Besides knowing what size animal he was hunting, he would also know approximately when it had been through there, where it was probably going, etc.

Sasha tells of hunting a jaguar that was known as Assassino – Murderer. A true murderer, he had just killed José Ramos, the foreman of a cattle ranch in the area.

Sasha's plan was to turn the dogs loose and follow on foot. The idea was to get close enough to where Assassino would attack him!

After running after the dogs for 10 minutes, their yapping became shorter and then there was a terrible scream. Reaching the spot, Sasha found Pardo, his lead dog, with its side ripped open. He followed after the remaining dogs and soon there was another scream. Another dog had been eliminated.

Assassino was using a sophisticated hunting technique. He would run ahead of the dogs and then quickly circle back, waiting beside his own trail for the pack to arrive. Then, with one sweep of his enormous paw, he would eviscerate one of his pursuers. Running ahead a short distance he would repeat the operation, thus, one by one, exterminating his enemies.

Within minutes Sasha found himself in the middle of the jungle, alone – and without a single dog. Everything indicated this would be his final hunt, for without the dogs to harass the tigre, so that he could get into a favorable position for the kill, he was no match for Assassino.

Then something totally unexpected happened. Tupi, a little fox terrier that Sasha left tied up in camp, had somehow managed to break loose and now came bounding up, happy to see his master again. At the same instant there was a rustling in the high grass on the other side of the clearing. Assassino was preparing for the final attack.

Acting on impulse, Sasha stepped on Tupi's paw, causing him to yip shrilly. The idea was, with all the noise, to induce the tigre to attack from where he now was, from the front, keeping him from circling around and attacking him from behind.

Besides his spear, Sasha carried a bow and arrow. Quickly he strung the bow and

shot an arrow at the spot where the grass was moving. A hit. But not being able to see the animal, he had no way of knowing how much damage he had done. Tupi continued his frenzied yipping. Once again there was movement in the grass and another arrow was shot.

Distraught by the pain of the arrows, Assassino did something he had by experience learned not to do. He turned and began running toward a low tree. It was exactly because he had learned not to permit himself to be treed that he was still alive and had managed to create so much havoc.

As the tigre neared the tree, it saw Sasha and changed his plan. He would attack instead. This was dangerous. At this stage of the game, Tupi was worthless. And worse, Assassino was wounded and in pain. His actions would be totally unpredictable.

Out of the corner of his eye, Sasha saw vultures sitting in the nearby trees, apparently believing they would be the ultimate victors of this duel. Sasha tells what happened:

“A single second of diverted attention can be fatal in a spear-fight; and this missed being fatal by a single step. I had been caught off guard, and perhaps the cat sensed that momentary lapse. As it lunged toward me, I managed to pivot and drive the spear at the charging animal’s neck. The spear did not bite deeply, but it was enough to throw the cat off balance. One paw, cutting through the air, actually grazed my right shoulder, and the force of my side-step threw me off balance. Had the cat swerved toward me, continuing its charge, I doubt if I could have met the attack. But it drew back, possibly from the new pain in its shoulder, and I had a chance to roll over and get on my knees. I still had the spear firmly in both hands, and I rose quickly to meet the next charge.”

At different times Sasha tells of the tremendous drain of energy on the hunter when fighting with a tigre. At this point he realized how exhausted he was. But Assassino was also exhausted – and bleeding from the spear wound in his chest. He too seemed to realize there would be but one more clash. It was now a matter of whether the vulture would have one or two bodies to feast on.

Sasha continues:

“The big cat was sideways to me, its head turned and the white teeth flashing, but it did not charge. I could not attack, since he might escape into that tall grass. I was breathing rapidly, and sweat was pouring down my face, almost blinding me, but I could do nothing about that. I tried kicking dirt at the tigre, but this had no effect. Suddenly, while I was desperately casting about for some way of provoking a charge, the cat gave a terrible, snarling roar and leaped straight at me.

“I barely had time to lift the point of my spear, and then it was a bit too high on the throat. I could feel the hot, foul breath against my face and arms as the spear-head drove into the animal’s throat, high over the chest; and for an instant I had the horrifying thought that I had misjudged the distance and was too close to the raking claws.

With every ounce of strength I had left, I rammed the blade deeper into the dying animal’s chest. Any other tigre I had fought would have had the life drained away by

this combination of wounds; but Assassino clawed furiously, even after I had gotten a downward thrust on the spear-head and was literally driving the point into the ground.

“I do not know how long this last furious phase of the fight lasted. Perhaps it was only a few seconds. Suddenly I realized that I was grinding the life out of a dead cat. Assassino had gone limp and the great, slashing claws that had ripped the life out of perhaps three or four hundred cattle – and had destroyed all of my hunting dogs except Tupi – were numbed forever.”

To this list of trophies, Sasha could have added José Ramos, the foreman on the ranch where the cattle were killed. In fact, immediately after the fight, Sasha went to recover his mangled body and return it to the family. Only after this did he go back to the scene of the battle with Assassino. The vultures had already begun their feast. He writes:

“Assassino’s carcass was mostly eaten away, but I salvaged the head as a trophy. I measured the torn carcass, and it was a hundred and twelve inches from nose to tail tip – almost ten feet! I could only estimate its weight, but it must have been close to four hundred pounds.”

I suspect this book has been out of print for years. Jake found his copy in a used bookstore. The publisher is Ace Books, 23 West 47th Street, New York 36, N.Y. ▲

## **This & That**

Bert & Ada Coblentz came to spend 6 months with their son Jonathan and his children.

Cleusa, Mrs. Galen Coblentz, together with her three children, came to visit the Colony and her family in Jataí. Galen is Bert & Ada’s son.

Dan & Clara Coblentz arrived on the 10th to again make their home in Brazil. Temporarily they will be living near the Monte Alegre river, in the house where Eldon & Bonnie Penner used to live. We feel fortunate to have them as neighbors. Their grandson, Vance, came along for a visit.

Myron & Sheila Unruh spent the November 13 weekend with Leo & Mim Dirks in Mato Grosso.

Glenn & Roger Hibner are back from Mato Grosso, where they spent a short time planting their crops.

Tamara Kay. Born on November 16, that’s the little girl that suddenly became part of Sid & Irene Schmidt’s family. My wife describes her as “a little doll.” With a beautiful name like that, she ought to be.

Joan, Mrs. John Unruh, spent several weeks at Halstead helping care for her mother, Mrs. Jonas Buller.

Reno & Marilyn Hibner are back after spending several weeks in the US.

Lynnette Penner, daughter of Eldon & Bonnie Penner is back after spending some time working at Bethel Home and at one of the child care homes in Arizona. The Monte Alegre and Rio Verdinho youth had a welcome supper for her.

Arlen & Carol Friesen, the missionaries from Acaraú, bussed to Goiânia to meet her folks, Walter & Linda Toews, and her sister Phyliss. They spent about a week on the Colony and they all left for Acaraú on the bus. Brave people, if you ask me.

Alfrieda, Mrs. Philip Martin returned from Canada after spending about a month with her dad, Pete Penner, who was very ill, and passed away shortly after she got back. Read on.

Clifford Warkentin's cellular phone was the first to be installed. The reason was that they wanted to have it operating so they could listen to Pete Penner's funeral. I just called Clifford and he said it came through very clear. The only problem was that their speaker wasn't powerful enough for those in the kitchen to hear very well. At least the family was able to get in on the service.

Sam Coblentz called me from the Patos mission, where he and Erma, and son Franklin, are stationed. He informed me that they now have a little boy whose name is Isaac Jonathan, born on December 1. Here is what Sam had to say about their new son: "If there were a hundred babies in a room, you would be able to pick out Isaac, because he would be the prettiest of them all." There was almost a challenge in his voice. What wouldn't I give for the opportunity of being the judge in that beauty contest.

On December 4, most of the Rio Verde Congregation spent the day on the Colony. They had their benches refurbished and the varnish didn't dry. So they called off church and came to pay us a visit. I suggest they varnish the benches more often.

Elias Stoltzfus and Dean & Esther Mininger went to the Northeast, where they met Ben Giesbrecht, to pay the missions a visit. Paulo Rufino, the young doctor who got converted some time ago, was baptized.

Rosella Yoder has returned to make her home in Brazil again, together with her son James. I believe they will be living in John & Sheila Kramer's house after they move to Mato Grosso the beginning of next year. Both Rosella and James are an asset to the Colony.

Lindomar & Monica Yoder are here for a visit. Lindomar is Rosella's son.

The Mark Loewen family is back after spending a short time in the US.

The Monte Alegre youth spent the afternoon of December 12 helping clean up the place where Dan & Clara will be living.

The Kramers drained their pond along side the Monte Alegre River. You can imagine their surprise when they found an African catfish about two feet long. The most logical explanation is that it came from a fish farm up river where some of the ponds were destroyed by heavy rains. So far as getting from the river to the pond, that would be no problem because of the way they can walk on land.

You wildlife lovers need to come to Brazil to see the ostriches that live in our soybean fields. During this time of the year it isn't unusual to see an ostrich with 20 to 40 young trailing along. A number of years ago Ike Loewen is supposed to have seen a herd of approximately 70 ostriches.