

Brazil News



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Editorial

Laws

The best way to get a microscopic view of the culture and civilization of a nation is to study its laws and how they are enforced.

This article is a critical analysis of laws both in Brazil and the US. For those of my good US readers whose shirt collar glows red when less than pleasant things are said about the motherland, I suggest skipping over to the next article.

Brazilians are proud of the fact that they are an independent people. They strongly resent any interference, or even suggestions, from other governments. Actually, they even resent the laws made by their own lawmakers.

When making unpleasant remarks about Brazilians, say what you please, but don't commit the folly of saying they aren't sharp. They are razor sharp. Before the ink is dry on a new law made by legislators, a half a dozen ways have been found to get around it. A recent example:

Apparently in an effort to create more jobs for the poorer class, a law was made saying that any farmer who didn't have a registered full time hired man would have to pay a 2.5% tax on all grain sold. Especially on farms run as a father-son project (which includes most of the Colony), it's undesirable to have a full time hired man.

The solution? In the wink of an eye, dad registered son as a full time farm hand. Son registered Dad. Brother registered brother. A dumb law with a smart solution.

And the Colony? An honest solution. They paid the tax and slept soundly.

Basically, laws in Brazil come under two categories: Those so full of loopholes they look like a section of perforated well casing and those so utterly rigid — few — that end up doing more harm than good.

Example one: Quite a few years ago, during the Military Dictatorship, an effort was made to make Brazil self-sufficient. "Make what you consume and consume what you make — and bye-bye to the rest of the world," was the unspoken slogan. Hard hit

by this attitude was travel abroad. Officials didn't want Brazilians (or even Americans living here) to convert their precious cruzeiros into dollars and spend them in foreign lands.

Obviously, to slap a ban on international travel would have reeked of totalitarianism — and after all, it was a right wing military government sponsoring this action — so a more legitimate facade would have to be found.

The solution was that anyone desiring to travel abroad had to (as I remember):

1. Get local police clearance, a complicated procedure involving other government offices.

2. Get an atestado de vida e residência from police officials. This was a document saying you were alive and living in the Municipality of Rio Verde, or wherever. Also complicated, involving other offices.

3. Get clearance from the local income tax office, saying you were owing no back taxes. For folks who had the habit of keeping their returns in piles instead of files, this could be — and usually was — a real nightmare.

4. A visit to the federal ministry of justice in Goiânia to obtain a document stating that the prospective traveler was not involved in any type of litigation with the federal government. Another complicated one, that usually involved waiting until the next day to pick up the document.

5. A visit to the state police office to obtain a document saying you had no police record. This involved getting photos and then standing in line for a number of hours.

6. Payment of a deposit, I believe the equivalent of a thousand US dollars, that theoretically one could get back in three years.

7. All of these documents had to be taken to the Federal Police in Goiânia to be analyzed. If everything was in order, one had to go downtown to a bookstore to buy three tiny little forms that were returned to the police to be filled out. These then had to be taken downtown again (quite a distance), to the Banco do Brasil, and paid. The authenticated receipt was then taken back to the Police, where, if it wasn't too late in the day by then, they would stamp an exit visa into the passport. At this point you were all set to travel. And fit for a mental institution.

Example two: During this same period, the Arabs out in the Middle East decided to flex their muscles and show the world who had the last word on the price of crude oil. This totally upset the apple cart, and the balance of trade, here in Brazil. In fact, it's a blow from which they haven't recovered to this day. The solution was to use less petroleum products.

A law was made that no gasoline or diesel fuel could be sold on Saturday, Sunday, or holidays. To give you an idea of how rigidly this law was enforced, when Denny Seiler, who was here on a visit quite a few years ago, drowned in the Rio Doce, his body had to be transported to Brasília for an autopsy, embalming and shipment to the US.

This happened on a weekend. The hearse didn't have enough gasoline to make the trip. We tried to buy gasoline in the gas stations. But the answer was Não! They were sympathetic, but weren't about to risk losing their station by selling fuel on a weekend.

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Clifford Warkentin was able to come up with some gasoline he had stored on the fazenda and the hearse made the trip to Brasília.

Except for the extremely rigid laws, which I have just described, laws are deliberately vague in Brazil. Several years ago when our new constitution was being made, there was a real tug-of-war between the left and the right. Unable to reach a consensus, the thing drug on and on. Finally a deadline was set. The constitution must be done by this date. And it was.

How? Spokesmen were chosen from the different warring factions. They got their heads together and came up with a terminology that could be interpreted either way. These resolutions were presented to the floor and voted on. They got good support, with both sides yelling victory.

Our minister of finance has brought inflation to 20% per month. It won't budge another percentage point. The reason is simple. The government is spending more than it is taking in. To make up the difference, money must be printed, which is exactly what inflation is. President Collor has a solution to this problem: Tax reform. If everyone paid the taxes that should be paid, Brazil would be in good shape, very likely with near zero inflation. But for congressmen to reform our tax system would obviously hit some of their well padded buddies who helped them into office. So unless there is a change of mentality, we will come up with a screen door reform (more holes than substance) and things will go on like before. In fact, we have a saying here: "We make changes so that things will continue as they are."

Many, many years ago, French president Charles De Gaulle made a visit to Brazil. Asked for an opinion about this tropical country, he dourly replied, "Brazil isn't a serious country." Amen. When it comes to laws, Brazil isn't a serious country.

Brazil is paying a heavy price for this lack of seriousness.

I promised to swing my artillery northward and do a bit of shelling. Here goes.

I have a deep respect for the US Constitution and the form of government it establishes. It has no equal in the world.

In one of the ironies that only history can produce, President Dwight D. Eisenhower selected Earl Warren to sit on the high bench of the United States Supreme Court. This was done in good faith. It wasn't until several years later that Eisenhower found that Warren was an ultra-liberal wolf in conservative sheep's clothing, a decision he doubtlessly lamented to the day of his death.

The Warren Court, possibly more than any other element in American politics, has contributed toward the moral collapse of the United States.

It was the Supreme Court that handcuffed the police and loosed the criminals.

It was the Supreme Court that abolished the death penalty (now symbolically restored).

It was the Supreme Court that authorized pornography in the name of freedom of press.

It was the Supreme Court that gave homosexuals the right to consider themselves normal human beings.

It was the Supreme Court that legalized abortion.

Brazil was born of Catholic parents, which accounts for much of the corruption and abuses that exist today. Even so, there is coming a day of reaping.

The United States was born of Christian parents. It was conceived truly as a Christian nation. Today, not only does it condone the terriblest of sins, but it also exports them to other nations, especially through Hollywood.

Doomsday prophets say that the US will be vanquished in war. Germany and Japan tried to accomplish this 50 years ago. They failed. The cup of sin apparently wasn't full.

What Germany and Japan couldn't do 50 years ago militarily, it looks like they may do today economically.

With America's stratospheric national debt, it is but one step from economic collapse. Should the dollar ever be supplanted as the international currency, pandemonium would break loose. The collapse of the welfare system, which for the past decades has been an incubator for a generation of criminals, would cause America to auto-destruct, so far as any continuance as a world power.

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It is said that a mother must be stern in spite of her gentleness. A father must be gentle in spite of his sternness. A good law must be merciful in spite of its stern nature. Those responsible for enforcing laws must be stern in spite of their human tendency to overlook evil. On this depends the success of a nation.

Is your collar red? I told you not to read this article. ▲

A Fishing Trip

by Mim Dirks

4:00 a.m. Wednesday morning. Time to get up and finish getting around. Who wants to go anyway? Apparently everyone. The children are sure easy to get up.

It seems like it takes a long time to get going, but finally, at 6:15, the last thing is tied down and we head out, finding places for the last things inside the pick-up as we go.

And we are packed: Leo and myself and our tribe: Jessica, Barbie, Rosa, Carolyn, Denton, Leanna, Poncho and Eric. We all fit into our double cab pick-up. Tim and Deanna, with their family: Darren, Oswaldo, Joetta, Kimberly, Lorinda and Marsha, shrink into Tim's little Fiat.

The first stretch of road is pavement. We are pleasantly surprised to find more had been paved since the last time we came this way. The dirt road was in good condition too, so we made good time. One of Tim's tires [on his Fiat] went flat, so that took a bit of time. Then we stopped in the next town to get it fixed. We also bought a few things we were lacking, like doce [thickly jelled fruit] and candy. When you are out under that hot sun all day, that's a must.

That ended our 60 km. stretch of dirt road and we were back on the pavement.

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Oswaldo [the Carnival boy who is staying with Tims] said, “We better go back. This is too far away.” Poncho wanted to know why they made this road so long.

We had lunch, bought ice and a few other things in Barra do Garças. There were a bunch of Indians eating at the same restaurant. They were all dressed neat and clean. They wear their hair — both men and women — like Dayuma Indians. I don’t think I have ever seen an Indian woman in shorts or slacks, only dresses (now that’s civilization!).

Some of the men had sticks poked through their ear lobes. Those with babies had woven baskets with a wide band or handle to fit on their forehead for carrying them.

One Indian lady asked Leo where we were from. She thought it was interesting to see so many little blondes at once. We were five adults and 13 children, ages 1-15.

We got to Água Boa late in the afternoon. The first man Leo talked to knew what we wanted to know. He told us where to go. The pavement ended here. We had another pleasant surprise. The road had been worked on, and except for the dust, was nearly as nice as the highway.

We stopped at Boracaia to talk to the fellow the first man had asked us to look up. He said he wasn’t sure they would let us into the place we wanted to go. We were wanting to camp on an island in the middle of a large river. Since all islands belong to the government, one must find someone who can issue a camping permit. I might mention that Boracaia is a small town made up of squatters, population 1,000.

As we neared the place, I was sure praying that the land owner nearest the island, who in this case could give us the permit, would let us stay, as it was now getting dark.

As we drove on the yard we heard the foreman inside the house say, “There are some fishermen here and they aren’t going to fish here!” Then Leo walked in to talk to him. Here, of all things, it was a man from Rio Verde that Leo and Tim knew real well. Not only did he let us stay, but also let us use a brand new house for as long as we wanted.

We “camped out” in the house the first night, since it had no furniture. The next morning after breakfast and devotions, Tim and Leo went to look for an island. There was one close by, thankfully, because it was the only one for miles.

A bunch of us got into the boat and headed out to the island to get a fire going so we could get dinner. Then they went back for the rest. By the time they got there, dinner was nearly ready: rice, beans, hamburger and salad.

The island had nice sized trees on it, so it was no problem at all to put up a tarp that would serve as a kitchen, hanging hammocks, etc.

By 3:00 p.m., “fishing time,” things were in pretty good order, even though for the next day or so we kept organizing things better.

Our days went kind of like this: I usually woke up a while before sunrise. I would get up and start the fire, then go sit in the boat and fish for a while. One by one the others would roll out. At sunrise the monkeys would begin their “bellowing,” which they would keep up for about half an hour. Storks, herons and parrots would fly by.

When everyone was up, we would have devotions, and then breakfast, which was usually coffee with rolls, doughnuts or bread. The younger ones would play around

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camp, climbing in the trees or trying to fish from the bank. Every once in a while there was a yell, “There’s a dolphin!”

The older ones helped clean up camp, wash dishes, and start dinner.

For dinner: rice, beans, farofa, a vegetable or two, salad and meat. Then clean up camp again.

By this time the children would be ready for a swim. The current coming around both sides of the island left a long sand point at the lower end with water shallow enough to play in. I usually went along as lifeguard. One day they found clams in the sand, so they had a big time digging clams.

Sometime during the day we would wash clothes. Everyday there were some scale fish caught from a little pier near camp. About 3:00 p.m. the ones who planned to fish from the boat packed up everything they would need and headed off up river.

Come night, the small children were bathed and put to bed. Around 10:00 the boat could come back. Those who were still up would run to see what they had caught.

On Sunday we would sit around camp. The children would study their Sunday School lesson. I read *The Exiled Prince*, a story about Daniel to the children. In the afternoon Tim hacked a path to the other end of the island and we all took a walk. We met up with a rattle snake on the way.

On the way back to camp, we saw the monkeys that live on the island. Some of the trees on the island were very interesting. One was a type of parasite tree. A bird leaves a seed on a branch and it sprouts, grows and sends down roots. Eventually the original tree dies and finally rots away. We saw one “tree” of this type where the original tree had totally rotted away, leaving an arch big enough for an adult to walk through without stooping.

There were a couple of hardwood trees that were big! One would have taken three adults to reach around. One of them it took four of the children to reach around.

The mosquitoes and gnats can get pretty bad in the evening. The best repellent we have found is plain old cooking oil.

One night on the boat, a kingfisher fell off a branch and into the boat. It decided it belonged there and pecked at anyone who came too close.

One day Jessica jumped into the water and swam to the end of the island. An alligator that watched her swim must have decided she was dangerous, because we didn’t see it in the daylight anymore.

One day the men left and went to another farm to fish in a lake for tucanarei (peacock bass). They didn’t get back until after dark. They had caught a few. We women packed a bunch of stuff and all walked to the other end of the island. We went swimming and then went fishing. There were fish jumping out of the water the whole time, but we only caught two.

At night if we shown a light down the banks, we could usually see “our” two alligators, probably waiting for a fish hand-out.

After supper the men cleaned the fish, jumped into the river for a bath, and went to bed. [No, the alligators didn’t eat them.]

One night Eric and I just got settled in the hammock, when the rope slipped and dropped us onto the ground.

One night Tim, Deanna, Darren, Lorinda and Joetta went out in the boat to check the bank lines. Everyone but I went to bed. I read and crocheted — and waited. Eleven o'clock came and went. Twelve o'clock. One o'clock. I was really getting worried. Two o'clock. Finally Leo got up and asked me if they weren't back yet.

At 3:00 o'clock we finally saw a light. In a little bit they came rowing in. They went down-river for 15 minutes. Starting back, they ran out of gasolina for the boat motor. After five hours of hard rowing, they made it back.

Leo, Jessica and I went out then to check the bank lines. When we would get close to a snag, Leo would shine the light in the water and fish would come flying out. Some landed in the boat. Some sailed clear over. One hit me in the hip so hard that I'm black and blue.

Leo groaned and we asked, "What's the matter?" He said, "A fish just hit me in the belly." We shown into the water and there were big fish swimming right beside the boat.

Friday we packed up and started home. We got stopped by some police who tried to bribe us — very common in this neck of the woods. When they saw we simply weren't going to play their game, they let us go.

We had a flat tire and then got on the wrong road. We spent extra fuel trying to find our way back. Tim's car ran low on fuel. We got to a service station, but the attendant was sleeping. It took us around half an hour to wake him up, which we finally did by poking him with a stick through the open window. We got home at 3:00 a.m. Saturday morning.

We brought 102 fish home. All of the children, except for the youngest, caught fish. Oswaldo caught the biggest one — 80 cm. Carolyn caught the most unusual one — a sting ray. ▲

Religion

Spiritism

[The following two letters were written by a couple in Goiânia, both members of the church. They tell of some of their frustrations in the spiritist church. The letters, published in the Portuguese Messenger, were written to help those who are enslaved by spiritism. The kind of spiritism they describe is the primitive type, almost boarding on ju-ju worship.]

Dear friends,

I want to write about the deception of spiritism. What made me decide to write about this was a conversation I recently had with a youth who is preparing herself to be a medium. I felt very sorry for her.

When becoming involved in spiritism, first of all you begin to have a strange feeling.

You don't sleep well at night. You feel that something is following you around. You can't study right, you can't work. You feel ill at ease around other people. You feel haunted, depressed, unsure of yourself. You get the chills and your hair seems to stand on end. Then something seems to go wrong inside.

What do you do? You tell your friends and neighbors what is happening, or maybe your own brothers and sisters. There is always someone around who suggests, "Go to a Centro Espírita [a spiritist church]. Something is the matter with you."

You go and the meeting begins. Soon someone calls you aside. The guia ("guide," as the leader is called) wants to talk to you. You tell him all that you are feeling. About the first thing he tells you is that all this is happening because you are a [born] medium. He says that you need to develop your gift. Since you are almost beside yourself to find relief, you begin going to the centro. Your gift develops and you begin to feel a bit of peace of mind. But the strange sensation you felt in your body gets worse. Your arms, your legs, your whole body feels strange. You ask the guia why you still feel so strange. He says it is because the good "fluids" are removing the bad fluids. [The way spiritists use the term "fluids" would be roughly equivalent to what we would call spirits.] You agree, as once again you feel a bit of peace of mind.

You grow in your gift. Now for two years you have been a medium. Your struggle continues. Once again you ask the guia what you should do. Now he says that it is something that you will have to suffer for a number of years, but that then things will get better.

Strange things begin to happen in your house. Things begin to mysteriously fall down. The door opens and closes. Something shakes you up as you try to sleep. Your children don't sleep at night. Again you seek the guia's counsel. He says that the spirits are playing with you, that they are watching over your house. In order that no evil gets into your house, you need to take all this lightly.

Ten years have passed since you began feeling the presence of spirits in your life. Your life is as bad, or worse, than ever. Your fears are the same as always.

At this point, my friend, you ask your guia for another explanation. This time he says that what you are going through is the cross that you will have to bear as long as you are in this life. Now you must either accept his reasoning or you become desperate. After all, you are working in the centro espírita trying to find peace, which seems impossible.

Dear friend,

There is a way out for you. It all depends on whether you want a way out. All you have to do is surrender your life to the heavenly Father. Find a missionary or a minister and tell him what is happening to you. You just as well accept the fact that on your own power, you will never rid yourself of these temptations and afflictions.

In the centro espírito you won't get rid of your evil spirits. Satan doesn't take his own angels out of anyone's life. If you feel that you are beginning to get involved in what I just described, don't go after other gods. Turn to the true God. The temptations that

you are having is the voice of Satan. He is trying to keep you from hearing God's voice. That is where we get tripped up. Instead of seeking God's face, we end up going to a centro espírita, where people don't even think about God. Then we begin to do exactly what Satan wants us to do. We go to his church and ignore God's voice.

If you are feeling a desire to know the true God, don't let Satan overcome you. Don't follow him, because after all, it was Jesus who died on the cross to save you. He loves you and wants to save you. All of this, my friends, is the battle I am facing, but with God's protection and the missionary's help, I am overcoming. ▲

Celionir Silvânia Miranda

Dear readers,

Life used to be rough for me. I knew that God existed, but I didn't try and find Him. I got involved with the centro espírita. Whenever I wanted something, I didn't ask God, but rather the guia. When I felt unhappy about something, I would beat it to the centro espírita, but never to God.

I had my own house where I lived with my wife and two children. I had a car to go work in. At that time I built houses and resold them.

I had a house ready to be sold, but instead of asking God to help me sell it, I asked the guia for help. The house just wouldn't sell.

Then my car went shot. I sold the house to buy another car and a lot. Right along with this I got such a bad pain in my left leg that I couldn't even walk. I suffered for a whole year.

I didn't work all that year. I tried to get help in the centro espírita. They said my problem was that someone had cast a spell on me. But they would tell my wife they thought I was a fake, that I wanted attention.

I kept selling off our possessions. First I sold the car, then the lot I had bought, then the color TV. It seemed the money disappeared without even knowing what it was being spent for.

Then I sold the house we lived in and bought a dinky little place. I put the money that was left over out on interest, hoping to live on this interest. My wife got a job to help support the family, but even with all these problems, I kept going to the centro espírita. Through all this, I became a medium. What a disappointment! This is when I really went downhill.

They kept deceiving me, saying they would cure me, but that never happened. I began to have mental problems.

Then one day I remembered God. I had a talk with my wife. I said, "If you want to live with me, never again go to a centro espírita."

She promised that never again would she go to a centro espírita. Then we began going from church to church, trying to find God.

One day my dad-in-law told me about another religion. In the beginning I wasn't interested. However, one day we decided to go to one of their meetings at my wife's aunt's house. She asked the missionaries to go to our house and talk to us about God.

This is what happened. We liked what we heard. They asked if they should come back. We told them we would appreciate it. From then on they began coming to our home, teaching us the way of the Lord.

Things began to change, because God was teaching us the things that the guias would never teach us, which was love, peace, and unity. What a joy this was to us!

Seven months after we decided to try this way, I received a great blessing. My leg got better — when I least expected it. This really increased my faith in the Lord. Even the serious financial difficulties didn't bother as they did before.

A year and seven months later we were baptized, which for us was a glorious blessing, for we knew that God had forgiven all of our sins.

By God's help we are now living in another house, which is still under construction. ▲

Nilton Rodrigues Miranda

Politics

Collorgate

Back in the days of the Military Dictatorship, and even for a number of years after, any political unrest was accompanied by a lot of saber rattling. Headlines would blare, Military Promises To Take Action If Normalcy Not Restored.

That seems to be a thing of the past. Brazil today is eating fried Collor for breakfast, dinner, and supper. There's a lot of indigestion. We're doing a rerun of the old Watergate film. Even so, the military is staying in its own little corner — where it belongs.

Good. That's a sign that democracy is actually taking root. As politicians realize that the voter will judge their actions, possibly they will become more responsible.

The basic charge against Collor is that PC Farias, his campaign manager during the last election, is collecting his dues by backstaging an active role in government decisions — with the president's tacit approval. This, in plain English, is known as corruption.

Brazil has a constitutional article on impeachment. If Congress decides to go this route, I have no doubt but what it will function correctly.

That, however, is an oversimplification of the problem. People are saying, "Bad with Collor. Worse without him." Here are the facts to remember:

1. Collor is trying hard to be a good president. Whether he goes or stays, he has put Brazil on a new course. His ideas are modern; what Brazil needs.
2. Collor is hung with a most unpleasant campaign debt: PC Farias. This is a corrupt debt that can only be paid with corruption. To blame PC Farias would be like biting the hand that put him into the presidency. It appears Collor has no intention of doing this.
3. If it comes to impeachment, how many of the congressmen will feel like casting the first stone? Obviously if they vote to oust him, they will be the next targets. That is the last thing they want. In other words, if the president has to pay the supreme price for his corrupt deeds, why shouldn't they also?

4. The vice-president, who would legally assume the presidency is a big question mark so far as his ability to govern the nation. He doesn't agree with all of Collor's ideas of modernization.

5. The stock market and the dollar are jittery. A change of presidents could very well result in a resounding crash of our monetary system, that slowly but surely shows signs of recuperation.

What can we expect? Collor went on TV and radio last evening and denied absolutely everything. It appears he plans on stonewalling and hoping things will blow over. It may work. But there is one big problem. His presidency will be weakened to where it will be extremely difficult for him to govern the country.

To impeach the president would be a terrible blow to the nation, but a fabulous lesson to politicians. It is very unlikely he will resign, although it could happen if he realizes he has lost his power to govern. Should inflation skyrocket, he will have little option.

God knows what Brazil needs. We don't. What we can do here, you can do there in N America. Pray. ▲

A Composite Story

A Day in Roberto's Life

Roberto doesn't have a watch. He doesn't need one. About a quarter till three every morning, Roberto awakens. It's pitch dark. No roosters crowing yet. But an inner clock is beeping more insistently than any alarm clock: "Time to get up! Time to get up! Time to get up!..."

Roberto has no flashlight. His casa de pau-a-pique (house with upright sapling walls, plastered with clay and dung) has no electricity. He whirls the wheel on a primitive gasoline cigarette lighter. He holds the flame to the wick of a lamparina. (A small galvanized conical shaped container with a wick coming out of the top. Filled with diesel fuel and having no globe, this lamp creates more smoke than light.)

Roberto is the vaqueiro (cowboy) on a fazenda de gado (cattle ranch). The owner of the fazenda lives in town, so most of the operation is left up to him. As the vaqueiro, Roberto is responsible for milking some 40 odd cows by hand — by himself.

Roberto goes directly to the fogão caipira (wood stove) and begins blowing the coals. When a small fire begins to flame up, he carefully places chips of firewood on the flame. Soon a hot little fire is heating water to make some good hot coffee. While the water is heating, he removes the poles that make up the back door to his house. He walks out to the bica (hollowed out log or palm tree approximately 15 feet long that constantly runs with spring water; a general purpose "sink") where he washes his face and brushes his teeth. He returns to the house. The water is boiling. Soon the strong aroma of home roasted coffee fills the air.

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After luxuriating over a second cup (approximately one fourth the size of an American cup) of scalding coffee, Roberto stands up. There is work to be done.

Roberto doesn't have to walk far to get to work. The corral is built right up next to one side of the house. It's made of long poles laid up between pairs of sturdy upright posts about four inches apart. The gate is made up of horizontal poles that can be slid back and forth to let cows in and out.

Attached to one side of the corral is a smaller pen. This pen has forty some calves in it.

To understand what these calves are doing here, we have to back up 12 hours.

At 3:00 yesterday afternoon, Roberto saddled up his faithful old horse, Russo, called his dog, Tupi, and headed out to the pasture where the cattle were grazing. Singling out the milk cows with their calves, he slowly drove them to the corral and shut the "gate."

Slowly walking among the cows, he carefully looked them over to see if they were all OK.

Now, holding a vara (a straight, slender stick) in one hand, Roberto opened the "gate." Hearing the gate poles falling to the ground, the cows came to be let out. Carefully the cowboy let the cows out, but with the vara in the other hand, he kept the calves from going out. With some it took some insistence, but finally the cows were on the outside, the calves on the inside, and the "gate" shut.

These calves were now placed in the little pen attached to the main corral. It was here they spent the night.

Three o'clock in the morning. One last swig of coffee and Roberto is ready to go to work. Taking several larger buckets and one smaller one, he picks up his lamparina and heads out to the corral.

The cows are lying outside, contentedly chewing their cud. Roberto walks around them chanting, "Vaaaaca! Vaaaaca!" The cows understand Portuguese. They slowly rise to their feet and head into the corral. Once they are all in, Roberto closes the gate.

For my good readers to understand what happens next, a few explanations are in order. A Brazilian brahma will not let her milk down until the calf has sucked.

I can't resist a word to you smart N American dairymen who are smiling knowingly and thinking, "I could handle that one. It's just a matter of training a heifer when she has her first calf." Come try it. One thing I can guarantee you: After you finish, it will no longer be proper to refer to you as a "smart" N American dairyman. There will be a dozen or two less complementary adjectives that will fit you a lot better.

Since a Brazilian brahma will not let her milk down unless the calf first primes the cow, the cowboy will have to use some sleight of hand with the cow, or the calf will get it all. After all, some cows only give a quart or two of milk once a day.

Roberto has placed the larger buckets on a shelf built against the outside of the corral. In one hand he is carrying the small bucket and draped over his shoulder are two short ropes, around six feet long, made of braided cow hair (the long hair cut off of the end of the tail).

Now, at approximately 3:15 a.m., the show begins. And a show it is. What Roberto, who doesn't know the difference between A and B, does, a lot of PhDs couldn't do. He

opens the gate to the little pen and lets out one little calf. The calf bawls and the cow moos lowly. That's all it takes. In a matter of seconds, the calf and mother have been united. In large gulps, the calf begins taking on nourishment.

Roberto must work fast. While the cow licks the greedy calf, he deftly flicks one of the short ropes. The loose end circles the cow's hind legs and flips right up into his waiting hand. Before the cow has a chance to step out, he pulls both legs together and flicks the rope again. With a double loop around the cow's legs, he crisscrosses the two loose ends between the legs. In a flash he has the rope tied in such a way that a quick tug on one of the loose ends will release the cow.

While this has been going on, the calf has been storing away delicious gulps of warm milk. It pays no attention when Roberto takes the second rope and with another of his quick flicks, brings it around the calf's head, catches the loose end and with a few more fast movements, has it made into a halter.

If he feels the calf hasn't sucked enough yet, he waits just a minute and then tugs on the halter, bringing the calf's head up next to the cow's front leg, where he ties the loose end of the halter.

The cow is pleased. She can lick her calf's head. The cowboy is pleased. The cow is primed for milking.

Now Roberto squats beside the cow, holding the tapered bucket between his knees. Powerful fingers begin sending jets of milk into the bottom of the bucket, which is soon covered with foam.

Roberto is a good cowboy. He takes his job seriously. Rather than stripping the cow dry, he leaves just a bit of dessert for the calf.

Standing up, holding the bucket with a half quart of milk, a quart, or even more, depending on the cow, with his free hand, Roberto releases the halter from the calf's head and then the rope around the cow's hind legs. Swinging the ropes over his shoulder, he heads to the larger buckets and dumps the milk. The calf is noisily slurping up the dessert left for him.

While the calf tries for the last drop, violently butting the cow's udder to see if there aren't a few extra drops hidden someplace, Roberto releases another calf, which is a replay of act one.

At 5:00 o'clock, Roberto's wife's biological watch tells her its time to get up. She stirs the embers of the fire made earlier by Roberto and puts more firewood on. Soon there is a hot fire in the fogão caipira, on which she makes a full meal.

The little side pen with the calves is growing emptier. Another 10 calves to go. The eastern sky has a slight reddish glow to it. Roberto blows out his lamparina. With tired hands he continues milking.

Finally the last calf is turned out of the little pen. Several minutes later the show is over. Opening the corral gate, Roberto turns the cows and calves out to pasture.

It's been a good night. It didn't rain. It wasn't cold. There were no new heifers to milk for the first time. Roberto's boss, a fine gentleman, sells off cows that give the cowboy fits at milking time.

When Roberto places the buckets of milk on a board over the bica, the sun is peaking over the wooded hillside. Washing his hands with homemade soap, he goes into the house.

Almoço (dinner) is ready. Early? Not really. It's been over four hours that he has worked non-stop. He's famished.

What about the milk? Now Elídia, Roberto's wife goes into action. While the milk is still warm, she measures the correct amount of liquid rennet and mixes it in. Once the milk clabbers, she will go through the procedure of making cheese — which I will have Faith describe in some future edition.

After dinner, Roberto sits around for an hour. This is custom for many Brazilians who do hard manual labor.

After doing some odd jobs around the house, Roberto saddles up his horse. He must check fences. He must check for cows with new calves. He must check for sick animals.

Around noon Roberto is back home for merenda (literally snack, but in this case used as lunch or dinner). His wife has heated up the almoço and possibly added a few sweets for dessert.

At three o'clock the calves are once more penned up. Roberto does some work around the house.

Five o'clock is supper time. But no supper without a bath. Roberto wouldn't even dream of having supper without going down to the river and bathing.

Seven o'clock is time to go to bed. After all, 2:45 rolls around mighty quick. The poles are put in place in the doorway and the house becomes silent. ▲

Emma Burns' Diary

Odds and Ends

Fri — Sept 5, 69

We are right at the end of the dry season. It is so smokey that the sun looks like a big red balloon in the sky. Our grocery box was practically empty. I didn't know what to get for dinner. I had the children go down by the river and get some wild fruit that looked like yellow plums. I cooked them and made pluma moos. Everyone liked it.

Sun — Sept 7

We had services at Dicks today. It was a windy day and the flies were very bad. After dinner Timothy, Charlie, Denton and I went to visit some neighbors that live several kilometers down river from us. We had to cross the river on a small log by Pedro Pão's place. We didn't start home until about dark, as they served us supper. When we got to the log, I was scared to cross. There were some fishermen there. One of them held my one hand, and Denton the other. I got across without falling in. It was dark when we got home. Faith and Miriam were down at the falls looking for us.

Tue — Sept 9

Eldon Penner, two of Dick's boys, Charlie, Mary, Elizabeth and I made blocks today. We got 400 done. Jona Dyck got the roof on his house. Faith got us a good supper. There are 16 people eating 3 meals a day at our house. Jonas sleep in the tent, Denton and I in a bed in the cracker box, Mary, Elizabeth and Miriam in three bunk beds hanging by chains from the rafters, and Charlies on the dirt floor.

Wed — Sept 10

John Penners, Jona Dycks and Denton left for town at 6:00 this morning. It takes almost two hours to get there (20 miles). We have to cross the creek on two open beams, open seven gates, and twist through the woods. So we don't go very often. Without a fridge a lot of things don't keep. So we buy cabbage, mostly green tomatoes and onions, for vegetables. Beside that we eat rice and beans and macarroni. Charlie, Faith, Elizabeth and Mary went to get wood. They shot two small ostrich, so we'll have some meat for a change. Jonas brought home some furniture.

Thu — Sept 11

We had breakfast at 7:30. To make pancakes it takes eight cups of flour. Denton and Jona unloaded their furniture at their new house. Two porcupines got into Dick's tent last night. They still live in a tent, that really is a tarp spread over poles cut from the woods. They shot one porcupine, but the other got away. They dressed it and had it for dinner. Dicks poured the footer for their pole shed. We made 268 blocks today. I made the iron kettle clear full of chili soup for dinner. Timothy and I washed clothes. We stomp the clothes in an enormous pan that looks like a giant wash pan. We use spring water, which is very soft. Jonas slept in their new house for the first time tonight. Denton brought meat home from town, so I salted it after cutting it into small pieces. These pieces I strung on a wire between two posts and then smoked it with green wood. It was delicious when done. ▲

This & That

June 2 was the Colony Thanksgiving. In order to celebrate this event after harvest, we have ours six months later than you do in N America. Because of conflicting plans, a minor adjustment was made on the date this year. Every other year we have a carry-in dinner at church, which was this year.

The Rio Verdinho had a carry-in dinner on Thanksgiving day as a farewell to the Stuart Mininger family, that has moved back to the US.

On June 13 a consignment sale was held at the Glenn Hibner residence. The Rio Verde congregation served lunch.

José & Lucy Cardoso, the printer, moved into Daniel Martin Sr's house.

An article on foreigners appeared in VEJA magazine, in which some attention was

given to the American Colony. I'll try and give some highlights on that next month. The Dean Miner family is spending several months in the Fortaleza mission, filling in until the new missionaries arrive to take John and Linda Stoltzfus' place, who have returned to the US.

Valéria Gold, and her brother Robson, are living in Elias Stoltzfus house while they spend several months in the mission in Mirassol, São Paulo.

The Schmidt brothers and their wives made a quick trip to Manaus. I'm trying to get them to write up a report on the experiences. By what they say, it must have been interesting.

The youth group sang for John Penners and for Emma Burns the evening of June 15. On June 2, they sang for Reno & Marilyn Hibner.

A group got together to sing one evening at Edna Loewens.

Some aspiring Colony cowboys moved Ileen Koehn's cattle from the old place to the new. They slept under the stars and did a few other things that real cowboys do.

Several Junior Sewing girls spent a day helping Joan Unruh scrub walls.

Melissa Kay was born on June 20. Ken & Dindy Wesenberg from Ithaca, Michigan hope to adopt her. Tim & Deanna Schultz are caring for the baby until the legal work is done.

The Glenn Hibner family made a trip to São Paulo.

Together with the Publication Board, it was decided to translate and publish Worth Dying For in our Portuguese Messenger. Dale Koehn at Gospel Publishers made the necessary contacts, getting authorization from both the publisher and from Nicholas Stoltzfus, the author. The book is being printed in serialized form.

The Brazilian tract board has been authorized by Gospel Tract in N America to come up with an official name in Portuguese to use on tracts (instead of just God in Christ — Mennonite). The name finally decided on was Distribuidora de Literatura Cristã (and in small letters underneath) da Igreja de Deus em Cristo — Menonita. All the addresses need to be changed on our forty some tracts we have in print here. I am taking advantage of this to change the scripture texts to the new version of the Bible we are using and am resetting all the type. The result is a nicer looking tract.

The João Souto family took a trip to Uberaba to see his mother and relatives. From there they went on to Santos, São Paulo for a short vacation.

Maxine Loewen returned from the US where she has taught school for a number of years.

Wynelle and Ruth Ann Loewen (Ike Loewen's daughters) are visiting on the Colony.

On June 28, the Rio Verdinho congregation had a special meeting in Jataí, where they have a weekly Sunday School class for children. Several trips were made ahead of time to hand out tracts and invitations. Not too many came, but numbers don't tell the whole story.

Those having gone on fishing trips are: The Tim Burns family, the Leo Dirks family, Dennis Kramer, Duane and David Miller, the Bill Miller family, the Jair da Costa family, the Wayland Loewen family, Leonardo Neves, the Gold family (except for

Brazil News

Valéria and Leonardo's baby), Luís Duarte, Pedro, Maia, Dan Kramer.

To the US: the Daniel Martin Jr. family, Corrine Koehn (Ileen's daughter), Doug Ferrell and children, the Lynn Schultz family, Reno & Marilyn Hibner.

I will be getting some figures together on crop yields, fertilizer and equipment prices, to be printed in the next issue.

Our weather is warm during the day and cool at night. We are definitely in the dry season and can expect a cold snap anytime. We have had fire in our fireplace a few times already.