

THE ROGUE RAVEN 36 is published (once more with feeling) by Frank Denton, 14654 - 8th Ave. S.W., Seattle, WA 98166. Not very regular, to be sure, but a difficult habit to give up. How about a post card once in a while to let me know what you're doing? Big mailing list chop comes next time.

#### FOG AND NOSTALGIA (10.16.86)

The past few mornings we've had pretty heavy fogs here. I should tell you that I live rather close to Puget Sound, probably within a mile-and-a-half. For people who live in the eastern United States, that's something like living close to Chesapeake Bay, I suppose. These fogs usually lift eventually, and the October afternoons are sunny and clear. But as I write this it's one in the afternoon and it hasn't lifted yet. Somehow it always reminds me of the thick fogs we had when I was a child growing up in Tacoma. The fogs now are not so thick that one can't drive in them. I remember fogs back in the thirties which were so thick that my father would roll down the window of the '36 Chevy and stick his head out of the window in order to see the white line. (Center stripes in those days were white, and white fog lines on the right edge of the road hadn't come into being yet.) Meanwhile either Mom or I would have our head out of the right window to

warn Dad of cars parked along the right curb. I've often wondered whether it was pure nostalgia or just my age showing that makes me remember those fogs as being so thick. I don't think so. Nostalgia can do funny things to your thinking sometimes, but I don't think that this is the case here. Those fogs truly were thick. Unfortunately, I don't know enough about what creates fog to figure out why today's fogs aren't as thick, but we can generally expect them around this time of the year.

I was thinking about nostalgia in another sense the other day. I belong to an apa called ALPS (A Long Playing Society) in which we talk about music. As an adjunct of the apa some of the members have formed a Soundtrack, in which we round-robin cassette tapes of interesting music, bits of latest record acquisitions, etc. I've noted that some of the older members have affinities for the music that they grew up with. And I find myself throwing in odd bits occasionally of music from my own

youth, a touch of Dixieland jazz here, a bit of Stan Kenton, Duke Ellington or Count Basie there. After all, I need to introduce these young sprouts to something besides rock and roll. Fortunately, my record collection goes back to the very beginning of lps, so I've got a lot of stuff to draw on. Well, enough of that. There'll be more about music when I report on our summer trip.

#### SUNSHINE AND BICYCLES (11.14.86)

Having previously written about fog, I guess I need to counteract it with something about sun-shine. The sun was shining beautifully this morning. It does happen here in Seattle. So I got out my bike and took a ride. You see, that's what I really wanted to talk about. I bought a new bike. I used to ride a lot when I was younger. Anna Jo and I had some of the first three speed Raleighs that were imported after the war. Later, when the boys were young, we all had ten-speeds. And just before I became a library director and had to work year round, my sons and I took a 625-mile bike tour across the state of Washington and up into Canada. That was in 1966, and that was the end of my bike riding. The new job saw to that. Trying to put together a library program for a campus that had three widely separated buildings, planning for two new college libraries to be built in the next few years; all meant lots of overtime and very little energy left.

So I've been agitating for a new bike for the last couple of years. In the meantime a lot has happened to bicycles. The advent of fat tire bikes a few years back intrigued me. While I didn't expect to go tearing around on mountain trails, the control gained by fatter tires and a tad more comfort were appealing.

Finally I got serious, reading the magazines and visiting a few bike shops. It was interesting, to say the least. Some of the bike salespersons didn't seem to care much if they told me about the differences in bikes or not. Finally I hit a shop that was enthusiastic, a salesman who took some time. Perhaps, in the meantime, I had actually learned enough to ask questions that weren't entirely stupid.

The salesman was enthusiastic about the Kuwahara Cougar, and a second salesman chimed in to tell me that it was the bike he rode. Kuwahara is not a big name in touring or mountain bikes, but has been building bike-cross bikes for about ten years. They've just come out with a beautiful line of tandem bikes, but I can't get Anna Jo interested.

A very nice selling point was that with the Japanese yen rising in relationship to the dollar, the next shipment was certain to be about \$100 higher in price. So I now own a lovely 18-speed Cougar, in basic black, with Shimano bio-pace cranks and derailleur. It's a joy to ride, and although it took a little while to get used to the shifting, it's coming along fine now. Balance is no problem; they say that once you learn to ride a bike, you never forget. What I've found myself being more careful of is riding on streets with a fair amount of traffic. There's a lot more to be aware of on a bike than in a car. Yes, an eternal truth. But it's all coming together pretty well.



I'm afraid that I intend to be pretty much a fairweather bicyclist. Yesterday it rained, so I didn't go out. Today it was beautiful, so I rode for a half-hour through a scenic neighborhood, looking at the autumn foliage, seeing some beautiful houses I hadn't seen before, being barked at by dogs, but not chased. I came back perspiring lightly and feeling good. So good that I decided to have a whack at putting down a few words for the Rogue. I'll try not to bore you with too many bicycle stories, but I'd be glad to hear yours if there are any riders out there.

I've been buying a few used books from a store in Washington, D.C. called Chaos Unlimited. One of the guys there is a serious bicyclist, just having qualified for The Race Across America by finishing in the top ten in a 70-mile race. It's interesting to read, in the front of each catalog, how he's doing in his training program for the long race.

None of the above means that we've stopped volksmarching. We're nearing the 700K mark. I just came back from a walk in Oregon (more later). There are two days of walks this weekend near home, the following weekend two more, one of which is sponsored by our club. So we just keep on walking, piling up the events and miles. It continues to be a lot of fun, good exercise and fresh air, nice people, and interesting place to visit, many of which we haven't visited in years.

#### HOW I SPENT MY SUMMER VACATION (Flashback to July)

For several years we've been browbeating and otherwise pressuring Dave Piper and his family to come over from England. Finally we convinced them that they had saved enough money. So Dave, his wife, Cathi, and daughters Clare and Sara arrived on July 2nd. Just in time for the fire-works. Dave had said that he wanted to see some good fireworks and we did our best. Seattle's 4th of July fireworks are shot off over Elliot Bay, and for the first time in 24 years of living here, we actually went downtown in order to see them. Quite spectacular, and our guests were impressed. I'm not sure whether it was with the fireworks or with the "All right!" that I shouted at a particularly impressive burst.

We tried to do as much of Seattle as we could in the first few days. Even though the Pipers rolled off the plane rummy from an all-day flight, they were game to see a bit of the town at night. We drove them to a favorite spot on Highland Drive from which you can look across the Seattle Center to the city and along Elliot Bay. They oohed and aahed.

In the following few days we drove to Mount Rainier (which chose to hide all day in the clouds), to the Ballard Locks, to Pioneer Square and the Pike Place Market. Dave and I shopped at Bud's Jazz Records and the University Book Store, while the ladies went shopping for clothes. Sometime in there, we found time for a small fannish party with people whom Dave had met before at English conventions or who had stayed at their house.

Then it was off to Vancouver, B.C. for a couple of days. With Expo 86 so close, I thought it would be a shame for the Pipers to miss it.

We spent only one day at Expo, and the other day seeing as much as we could of the city, one of my favorites. We even managed to find time to sit on the beach in West Vancouver for an idle hour and just relax, watching the ships and the water. We played on the swaying suspension bridge over Capilano Canyon, visited the Vancouver Aquarium and saw the two whale shows, orcas and belugas. Cathi said that she liked Vancouver best of all the places we visited.

We returned home for a day of doing laundry and relaxing. I think that's when Dave and I went to the bookstores, the jazz shop and Pike Place Market, where we discovered a World Class Chili place and had a nice conversation with the owner, who quit a high-powered consulting job with five days a week on the road (or rather, in an airplane) and turned to making terrific chili and corn bread.

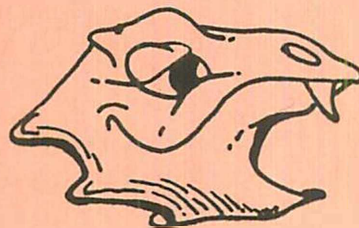
I guess I should have explained somewhere earlier that my car won't hold six adults, so we had rented a van to carry six and luggage. The following morning we began a trip that rarely slowed down. My guess is that the Pipers were happy to arrive home so that they could rest a little. We spent four days along the Oregon coast, visiting Astoria, the Lewis and Clark Museum, Seaside, Cannon Beach, and stopping wherever the mood took someone. I remember an evening in Florence, where Dave waded in the Pacific Ocean, pants rolled up, and Clare and Sara just thoroughly soaked themselves.

We had hoped to make it into northern California in order to see the redwoods, but we ran out of time. We had reservations in a motel in the Bay area, so struck out for I-5 and made tracks. Two days were spent in San Francisco. One day was totally consumed doing the touristy thing on the waterfront; Pier 39, The Cannery, and Ghirardelli Square. I think our guests enjoyed that a lot. The other day was spent in town. We split up again and Dave and I did a couple of bookstores, including hopping a bus and going to City Lights, home of beat poets.

A long day's drive brought us to Los Angeles, where we stayed in Whittier, handy to Disneyland. We spent two days at Disneyland, standing in line, riding rides, visiting all the major attractions, including the 360-degree movie, the incredible Kodak 3-D film, and riding Space Mountain. We all enjoyed the parades, both the daytime one, called Totally Minnie, and the nighttime parade with all the lighted floats. Both nights we took in the music of the Count Basie band, now led by former band member, Frank Foster. Since Dave and I both like jazz a lot, this was a real treat.

The group decided to take another day off, but Dave and I thought we'd see what Whittier had to offer in the way of book stores. Boy, did we hit a gold mine. There are about a dozen shops, seven of them within a few blocks of each other. We ran out of time before we visited them all, but the ones we did visit were terrific.

The penultimate day was spent at Universal Studios, taking the tour, seeing the Conan show, the Western





stuntman show, visiting the shops, spending the last of the Pipers' hard earned pounds.

Finally, it was over. Does that sound like it was an ordeal? It may well have been for the Pipers, whose holidays are usually spent lying quietly on a beach in Portugal or Greece, soaking up the sun. I'd love to have been able to listen in on their conversations around the house when they got home and had time to think about it. The one comment that Dave made which I remember vividly was that there was too much choice, in supermarkets, on menus, everywhere. Inevitably, English visitors are awed by the size of the U.S. In England, one can't travel for very long before coming to a village or even a good-sized town. Here it takes a little longer. Of course, traveling the freeway system gives one the false impression that there are no towns along the way. Still it can be quite a distance between towns.

Letters from the Pipers after the trip suggest that they still can't believe all that we did in their nineteen days. They vow that they will be back. Just as we return to England as often as we can afford. Is the grass always greener...?

To my mind, it was a great trip. Anna Jo and I enjoyed hosting the Pipers and helping them to see a small bit of the U.S. We wish that there had been more time to show them more things, but we did our best. We hope that by now they've recovered. We'll even welcome them back again. Are you saving, Dave?

#### DESPERATELY SEEKING CORPORATE SPONSORSHIP (1.21.87)

A couple of issues back I talked about the pleasure we have been getting from volksmarching, 10K walks sponsored by various clubs. There are now twenty-eight clubs in Washsington, so there are a lot of events to walk in. A couple of summers ago, we walked a Year Round Event in Sacramento, California while we were attending Westercon in that city. A Year Round Event is a walk which is set up so that walkers can do the walk any day of the year and receive distance credit for it. (A member of the Evergreen Wanderers in Tacoma has 18,000K to his credit.) The walk is considered a single event, so no matter how often you do the walk during the year, you can only get event credit for one event.

The Tacoma club set up a Year Round Event beginning last April and 1300 people walked the course before the end of the year. One man we met walked it 101 times; that's over 1000K, or 621 miles. Anna Jo suggested that our club set up such a walk in Seattle. The club went for the idea, and guess who were made co-chairmen of organizing the event. Establishing a 10K route is the easiest part. One member of our committee made the initial proposal to a downtown hotel to act as host and starting point. So that's taken care of. A small mom-and-pop grocery store, open seven days a week, has agreed to act as the checkpoint, about half-way.

Now comes the most difficult part. We need to prepare a brochure to have available at other walks so people will know about our event. I've prepared most of the text. Today, Anna Jo and I, accompanied by our

club president, set out to begin soliciting corporate sponsors who will place ads on our brochure and help to defray the cost of printing. I've been away from public life for a few years now and am a bit rusty at meeting strangers in a business situation. And I've never done quite this sort of thing before. We quickly learned that receptionists could direct us to the proper departments; sometimes Sales & Marketing, sometimes Public Relations. Another thing I had forgotten is that the people whom you need to see are often not available, either away from the office, in a meeting, or otherwise busy.

We ended the day having contacted five or six businesses, but no ads. But we did have names and phone numbers of three businesses which thought there might be an interest. We'll call and make appointments and should then be talking to the proper people. It seems like a complicated process to sell four ads at \$200 apiece. So much for struggling, even for a brief time, into the world of business. A useful experience, I think.

Now if we can get the artist to finish up the art work for a cloisonne medal and hatpin, and get the first order for same off to the manufacturer (volksmarchers love these mementos of their walks). We have two days of kicking off the event on May 16-17. I'm certain that it will be upon us before we know. For those two days we expect 600-800 people, so the club will provide registration and checkpoint personnel. After that, the hotel will take care of the few walkers who might do the walk on any given day.

It's been a lot more work that we anticipated. Had I But Known... I expect it will all come together on time. Once it's begun, there's not much to take care of. Except to remember, that by January 1, 1988 we'll need a new route, and checkpoint. By October a new brochure, new medal, new corporate sponsors, new sanction procedure with the national AVA. But that's next year, a long way off.

#### BIRDS OF WINTER (1.22.87)

Something possessed Anna Jo to be a bit more consistent about feeding birds this winter. She generally has thrown wild bird seed onto the patio in the back yard. This year she added a feeder in the Norwegian pine and a slab of suet. The Norwegian pine is now about forty feet high; it started as a live Christmas tree not so many years ago and was about four feet high. I've been surprised at what the feeders have attracted. We generally expect English sparrows (the common house sparrow) and Oregon juncos. The first newcomer was the rosy-breasted nuthatch, then chickadees, and the other day a pair of song sparrows. The crows are here year round, but don't like the confines of our fenced back yard. I try to remember to leave bread in the front yard for them. The unfortunate thing about all of this is that we've also attracted the starlings. Their winter plumage is quite nice, but their manners are atrocious. They drive the other birds away. Anna Jo tries to scare them off, but that's a useless endeavor. I guess with wildlife you can't be choosy. But the starlings certainly go through the suet quickly. Robins, not being seed eaters, make do with the red berries from the bush in the neighbor's back yard. These we can watch from the kitchen window.



The other day I had to drive to a business park in Bellevue (taking the computer in to replace a drive after only four months; I don't want to talk about it). There's a stream and artificial ponds scattered throughout the park and apparently the Canada geese are wintering over. Several scattered flocks were feeding on the lawns, with one standing guard. If we can find a weekend free, I'd like to take a run further north up Puget Sound and see if we can find any loons. I've never seen one in the wild. On a walk along the waterfront the other day, we spotted cormorants, brant, scaup, scoter, and western grebes. Plenty of birds around in winter for the bird lover.

#### BOOKS (1.25.87)

I'm always interested in what other people are reading and usually like to tell you of a few things I've found tasty. Long time readers of TRR probably know whether their tastes agree with mine or do not. They also know that I'm a great admirer of John Fowles, the English mainstream author. I've just finished A Maggot, his latest novel. It's an intriguing book for the first two-thirds, but ultimately Fowles lost me. It certainly won't replace Daniel Martin or The French Lieutenant's Woman as my favorites. It starts promisingly with a group of travelers riding toward the southwest of England in the 18th Century. As the story unfolds, we find that a young gentleman has hired a couple of actors and a whore to play certain roles during his trip. When he has nearly reached his supposed destination, he dismisses the two actors. Taking his retarded servant and the whore with him, he disappears onto the moors of Devon. Later the servant is found hanged, presumably a suicide. Much of the latter part of the book consists of transcripts of interrogations of people who accompanied the gentleman, ferreted out by followers of an unnamed noble, whose son is the man who led this elaborate masquerade. The young lord has disappeared. The questioning of each player reveals a different analysis of what was happening. But the revelations of the prostitute have both religious and mystic overtones, and she has repented of her life and embraced the Quaker religion of her parents. Religious discussions with the lawyer who conducts the questioning bogged down the story a great deal for me, and I found myself skimming, something I've never before done with a Fowles book. Much of this latter portion is based upon the life of Ann Lee, the founder of the United Society of Believers in Christ's Second Appearing, better known as the Shakers. Later the Shakers were driven out of England and came to America, where there are only a couple of members left. Since one of the Shaker beliefs was in celibacy, there were no offspring to help the church grow.

#### ANOTHER KEITH ROBERTS' RECOMMENDATION

I'm always pleased to get a review from Keith Roberts to share with you, because the man is so perceptive. Wasn't it he who gave me a photocopy of the manuscript for Rob Holdstock's Mythago Wood to read on the plane home from England a couple of trips back? And didn't it win the World Fantasy Award for Best Novel?

Keith reviews here the second offering of Kerosina Books, a new small press publisher from England. Their first book was Keith's own Kaeti

and Company, a superb book turned down by major English publishers. One can well see how Keith might have a soft spot in his heart for this young publishing firm.

But a new book from Richard Cowper is great news in the Denton household. It's like the announcement of a new Gene Wolfe, or Jack Vance, or John Fowles. Something to be looked forward to with great anticipation. I'm happy to do a bit of advance publicity for it, and for the publisher. If you'd like to know more about Kerosina's publishing efforts, please write to Kerosina Publications, Ltd., Plovers Barrow, School Road, Nomansland, Salisbury, Wilts. SP5 2BY, United Kingdom. They deserve our support. Their books are well made and I appreciate seeing anything new by the two authors whom they have thus far chosen to publish.

SHADES OF DARKNESS by Richard Cowper.

It's the declared aim of Kerosina Books to bring into print writings they consider to have merit but that would stand little chance, in these harsh, cynical times, of winning Establishment approval. With this, their second title, they have succeeded triumphantly.

There are three types of ghost story. The first, by far the greatest number, can be disregarded; for this delicate, subtle genre has suffered more at the hands of the hype brigade than any other. Above the ruck stand those rare writers whose work not only extends the medium but is an ornament to English letters. Blackwood and O. Henry, Jacobs, le Fanu; and M.R. James, of course, still without dispute the Grand Old Man of horror. There's another level, though, and it's given to few to reach it. De la Mare could access it, Kipling on occasions, the incomparable Mrs. Oliphant. On this high, strange plateau, terror is left behind. We're shown not the jolly, clanking spectres of our childhood, but ourselves; and fear gives way to pity.

In a memorable passage, Walter De la Mare concluded that the evidence for ghosts should drop into the scales like grains of dust; first one side, then the other. This fragile process is at work throughout Mr. Cowper's so-English little book; and he never gets it wrong.

Ostensibly the tale concerns Jim Fuller, a young, embittered journalist 'released from contract' by his boss, struggling with a novel in the seclusion of an East Coast bungalow. By hints and touches - the mumbling of an old man in a pub, the asides of Zena, queen of the greetings card quatrain - the tale of the tragic Vera Barcombe is built up. Unwillingly at first, Jim is drawn back in time; to Africa, in the savage days of Mau Mau. Ondoka, the cryptic Swahili word forced so strangely into his consciousness, obsesses him; till an answer must be found. What that answer is, I wouldn't dream of hinting; save that on grasping the true nature of this saddest of 'Grey Ladies' I burst into tears. Which may or may not be a recommendation.

Both Mr. Cowper and his publishers are to be congratulated. This is a magic, understated novel; as modern as tomorrow, but worthy of the great tradition from which it springs.

Keith Roberts  
Amesbury, November 1986



## MORE BOOKS - ME AGAIN

I looked forward to reading John LeCarre's latest spy effort, but was worried because it was over 600 pages long.

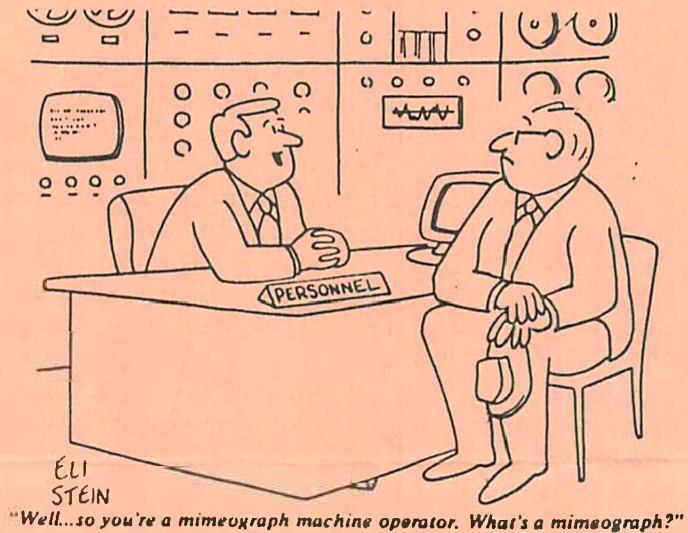
I have an aversion to be-gin-ning any book that's very long, knowing that it's going to take a fair amount of days to read it.

Fortunately, Anna Jo suggested that we go to the cabin for a weekend.

Ah, I thought, perfect for The Perfect Spy (Knopf, '86, \$18.95).

And so it turned out to be. On Friday night

I read into the wee morning hours, then spent most of Saturday at it. That's the way I think a long book should be read, in a couple of heavy sessions.



The English agent flies home from his post in Europe to attend the funeral of his father, then disappears into his own safe house in the south-west of England. His agency is very worried, the Americans are worried, and his wife is worried. We learn a great deal about his father, a con man from the word go, about his own childhood and education, and particularly his association with a Czech whom he met as a 16-year old. Double dealings have gone on for a very long time and are beginning to catch up with our protagonist. Le Carre is a wonderful writer, who is able to show us the organization and craft of the contemporary spy. If you like this sort of book, LeCarre is one of the best there is.

## SNIPPETS AND OTHER UNCONNECTED BITS

Anna Jo just came home with an enormous piece of decadent chocolate cake which she tells me is what is left from a \$3 piece which she and Shannon ordered to share after a salad lunch at The Castle. I've paid more than \$3 for desserts which were not half as large as the leftover. // You can blame it on Dale Goble and Mike Horvat, whom I visited a while back. They've gotten me back into stamp collecting. A peaceful pastime, which injures no one, costs little, and is often educational. Though it does detract from the time which one has to publish fanzines and read books. // Gee, this reminds me of a fanzine from England that I once received. I don't recall the editor. I received only one issue, because it was his last. But it was crammed from edge to edge of the paper with exactly this sort of rambling, and I found it fascinating. // Anna Jo has set out suet and a seed bell for the birds in the back yard. Besides the ubiquitous house sparrow, we've been visited by titmice; black-capped chickadees, rosy-breasted nuthatches, and a Stellar's jay.

Not to say anything about the starlings, which Anna Jo would like to exclude.// When she (Who Must Be Obeyed???) came in from the luncheon, I complained of a headache. She told me that she had heard on the radio that an ice-pack rubbed across the forehead would relieve it. I have such in the freezer compartment of the refrigerator. (I have not told you about periodontal surgery, and you probably don't want to hear about it, anyway. But it's the reason for the ice-pack.) By golly, she rubbed it across my forehead for a few minutes and the headache has gone. Not a bad trick. Better than aspirin, which tends to upset my stomach. // I've been listening to Moon Over Morocco again, the ZBS production of the adventures of Jack Flanders. Maybe you've heard it on NPR. Almost ten hours of wonderful adventures. It's as good as I remembered it. I last played it a year ago. Recent word from ZBS is that they are working on another Jack Flanders production, this one called Dreams of Rio. I can't wait. The Genius behind all of this is a guy called Meatball Fulton. Write for their catalog: ZBS Foundation, RR #1, Box 1201, Fort Edward, NY 12828. There are two other Jack Flanders adventures, and, of course, Ruby, the Galactic Gumshoe. End of plug. // Favorite new recording: Ralph Vaughan Williams. - Sinfonia Antartica (sic) with Bernard Haitink and the London Philharmonic Orchestra. // For jazz, try Skywalk, a Vancouver, B.C. group. I have their album, The Bohemians, on CD, for which I'm grateful, because I'm playing it to death. // Walking down to the P.O. tonight, I found two officers from the Sheriff's Office getting their dogs ready to work. If I were in police work, I wouldn't mind having such a companion. I had the pleasure a while back of having a canine officer and his dog as our guest speaker at the Northwest Chapter of Mystery Writers of America. Very nice dog, and very friendly until a word from the officer told the dog that it was time to go to work. Then the dog was all business. // During the same walk I watched seven jets take off from Sea-Tac International. I'm ready to go. Place a ticket in my hand. I don't care where, particularly. // Time to say thanks to Sheryl Birkhead for the art. Thank you, Sheryl. When the heck are you going to be done with veterinary school? The rest was stolen, er...borrowed, I'm afraid. // Eating with friends the other day after a 10K walk, all the meals arrived at the table except one, the lady's taco salad. "Sorry it's not ready yet," the waitress said. "It has to go through customs." // Bye.

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