

# LETTERS

## Rah, Rah! Sis-boom... Beethoven?

Irving Kolodin ["Do Prize Competitions Mean Anything?" February 18] seems bothered "that a competition rarely proves anything except how well—or how poorly—a competitor may perform at a specific time in his life." To rectify this, he would like to see the honors shared by several contestants rather than emphasized in one grand-prize winner.

It occurs to me that perhaps Kolodin would enjoy the following proposal: He's heard of team tennis? How about team piano? Individuals could excel, yet the team emphasis would spread the honors. Team piano could be conducted on either the collegiate or the professional level. Each team would be responsible for five pieces or specific movements determined a few weeks before each competition, each team member preparing one piece. At the competition, a member from each of two schools would play the same piece of music before neutral judges, who would score each performance by a point system reflecting many criteria. After five pieces, the team with the highest total would win. The possibilities are many: rivalries between schools, leading scorers, clean-up or anchor pianists, sudden death "play"-offs, second "strings." Imagine the tense crowds when undefeated Indiana faces once-beaten Juilliard!

Fred Blatt  
Mansfield, Pa.

## Housing: Fair or Foul?

We apparently have a group of people in this country catering to "the poor" ["The Assault on Fortress Suburbia: How Long Can the Poor Be Kept Out?" February 18]. In fact, being poor seems the thing to be.

How many of the poor have scratched for survival, going through college so that they could earn their own way and not have someone do it for them? I did just that, and now I live in the suburbs.

In my subdivision of approximately 50 houses, we have three black families, two Mexican-American families, one Japanese-American family, and one French-American family—all of whom work very hard in the marketplace. Now, the poor are to have homes in my neighborhood in the suburbs for one quarter of what I and these others have paid. That's one of the best buys ever. Where do I sign up?

H. F. Schattenberg  
Lansing, Mich.

Not all suburbs are systematically denying housing access to minorities. The Chicago Metropolitan Strategy Group is composed of communities that have recognized the "American Creed" of equality and endeavored to turn "creed" into "deed." The eight communities are presently interracial in character and are trying to maintain diversity in housing demand. Our hopes are that Patricia Harris will get tough with exclusionary areas and that the

administration will in general support human rights within our own country.

Bobbie Raymond  
Chicago Metropolitan Strategy Group  
Chicago, Ill.

## As We Like It

To be charitable (and it's an effort), I can only assume that Bruce Cook has not read any contemporary science fiction ["From Here to Immortality," February 18]. If he had, he would have realized that "regular readers of science fiction" are quite at home with "curious, devious, almost arcane" books, with or without exasperating literary devices.

Readers—and writers—of science fiction are often accused of having a Bunker mentality. Arrogant assumptions like Cook's are one of the reasons why the accusation is in many cases true.

I would recommend to Cook the works of Stanislaw Lem, Harlan Ellison, and Ursula Le Guin, to name but a few—all recognized as science fiction writers and all curious, devious, and arcane to a degree.

Phoebe W. Ellis  
Millwood, Va.

*Editor's Note:* Tuition at Harvard is \$4,450 a year, not \$7,000 a semester, as stated in "Whatever Happened to Mr. Chips?" [April 1]. We apologize for the error.

## Saturday Review

### Chairman, Editorial Board

Norman Cousins

### Editor

Carll Tucker

### Publisher

James E. Broadwater

### Managing Editor

Peter Young

### Editorial Director

Horace Sutton

### Art Director

Alfred de la Houssaye

### Senior Editors

Hallowell Bowser, Doris Grumbach,  
Susan Heath, Irving Kolodin, Albert  
Rosenfeld, Roger M. Williams

### Associate Editor

Susan Schiefelbein

### Copy Editors

Carol Mauro (Copy Chief),

Gina E. Grant,

Joan E. Henricksen

### Assistant Editors

Karen Braeder,

Susan von Hoffmann,

Susan Ochshorn

### Cartoon Editor

Clarence Brown

### Contributing Editors

Goodman Ace, Anthony Burgess,

William Cole, Owen Edwards, Roland

Gelatt, Martin Gottfried, Fred M.

Hechinger, Jonathan Evan Maslow,

Karl E. Meyer, Thomas H. Middleton,

Barbara Rose, Arthur Schlesinger, Jr.,

Christopher H. Stern, Walter Terry

### Associate Publisher,

Advertising Director

Ernest M. Durso

### Associate Publisher

Richard B. Barthelmes

### Travel Advertising

### Manager

Jay Stelzer

### Manager,

Liquor/Cigarettes

Phillip D. Russell

### Advertising Sales

Ilene Goldsmith,

Thomas G. Petersen, Jr.,

Vicki H. Richards

### Classified Advertising

### Manager

June Tooni

### Director of Advertising

### Services

Joan Grant

### Production Director

Gerald W. Harris

### Advertising

### Representatives:

Western Region,

Donald G. Dickey Co.,

681 Market Street,

San Francisco, Calif.

94105; Midwestern

Region, Joseph Wall &

Associates, 400 Ascot

Drive, Park Ridge, Ill.

60068; Detroit, David L.

McDonald, 1100 N.

Woodward,

Birmingham, Mich.

48011;

Metropolitan

Publishers

Representatives, Inc.,

Atlanta (404) 352-2173,

Miami (305) 856-8326,

Tampa (813) 837-5618

### Research/Promotion Director

Judy Berenberg

### Circulation Director

George Reeves

### Controller

Nathan Cohn

### Accounting

Dave Freed

### Office Manager

Susan Selby

### Administrative

Assistants

Cathy deRiesthal,

Dorothy Murray, Emily Suesskind,

Mary Swift

## HHH

Norman Cousins's article ["Journeys with Humphrey," March 4] shed light on a dark place in our history.

The light was needed. Why, one wonders, is Watergate so fixed in the minds of the media? So far as I know, nobody died as a result of the Watergate cover-up. How many died as a result of the cover-ups, deceptions, and stubborn wrongheadedness that characterized U.S. policy in the Vietnam War? Forty thousand?

Why was there not and why is there not the dogged energy being spent on uncovering how our government secretly got us into a war it didn't plan to win, how it skirted perilously close to confrontation with our nuclear-armed major enemy, and how it covered all this up with a smokescreen of lies? And this through three presidential administrations? Is Vietnam a rock that nobody dares to turn over because the worms under it may bite?

In how many other areas is our government lying to us or hiding the truth?

Donald A. Justice  
Sepulveda, Calif.

Norman Cousins's article on Humphrey is an important document that should set the record straight for the electorate at large and for present and future historians.

The piece clearly shows that our country missed the chance to elect a potentially great president or perhaps have a humanistic secretary of state. It might have avoided a period of great trauma as well.

Henry S. Evans  
Morristown, N.J.

On December 4, 1968, I received a letter from Hubert Humphrey, who was then Vice-President. The second paragraph is really the quintessential HHH. I would like to share it with SR and its readers:

Defeat, like victory, is only a passing phenomenon in a political career. The battle for one's ideals and beliefs must go on, and I mean to pursue mine.

Herbert Gurbst  
Kingston, Pa.

## Mysteriuser and Mysteriuser

Jon Swan's reporting on the remarkable sleuthing of Lotte Brand Philip in the Ghent Altarpiece whodunit [March 4] is informative and tends to be convincing, especially since Swan confesses to a degree of bewilderment after

having observed the masterpiece. However, there are a couple of points that, while possibly having trivial explanations, require clarification before the Philip thesis can become fully acceptable.

The most worrisome point is that the dimensions of the end panels are such that on folding (to close the altarpiece), the central panel is precisely covered. If the original work was rigidly installed between the verticals of a sculptured Gothic framework, as Philip claims, it is most improbable that any specific intention to ensure that the combined width of the wings was equal to the center panel would have existed. Obviously, a limited discrepancy in original panel widths could have been accommodated by adjusting the width of the frames presently enclosing the individual panels, which if done should be easily discernible.

Also, there seems to be present a fourth level of reality, since the outer panels of the lower portion appear to depict a Near Eastern landscape peopled by exotic (biblical?) figures on one side, while the other side seems to be a fifteenth-century Netherlands scene. Is there a coming together at the Lamb?

Thanks for this article, and please, let's have more of this kind.

William Vidaver  
West Vancouver, B.C.

## Letter to Goody

Man and boy, for over 40 years I've been listening to and reading words and phrases made by Goodman Ace. His letter to Groucho ["Personal," February 18] and his column about Jane Ace ["Jane," February 8, 1975] prompt me to finally say how much admiration I have for the man.

From *Easy Aces* to public radio to SR,

and all the others in between, I have yet to be bored or not entertained by this most talented individual. To me, he is a true comedy genius, and I want to salute him. His last word in the "Groucho" column is one I'll borrow to say to Goody: Thanks for the years of pure pleasure and "Seeya."

William B. Gordon  
San Diego, Calif.

## Yankee Go Home

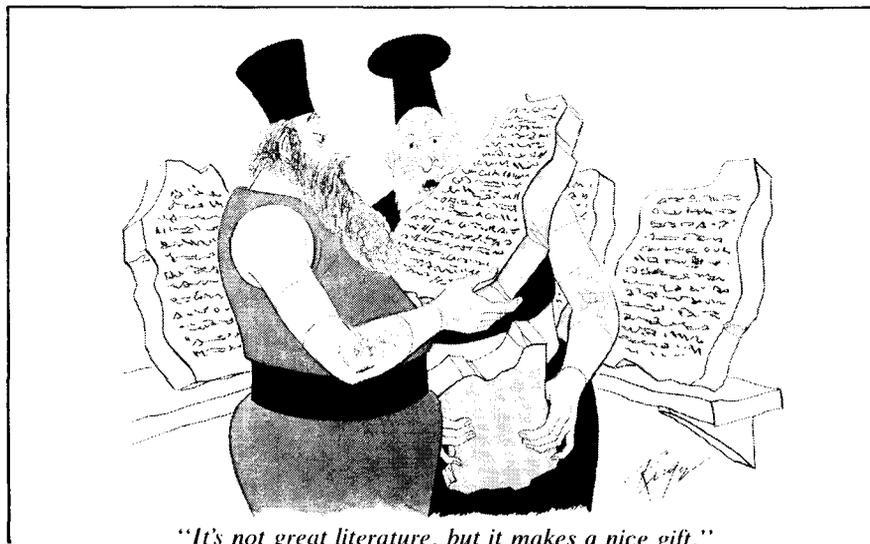
To one who knows a little of India, James Traub's article ["Down and Out in Dharamsala," March 18] is disappointing. He would have done better for himself and for India too if he had never gone there.

He makes strange statements: "Why have the Sixties-in-exile taken up headquarters in old Cathay?" "Old Cathay" used to mean China. I've never seen it anywhere applied to India.

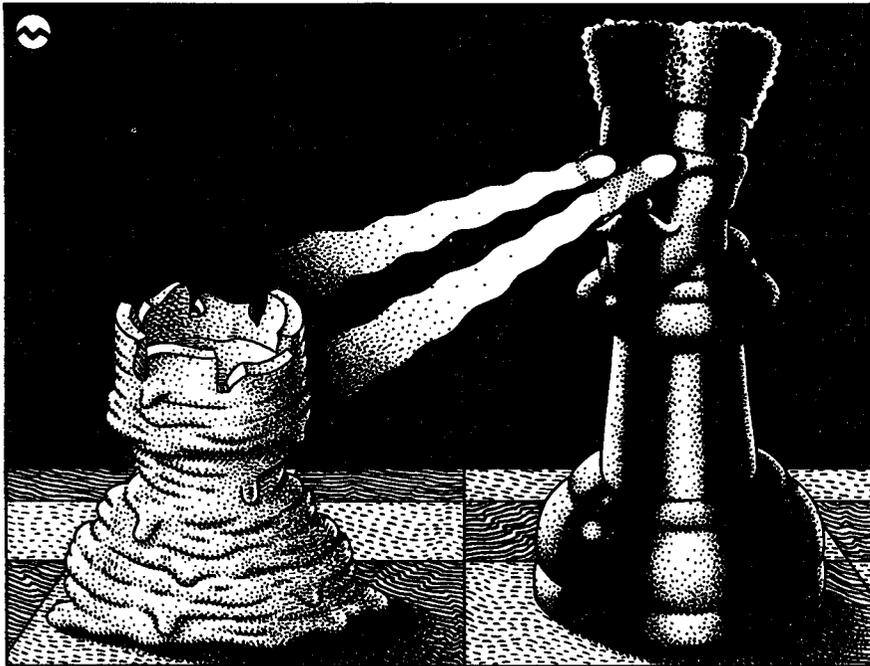
And how anyone can call India dull, even transcendently so, is beyond comprehension. The Gangetic Plains, "flat and dead to the horizon," are not all of India. There are mountains aplenty, in the south, where the Western Gats rise to 8,000 feet within 50 miles of the Arabian Sea, as well as in the north. And the people—a woman from a plains village bringing home two pots of water on her head; the beggars in the cities; the barber squatting on the sidewalk and with a straight razor shaving his squatting customer.

To us, India is beautiful and fascinating, a country with many problems yet full of wisdom. The year Traub spent there was evidently not enough to get the real flavor of so great a country.

The Reverend Warren Waldo  
N. Ferrisburgh, Vt.



"It's not great literature, but it makes a nice gift."



## The Evil Eye

Do Russian chess champions play dirty pool? Indeed they do, says Soviet defector Viktor Korchnoi, himself an international grand master. When he was pitted against Soviet superplayer Boris Spassky at Belgrade, Korchnoi says, he was bombarded with hypnotic waves, emanating either from the gallery or from Spassky himself. Korchnoi claims this is why Spassky showed up wearing—at different times during the long match—sunglasses, a

sunshade, and underwater goggles. Spassky, for his part, claims he wore the eye gear to protect himself from the unsettling effects of Korchnoi's baleful, intimidating glare.

Korchnoi also believes Soviet secret police aimed "death rays" at him. Since big-time chess requires above all a mind free of distractions, Korchnoi's allegations—and Spassky's counter—are serious charges. But whoever was psyching out whom, Korchnoi did beat Spassky at Belgrade and will meet Soviet world champion Anatoly Karpov later on this year.

## Problems, Problems...

An Islamic group funded by Saudi Arabians is encountering complications in its attempt to set up a youth camp in Ohio. In 1967, the Saudi-backed Federation of Islamic Associations paid \$10,000 for a 138-acre site in Chester Hills and got ready to build the camp. Then the complications began. First, oil was discovered on the property. Later, the federation found that a seam of solid coal runs under the land. Finally, someone found the property is sitting

on a huge reservoir of natural gas—for the rights to which a company has now offered the federation \$2 million.

Which way to go—oil, coal, or gas? Since the Saudis are used to dealing only with the problems of a one-crop economy—oil extraction—the Chester Hills situation must be a dizzying, and delicious, new problem for them. Arnold Shaheen, chairman of the federation's planning group, says the whole matter is still up in the air, but he adds pointedly, "Certain [of the] offers have been spiked with benefits difficult to refuse." No word, meanwhile, on how the camp's youthful would-be patrons feel about all this.

## Africa's Underrated Leaders

Are Idi Amin and the egregious Emperor Bokassa I your idea of typical black African heads of state? Well, think again, says Father Hubert Horan, writing in the journal *Missionaries of Africa Report*.

"The way we dismiss or downgrade African leaders," Father Hubert writes, "is terribly unfair. . . . We don't see too much in the press, for example, about [Senegal's] Léopold Senghor . . . an accomplished poet in French, internationally known as a man of letters. . . . Julius Nyerere of Tanzania is an author of ideas as well as books, and he, with Zambia's Kenneth Kaunda, is a proponent of a humanism such as Plato longed to put into practice."

As for rumored corruption and ineptitude among black African leaders, the clergyman cites "the unspeakable corruption of our [own] first centennial, with Boss Tweed of New York, and the Grant administration. Did we, after a century of independence, produce a Chief of State capable of stepping down gracefully with a gently ironic quotation from Shakespeare on his lips, as did Nigeria's General Gowon?"

Father Hubert, obviously a gentle man, refrains from mentioning that when—after two centuries of American independence—Richard Nixon stepped down, he did so in a way that was less than graceful and by no means Shakespearean.

## The Translator as Traitor

An American living in France tells us that in Sam Peckinpah's war film *Cross of Iron*, shown recently in Paris with French subtitles, a German soldier peers out of his bunker, spots an oncoming Russian armored column, and shouts, "Tanks!" The subtitle reads, "Merci!"