

Monday, March 19, 1973

TRAVIS

Operation Home Coming - phase three. Another twenty-six freed POW's were returned today to the mainland - USA; thereby completing the repatriation - of more than three quarters of all Americans held by the North Vietnamese and Viet Cong.

The first of two "freedom flights" - arriving at Travis air base in California. Air Force Colonel Theodore Guy - serving as chief spokesman for his comrades-in-arms. "A man's honor - is something that can't be sold" - said he Adding: "I am proud to be returning with a small group - who are coming back with honor." A second "freedom flight" heading for McGuire Air Base in New Jersey. Those aboard including Army Major Floyd Thompson - who was held a record nine years in captivity. Major Thompson describing his feelings as one of "sheer delight."

PENTAGON

A number of bills have been introduced in Congress - to create a special "tomb of the Unknown soldier for the Vietnam war." Except that the Pentagon^{WCCQ} saying - today - there is no "unknown soldier" from Vietnam. A spokesman explaining that modern scientific methods are such - there have been, as yet no unidentifiable casualties. Well, they say at least one mix-up - whoever was flown here and buried in place of Marine Private Ron Ridgeway of Houston. Ron, as you may have heard was rather unexpectedly flown home today! Whoever was buried in his place, wouldn't he do for the Tomb of the Unknown?

DETROIT

From giant General Motors ^{came} a pledge

today not to increase prices on Nineteen Seventy Three model cars. In the words of G M chairman Richard Gerstenberg - not to do so "unless forced by major economic events."

This in ~~keeping~~ keeping with President Nixon's ^{three} phase economic program - said Gerstenberg; also, "an act of reasonable responsibility" --- he continued; one that he hoped would be reflected - in upcoming labor talks in the auto industry. Granted a similar approach on the part of Union leaders - said he - ~~and~~ the year "Nineteen Seventy Three" can mark a new milestone in labor management relations.

PANAMA CITY

At that U N Security Council meeting in Panama City - Red China joined today in denouncing U S "colonial rule" in the Canal Zone. Adding that Panama's claims for control of the area - ~~just~~ were "just and reasonable."

Next - Australia; for a change from recent ~~pa~~ events - fully backing the U S position.

**2
- 1 The World body has no business - said Australia - ~~is~~ trying to "dictate" - the terms of any new U S and Panama Canal treaty.**

SENATOR BILL BENTON

Death has claimed one of the most successful, one of the most versatile men I or anyone ever knew. My neighbor at The Waldorf, former Senator William Benton of Connecticut. Even in his youth one of the nation's top admen, later, one of the heads of the University of Chicago; publisher of the Encyclopedia Britannica, and a politician-statesman.

Along the way, he was also, by his own admission - "one of the ten or twenty best card players in the world." Also the guiding hand in the founding of Radio Free Europe. It was Senator Bill Benton who led the public crusade against Senator ~~Joseph~~ Joe McCarthy that led eventually to McCarthy's censure. An avid art collector, a philanthropist - yes, a genius. Departing at age Seventy-Three.

MELCHIOR

Death has also claimed one of the great operatic stars of all time. Danish born Lauritz Melchior - at his peak, the world's foremost Wagnerian tenor. Thrilling tens of thousands via the Metropolitan Opera and millions more via the movies. For some twenty years I had gone camping each Summer with Melchior. He was a mighty hunter and a grand companion.

Lauritz Melchior - just two days short of his eighty-third birthday.

TOM SAWYER - Reader's Digest

Wasn't it Gabrielle Heater who used to say early in his evening broadcast, "I have good news for you tonight!" Gabe did that even when the news was grim. I wish all of my colleagues of the pre-World War Two era were still on the air with me, Gabriel Heater included, of course.

Now tonight if Gabe were here, ah here is something that would cause him to say his famous good news sentence with extra enthusiasm.

As you have no doubt have heard, The Reader's Digest has been the most successful magazine ever published anywhere on earth. It's success has been so phenomenal that now The Reader's Digest organization is branching out into other fields. Hobe Lewis, the present publisher, who obviously has the same philosophy, the same outlook on life as Lila and DeWitt Wallace, is taking the Reader's Digest organization into the fickle field of films. He feels, and I suspect nearly all of us, even including managers and owners of motion picture theaters, will agree, that the moment has

arrived when there is a desperate need for great motion pictures, the kind with an appeal to all ages and all classes of people. Films for all - with no X's in their rating.

As you perhaps have heard they are launching their program with a film that has just had it's world premier at The Radio City Music Hall in New York, Mark Twain's immortal American classic "Tom Sawyer."

In putting this story on the screen they have set a high standard for whatever they plan to produce in the future. Cast, setting, music, the direction, everything about it is of superior quality. In June, United Artists will put it in theaters from coast to coast. Mark Twain was as popular abroad as he was here in America. So Tom Sawyer no doubt will appear before enthusiastic audiences right around the globe. Tom Sawyer is one film that will not give the peoples of other nations a false impression of America.

HUMBOLDT

Mrs. Sheri Weiler of Drummond Island, Michigan is a leading advocate of a national meatless week; to protest high food prices. Farmer Dale James of Humboldt, Nebraska has invited her to spend one day working with his twelve hundred hogs - to see why prices have soared. Invitation accepted. The result?

Mrs. Weiler reports she's still against high prices but that she has become more enlightened about farm life. "Every bone in my body aches" - said she.

TUNIS

At Tunis - a meeting of the Congress of Arab writers heard today from Tunisian President Habib Bourguiba. On the subject of Israel versus the Arab said Bourguiba: "The secret of Israel's strength" - lies in its mastery of modern science and technology. Adding: "The wheel will turn inexorably against the Arabs - if they continue to practice in regard to this problem, the policy of the ostrich."

SAN JUAN CAPISTRANO

Right on schedule - the swallows came back to Capistrano today. An advance flight of about four to five hundred birds - swooping in about mid-morning. The rest - expected to straggle along throughout the week.

The return of these swallows, one of the rites of spring, this time drew some eighty thousand spectators.

Where I am it felt like Winter - Spring - we've had!

LISBON

From Lisbon - the story of a vaudeville hypnotist - who bills himself as "Professor Rustor." The Professor allowing himself to be blindfolded, stepped into a car and drove it twelve miles with narry a problem.

The Professor's reward? "A trip to police headquarters - his driver's license confiscated. Now they are trying to find an appropriate charge, Bill. Driving while blind-folded seems - to be an offense not in the books!

TEL AVIV

From Tel Aviv - the story of a seventy-two year old Israeli seamstress in love again - and still feeling young; therefore, desirous of wedding her latest suitor - a mere youth of sixty-seven. Only trouble - a Rabbinic court refusing to permit the nuptials. Why not? Because the lady in question - has already been widowed three times. Under Jewish law thereby becoming a husband slayer. A spokesman for the court saying: "If such a woman finds another fool who is willing to take a risk - the marriage holds." But "we", said the Jewish judge, "we do not permit her to marry."