

EGOBOO EXPRESS; LeeH

Nicholas Davies;

"Also Lee Hoffman's the Real Estate was interesting."

Jon Wallace;

"You can tell Lee Hoffman that she's right to doubt the existence of England. The whole thing is a hoax, set up by the Europeans against the day when they could offer it to the US government as a forward base for nasty things that they wouldn't want on their own home soil. Scotland, on the other hand is the only place. And it exists, haven't you seen Brigadoon? No? Aren't you lucky."

Chuch Harris;

"LeeH is ALWAYS praiseworthy, interesting, and easy to comment on, and I love her dearly. She too once dedicated a book to me --- in lieu of a spaceship --- and, - at least I like to think so, - spent the most interesting part of her honeymoon with me. She writes easily and simply -- no artifice, no funny names, or contrived jokes, and holds the reader effortlessly from the first word to the last.

I wondered about Port Charlotte though. If it was so low lying, would the cemeteries have tombs above ground -- like they do in New Orleans? With the water table just below the surface of the ground, unweighted coffins would float like boats unless they had some sort of bunghole cut in the bottom. Surely they don't just smash a bottle of bourbon over the handles and, 'God bless this box all who sail in her.' (Memo: the best coffins come from Courtney the aquatic undertaker --- all boxes specially treated to remain underwater.)

Dave Rowley;

"Lee Hoffman's tale of her environs is fascinating. Wild life in the middle of a town, wow, I suppose I'm only impressed due to its exotic nature (alligators, snakes etc.). We only have things like Kestrels and foxes on the trading estate which I work on. Nothing odd about that you might think, except it is surrounded by housing estates and a reclaimed spoil heap from one of the many collieries around here."

Colin Fine;

"I am interested in Lee Hoffman's bit about the derogatory names for inhabitants of particular states. The only such name I've come across is as far as I know not derogatory, but used with pride by the people themselves: 'Hoosier' for somebody from Indiana? I came across this more than once in American books before I found a reference which explained what it meant. Interestingly, I saw a rare example of a similar thing in this country in the paper this morning: The Guardian has 'Boycott sweeps to tyke election triumph'. This is the first time I have seen 'Tyke' on its own to mean 'Yorkshire'. The article itself is also interesting in that it is not until the fifth paragraph that there is any reference which would allow the reader unfamiliar with Boycott's name to realise that it was talking about cricket: 'Geoffrey Bocott sacked as a Yorkshire player, was elected to a new county committee yesterday when his supporters, the Yorkshire 1984 reform group, won 13 of the 18 seats in the district by district elections.' and it continues in this vein, 'player', 'captain' and 'team' might make the stranger wonder if it was sport being talked about, but I could imagine a foreigner puzzling over it, trying to work out what level of government was being discussed (these English with their mania for sporting metaphors..)

I remember grits as being a cross between porridge and mashed potato."

Joy Hibbert;

"I see that Terry Jeeves will have Lee Hoffman Marked down as one of these communists for daring to draw accurate comparisons between the 2 superpowers behaviour."

Sydney J. Bounds;

"LeeH takes second place..." << to Sid Birchby:>>

Hazel Ashworth;

"LeeH's writing was informative and entertaining as usual, and ain't she brave to be so casual about snakes and alligators? I know that reading POGO makes you feel warm towards swamp critters, but I wouldn't like to put my affection to the test. (I have only recently learned enough self-control to face a smallish spider without screaming)."

Harry Warner, Jr.;

"Lee Hoffman has confused me badly. Until I read her article in this issue, I had a precise, crystal-clear mental picture of Port Charlotte. It was exactly like those Florida communities that figure in John D. McDonald's novels. In the JDM books, the towns where all sorts of crime and corruption and violence occur never suffered from grass seeping through paving and there were no possums roaming around or school taxes to worry about (because the characters always had much more serious things to worry about). But I appreciated the less disillusioning information she gave in the letter section about crackers. I wonder if I remember correctly that the Atlanta baseball team had Crackers as its nickname back in the years when it was in the minor leagues? (It became the Atlanta Braves after it stole the Braves from their former owners in Milwaukee who had in turn swiped them from Boston.) I also wonder if the famous United States confection for kids which is boxed and sold as Crackerjack derives its name from the old significance of crackers."

Mal Ashworth;

"Lee Hoffman, too. You really have got yourself a fine line-up of fan talent together; getting purty close to the hubris barrier, I reckon.

I thought Lee's piece on how indistinguishable American imperialism becomes from Soviet imperialism very fine and honest. The U.S. record of torture and murder of civilian populations too (sometimes direct, as in Vietnam, sometimes through intermediaries as in Argentina, Chile, the Palestinian refugee camps in Lebanon etc.) must by now rival Nazi German statistics. (Britain, having been thrown out of everywhere else, still tries to keep its hand in in Northern Ireland. 'Concentration Camps? Who, us? Er - well, yes, actually'). As she says, all very confusing. And embarrassing.

But she is getting far too acute at seeing through these 'social games' - even beginning to doubt if she ever really came to England. This is getting serious, Terry; you've got to steer her away from this line of thought. I wonder if my old photos would help - Lee in a group with Walt, ATom, Larry Shaw, me and Sheila, Chuch, Ken Bulmer and so on? We invented this imaginary (and, we thought, rather unbelievable) town called Kettering and erected Hollywood type sets of streets, railway station, even a Con hotel. And Lee fell for it - the whole bit. She didn't even suspect that we'd set it all up in a little used corner of South Carolina. It was all very much like the CIA spoof film of Americans landing on the moon and all that other crazy interplanetary stuff. Course that was all

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pretty sercon - I suppose everybody knows by now that the CIA is just a front for the N3F. Ours was just a Trufan hoax; and now, just as we're about to plan a repeat to get Lee to 'England' (hee hee) again, she's starting to get wind of it all. Do something, Terry."

John D. Owen;

"Odd bit tacked onto the end of Lee Hoffman's article on Floridian real estate - I mean, it's about 'real estate' of another kind entirely, innit? Very much to the point though, and I'm glad to see that there are Americans around who can still question the more illogical acts (like every second one) of their government. Now, if only you could get them to spread the word a bit more thoroughly before the elections, maybe you could get even the Mid-West to vote sensibly for a change, and put some intelligent person into the White House. Trouble is, what would an intelligent person be doing running for president in the first place?"

Oscar Dalglish;

"Lee Hoffman's Real Estate sounds a lot like the bit of China in which I found myself two years ago. I was in a wet suit up to my armpits in water, when our translator at Leh Neh Hang Peoples' Revolutionary Scientific Investigation Station 192 informed me that while they usually only grew flies to study malaria, they did have some tendency to be a breeding ground for the local water snake population. On asking if they could kill, I was cheerfully informed that they only did so when they bit you. That too is a lovely piece of real estate, and it doesn't even have the value of being above water."