

POINTLESS PONDERABLES

LAST WEEK'S ANSWER:

The average total you should get will be 14. It can be shown that for this kind of question, the average roll will be indicated by the formula 'n+2' — where n is the number you are shooting for (12 in our case). The number 'n' though must be greater than six (the number of sides on a dice). We didn't receive any correct answers this week, and we even double-checked our result by simulating it out on a computer.

THIS WEEK'S QUESTION:

Since this is our last issue for the year, we'll include the answer in this issue. Since we cannot print them, we will not be accepting entries.

You've decided to try your hand at farming. You want to lay out a fenced-in pasture and have 100 metres of fencing to work with. You also have a really long stone wall that you could use for one side of the pasture. With the material you're given, what's the largest area you could enclose? Hint: For a hint as to the shape to use, check our spool ponderable.

THIS WEEK'S ANSWER (don't peek):

You are probably thinking in terms of a square, but this is the wrong approach. A circle encloses the greatest area with the least material so that's the kind of structure you should attempt. Simply form a half-circle with the fencing and put it against the stone wall. This will enclose the maximum area possible. That area will be 5000/pi metres squared. Thanks for a great year and a ton of responses. It's great to see and it's been a great experience.

Science man takes a bow

Well, I suppose all good things must come to an end.

This is the last issue of the *Gazette* until September, and although I'll definitely be back next year, it probably won't be as the Science Editor. Not because I want to pass the torch onto the following eager volunteers — oh no. The reason is because it's a damn hard job.

When I first walked into the *Gazette* office sometime in the summer of '93, I saw this guy with LOTS of hair at a computer, who said he was the editor and was really friendly to me and made me feel welcome.

So I came to the first staff meeting, when people were running for all the positions on the paper, like Arts Editor, and so on. Well, this may just come as a shock to those who have been reading the science section, but the reason I'm the Science Editor is because no one else wanted the job. And I don't really

blame them either — now that I've spent eight months at it. There were tough times at this job. The hours spent each day toiling in badly-lit rooms while the presses galloped downstairs — the ashtray full of half-smoked butts and the empty bottle of Gin on the table, conspiring to finish me before I could finish the section.

OK, I'll admit. That's all a lie. The presses are over in Bayers Lake, I don't smoke, and I don't drink Gin, only Vodka. But you gotta admit. It sounds neat, huh?

The truth of the matter is, I did all this hard work because I wanted to, and because I enjoyed it. That doesn't mean it was a cake walk, though. There were some parts I didn't really think were that much fun, like the time I was interviewing a researcher for a story, and he ended up giving me all this stuff about how he wanted the names of about 20 people in my

article, so that they'd all get famous. He also wanted me to put a nice positive spin on the article so his project could get the funding it needed. Sorry, I'm a journalist, not an ad man.

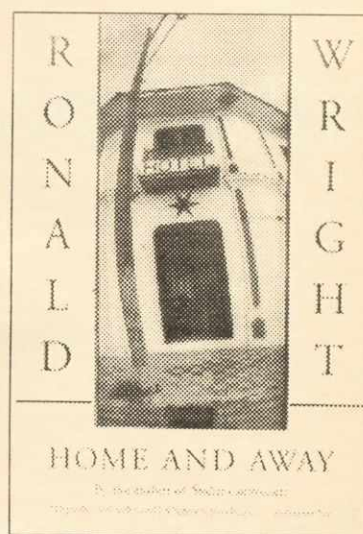
And now for something completely different.

Anyhow, I just thought it'd be proper to say goodbye for now to everyone who helped me by teaching me how to edit, enforce deadlines, and be the general mean bastard I am to all those who write for me. I came out of this year at the *Gazette* with lots of things to look back on, and lots of helpful knowledge to bring back next year and pass on to new people. Thanks.

Steve Tonner

Travelling truths

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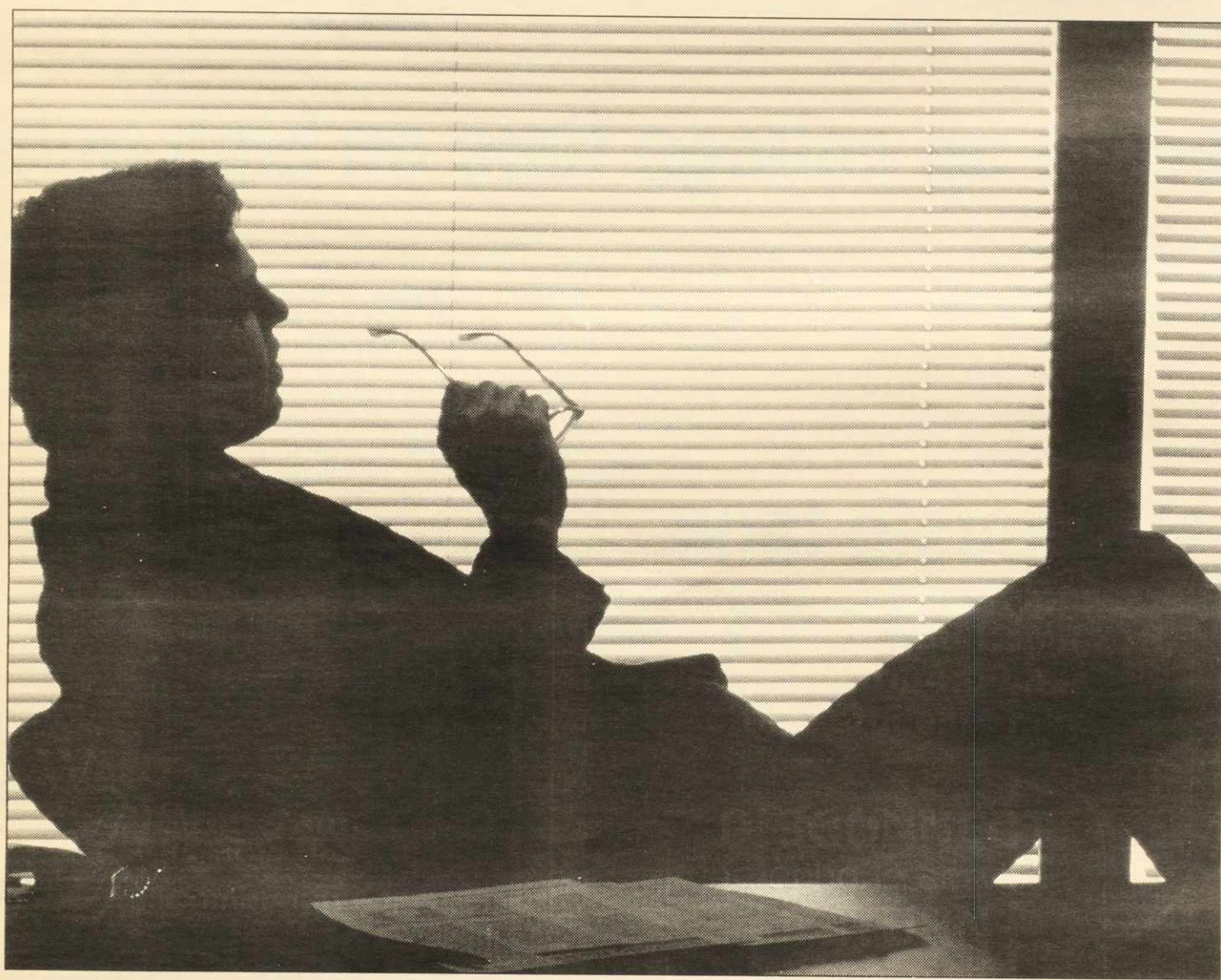
demonstrates the legacy of the US invasion; to Turkey, where a government-paid trip to boost tourism and fund a restoration project exposes the Byzantine heritage in more ways than one.

Perhaps the most compelling piece is "The Death-List People," originally published in *Saturday Night*. It is an intimate portrait of Guatemalan exiles — physically safe from the terrors of Guatemalan reality, but altogether isolated in the other world of lonely, suburban Toronto. Metaphor, history, and humanity come together in an artful but sobering account of Guatemala's scars:

"The secret police checked my family after I left. If they see my name in print they might do something to make me shut up. Not to me, of course, but to someone close to me in Guatemala." He's only in his mid-thirties, but there's a weight of experience in his voice, his shoulders, the line on his dark face. He goes to the kitchen and comes back with a cigarette that trembles in his hand. Ash falls onto his white cotton shirt embroidered with quetzal birds, Guatemala's national emblem and a symbol of freedom. The quetzal is nearly extinct.

Another is "Does Canada Want A Wounded Knee?" which first appeared in the *Globe And Mail* during the Oka crisis — it should be mandatory reading for any student of Canadian or AmerIndian history.

What Wright offers us in his latest book is a collection of tales, each more than just sketches, but also a truth that surpasses travelling and gives us the world.



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