

A CONTEST

by Paulo DePaula

The Washington "Daily News" - that good little paper you know so well - recently had a contest. It ran for four weeks, and the winner was to select ~~any~~ ^{two people} in these United States and have them spend a week in the Capital, all expenses paid, tours, entertainment, etc.

The idea was to write a short essay on a particular spot in Washington which was particularly beautiful, and why one thought it specially meaningful. Winning contestants wrote about the Folger Library, Dupont Circle and a couple of other places I do not remember. For four weeks I felt like submitting my essay on the Pan American Union Building. To me that represents the poetic vision of Rubén Darío, the united victory at Santo Domingo, ~~the~~ ^{the} only monument in Washington which really represents the Americas. Except, perhaps, the "Santa Maria", a replica of Columbus's ship, on the Potomac. But then, that is going a bit too far...

As I was saying, I felt like writing about the Pan American Union Building, but all of a sudden I abstained. The same paper started to mention a meeting at that Building. A meeting of all the Heads of Foreign Affairs of ~~the~~ the American Nations. I got cold feet.

Not long ago there was such a meeting in Uruguay. Differences existed there and they will not all be hidden under the Pan-American sign of the Building I so admire. Thinking about those differences, I decided not to enter the contest. But, on the contrary, wait for the result of this "tête-a-tête". Perhaps, in their own house, these Ministers will be more positive. Perhaps the environment will make them more congenial, for, after all, that is the House they have in common. Not a hotel room in Mar del Plata, or what have you.

While I ~~am~~ ^{was} waiting for the reply, without having entered the contest, ~~my~~ ^{one} of my reasons for entering the contest ~~has been~~ ^{was} fulfilled. Jason and Barbara, my in-laws from California, suddenly decided to visit us. I no longer needed the contest to show them around Washington, to catch up with what's new during ~~my~~ these four years we've been apart. All of a sudden, with their four children accompanying them, our attic and basement became as livable as our living room.

I forgot all about the contest. All about the beauty of anything. My family and I became practical. Here we were, all together again.

I hope the same feeling pervades among the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of our States as they commune at their House. Our House of
*Hope for a united hemisphere. For a family of nations
 as the world has never seen.*

THE BEAT GOES ON

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by Paulo DePaula

Cops whose beat is Laffayette Square must get pretty tired of their beat, and of the goings on. Not a day goes by that a group of protesters is not available; defying other trends of thought, shouting for their rights, causing the police force, there present, to use every means possible to pacify and contain them for that moment of utmost exhaltation.

This week it was the housewives, combatting the draft, who really got strong. They came in throngs. Their number outnumbered the specified one hundred permitted for demonstrations of this kind. This in itself caused a semi-riot, because they also claimed that it was unconstitutional to set a definite number of people who could participate in pickets, marches, etc. They not only said that. They also reached out to hit some of the men whose uniforms were beginning to get a sudden worn out look, but who never pulled their guns to intimidate.

Not so long ago it was the Arabs. ~~and~~ Then the Israelis. More recently, Melina Mercouri and her Greek entourage, took over Laffayette Square, to protest the presence of their King at the White House, across the Street. They shouted and hollered and even danced while Mercouri sang ~~"Horra the Greek"~~ "Never on Sunday". It was no Sunday, but, from the look of the crowds it certainly ~~was~~ ^{looked like} some sort of Greek holiday. Only ~~the King~~ ^{different}, never made it official!

Now a new group has come to Laffayette Square. They are protesting against what they claim to be an "audacity". A toy factory has ~~decided to~~ ~~xxxxxxx~~ presented to the market little dolls who can easily be identified as 'boy' or 'girl'. In other words, = dolls ~~xxxxxxx~~ which can satisfy a little girl's desire of having a "baby boy" or a "baby" girl", for her playhouse.

This definitely caused a commotion among a great number of women, and their first move was to start lobbying and to march, as a united front, to Laffayette Square, protesting the "indecent appearance of a penis in a baby doll." Dolls, like angels, are sexless, they seem to claim. And, they may be right, to a point. But how are children who are reared in our modern environment, and exposed to childbirth on television ever ~~to~~ ^{to} agree that their "baby boy" is a boy when they see nothing in the doll's body to corroborate that fact?

Well, maybe our progress has been tresspassing borders we cannot fathom.

At any rate, judging from what Laffayette Square has to offer, I'm sure that if Michelangelo lived in the States today and were he entrusted with the task of sculpting a "David" for Dupont Circle a march of protest would ~~be~~ destroy all lawn still existing at Laffayete Square. A march so great that would most probably even count with the presence of all the flower people, who would join the group while shouting: "We dont want no David. Give us our fountain back!"