

RAVEL

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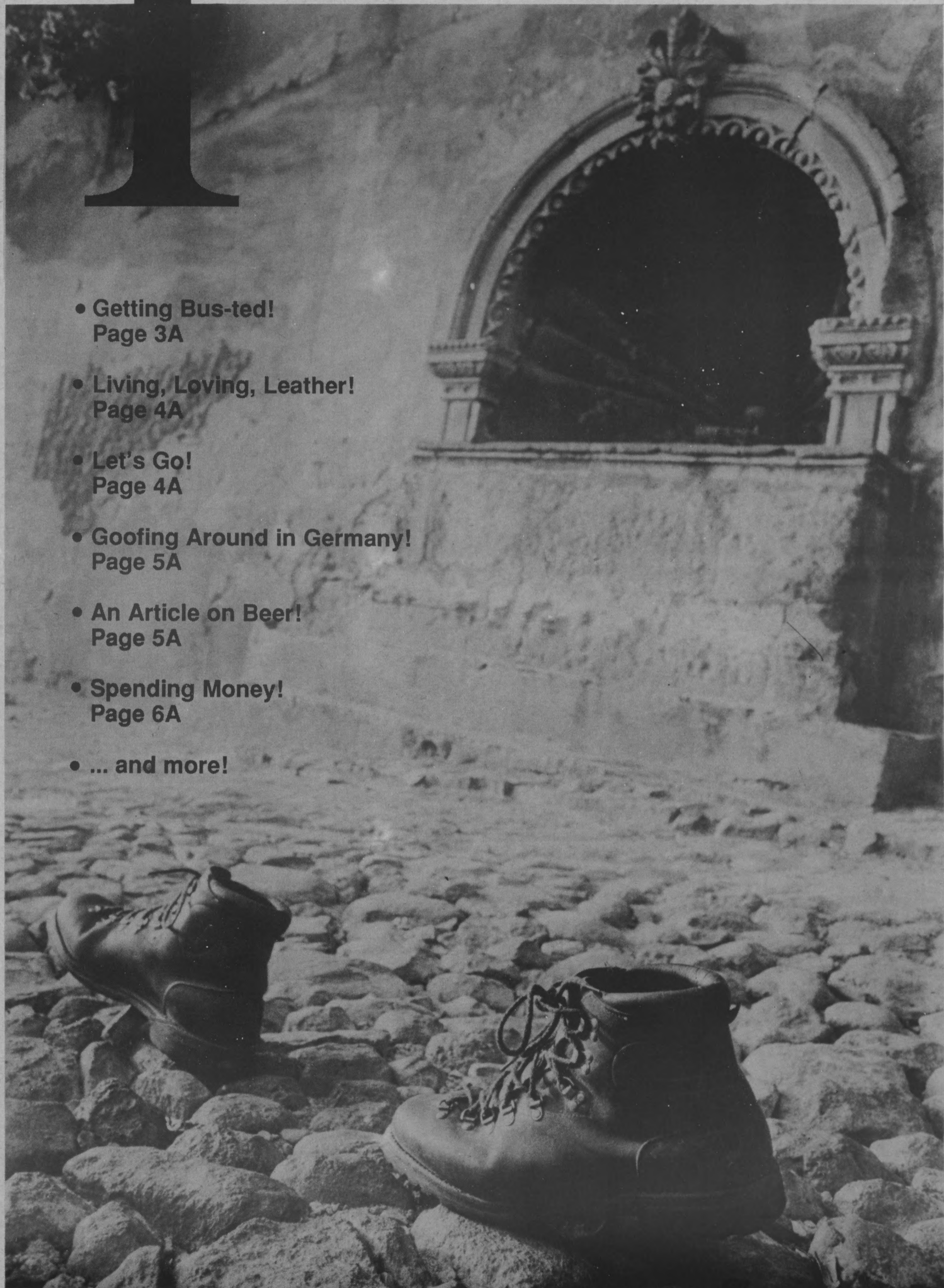
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## Travel 1990!

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Editor  
Thor Garcia




Contributing Editors  
Jill Weisskopf  
Weston Briggs  
Finnegus Jackson  
Charles Gomer Scott  
Aimee Gordhen  
Rob Lowe

Cover and Gatefold  
Photos by  
Brenton Kelly

Intern  
James Siojo



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## Travel 1990!

# Taking a Bus is Fun Business

By Finnegan Jackson

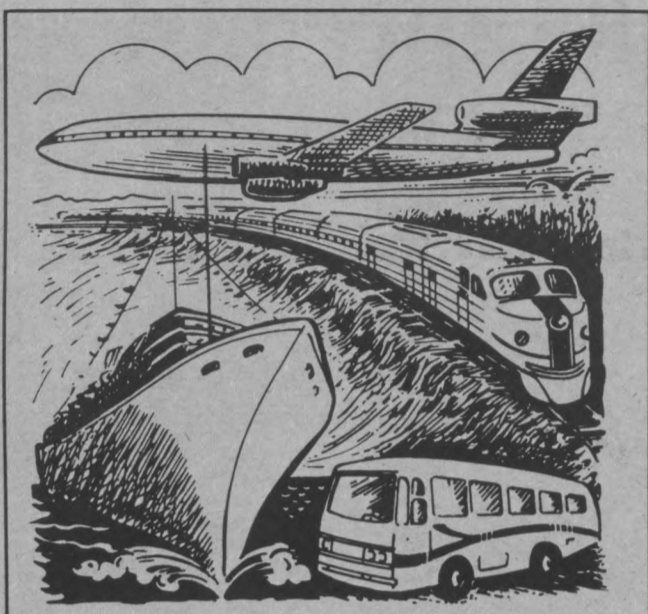
His eyes drilled accusing holes of hatred through my forehead. His 28-year-old burned-out deadhead beard suggested years of malicious neglect. He had the general look of a rail-thin rabid mongrel dog who had been beaten too much and wants bloody revenge against the Humans. "Take ten steps that way," he said to me, wagging a finger toward my ride's car in the parking lot adjacent to the downtown Greyhound station, "and I'll shoot you."

Just nine hours earlier I was standing in the doorway of the San Francisco Greyhound station with three Sunday newspapers under my arm, listening to a disheveled man tell a long, contradictory story about his brother being in jail in Sacramento and needing money so he could go there and bail him out, but he needed to go across the street first and try to convince the judge that he was really a Vietnam Vet and therefore qualified to get medical care which he needed because his brother was in jail and Burger King had bad coffee.

That's all part of the fun of being young and alone and going Greyhound. Because most rich people have cars, you encounter a wonderfully rich cross-section of the meat and potatoes of society, complete with grandmothers, farm workers, poor students, runaways, construction dudes, weird tourists, teenage mothers, navy boys, priests and the insane.

Many of those who don't ride hang around the station anyway, looking for a similar ear to talk to or maybe a little change. Sometimes, if one is alone and paranoid, it can get a little frightening around certain stations, such as Los Angeles, Sacramento, Long Beach, and — of course — Stockton. My good friend Thor was once in the L.A. station when a man with humorless eyes barked at him and took his Sprite away.

But this is not to say you don't meet some fantastic people on the road. I've ridden Greyhound buses from Long Beach to Portland, up the coast and through the San Joaquin Valley, and the majority of the people I've met have been fascinating in one way or another. There was the grandmother who sat next to me on a trip through South-Central L.A., telling me with fire in her eyes how she plans to outlive her grandchildren. There was the at-least-450-pound guy who sat next to me from L.A. to Santa Barbara who scratched a lot and told me he hadn't had a shower in three days. There was the woman who grew up in Isla Vista and remembered



With so many travel choices available, a bus ride is often overlooked. For a superspecial time, give it a try.

the "good old days."

Some of the stations are quite nice, too. Ventura's is part of a nicely-done transit center by the railroad tracks that's all dolled up in pretty red bricks and stuff. The downtown Portland station has a historical Time Square-ish clock reaching high above its beautiful brick architecture next to the Wilamette River. Most of the stations, however, smell like urine.

For a bloke or a blake without a car, Greyhound is certainly the safest cheap way to travel. But nobody said it was fast. It once took seven hours for me to go from L.A. to Santa Maria in the wee hours, a three-hour drive tops. Another time my buddy Thor dropped me off at the Medford Greyhound station and then picked me up when I arrived in L.A.

And now here I was a couple dollars poorer after helping that guy's brother, holding a ticket for the "scenic route" from Frisco to Santa Barbara.

See BUS, p.7B

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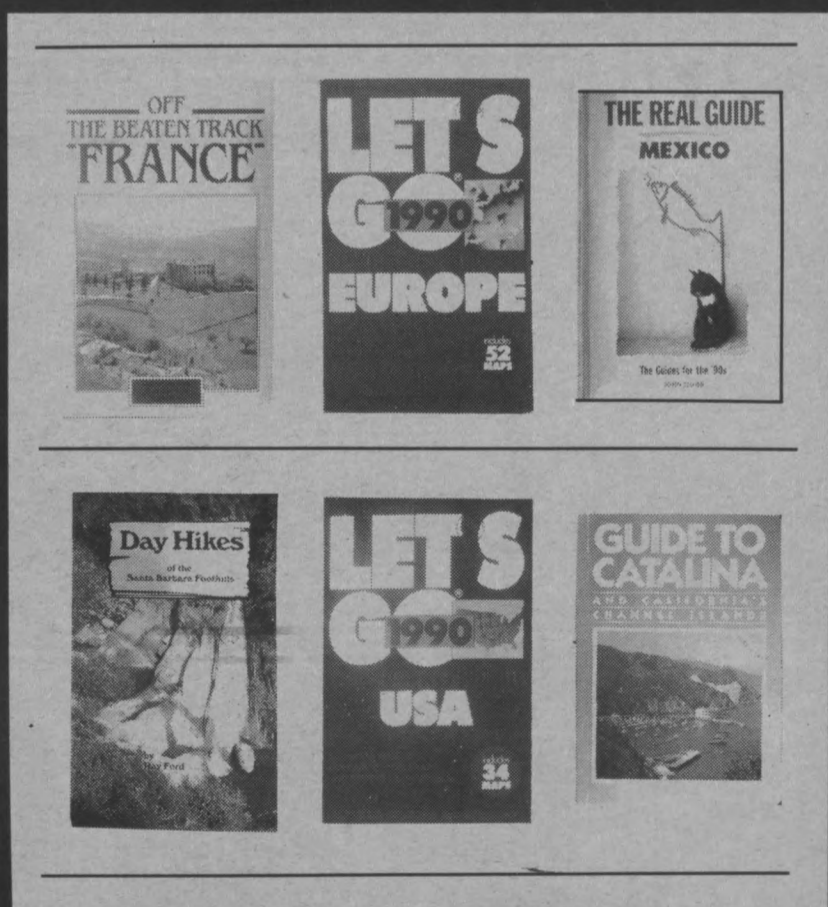
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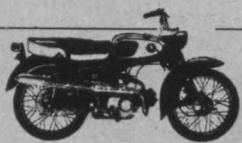
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## Living, Loving Leather

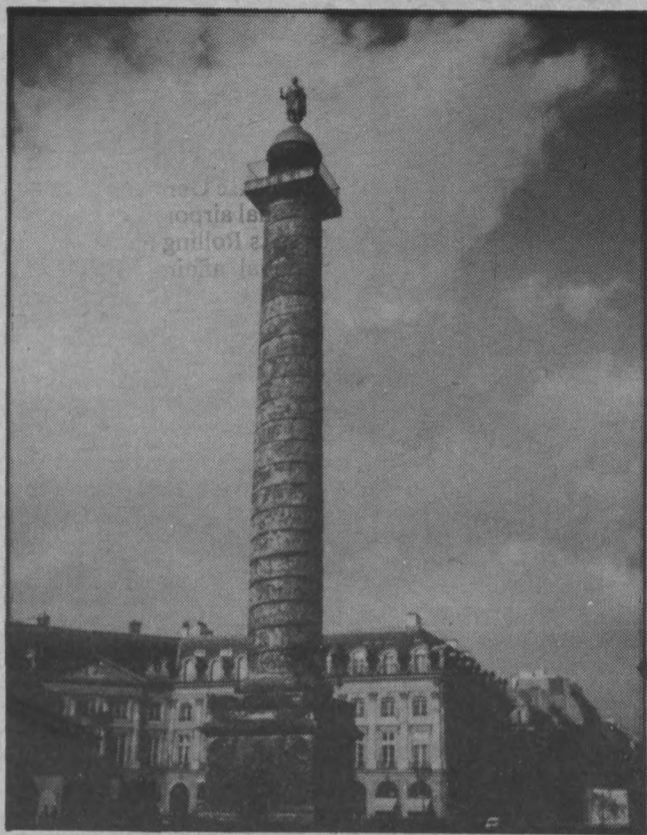
By Weston Briggs

So there we were in the Florence train station, wearing a lot of leather. Leather because, well, because we were in Florence and that's just what you *do* in Florence. *Everybody* wears leather in Florence.

Where were we? Right, the Florence train station. We were going to Siena for the day for some big festival thing and the word from our people was clear: Leather.

We boarded amid a great uproar caused by the hundreds of fans headed for a soccer — excuse me, "football" — game in Pisa. They were screaming and chanting and singing, all of them wearing Florence scarves tied around their biceps as they crushed onto the train. A lot of them were wearing leather. Florence is the leather capital of the world.

About ten minutes out of the station someone informed us that we were on the wrong train. Headed to Pisa instead of Siena, we decided to go to the game and grabbed a guy scalping tickets and scored some of same. Our Italian friends — clad almost entirely in leather — vanished, reappearing several minutes later with Florence fuscias



Be extra sure to be leather-clad when roughhousing around Europe's towering, historical monuments.

scarves and small leather seat cushions.

Tension in our cramped car rose as we pulled into the leaning city of Pisa, enemy territory. Pisa is Florence's No. 1 rival in football

so everybody was ready for violence. Italian football rivalries go back to when Italy was just a motley collection of city states warring with

See ITALY, p.7B

## Let's Go! Buy a Book

By Charles Gomer Scott

Some tourists go to Amsterdam for Flemish art, canals or the Anne Frank House, while others are looking for delights offered by the city's hash bars and infamous Red Light District.

To some, summers in Italy equal the unparalleled Renaissance art trip — the Leaning Tower of Pisa and stuff — while others go there in June to ski, believe it or not. (Big, cold glaciers cover the Alps year-round.)

Let's face it, we're a bunch of diverse, multicultural, unique fun-seekers with different tastes, desires and needs, (not to mention budgets!) all of which have to be considered when planning a holiday.

Enter the how-to-travel books.

Guidebooks are available to please everyone, whether you're out to see Europe on \$50 a day or \$5. Frommer's, the mainstream leader in generic WaldenBooks travel guides, is now actually offering guides to Europe and other destinations with this sort of double-digit inflation in mind, so most people reading this are probably in need of a less costly plan.

Fret not, for budget travel is the rage these days, with airfares, package tours, accommodation and yes, books all geared to those with a less-than-Frommer's-style budget.

Mention Europe and *Let's Go Europe!* immediately pops into the mind of every "groovy world traveler." (My well-traveled friend Kennison denigrates

all the college-age kids out seeing the world and trying to be oh-so cultural with this slur.)

Anyway, *Let's Go!* isn't too bad for the first-time traveler, although following their advice will often lead you: a) to horrible youth hostels run by bad people they liken to Attila the Hun; b) to horrible medieval churches, because of their cultural relevance, when you'd really rather be at the beach; c) to back alleyways in tiny Euro-villages where strange people with weird accents and clothes will confront you for disturbing the animals in their yard as you look for the "quaint" cafe that was supposedly there last summer.

The series was started in 1960 by a group of Harvard students, as a helpmate for the "adventurous and often impecunious student." The first year it was a flimsy 20-page book of tips, but has since developed into an 11-volume series updated yearly by a team of 70 Harvard students who spend their summers traveling around the world and writing about it — not bad work if you can get it.

Titles range from the all-inclusive *Let's Go Europe!*, to the more specialized *Let's Go France!*, *Let's Go Italy!*, and the only one I would recommend for extensive use, *Let's Go Egypt and Israel!*. Awright!

Each book gives synopses of the country's history, culture, food, transportation system, et cetera, and then leads into regional and city-by-city descriptions. For the lazy person this means a short explanation of what to do, where to eat

and sleep, which cafes or neighborhoods to frequent, how to ride buses.... You get the picture.

Unfortunately, a lot of American kids really groove on these books too much, choosing to use them more as a bible than a guide. I was heading into East Berlin a few years ago, ready to just walk around with a map and see whatever the Iron Curtain nation of old had to offer. Right in front of me at the infamous Checkpoint Charlie were two American travelers frantically searching through their *Let's Go!* looking for somewhere to go! Awright!

To me, there's a little more to traveling than riding around Europe by train for a few months, staying at the same hotels and eating at the same restaurants some travel writers hit the previous year, and then saying I'd "done Europe!" But hey, who am I to cop this mock superiority, right?

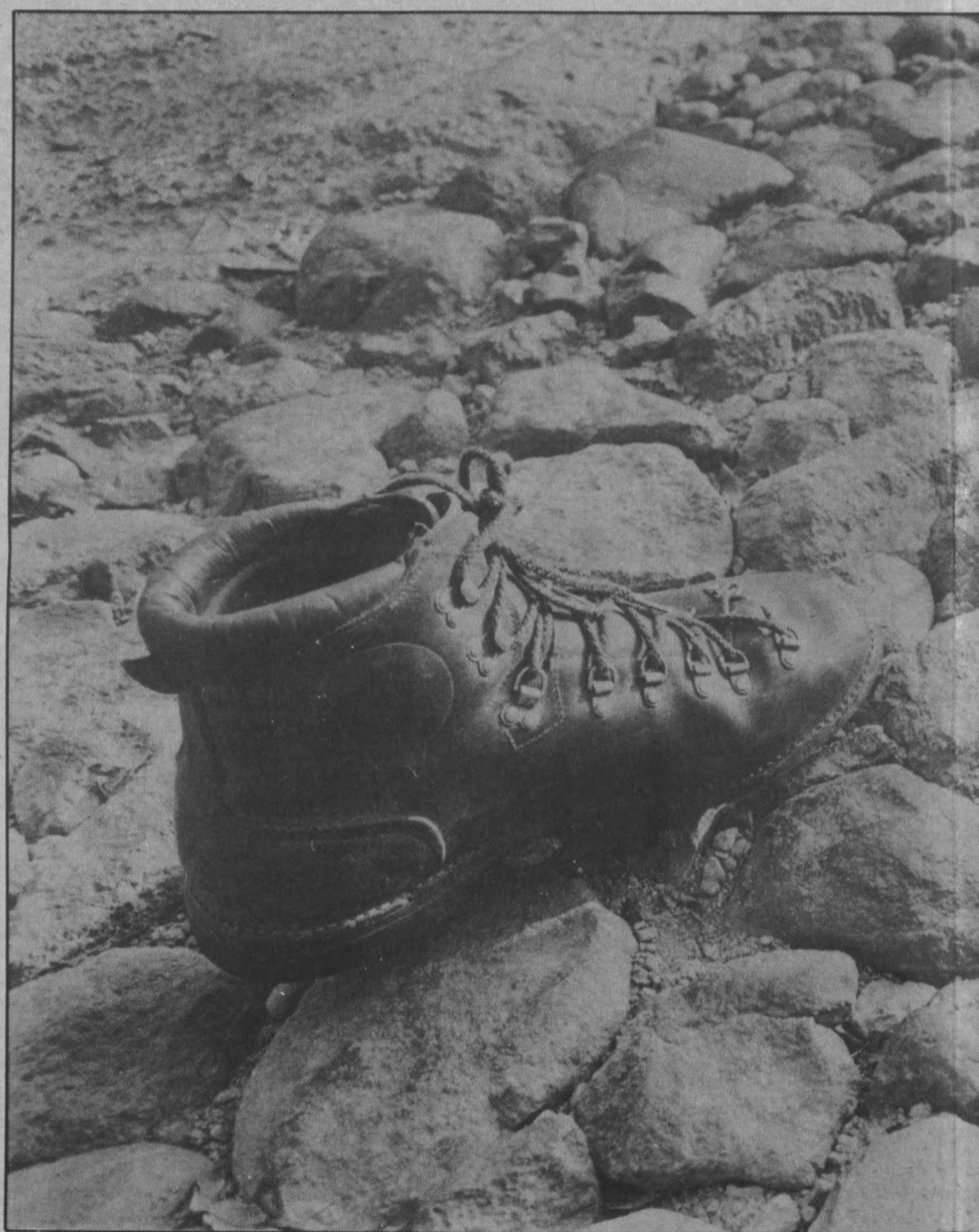
My alternative travel book of choice is the *Lonely Planets Travel Survival Kit* series, started in the early to mid-70s by a group of wild Australians seeking to give their countrymen tips on how to best conquer the Overland Asia route. It has since developed into an outstanding series of guidebooks and phrasebooks geared more to the budget traveler in the underdeveloped world.

The books are long on history, culture, excursions and advice, yet steer clear from hotels and restaurants on the well-trod path. The Africa volume comes highly recommended, although

See GOMER, p.7B



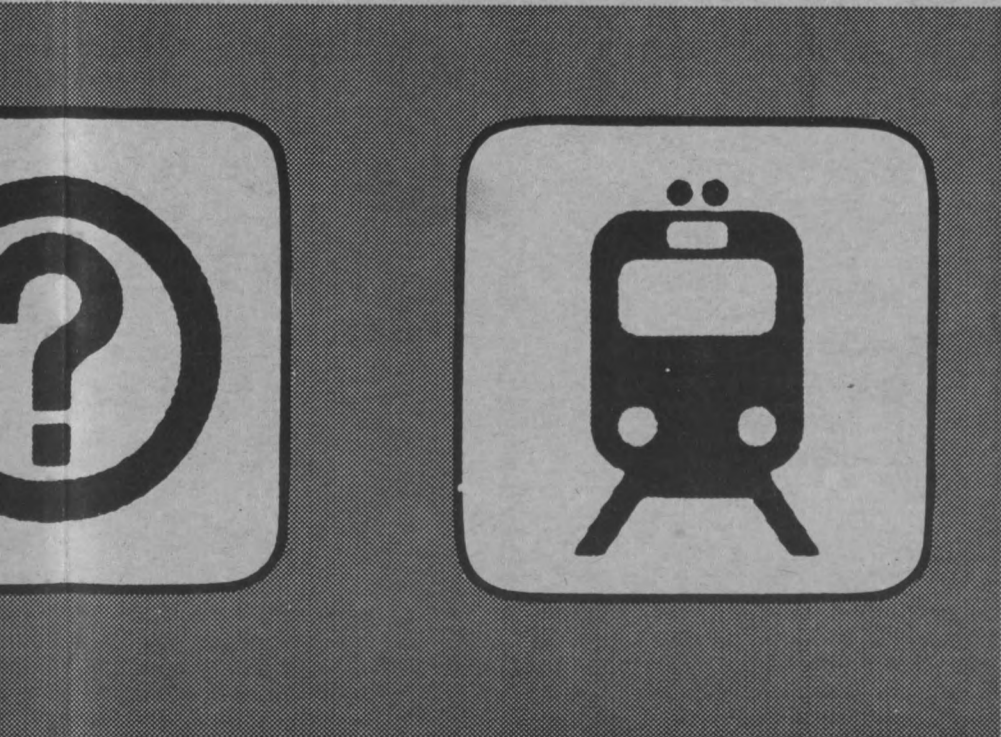
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Travel 1990!



# Wide World Travel GO!



## Germany: Nation of Fun

By Aimee Gordhen

You know how sometimes logic seems to point you in one direction, and reality drop-kicks you in another? Well, German cities are kind of like that: deceptively similar, yet quirkily different.

Look at the cities of Hamburg, Frankfurt and Bonn, for example. Hamburg, in the far north near Scandinavia, has been since almost the early Middle Ages a large, bustling port city along the Elbe River. Frankfurt, in the southeast, is located near the center of Germany, and is very industrial. Bonn is not as large or old as Hamburg or Frankfurt, with only a few hundred thousand people, and is largely known because it is the capital of the Federal Republic of Germany.

Now, when the Gordhens skipped *der Vaterland* in the 1850s because of potato famines and, in my family's case, bad radicalism, they had two ways of getting to America: go through France and leave from a French port, or travel to Hamburg and catch a ship there, which is what millions of German immigrants did in the 19th and 20th

centuries.

But if I wanted to immigrate to Germany, I wouldn't fly into Hamburg ... because Germany's international airport is in Frankfurt. As Rolling Stone international affairs writer P.J. O'Rourke aptly put it: "If Jesus Christ came back tomorrow he'd have to change planes in Frankfurt."

So when I went to Germany to visit friends in Hamburg over break, I had to fly into Frankfurt (since my mother was afraid I would get shot by wild hashish dealers in Amsterdam) and then take a train to Hamburg, a distance of several hundred miles.

Now, if you're traveling to Frankfurt, I can't tell you much more than that it has an amazingly clean airport, an impressive subway system to the train station, and a pornographic movie theater in the basement, and, no, I did *not* check it out. Except, you know, for that one time.

Also, most everyone is German. But if you don't speak *die Sprache*, don't worry. Although I was armed with four years of high school German, I was so stressed about exchanging my dollars for marks and catching a train to Hamburg

that I immediately forgot everything Frau Lothar had taught me.

But that's when the United States Army came to my rescue. Well, its information booth, that is. Every year thousands of American troops ship into Germany, most of them not speaking a word of German, and so the Army provides free travel information services to them, and other lost *Amerikanischer* tourists.

Although Hamburg is heavily influenced by its proximity to England (the city is closer to London than to Munich) it is like other German cities in that it is busy and clean. Even the shipyards seemed neater than in American industrial areas. The lifeblood of Hamburg is the Elbe River, a long, sluggish, brown river which runs to the North Sea and then to the Atlantic. A good place to watch the ships being directed along the Elbe is the ritzy suburb of Altona, with its riverside cafes and restaurants and now expensive, old sailors' cottages with markers of floods years ago. Altona is a good shopping, walking area, with staired walkways instead of streets in many

See GERM, p.7B

## Europe Has Beer, Too

By Jill Weisskopf

The air was cool as it had just turned October and the chill of Denmark didn't seem as harsh as it should, for I'd been in Munich the previous day celebrating Europe's version of Isla Vista's Halloween.

Halloween in Isla Vista attracts young adults borrowing their parent's and brother's Mustangs, and K-Cars. They pack in their friends who've brought hard booze and "controlled substances." They listen to bad heavy metal and search for scantily dressed natives on a "holiday" that has lost its true meaning.

No one in Germany could tell me what the true meaning behind Oktoberfest was, why fair citizens arrived from every country of the continent traveling mostly by train to attend the largest picnic/barbecue/county fair that side of the Atlantic. Most said it used to celebrate the harvest, some said it was a pagan festival, some simply slurred, spitting out nonsense about a "festival of indulgence."

Regardless, all ages, languages and shoe sizes were represented. All sizes served were Big Gulpish: chickens were whole hens, pretzels could be hula-hooped, and the bar maids were direct descendant of the Norwegian Goliath tribe.

Yes, and the beer was of supremely high quality, arriving in steins the size of what Americans call "pitchers." That is Oktoberfest.

A mere 12 hours was enough indulgence for me as I arrived in Copenhagen on the sleeper train which



This sign means "alcohol or something"

departed Germany after midnight, arriving in Denmark after noon. I was greeted by an *au pere* girl my six-year-old half-brother once had the pleasure of being nursed by.

She was a healthy, muscular Dane, with rich blue eyes and fair skin with a hint of blush on the cheeks and too much blue mascara on the lids, but I'd had a few morning screwdrivers on the bar car, so I didn't mind much.

We sped to her home in her father's Mercedes sedan, passing castles and homes proudly displaying their red-and-white flags in windows and in backyard flag posts. There were no 7-Elevens to speak of, but I had a few luncheon rum and cola's in the station while waiting for her to pick me up, so I didn't mind much.

"Welcome to Denmark," her courteous father smiled at me behind small reading glasses while her mother smiled and her younger sister sheepishly stared at me from behind a tree. The father took me to the refrigerator, opened it and pointed at the top shelf that had many green and a

brown bottles chilling, sitting valiantly.

"These are the beers of Denmark," he said. "These two are on strike, so we will not have them today," he said respectfully and grabbed us each a cold green bottle as his wife took two tall glasses from the cupboard.

When we had finished the beers I complimented his choice of electronic entertainment devices, stressing the fine quality of his turntable: Danish made Bang & Olufson. He grinned at his wife knowingly, stood up and left the room only to bring out a large clear pitcher full of yellow liquid which had thin sliced lemons floating atop ice and sugar water.

"Have a glass of this, and if you don't like it you must leave," the man said as his family giggled softly and I laughed. The drink was, of course, spiked with vodka, I believe, but barely noticeable, quite delicious and we laughed as we watched the Cosby Show, finishing the pitcher quickly while the sun went down behind the tall trees of Copenhagen, Denmark.



Travel 1990!

# Going to D.C.? Don't Forget Mom and Dad!

By Rob Lowe

The last time I went travelling I was fortunate enough to go with my parents. All necessary expenses (food, hotel, cabs, et cetera) were picked up without forking out a dime. In fact, that's how it had always been. Shucks.

At any rate, I was rudely awakened on a recent trip to our nation's capital last quarter when the budget was made out and financed by me. I had saved from my summer job and was pretty sure I'd be able to stay within the confines of my

bankroll and credit. Hell, 250 bucks to spend on leisure for just a weekend? With airfare and accommodations taken care of? No problem.

Well, the airlines were no problem but that was about it. Being a smart little Gaucho, I did the wanna-be yuppie thing to do and applied to American Express just to get that \$99 deal. And what a bargain it was! Never mind the multitude of restricted travel dates, the lousy airline we were assigned and the Attitude we encountered from the stewards and stewardesses in



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"K" class, we were on our way.

No matter what they say about arriving plenty of time before departure, I am now a strong advocate of getting to the airport only a half hour or so before scheduled take off. There is nothing to do while sitting around except eat. You can forget Michael's or the El Encanto or any other blue-blood restaurant around here, the most expensive place to eat and drink is the airport. At LAX my buddy and I sucked down two beers and a

microwaved, paper plate pizza for 16 bucks.

If I seem down on how much stuff costs here, I should have counted my blessings before I got to the East Coast. In-fudging-credible. When I meet these friends of mine, first thing we do is grub and drink. Washington, I was soon to find out, is one of the most expensive places to fart around in.

I had every intention of seeing the Lincoln Memorial, the Smithsonian, the Wall, and as many historical

(and free) sights as possible. You know, culture. But you gotta eat. And more importantly, in our case you gotta drink. At \$15 per chicken sandwich and vanilla shake, throw in a few beers and shots of tequila and we can chalk up 35 bucks for lunch. I knew I was in trouble. At \$6 or \$7 a drink, and six or seven drinks a meal, cash outflow was amazing.

Nightclubs not only get you on a three-drink minimum, they get you on the cover as well. Shelling out \$15 to get into some place

where the main attraction is that Lou Reed or someone once played there is not my idea of fun.

Bars, though, were a happy surprise. Lots of friendly, chatty, fake people willing to talk about themselves and have a drink on you. Just like Santa Barbara, but more dressed up. You know what was really strange? No shot glasses. Order a shot of Jose or JD, they bring it to you in a beer stein.

See AIR, p.7B

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## BUS

Continued from p.3B

I made my way over to one of those one-of-a-kind coin-operated chair-television units and watched a football game until my bus came. I hopped in, secured a seat in the usual place (two or three aisles from the back), pulled out tons of reading material and put it on the aisle seat next to me.

When I'm on a bus, I like to have both seats to myself for stretching and comfort reasons, so I always put a manic sneer on my face and all my reading material on the aisle seat to scare away people who might want to foul up my leg room. Sometimes, of course, this is either infeasible or you're not quite weird-looking enough for this to work. But it's all academic as long as you have reading material.

For this journey I brought along nine Norman Mailer books, one Fletch book and all those newspapers. I've had some of my most valuable reading experiences on Greyhounds: Halberstam, Woodward & Bernstein, the Fletch series, David Niven, Mailer, and more Fletch. Fletch is the best because you can read 'em in one Long Beach to Santa Barbara trip.

So there I was, reading a Fletch book in peace, when suddenly a trashy white construction worker and his girlfriend/servant sat together on the seat next to me, giving me a look of contempt. For the next three hours he told so many stories — all just loud enough for everyone in the bus to hear — about how he's gonna kick this guys ass and how he ain't no "fag" and how, heck, some of his best friends are minorities. Three

hours. When we docked into Santa Barbara, I was sweating and wanted a smoke.

So I pulled my pack out of my sock inside the station and greeted my ride home. Then the scrawny, butt-crazy, burned-out guy came up. "Where'd you get those

cigarettes?!" he spat out, trying to control his total rage.

"From my sock," I said, laughing.

"Y-Y-Y-You took those, y-y-you got those from the front seat of the bus, didn'tcha didn'tcha y-y-you stay right here y-you don't move I'm calling the fu-ing police." And he went to the phone. I told him how to spell my last name and walked out. He came outside insisted that I drop my bag, surmised that he should probably punch me and accused me of stealing everything he had.

"Look buddy I'm really sorry you lost your smokes, I certainly didn't steal 'em & I have to go to work so I'm leaving," I intoned.

That's when he brought up the shooting business.

So what do you do? Do you call his bluff, taking the chance that he wouldn't be the one guy in 500 just crazy enough to have a gun? Or do you call for the authorities? (There was a crowd of 50 voyeurs lined up, doing nothing.) Or do you punch him? Racked with indecision I hemmed a bit, hawwed a bit, and thought a bit. Wait a second. I love this system. I love these people. Hell, I love this dang bus! If he shoots me, the system fails. I believe in the system, therefore he won't shoot me.

So I walked off, tensed up for the sound of gunfire that never came. I got in the car. I sneezed and went home.

VICES. The *fischmarkt* is similar to many open-air markets in that the typical wares are fruits and vegetables, along with candies, dried flowers, jewelry, and sometimes clothing are sold.

But what makes the *fischmarkt* different is *how* those ordinary goods are sold. Vendors shout, tell jokes, do impressions, throw food — in short, just about anything to capture attention and convince you to buy. If a vendor puts on a good show (and you're interested in the product) you buy from him. If not, you move onto the next stall, and the next show.

There is a lot to see in Germany, especially now, with the opening of the border to East Germany, but I don't want to hype that. Whether you spend your time in the *biertagens* or in the museums, visiting Germany is an integral part of any trip to Europe.

eyes. Foam became an appetizer, spilling a mortal sin. We arm wrestled for the right to lick the pitcher, and then it was my turn.

"Please, sir, more?" I was Oliver Twist — naive, timid, broken. As I forked out one of the few remaining ten spots, I knew it was time to go home.

No, I was not meant for D.C. As I waved goodbye to Washington from my airplane seat, I turned to my friend and said, "I really enjoyed Washington, it's a neat place. Next time we travel, we're going to Fresno."

## ITALY

Continued from p.4B

one another. That's why everyone was wearing leather. It's a form of light armor.

The train ground to a halt and our world became very fast. Our feckless Florentine funpack — by now we had bonded mightily and our city-state loyalties were clear — let out a thunderous roar and descended like a raving band of degenerates into the cobblestone streets of Pisa.

We were quickly surrounded by dozens of *carabinieri* wearing their thick leather police jackets with gruff nonchalance. They began to herd us, presumably toward the football stadium, like so many Neapolitan cattle.

Ugly, heckling Pisans began throwing rocks and coins at us as we walked, trapped in our police escort. A rock hit me in the back of the head and I wondered what the hell I was doing here. As I began bleeding profusely from my skull I realized the potential value of leather hats.

Florentines began breaking off in a desperate maneuver, running down alleys in an attempt to get to the tormenting Pisans who stood so smugly along our parade route. They were beaten brutally somewhere in the shadows and came limping back in pathetic ones and twos where they were comforted and bandaged on the run. People in windows above the narrow streets spat on us as we jogged like Christians to the Roman Coliseum. Italians party way too hard as American friend trotting beside me noted dryly — way, way, way too hard.

Passing the leaning tower we picked up speed as the rain of stones became more insistent. Running along the river our large mob started, changing direction in mid-stride like gazelles as two swift booms resounded across the river.

"Something smells funny," said my friend.

## GOMER

Continued from p.4B

Kennison, an old Southeast Asia hand, was unimpressed with the advice on Thailand.

The best guide book I

All around us the Florentines were moving as one, removing their scarves and wrapping them around their mouth and nose. As we, the dumb Americans, began coughing and crying we realized what we were up against: tear gas, fired in canister guns from the quaint medieval bridge we were approaching.

It was becoming more and more difficult among the chemical mist, stones and batons to imagine us going to a sporting event. But just when we had given up hope, we arrived at the stadium. We were herded into a tight dog-run, squeezed through a security check and funneled into a small enclosure at one end of the field — the visitor's rooting section.

All around us was barbed wire atop 15-foot fencing. Italian riot police with sub-machine guns stood between us and the Pisan crowd, protecting us no doubt. They too wore leather.

And on came the team! Here at last was good clean sport, played on a fair and level field amongst athletes of great stature and integrity.

"Bafancoulo!!" screamed the Florentines to the Pisans, a swear word too offensive even for a college newspaper. "Florence sucks!" responded the Pisan masses, reveling in their communal togetherness.

The game went by quickly — too quickly for our tastes — and soon enough we were out in the dog-run, amid the rocks and bloodied batons. Our giant Italian friend, a great Clifford Ray figure among mere mortals, was absolutely decimated by Florence's 1-0 loss to lowly Pisa. He cried slowly as he waded absently through a sea of human chaos. We clung to him, like lampreys to a great white shark's belly, as we made our way back to the train and semi-safety in the darkening gloom. There would be no joy in Florence this night.

There would, however, still be a lot of leather.

ever used was a tiny 60-page booklet on Turkey I got for \$5. It simply listed the best spots to see and a little bit about the culture and history, leaving me the adventure of getting there and learning about the country's life on the way.

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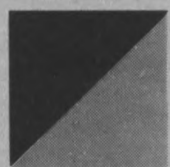
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## AIR

Continued from p.6B

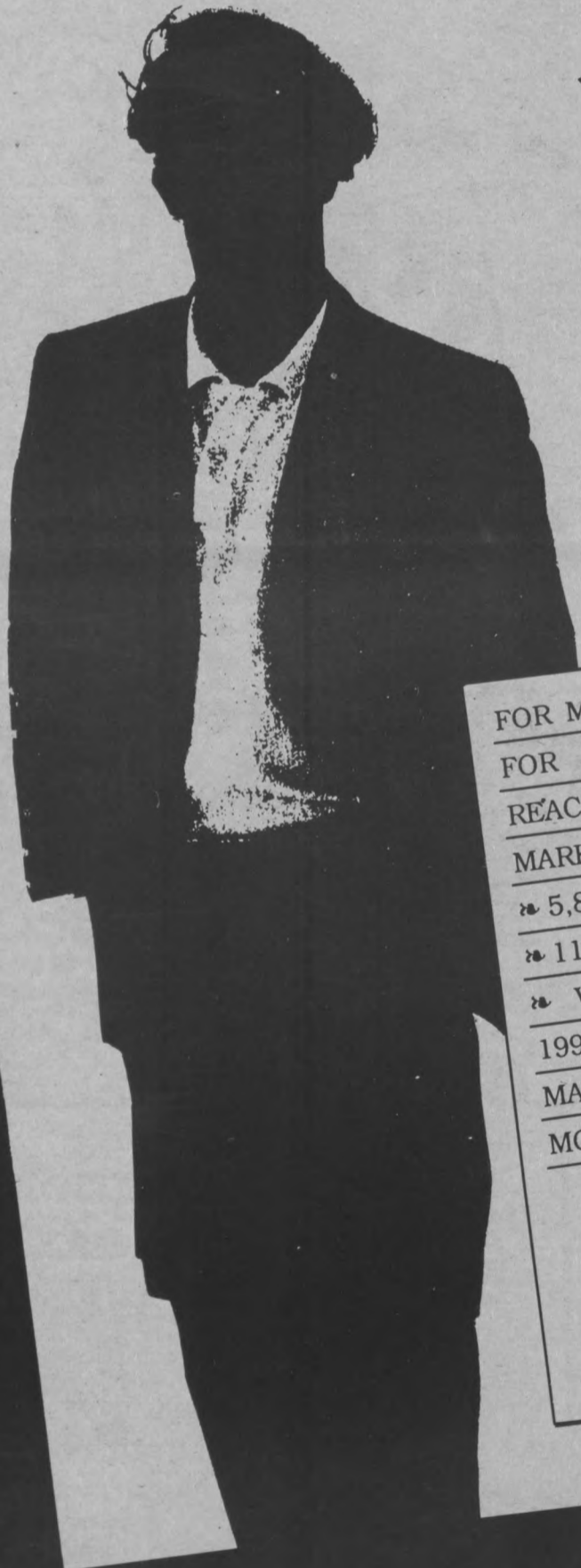
We cruise into a club to hear some acoustics (\$3 cover) and drink pitchers.

I heard my friend say "pardon me?" to the bartender.

"Nine thirty-five."

NINE THIRTY-FIVE! I saw Neil's eyes pop out as my jaw hit the bar. Coors Light was now a luxury. For the first time in our lives we begin rationing beer, measuring each precious ounce poured with suspicious

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