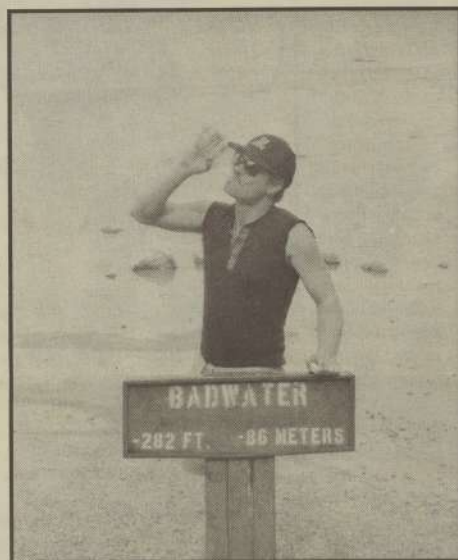


Death Valley? Yes, and it was a blast



(Top Left) Students in the History of Southwest Deserts class traveled to Death Valley over Spring Break. This course fulfills three credits of science requirements. California Public Broadcasting (Top Right) who happened to be on location, filmed the class in the midst of exploration. (Right) Bob Misley, leader of the pack, learns to appreciate just how "good" water is.



Letter to the Editor:

Student seeks balance from both ideas

Dear Editor:

In your last two issues, passionate voices have argued both for and against establishing English as the official language of the United States. Although I agree with the teachers of English as a second language -- that more harm than good would result from "English-only" laws -- I also agree with some of Mr. Eatherton's observations, and would like to suggest a way to address the concerns of both sides. The idea is not my own, however. It is one of the social principles of my religion, the Baha'i Faith, which calls for the adoption of an international auxiliary language as a necessary step for the promotion of international peace.

An auxiliary language can also overcome the expenses and cultural barriers arising from the multiple languages spoken in the U.S. and in the world. The idea itself is quite simple. An auxiliary language would not replace the native language of any nation or culture, but would be taught in schools in every nation, alongside their native languages. This would not exceed the abilities of students. Many

schools in Europe require students to learn English alongside their native German, Swedish, etc., and many Europeans learn four or five languages by the time they become adults. Many in Latin America become fluent in both Spanish and their own various Native American languages.

Once established, this international language would, in effect, be the official second language of every country in the world. Information so important that it must be made accessible to everyone could be printed in this language. Governments would not need to pay the cost of printing documents in multiple languages. International commerce, diplomacy, and understanding would not require people to spend years of their lives mastering different languages, and because this language would be auxiliary, the strength and beauty of humanity's many different cultures and languages would not be erased by enforced uniformity.

The most difficult phase of a program to establish such a language would be finding international agreement on which one language to use, but this

should not be impossible, since none are asked to give up their native languages. Indeed, none of the steps required to establish an international auxiliary language are truly impossible. Most are far easier than things humanity has already accomplished, such as the U.N. Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the many achievements of agencies such as the World Health Organization.

Implementing such a program is well within the capabilities of the United Nations, particularly if the idea receives the support of the United States. The advantages to be gained from an auxiliary language far outweigh any financial costs required to establish it, and once it is established it will add very little to the budgets we already need to spend on public education. However, it is a long-term solution whose benefits will take time to become apparent, so we in America will need to overcome our cultural attachment to short-term results. Surely we are capable of that, aren't we?

Sincere Regards,
Kevin Haines

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