

Matter of FACT



According to the Greek legend, Proserpina in jealousy turned her beautiful rival Mintha into the herb mint. Spearmint, peppermint, bergamot, sage, catnip and pennyroyal are varieties of mint. Commonly, the term mint is applied principally to peppermint and spearmint.

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Blind Boy Joins CAP

PHILADELPHIA (UPI) — A 15-year-old boy who recently joined the Civil Air Patrol will have to work hard for the next 18 months to earn his certificate of proficiency, but odds are he'll make it despite the fact he's totally blind. James E. Spruill, who lost his sight due to an eye ailment when he was two, admits that the requirements are tough — that include electronics, aerodynamics and math as well as drilling with his squadron and building three model planes—but he's ready to "give 'em a try."

Jimmy, a student at the Overbrook School for the Blind, became interested in electronics while reading about the subject in Braille. This led to an interest in radio and he joined a German-town radio club. He's passed the necessary tests to show he can operate the group's transmitter and receiver.

As for aerodynamics, Jimmy explains that the "Volunteers for the Blind have already transcribed most of the CAP books into Braille and I can use wing models for a further study" of the subject. He's also learned math by Braille.

Two parts of the CAP course present more problems. One is building the model planes. "They may give me some trouble," Jimmy said, "but I'll just give them a try."

The other troublesome part is the drilling. But that's been overcome. Jimmy marches wedged between two friends, who step on his ankles when he makes a mistake.

POSTAL REVENUE CLIMBS

WASHINGTON (UPI) — Post office revenues rose 18 per cent over 1957, but only part of the increase resulted from normal growth of mail volume, officials said. The biggest factor is said to be the one-cent an ounce increase in first class, air mail and postcard rates that went into effect last August 1. Rates on second class mail rose January 1, and are due to rise again on that date in 1960 and 1961.

RESTRICTIONS ON HEATERS

ALBANY, N.Y. (UPI) — New York State has banned portable kerosene heaters from multiple dwellings as fire hazards. They may be installed in private residences and in buildings used for agricultural and commercial uses. Even then, the heater must be equipped with a sheet metal tray beneath the burner and with a safety control to stop the flow of oil if necessary.

TROUSERECTOMY

WEST HARTFORD, Conn. (UPI) — Three physicians living in the same part of town were the "patients" in a neat operation that cost them a total of \$280. Thieves slipped into the homes of Drs. Herbert F. Laramore, Albert J. Dunn and Edward P. White, and while the doctors were sleeping, cleaned out their trouser pockets.

Antarctic Proves Land Of Scenic Splendor In Ice

McMURDO SOUND, Antarctica (UPI)—Apart from the cold, the most striking impression on a newcomer to the Antarctic is made by the continent's desolate but magnificent scenic beauty.

The area around this U.S. Navy air base on McMurdo Sound, about 800 miles from the South Pole, is a fitting example of this. The base was built early in 1956 to provide air support for the construction and maintenance of U.S. International Geophysical Year science bases scattered throughout the Antarctic. It has been continuing in this role since IGY ended Dec. 31 and is now part of the U.S. Antarctic Research Program.

Situated on a slope of the southern tip of Ross Island, an ice-locked mound of volcanic ash which overlooks McMurdo Sound, the base is a cluster of about 40 huts of various sizes including a chapel, and surrounded by supply dumps.

At the northern end of the island, looming over the base, are two huge volcanoes, 13,350-foot Mount Erebus, believed to be Antarctica's only active volcano, and next to it, extinct Mount Terror, some 10,000 feet tall. A "smaller" mountain 8,000-foot Mount Terra Nova, sits between the taller peaks and, like them, is almost entirely covered by ice and snow.

Erebus is known as "The Fujiyama of Antarctica" and is 400 feet taller than the famous Japanese volcano. A cloud-like plume of steam is usually seen pouring from the crater.

Opposite the base, about 30 miles across the ice on the other side of the Sound, is another volcano, 9,000-foot Mount Discovery which is comparatively free of snow. Several long islands, with hills rising to more than 3,000 feet, surround Discovery.

On the northern side of Mount Discovery, opposite Mount Erebus, stands the Royal Society Range, a line of high peaks stretching for more than 30 miles at more than 10,000 feet. Mount Lister, 12,800 feet, is the highest mountain in the group.

The mountains are separated by glaciers, frozen rivers which flow down the wide valleys into McMurdo Sound. The range, part of the Prince Albert Mountains, stretches to the North as far as the eye can see and to the west to the Polar plateau of Victoria Land.

Huge table-like icebergs, rising to 200 feet in height and often miles long, drift into the Sound after breaking off the Ross Ice Shelf, a huge chunk of ice the size of California. The Ross Shelf is on the other side of the island and it extends for several hundred miles to the east.

Ancient People Prayed In Nude

JERUSALEM (UPI) — The ancient people who inhabited the underground villages near Beersheba between five and six thousand years ago considered nudity the utmost expression of reverence for their gods, according to Jean Perrot, director of the French Archaeological Mission at Beersheba.

Ivory figurines discovered during the excavations of a site known as Bir es-Safadi, a little southwest of the modern city of Beersheba, are always naked and lacking mouths when supposedly facing a divinity, according to the French archaeologist who has just completed his seventh season digging here.

The absence of a mouth on a figure that is meant to represent someone paying respect to his god is taken to mean that the worshipper was expected to remain completely silent when in an attitude of devotion.

The village at Bir es-Safadi was founded sometime around 3500 B.C. It is the last of six underground villages unearthed by Perrot just outside Beersheba.

Perrot believes these people lived underground because such villages afforded the best protection against the blazing sun of the day, the bitter cold of desert nights and lashing sand storms which darken the winter skies of Israel's Negev south.

In addition to being one of the most scenic areas of the continent, McMurdo Sound is also the most historic. It was from here that British Antarctic pioneers Captain Robert Falcon Scott and Sir Ernest Shackleton made their historic dashes to the Pole.

Just a few hundred yards from this base on Hut Point stands Scott's first hut, built during his first Antarctic expedition in 1901. It provides a striking contrast to the big bustling base of today.

The hut is still in solid condition, but snow and ice accumulating over the decades since it was last used have all but covered the structure. Only the gabled roof and about two feet of the walls re-

main above the snow. Because of the snow blown inside, it is impossible to enter the hut without a major excavation project.

Also in the vicinity of this modern camp are three memorials which dramatically illustrate that Antarctic exploration, even today, is filled with hidden dangers.

At the edge of a 40-foot cliff near the Scott hut is a cross erected in memory of a member of his expedition who was swept to his death in a savage blizzard nearby. And on top of another hill at the end of the base's main street is a tall wooden cross facing the South Pole and inscribed with the words: "To strive, to seek, to find and not to yield."

The cross is a memorial to Scott and his four companions who died about 100 miles from here 46 years ago as they returned from their "march" to the Pole, terribly disappointed because they'd been beaten by the Norwegian Amundsen.

Overlooking the Scott hut as a grim reminder to present-day visitors to this bleak land is a religious memorial to Seabee tractor driver Richard T. Williams, who drowned in 600 fathoms of McMurdo Sound early in 1956.

Death has claimed the lives of 15 other men in Operation Deepfreeze operations, including six who died in a plane crash while en route to McMurdo last October.

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