Reader's Digest

1985 April—June

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BEHIND THE LINES

Have We Touched Your Life?

A FEW MONTHS AGO we opened the mail and learned of this incident in the life of Marilyn Kay Gage, a schoolteacher in Alex,

Okla. She wrote:

"I pride myself on quick thankyou notes, but this one is almost
eight years overdue. I usually read
the Reader's Digest in its entirety,
and the August 1976 issue was no
exception. In it, condensed from
The Elks Magazine, was 'Help the
Choking Victim,' by Andrew Hamilton. If that one brief page had not
been printed...

"On a spring day my life-science students were busy with an assignment. I was grading papers when I heard laughter, then a strange sound like a high-pitched blend of a cat's meow and a baby's cry. Having taught seventh-grade boys for several years, I decided to ignore their foolishness.

"'Mrs. Gage!' someone yelled. I looked up. Joe was standing in front of my desk. His face was contorted and blue-purple. All that he

could utter was 'eeeeeen, eeeen.'

"I had to get help. I led Joe into the hall. He was getting limp. What do I do? Then the light dawned. Give him the 'hug of life.' I drew him close. With my front to his back, I cupped my hands just below his rib cage and pressed into his abdomen with a quick, upward thrust. One, two, three times. Out popped a wad of pink bubble gum that had become lodged in his windpipe when he laughed.

"As I walked him to the office to recuperate, my legs were quivery. I realized the outcome might have been fatal had I not read of the Heimlich maneuver in The Digest."

SUCH DRAMA doesn't occur every day—for which we are grateful. But we know from your letters that Reader's Digest articles often have an impact on your lives in no less important ways; that you have found in them the resolve to quit smoking, the inspiration to make it through a family crisis, the chance to get



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involved in an issue of the day.

Last November, for instance, we told the story of Andrei Sakharov, the Russian physicist exiled with his wife in an isolated part of his country for speaking out against Soviet policies. At the end of the article, we urged you to write the Kremlin in his behalf.

We have watched enough writers struggle with a paragraph to understand the challenge of our suggestion. Yet more than 15,000 of you—along with thousands of readers of our international editions—took time to write. Many sent us copies. In his letter to the Kremlin, Robert S. Novak of Depew, N.Y., expressed a common sentiment:

"You have banished the Sakharovs to the outskirts of your civilization, hoping they will be forgotten. Don't you realize that your very action of removing these two important people from our view can only perpetuate their effect on us?

"Consider these thoughts, and the thoughts of those with whom I join my voice. We will not be ignored, just as Andrei Sakharov and Elena Bonner will not be forgotten."

Helene E. Merrick of Ridgefield, Conn., who signed her letter to the Soviets "Just an American," had this to say:

"What an admission of weakness a government makes when the freedom of one man's voice must be smothered! Such a government sows the seeds of its own destruction. History has taught us one indisputable fact—the voice of the people will inevitably be heard."

Several months after the Sakharov article appeared, 40 to 50 letters a day were still arriving at the U.S. Mission to the United Nations, which promised to deliver them to Soviet officials. Members of the staff, accustomed to quantities of public mail, were nevertheless surprised at the size and duration of the response to the Sakharov story. "This is unprecedented," said one.

As U.S. ambassador to the U.N. Jeane Kirkpatrick sat next to seven big bags crammed full of mail for the Soviets, she said to reporters, "This is not a post-card campaign. These were letters written by their authors. It is a moving outpouring."

In a letter to us referring to the Sakharov story, Molly Smith of Dallas wrote:

"We have been encouraged by the Reader's Digest policy of presenting situations and then offering specific, constructive and easy-to-follow steps by which the average American can help."

INDEED, we want our articles to find a useful place in your life. And if we've provided you the opportunity to improve yourself or your world, we'd like to hear from you.

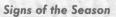
Won't you share with us any impact that The Digest has made on your life? Send your letter to: Editorial Impact, Reader's Digest, Pleasantville, N.Y. 10570.

-THE EDITORS



ON AN APPLICATION for employment, beside the question regarding marital status, a job seeker wrote: "Not speaking."

Toward More Picturesque Speech



At a garden center: "We're a growing concern"

—John E. Gergich

On a church lawn: "Pray, keep off the grass. Such trespasses will *not* be forgiven" —Frank Hughes

By a muddy road: "Closed in observance of spring"

—Joel Eastman

At a drive-in restaurant: "Taste buds are blooming here" - Janet E. Morse

In a plant nursery: "We will sell no vine before its time"

-Shelby Friedman in The Wall Street Journal

Word Play

Bunny hutch: rabbitat -John Roberts

Feminist goals: herizons -A. H. Berzen

Bald head: nudel —Edward Stevenson

Brothers and sisters: quibblings

—Barbara A. Scienke

Park-bench philosopher: senior sitizen —A. H. Berzen

Revised Versions

Where there's a will there's a wail

—Arnold H. Glasow

Rolling Stones gather an audience

—Ray Przybysz

A stitch in time saves embarrassment
—Al Frisbie in Omaha World-Herald

Where there's life there's cope

—Lanc Olinghouse

All secrets are alike—they go in one ear and out to another —Rhonda Engs

City Sights

The upward flight of skyscrapers

—Bonnie May Malody

A spider's web of streets -Bill Granger

Fire escapes slashing down sides of buildings like wrought-iron lightning

—James Carroll

Smokestacks autographing the sky
—Mary Shepard

Date Lines

Young woman to friend: "I'm all in from going out"

—Judith A. Mollner

Bachelor to mirror: "Mirror, mirror, on the wall, who's the fairest one to call?"

—Gregory Scott Billstone

Customer to computer-dating service: "Your machine just matched me up with my ex-wife!"

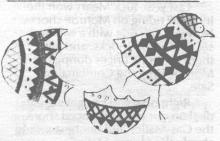
—Al Kaufman

Woman about date: "He's a regular Don Yawn" —Lou Erickson in Atlanta Journal

Man to girlfriend's lawyer: "Fifty thousand for a broken heart? What's she getting—a transplant?"

-Reamer Keller

Picturesque Speechless



-Vahan Shirvanian in Audubon



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THE MILITARY-BASE BOONDOGGLE

Two billion dollars—the total federal income tax paid by 684,000 typical U.S. taxpayers—is hardly petty cash. But that's the amount Congress forces the Pentagon to spend each year to keep open outmoded, unneeded installations across the country

BY RANDY FITZGERALD

ISTORIC FORT SHERIDAN sits on the shore of Lake Michigan, about 28 miles north of downtown Chicago. Established in 1887, the old Army base is now staffed mostly by recruiting and administrative personnel. While 62 of its acres are devoted to training or operations, and 32 to administration, over 150—including two lovely beaches and a superb 18-hole golf course—are used for recreation.

For more than a decade the Department of Defense (DOD) has wanted to close Fort Sheridan. This would save taxpayers at least \$9 million annually, with another \$50 million or more coming from sale of the property. An Army study is blunt: "No strategic or mobilization mis-

sion has been identified for Fort Sheridan." But fearing the economic impact of closure, members of the Illinois Congressional delegation used their legal and political clout to keep Fort Sheridan open.

Of the DOD's 4000 military facilities nationwide, at least 50 are obsolete and could be closed. Many were established long before modern communications, interstate highways and jet aircraft rendered them uneconomical and unneeded. If the military-base structure was realigned, savings to the taxpayers—as calculated in 1981 by the Office of Management and Budget and in 1983 by the Grace Commission—could be \$2 billion a year.

But no military-base-realignment

package has been sent by the DOD to Capitol Hill since 1979. The reason is that any attempt by the Pentagon to close unnecessary facilities is met by widespread Congressional opposition. Every state and about half of Congressional districts contain military installations, and the pervasive Congressional attitude, summed up by one lawmaker, is: "Protect my pork and I'll protect yours."

In the face of such reaction, it is little wonder that the Pentagon has practically given up on closing bases. "Tragically," says Rep. Denny Smith (R., Ore.), "national-security decisions are being thwarted by local political interests that sabo tage efforts to provide a strong national defense in a fiscally responsible manner "

Until 1977, the Executive Branch enjoyed a relatively free hand in

fashioning the nation's base structure. Then Congress passed, and President Jimmy Carter signed, legislation creating hurdles against closures. The new law required, first, that the Pentagon notify Congress when it is even considering closing a base. The Pentagon must then prepare economic-, environmental- and strategic-impact studies that can take up to a year and \$1 million each to complete. Finally, Congress can veto any closure simply by refusing to consider it.

President Carter's signature came back to haunt him a year later when Secretary of Defense Harold Brown released to Congress a list of 85 base closures and reductions intended to save taxpayers \$337 million a year. Democrats and Republicans, liberals and conservatives, put aside their differences to join in opposition to the package of economies.

Consider the case of Goodfellow Air Force Base in Texas, described in a 1979 Pentagon study as "a small, single-mission training base with a relatively high per-capita operating cost." Shutting down the base, the study estimated, would save \$11 mil-

lion annually.

Sen. John Tower (R., Texas)since retired-thundered that the elimination of Goodfellow was "a major national-security risk." Rep. Tom Loeffler (R., Texas), whose district includes Goodfellow, added language to the 1980 military-construction legislation ordering the Pentagon not to close Goodfellow until a new series of studies had been prepared analyzing the "socioeconomic factors in the affected area." Since 1981, Tower, then chairman of the Senate Armed Services Commit-

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tee, and Loeffler, a member of the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Military Construction, added money to the military budget for construction at the base. They appropriated \$41 million for new facilities, a ploy designed to make it even more difficult for the DOD to justify eliminating the base in the future.

Fort Monroe, Virginia, continuously manned since 1823, was targeted for closure because it is too old and too small. The Pentagon estimated savings of \$10 million a year if the fort's occupants were transferred to another post a few miles away, Rep. Paul Trible (R., Va.)now a Senator-whose district encompassed the fort, objected that closure would cause "severe economic disruption" to the surrounding community. Vowing to

maintain the historic military post, he inserted into the 1980 militaryconstruction bill the same language that helped prevent the closing of Goodfellow.

After the Reagan Administration took office in 1981, the DOD drew up a new list of at least 50 obsolete, under-utilized or too costly facilities. As news of the possible closures leaked out, the Northeast-Midwest Coalition, representing over 200 members of Congress, demanded a complete moratorium on base closings in their states. Rep. Margaret Heckler (R., Mass.)-later named Secretary of Health and Human Services-wrote the Secretary of the Army that she would "be severely constrained" from supporting any increase in the defense budget if Fort Devens in Massachusetts was closed. The protests paid

off. The Administration abandoned plans to ask Congress to close Fort Devens or the other obsolete bases.

Though lawmakers argue that base closures would jeopardize the local economy, it need not be that way. Take, for instance, Benicia, Calif. When the Pentagon announced in 1961 that the 110-year-old arsenal there would be closed, it seemed that a killing economic blow had been dealt the surrounding community. With a payroll of 2400, Benicia's arsenal was Solano County's largest employer.

But some civic leaders recognized that the 2000-acre abandoned facility—with a port, airstrip, roads and buildings already in place—posed a golden industrial-development opportunity. Today, the Benicia Industrial Park is home to dozens of businesses from specialty manufac-

turers and warehouses to a refinery, employing over 4500 people.

Consider also the case of Kincheloe Air Force Base in Michigan's Upper Peninsula. When the \$700million base was closed in 1977, 700 jobs and \$36 million in annual revenues were lost to the rural community of 26,000. But the closing. proved to be an economic boon. The Chippewa County board of commissioners established a local economicdevelopment corporation to offer low-interest loans and lease the land at bargain-basement rates. Nearly 30 companies have established commercial and industrial operations at a the former base, creating more than 1000 new jobs. Reports Industry Week magazine: "Amazingly, in what was once a town of deserted buildings and shattered dreams. plans are now under way for the con-

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struction of additional facilities to meet expansion demands."

The experiences at the Benicia arsenal and Kincheloe Air Force Base are not unique. Numerous communities nationwide have overcome the initial shock of base closings to turn apparent disaster into an economic blessing.

A Pentagon-commissioned study of 12 converted military installations found that in most cases the base closure turned out to be a boon. "Not only have the local economies not suffered the severe setbacks anticipated," the study reported, "but civilian acquisition and operation have had unexpected benefits. In almost every case, the civilian jobs lost because of the base closure have been offset with an equal or greater number of new jobs."

If the budget deficit is to be lowered, Congress must summon the courage to shut down economically indefensible installations and place the national interest above shortsighted local concerns. No longer should Congress force the Pentagon into the business of combating unemployment and subsidizing the local economy of communities with costly, unnecessary military facilities. Shutting down just ten unneeded installations, says Senate Armed Services Committee Chairman Barry Goldwater (R., Ariz.), would save one billion dollars a year.

Congressman Smith has introduced legislation to give the Executive Branch more flexibility in operating the military structure. His bill would limit the requirement for the Pentagon to perform lengthy, costly closure-impact studies. Smith has been unable to line up a single co-sponsor in the House or Senate. But the Congressman, a decorated F-4 combat pilot with 180 missions over Vietnam, vows to keep up the fight.

"Congress must remove the unnecessary legislative barriers that bar the President and the Secretary of Defense from taking the swift action necessary to manage our base structure efficiently," Smith says, "We need to shelter national-security decisions from local self-serving political interests."

To which beleaguered taxpayers can—along with letters of support to Rep. Denny Smith—add an amen.

Caught in Passing

AT A HEALTH SPA: "She's a decided blonde—she decided last night."

—Contributed by Galen Davis

WIFE TO HUSBAND looking at garden tools: "Don't buy anything we can borrow."

—Maric Reinke, quoted by Alex Thien in Milwaukee Sentinel

IN AN ELEVATOR: "He has a waterproof voice—no one can drown it out."

—Lane Olinghouse

AT A SINGLES' CLUB: "Polite? He won't open an oyster without knocking first."

—Parts Pups



News From the World of Medicine

CHEAPER DRUGS AHEAD

CONGRESS HAS PASSED a bill to make lower-priced generic drugs more widely available, saving consumers an estimated \$1 billion during the next decade. The bill will make a fast-track method of FDA approval available for generic versions of patented prescription drugs approved since 1962. For drugs approved prior to that, a generic manufacturer had only to show that his drug was the same as a brand-name drug to win FDA approval. But this procedure was not available for drugs approved since 1962, insulating many best-selling drugs from lower-priced competition. For instance, the diuretic Dyazide, the top-selling prescription drug in the United States, has had no patent since 1981, but no generic version has been available.

The bill also allows up to five more years of patent protection for new brand-name drugs, an incentive that the pharmaceutical industry has argued is critical to development of

ew ones.

-Martha M. Hamilton in Washington Post

LESSON FROM AN EASTER-EGG HUNT

THOUGH CUSTOMARY for centuries, boiling and dyeing Easter eggs can contribute to food poisoning, researchers report in the Journal of the American Medical Association.

About 300 children became ill after eating hard-boiled eggs at a 1983 Eas-

ter-egg hunt in Modesto, Calif. The outbreak was traced to bacteria that had seeped through the shells while the eggs were cooling in water. The bacteria matched staphylococci found in a cook who had boiled and dyed the 3600 eggs involved and stored them at room temperature for several days.

Laboratory experiments were conducted and demonstrated the ease with which cooked eggs could become contaminated, according to the research team, led by Dr. G. Alexander Merrill at the University of California School of Public Health. Normally, unbroken eggs are protected from spoilage for weeks-even without refrigeration-by the cuticle. shell membranes and antibacterial properties of their protein. But these are destroyed by the heat and mild acid (vinegar) used in most dyed-egg processes. "We recommend that cooked eggs be handled as aseptically as possible and properly refrigerated until they are consumed," the researchers advise.

THAT THE DEAF MAY HEAR

THE FDA HAS APPROVED an electronic ear-implant that could enable as many as 200,000 profoundly deaf people to hear sounds such as automobile horns and doorbells. Dr. Mark Novitch, deputy commissioner of the agency, says, "For the first time, a device can, to a degree, replace an organ of the human senses."

The inner-ear, or cochlear, device works this way: a small, externally

worn microphone picks up a sound that is converted into an electronic signal and sent to a coil placed behind an ear. The coil then transmits the signal to a receiver implanted under the skin, after which the signal is carried to the cochlea by a wire. The auditory nerve is thus stimulated to send the sound message to the brain.

The device, one of several implant systems under development, can help people detect changes in voice inflection or volume, an aid in lip reading. It has been tested on more than 400 patients since 1969, according to its developer, Dr. William House of the House Ear Institute in Los Angeles. But the implant can assist only a portion of the two million Americans whose hearing loss is so severe that hearing-aids are of limited benefit, and it is so far approved for adults only. The cost of the implant, about \$11,000, is expected to be covered by most insurance programs.

-Irvin Molotsky in New York Times

SURGERY FOR NEARSIGHTEDNESS

A CONTROVERSIAL SURGICAL technique to correct nearsightedness called radial keratotomy appears to be a relatively safe and effective alternative to eyeglasses. Preliminary results from the first year of a planned five-year study funded by the National Eye Institute confirm early reports from the Soviet Union, which pioneered the technique, and the experiences of American ophthalmologists who have performed more than 63,000 of the operations since 1978.

In the \$2.5-million study, 413 patients underwent the procedure on one eye at one of nine centers. With eyeglasses or contact lenses, people enrolled in the study were able to see well. Without corrective lenses, more than half had 20/200 vision or worse: the only letter they could read on an eye chart was the big E. After surgery, 78 percent had 20/40 vision or

better, the acuity needed in most states to get a driver's license withou glasses.

While the statistical results seen encouraging, study director Dr George O. Waring III, professor of ophthalmology at Emory University. says, "The outcome cannot be precisely predicted for an individual patient." The surgery failed to free about 20 percent of the patients from their glasses. And although side effects seem minor-fluctuations in vision and glare—the study's researchers stress that long-term problems might not show up for 10 to 30 years. Surgery takes about 15 minutes, costs from \$1000 to \$3000 and can be performed in a doctor's office.

-Larry Thompson in Washington Post

HAZARDS OF RAW MILK

MILK IS OFTEN CALLED the "perfect" food. But it may be far from perfect if it is drunk in the raw, unpasteurized state—particularly by the very young, elderly or infirm. Sparked by a steady increase in the incidence of food poisoning from a virulent strain of bacteria, Salmonella dublins, the Centers for Disease Control have conducted studies linking illness and death from this infection to the consumption of raw milk.

Dairy sanitation laws are under state jurisdiction, so the FDA has no direct involvement in controlling the availability of raw milk. Because its sale may present a public-health problem, however, the FDA is gathering information to determine if there is a need to require pasteurization of all milk products sold for human consumption. Advocates of raw milk claim that it is more nutritious than its pasteurized counterpart, but there is no way for a consumer to know which raw milk is safe and which isn't.

-Tufts University Diet & Nutrition Letter

An archeological find brings delight to a group of volunteers



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Then try...Adventure Travel With Earthwatch

By Patricia Skalka

THE SKY WAS OVERCAST, the Pacific waters were choppy, as our 12-foot inflatable boat drifted a quarter-mile off the rocky coast of Canada's Vancouver Island. Four of us—a marine-biology research assistant named Rikk Kvitek and three amateur whale watchers—were silent as we scanned the horizon for the telltale spout of the gray whale, a species protected by the United States. Since early morning of the previous day, teams of volunteers and

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An Earthwatcher holds a newly hatched leather back sea turtle

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scientists had been tracking the huge mottled animals to document their feeding behavior as part of a research project for California's Moss Landing Marine Laboratories. If all went well, the facts and figures we were compiling would form a round-the-clock record of a single whale. At 7:44 a.m., my team relieved the night-watch crew.

At 2 p.m., we still had our target in sight when another whale suddenly slid under our boat, its massive back less than five feet below the hull. The whale was the size of a locomotive, and it seemed to take an eternity to pass completely under us.

Kvitek cut the motor. We drifted,

silent, tense.

What happens next is not up to us, I realized. The whale is in control.

WHOOSH! The leviathan surfaced directly behind us and exhaled. Its ten-foot-high spout enveloped us in a fine mist. Then the whale disappeared under the boat. Quietly, almost without a ripple, the huge animal resurfaced on my side of the craft, its head up against the hull. Slowly it rolled over, taking a steady look at me with a dark eye. For an eerie moment we were in silent communication.

It's asking to be touched, I thought, as I extended my arm over the edge of the boat and gently laid my hand on top of the whale. For 30 seconds we maintained contact—two warm-blooded creatures adrift on a cold sea, each a mystery to the other. The whale dropped away, and two minutes passed before it surfaced 200 feet off our bow.

The great back arched and tail flukes rose out of the water. For a moment, the tail seemed suspended against the horizon. Then it slowly disappeared beneath the surface.

MY ADVENTURE had been made possible by Earthwatch Expeditions, Inc., a nonprofit organization founded in 1970. Based in Belmont, Mass., Earthwatch offers people with scientific interests the thrill of exotic locales—and a possible tax deduction for volunteering their time and services to scientific research.*

In its 14-year history Earthwatch has signed up some 13,000 recruits, ranging in age from 16 to 82. Paying from \$460 (excluding transportation costs) to more than \$2000 for tenday to four-week trips, and working side-by-side with experts, Earthwatch volunteers have mapped ancient shipwrecks off the coast of Majorca, dug for Mayan artifacts in Guatemala, tracked hyenas in Kenya, and helped unravel mysteries of the people who erected giant stone statues on Easter Island.

Earthwatch is part of a burgeoning industry that includes educational science tours sponsored by museums and zoos, as well as actual working expeditions. One of the largest of expeditionary coordinators, Earthwatch offers 86 programs in 42 countries.

"Earthwatch appeals to the American volunteer spirit," says Brian A. Rosborough, president of the 16,000-member organization. "It's a little like Tom Sawyer. He made painting a fence fun and got his friends to help. We make science

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^{*}The deduction, expected to continue even under proposed tax reforms, could cover expedition and transportation costs to and from the research site. Contact a professional tax adviser for details regarding volunteer services.

research a challenge and ask the public to support it with money and manpower." So far, the organization has raised more than \$9.9 million for science, making it one of the country's larger sources of funding for field research.

Once trained in basic research techniques by an expedition investigator, Earthwatch volunteers collect information. They become extra eyes scanning the sky, or extra hands scratching in the earth. Wisconsin farmer Ed Leach and his wife, Janet, a special-education teacher, have been on three expeditions. Together, they have studied an early-17th-century school in Lexington, Va., a ninth-century church in Gueugnon, France, and an Iron Age settlement in the Mediterranean. "In each instance," says Janet Leach, "we were uncovering the mystery of another culture. We never knew what treasure we might find."

Sometimes volunteers make dramatic discoveries. John Connor, a tire dealer from Bergen County, New Jersey, was excavating a site in Swaziland, Africa, looking for evidence of early man from the Middle Stone Age. He had brushed through nearly two feet of what archeologists call a sterile area—soil that yields nothing in terms of human or animal remains.

Above him, investigator David Price-Williams, field director of the Swaziland Archaeological Research Association, walked among the digging sites offering hints and answering questions. Connor, discouraged by the quality of his finds, had an abrupt change of luck. While sweeping away loose soil, his hand froze in

midair. Lying on top of the dirt was a black quartzite object shaped like a spearhead nearly 14 cm. long. Connor stared in awe at the 45,000-year-old relic.

Later, after inspecting the piece, Price-Williams told Connor: "You've just discovered one of the largest Stone Age artifacts of its kind found in this part of Africa."

Daphne Gemmill, an administrator with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, strolled down a deserted beach in the Galápagos Islands, about 600 miles west of Ecuador. Since early morning she and four other Earthwatch volunteers had scrambled through desertlike scrub growth, recording the songs of local finches for studies in their evolution.

Suddenly Gemmill heard a flapping noise behind her. Some 200 yards away a brown Galápagos hawk was struggling to get off the ground with a large white bird, called a booby, grasped in its talons. "No matter how mundane something seems, don't ignore it," Gemmill had been told by expedition scientists. She began documenting the scene, snapping as many pictures as possible.

She was told by a research scientist at the Galápagos Islands' Charles Darwin Research Center that he believed she was the only person known to have photographed such an encounter between these two species.

From the beginning, the idea of amateurs' participating in scientific research was met with skepticism. "But Earthwatch volunteers have helped to prove the skeptics wrong," says Rosborough. "Today many researchers admit they

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