

THE SABBATICAL COMMUNIQUE
of Thomas V. Taylor member of the Biblical
faculty and currently on a sabbatical leave although the
only thing he has really left is his fishing rod.

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No, I have done very little fishing although I have thought about it a good deal. I have read several books and have done a little more work on my writing although I am about twenty pages behind in my announced schedule. Some of this is due to the travelling...it is not easy to get a lot of writing done when travelling around the country. And I doubt if I will get caught up in this aspect of my work but maybe on my next sabbatical (1999+) I will be able to renew these efforts...unless some other amazing adventure should come my way.

And I have been telling you of the curious things that happened to me following my attempt to help a hitchhiker during a furious storm earlier in the year. I was discussing the Kuisbeighn library system and had noted that it utilized a tree called the Sogwog tree. The leaves of the Sogwog are somewhat oval in shape and about the dimension of the diameter of a football. They grow on short stems and are somewhat opaque in character. A page of a printed book is held next to a sogwog leaf, briefly, and it is transferred to the leaf and a whole branch of a tree will be the pages on one book. Only mature trees are used, of course. The maximum height of the vegetation above the ground is no more than five feet so one just walks along reading as one goes. There is a great abundance of the trees in Sogwog park and the trees are arranged in special sections so that the learning processes can be "put together". Librarians in Kuisbeighn are really gardeners and most of their time is spent in raising trees and deciding where to place them at the right time. The trees grow fairly rapidly and are most hardy. But when one does become infirm, the pages are gathered as collector's items and their content passed to another tree. The system is not nearly so space economical as is ours and the maintenance is somewhat different but it is certainly unique. Rain, incidentally, sharpens the image on the leaves and after a good rain there is a rush of Kuisbeighners on the library. Librarians are treated with honor on the little planet so long as they do not talk. The constant work among the trees gives them a moldy aroma and a person who has eaten so many rocks as to have dust in the mouth is often referred to as having Librarian's breath.

But speaking of books...it is of interest to note that no one does any writing on Kuisbeighn, writing with physical implements, that is. There is plenty of written communication but it is done by a very highly developed thought process machine. All the natives carry a small device about the size of a pocket calculator. There is a small mirror on one end and a sort of pocket on the other. The pocket is filled with pieces of a special paper and these are joined rather like our modern computer paper. BEhind both of these