At the Los Angeles County Fair

there is a lion who waits through the races to perform at night in front of the grandstand. He has the only shade around and he lies in the shadows

while the bettors in the infield and the horses on the track circle around him. I look forward to seeing the lion every September during the short racing season out there. When I stand by his cage to read the Racing Form my luck seems to improve,

if only a little, and that is a comforting thought in the spring when betting is precarious and the fillies and mares are not thinking about running but of enormous, haunchy stallions.

Once in 1966, after a fine day, I successfully resisted the temptation to smuggle in some delicacy for the lion. I have always been glad that I did not do that. From the beginning our relationship has been without sentimentality or need for compensation. It has been as clean as his sharp, white teeth.

Yesterday when the fair opened for the new season I drove out and the lion was nowhere to be found. And though I asked anyone who would listen to me, no one in the circus nor any of the fair officials seemed to know anything about it.

Things They Don't Tell You in History Class

The name, for example, of the man who first used the phrase, "The only good indian is a dead indian."

He was called Oklahoma Charlie, a little-known scout for the Army who was -- besides being a necrophiliac -- was queer as a three dollar bill.

Live and learn.

-- Ronald Koertge

Pasadena, Calif.