

WE'LL MISS YOU, SAMANTHA

Last May, Gale Warner set off for Manchester, Maine to write the third chapter for *The New Diplomats*. Her subject was the twelve year old Samantha Smith. For several days, Gale lived with the Smiths, talking at length with Samantha and her parents, Arthur and Jane.

Tragically, it was the last in-depth interview anyone ever had with Samantha or Arthur. On the evening of August 25th, Samantha and Arthur were flying back from London, where Samantha had just finished her first acting job for the television series "Lime Street." Shortly before their Beechcraft 99 jet landed in Portland, Maine, it crashed, killing everyone aboard.

Several days later, in what was reported to be the largest memorial service in Maine's history, more than a thousand people gathered to pay their last respects.

Among those attending was Vladimir Kulagin, representing the Soviet Embassy in Washington, D.C., who read a special statement from Mikhail Gorbachev.

"Everyone in the Soviet Union who has known Samantha Smith," Gorbachev wrote, "will remember forever the image of the American girl, who, like millions of Soviet young men and women, dreamt about peace, and about friendship between the peoples of the United States and the Soviet Union."

Kulagin then set aside the message and added, "The best thing would be if we continued what they started with good will, friendship and love. Samantha shone like a brilliant beam of sunshine at a time when relations between our two countries were clouded."

Another unusual part of the audience were 15 children from The Life Experience, a school for handicapped and terminally ill children. Meg Randa, the school's associate director, said, "Samantha was a symbol

of hope to all the children."

Dori Desateal, one of Samantha's closest friends, said, "When I realize what she was trying to do for our world, I was very proud to be her friend."

Thousands more sent condolences.

Maine Governor Joseph Brennan said, "All of America has lost a very special little girl."

President Reagan wrote, "Millions of Americans, indeed millions of people, share the burdens of your grief."

"I regard her death like the loss of a loved one," wrote Valentina Tereshkova. "It is hard to believe that Samantha is no more. Her numerous Soviet friends—adults and children alike—deeply mourn her premature death."

... The bright image of Samantha Smith, the 'little ambassador of peace,' will live forever in our hearts."

Samantha may be gone, but she has not been forgotten. Her mother, Jane, has already formed a foundation to support future citizen diplomacy initiatives. In the Soviet Union, a recently discovered diamond of rare beauty was named after Samantha.

And in late November, a "children's summit" between Minnesota and Moscow took place in Samantha's honor. Using "space bridge" technology, American and Soviet children were able to look at each other and ask each other questions—about their games, their clothes, their dating habits, etc. At the end of the program, the children all broke down and cried when they realized that the little girl who helped make it all possible was now gone.

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In the following essay, we have left Gale's writing as it was before Samantha died. We felt that this would be the best way to convey her passion and enthusiasm for life—her legacy that will live on for generations.

Profiles in Diplomacy

GALE WARNER

The Innocent Abroad: Samantha Smith

ON THE BACKDROP BEHIND THE makeshift stage, in handpainted, childishly askew letters, is a quote from Mahatma Gandhi: "If we are to reach real peace in this world and if we are to carry on a real war against war, we shall have to begin with the CHILDREN." About 200 parents and children are sitting in a dormitory lounge at the University of Southern Maine in Gorham, Maine, whispering to each other about the BBC cameramen politely maneuvering in the background. Everyone has gathered to see a real, live celebrity: the girl who, two years ago, sent a "letter for peace" straight to the top—to Soviet Premier Yuri Andropov.

Samantha Smith bounds to the microphone like a young cat released from a cage. "I thought I'd read a few selections from my book, if you guys don't mind," she begins, beaming a winsome smile at the audience and tossing her head to one side. "Actually, the whole thing started when I asked my mother if there was going to be a war. Once I watched a science show on public television and the scientists said that a nuclear war would wreck the Earth and destroy our atmosphere. Nobody could win a nuclear war. I remember that I woke up one morning and wondered if this was going to be the last day of the Earth."

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"Profiles in Diplomacy" is a regular feature of The CID Report describing the personal stories of individuals who have undertaken noteworthy diplomatic initiatives. The following piece is an abridged version of a chapter in a forthcoming CID book entitled The New Diplomats, written by Gale Warner, a freelance writer now living in Cambridge, Massachusetts.

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Samantha Smith is now nearly thirteen years old. Under the fashionable blue-and-white checked blouse and skirt there are incipient signs of puberty. The girl who so impressed hard-bitten reporters as a "gangly-legged bundle of energy" and charmed them with her penchant for softball is growing up. Her straight brunette hair, once held back in a hairband, has now been clipped into a stylish pageboy. Her lips are tinged with rouge and mascara highlights her wide blue eyes. Still, despite all of the attention, despite the instant fame, despite the book, despite Hollywood, Samantha Smith has not yet turned into Brooke Shields. She reads quickly and decisively. She appears to have a good deal to say.

"I asked my mother who would start a war and why. She showed me a news-magazine with a story about America and Russia, one that had a picture of the new Russian leader, Yuri Andropov, on the cover. We read it together. It seemed that the people in both Russia and America were worried that the other country would start a nuclear war. It all seemed so dumb to me. I told Mom that she should write to Mr. Andropov to find out who was causing all the trouble. She said, 'Why don't *you* write to him?' So I did."

"Dear Mr. Andropov," she wrote, "My name is Samantha Smith. I am ten years old. Congratulations on your new job. I

have been worrying about Russia and the United States getting into a nuclear war. Are you going to vote to have a war or not? If you aren't please tell me how you are going to help to not have a war. This question you do not have to answer, but I would like to know why you want to conquer the world or at least our country. God made the world for us to live together in peace and not to fight."

Samantha wrote on a lined piece of notepaper in the careful, looping script of ten year old girls everywhere. Her father, Arthur Smith, helped her mail the letter to "Mr. Yuri Andropov, The

"I thought my questions were good ones and it shouldn't matter if I was ten years old."

Kremlin, Moscow, USSR." Samantha was impressed that it cost so much to mail—40 cents. Her expectations were not high. "I thought I'd just get a form letter, like I did from the Queen of England"—to whom, at the age of five, she wrote a fan letter. Samantha and her parents soon forgot about the letter.

Four or five months later, Samantha

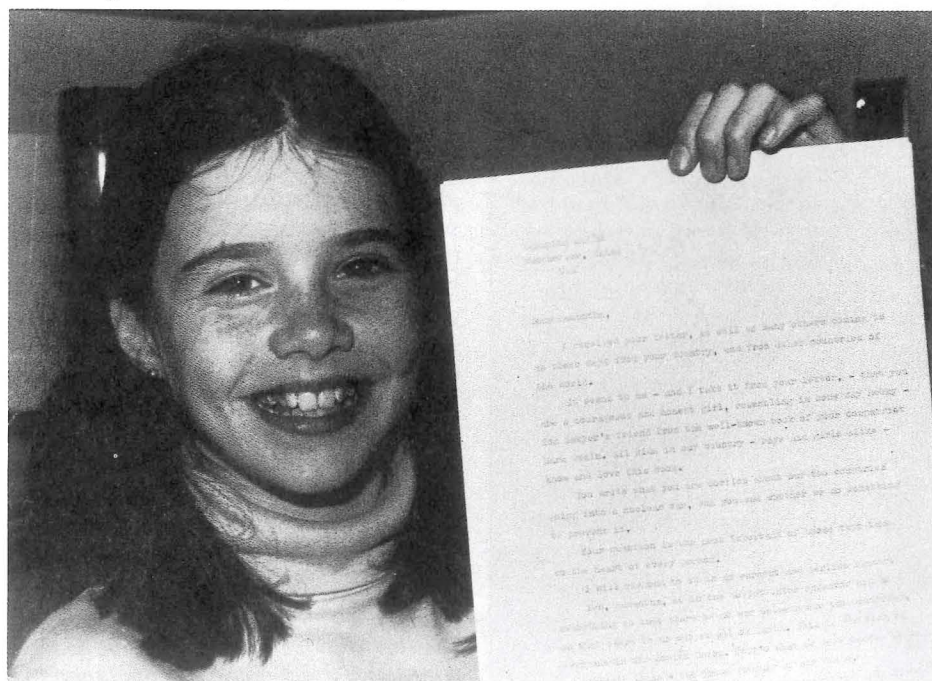


Arthur, Samantha, and Jane Smith, standing in front of the Sovietskaya Hotel in Moscow.

was summoned to the secretary's office of her elementary school and told that there was a reporter from the Associated Press on the telephone who wanted to speak with her. Samantha protested that there must be some kind of mistake. "Mrs. Peabody said, well, did you write a letter or something to Yuri Andropov? She practically dragged me into the office and got me on the phone. And the reporter told me that there was an article in *Pravda* that talked about my letter, and there was even a picture of it."

Samantha managed to overcome her surprise enough to talk to the reporter for a few minutes. A story went out over the news wires, and the Associated Press sent up a photographer to Manchester to take a picture of a grinning Samantha next to her dad's manual typewriter. Meanwhile, her father, a professor of English at the University of Maine, managed to locate a copy of *Pravda* and found some colleagues in the Russian department to translate the article. *Pravda* indeed quoted excerpts of Samantha's letter and said, in reference to her question about why Andropov might want to conquer the world: "We think we can pardon Samantha her misleadings, because the girl is only ten years old."

Samantha was understandably pleased that *Pravda* had printed her letter. But she was miffed that no attempt had been made to answer her questions.



Samantha showing her letter from Mr. Andropov.

So she wrote a second letter, this time to the Soviet Ambassador to the United States, Anatoly Dobrynin. She asked him whether Mr. Andropov was planning to answer her questions, and added that "I thought my questions were good ones and it shouldn't matter if I was ten years old."

Apparently, that did it. A week later the Soviet embassy called Samantha at home to say that a reply from Yuri Andropov was on its way. Within a few days, the postmistress of Manchester, Maine

called to say that a peculiar envelope had arrived registered mail for Samantha. The letter, typed in Russian on cream-colored paper and signed in blue ink, was dated April 19, 1983, and was accompanied by an English translation.

Andropov's letter (reprinted in the box below) arrived at 8 a.m. on Monday, April 26, 1983. When Samantha got home from school that afternoon, the lawn in front of her house was blanketed with reporters and cameramen. Before the night was out, she and her mother, Jane

Smith, were on a jet chartered by CBS and NBC to New York City for a round of appearances on the *Today Show*, *CBS Morning News* and *Nightline*, as well as more interviews with major newspapers, radio stations, and wire services. A few days later, Samantha and her mother were off to California for her first appearance on the *Tonight Show*.

Samantha's prior travelling experience had been limited to visiting her grandparents in Florida and Virginia. Her reaction? "It was different," gasps Samantha, "but it was *fun*!"

Samantha flips through the pages of her book, *Journey to the Soviet Union*, to her favorite part of her trip: her visit to Camp Artek on the Black Sea. "The kids had lots of questions about America," reads Samantha, "especially about clothes and music. They were all interested in how I lived and sometimes at night we talked about peace, but it didn't really seem necessary because none of them hated America, and none of them ever wanted war. Most of the kids had relatives or friends of their families die in World War II, and they hoped there would *never* be another war. It seemed strange even to talk about war when we all got along so well together. I guess that's what I came to find out. I mean, if we could be friends by just getting to know each other better, then what are our countries really arguing about?"

Now it is time for questions. A dozen local seventh and eighth graders from Gorham Junior High School take turns stepping to a floor microphone and reading queries from slips of paper. Samantha stands with her hands folded a little stiffly on the podium, her face intent as she concentrates on hearing each question. Her answers are brief and to the point.

"How have your attitudes toward Russia changed?"

"At first, when I hadn't gone over there, some of my parents' friends said it was sort of gray and dull. And the news was always saying that it wasn't nice at all, and that they were mean and truly wanted to be enemies and stuff. But when I got there I found out that the people were really friendly and very down-to-earth. They certainly didn't want war at all because they had gone through such tragedies earlier in their lives."

"Do you have any message to give people in the United States?"

"Well, I feel that one of the reasons we
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THE LETTER THAT SHOOK THE WORLD

Dear Samantha,

I received your letter, which is like many others that have reached me recently from your country and from other countries around the world.

It seems to me—I can tell by your letter—that you are a courageous and honest girl, resembling Becky, the friend of Tom Sawyer in the famous book of your compatriot Mark Twain. This book is well-known and loved in our country by all boys and girls.

Yes, Samantha, we in the Soviet Union are trying to do everything so that there will not be war between our countries, so that in general there will not be war on earth. This is what every Soviet man wants. This is what the great founder of our state, Vladimir Lenin, taught us.

Soviet people well know what a terrible thing war is. Forty-two years ago, Nazi Germany, which strived for supremacy over the whole world, attacked our country, burned and destroyed many thousands of our towns and villages, killed millions of Soviet men, women, and children.

In that war, which ended in our victory, we were in alliance with the United States; together we fought for the liberation of many people from the Nazi invaders. I hope that you know this from your history lessons in school. And today we want very much to live in peace, to trade and cooperate with all our neighbors on this earth—with those far away and those near by. And certainly with such a great country as the United States of America.

In America and in our country there are nuclear weapons—terrible weapons that can kill millions of people in an instant. But we do not want them ever to be used. That's precisely why the Soviet Union solemnly declared throughout the entire world that never—never—will it use nuclear weapons first against any country. In general we propose to discontinue further production of them and to proceed to the abolition of all the stockpiles on earth.

It seems to me that this is a sufficient answer to your second question: "Why do you want to wage war against the whole world or at least the United States?" We want nothing of the kind. No one in our country—neither workers, peasants, writers, nor doctors, neither grown-ups or children, nor members of the government—wants either a big or a "little" war.

We want peace—that is something that we are occupied with: growing wheat, building and inventing, writing books and flying into space. We want peace for ourselves and for all peoples of the planet. For our children and for you, Samantha.

I invite you, if your parents will let you, to come to our country, the best time being the summer. You will find out about our country, meet with your contemporaries, visit an international children's camp—"Artek"—on the sea. And see for yourself: in the Soviet Union—everyone is for peace and friendship among peoples.

Thank you for your letter. I wish you all the best in your young life.

Yuri Andropov



Samantha donning native garb.

are having problems with them is that many of the people in the United States government have not actually gone over there for a tour, or to actually meet any of the children or the other adults in the Soviet Union. Half the adults seem to think that they are our enemies, but they haven't even been over there to experience meeting people in the Soviet Union to see what they are like. I have experienced that and I have found out that the people of the Soviet Union are very friendly and they're trying as hard as we are to have peace."

"Would you like to visit the Soviet Union again?"

"If anybody wants to invite me, I'd be happy to go."

"What do you see for our future? Do you think it's possible to have world peace?"

"I think there's a way we can have peace among children. As for the adults—I think it's possible. But, well, I can't exactly do that much about it, because I'm a kid. I would like to be able to do something about it, but I can't. I think we can achieve peace if we try hard enough."

The questions end, the audience gives her a grateful ovation, and Samantha exits to a chair on the side of the room. As other children make presentations, her young-lady chic disappears as she sprawls across her father's lap like a giant kitten. Samantha is tired. It is already an hour past her usual bedtime. But she and her father can't slip away just yet; a short photo session is scheduled after the program. Then they must drive nearly two hours from Gorham back to Manchester, for tomorrow is a school day.

The Girl Beneath the Glitter

LOOKING AT SAMANTHA IS AN EXERCISE in cognitive dissonance. She is a sophisticated little princess reclining on the sofa, adoring fans all around, her make-up impeccable, her manner aristocratic; she is also a twelve-year-old girl who doesn't question her father's right to decide what she wears in public and who goes to bed at 8:30 p.m. in her lavender flannel pajamas. Her voice has lowered since her early talk show days; she can now sound like a teenager if she chooses, or she can suspend that maturity and trip lightly through her words in flawless little-girl-speak. Is she a girl, or is she a young woman?

It is not simply the contradictions inherent in her age, though, that make meeting Samantha somewhat disconcerting. Like the people of the country she became famous for visiting, Samantha is not exactly who one would expect her to be based on newspaper accounts. One expects to find an earnest, studious child who regularly peruses *The New York Times* and keeps up with the latest debates over weapons systems and arguments for arms control. "Some people think that because of what's happened to me I'm a real super-person peacemaker," says Samantha with a tiny inhalation of breath, a delicate gasp, before she speaks. "But I'm not really into politics that much. I'm just *concerned*, and this just sort of happened."

One expects a prodigy, but instead finds a refreshingly normal twelve-year-old girl with typical twelve-year-old interests and perspectives. Samantha watches a fair amount of television. She giggles a great deal—fine-tuned, highly modulated giggles that can convey intricate shades of meaning. She watches—and giggles at—Bugs Bunny shows in the morning while she eats her Cheerios. She chews gum and has a weakness for popsicles. She is at the age when boys have become intriguing, and when few things can keep her in the bathroom longer than getting ready for a Friday night school dance.

Once the initial surprise is over, though, one also realizes that it is her very normality that has made her such an effective symbol of her generation. In a culture jaded by hot-house-grown child performers, Samantha is reassuringly genuine. Not everything she says is profound. Yet her brand of childish di-

rectness, bereft of fuzzing layers of learned complexities, has made many an ideologue wince. Her credentials are simple: *she was there*. Going to the Soviet Union allowed her to come to her own conclusions—a fact that delights her fans and irritates her detractors.

And since her return, no one has been able to shake her faith in her basic tenets. "All the children here, and all the children over in the Soviet Union, are not enemies," declares Samantha. "For some really strange reason, the grown-ups that rule don't get along. Whenever you want to do something at home, and you ask your parents if you can, they

"Half the adults seem to think that they are our enemies, but they haven't even been over there to the Soviet Union to see what they are like."

always say, give me two good reasons.' But here the grown-ups never give any good reasons for why they don't get along. Maybe it's time we did a little backtalk," she says, impishly eyeing her father, who has just settled in an armchair.

Because she so obviously lacked a political axe to grind, public interest in Samantha's conclusions was keen. She could be trusted to tell things the way she saw them. Within a few weeks of the letter's arrival, Andropov's invitation was confirmed: the Soviets offered to pro-

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An inquisitive press followed Samantha everywhere.

vide an all-expenses-paid two-week sojourn for Samantha and her parents. And so as Samantha's July 7, 1983 departure date drew near, the Smith family packed bags full of Maine college T-shirts and pennants as gifts for their Soviet hosts and the Western press got ready to record her every impression.

A Tour De Force

AS SOON AS HER AEROFLOT JET from Montreal arrived in Sheremetjevo Airport, Samantha was besieged by reporters asking her what she thought of Moscow. Blinking sleepily under the bright camera lights, she said she thought the airport looked a lot like American airports, and soon was whisked away to bed in a deluxe suite in the Sovietskaya Hotel, which is normally reserved for visiting dignitaries. The next day, she rode in a black limousine accompanied by a full police motorcade to Red Square, where she toured the palaces and churches of the Kremlin, visited Lenin's tomb and study ("Lenin," she explains, "is sort of like their George Washington") and laid flowers at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier. Samantha's summary: "Moscow was pretty exciting, we got to go to all these tourist places. But after awhile it started to get boring, and my feet started hurting because the shoes that looked best on me were too small."

Much more to her liking, and her favorite part of the trip, was visiting a large youth camp called Artek in the Crimea. "They have hundreds of tons of jellyfish that don't sting in the Black Sea," explains Samantha, "and you can have jellyfish fights. It's wonderful." Samantha was met at the airplane by a busload of enthusiastic Young Pioneers her own age and welcomed to Artek by a cheering bleacherful of uniformed children with balloons and banners, mostly in Russian, but one in English: "We are glad to meet you in our Artek."

Samantha donned a Pioneer uniform (white blouse, turquoise skirt, and white knee socks) and the white chiffon bow which Soviet girls often wear in their hair, but eschewed wearing the red Pioneer neckerchief, which symbolizes devotion to communism. According to Samantha, "The Young Pioneers are a little like Boy Scouts or Girl Scouts except that their activities teach them about communism instead of democracy." She expected, though, that the camp would

be "more wildernessy, with tents."

Samantha opted to spend the night in one of their dormitories instead of in the hotel with her parents. A thirteen year old blue-eyed blonde named Natasha, who spoke fairly good English, soon became her best friend. They played together on the beach, took a boat ride to nearby Yalta (where Samantha dangled her legs in President Roosevelt's chair), and tossed wine bottles stuffed with messages from the deck of the boat into the Black Sea. "Hopefully we will all have peace for the rest of our lives," read Samantha's message. By this time she knew enough "adolescent Russian," as her father puts it, to be able to sing Rus-

"Us kids have made friends, and we're really just smaller versions of grown-ups."

sian songs on the boat with the other children, arms locked together as they swayed back and forth.

Samantha would have liked to stay longer, but the camp session was ending, and after a final evening of closing ceremonies that included a parade, fireworks, skits, dancing, and costume shows, the campers went home and Samantha flew to Leningrad. Here her every move continued to get prime-time coverage in the American, European, and Soviet press as photo opportunities unfolded. Samantha in a colorful Russian folk costume made for her by other children. Samantha eating enormous raspberries on a collective farm. Samantha at the Kirov Ballet trying to put on a signed pair of toe shoes given her by the prima ballerina, Alla Cisova. Samantha accepting flowers from a Soviet sailor on the ship *Aurora*, which fired the first shot of the Russian Revolution. Samantha laying a wreath at the Piskarevskoye Memorial to the more than half-million citizens of Leningrad who died in the 900-day siege by the Nazis during World War II. Samantha was on "every other night on Soviet T.V.," says her father Arthur, "and probably has greater public recognition there than she does here."

Then it was back to Moscow on an overnight train for a final whirlwind of activities, including visits to the Toy Mu-

seum, the Moscow Circus, and the Puppet Theater, a chance to try out a racing bicycle in the Velodrome of the Krylatskoye Olympic Center, and a lesson from expert gymnasts on how to twirl ribbons.

"Kids have written to say they think she was very brave to go to the Soviet Union, but she doesn't think she was, and I would have to agree," says Arthur. "But what she did that *was* very difficult was to carry off that trip. Two weeks of twelve-hour days, and she greeted everyone everywhere with enthusiasm, eagerness, and good humor. God only knows I wasn't in good humor for twelve hours a day for two weeks."

"I'll vouch for that," interjects Samantha's mother, Jane.

In addition to her hectic tourist schedule, Samantha's appointment calendar would have made a visiting dignitary envious. Valentina Tereshkova, the first woman in space and now the president of the Soviet Women's Committee, invited Samantha and her family over for tea at her office. U.S. Ambassador to the Soviet Union Arthur Hartmann and his wife also had the Smiths to their house for an American lunch of hamburgers and French fries—which, after a steady diet of Chicken Kiev, tasted great to Samantha. And suspense built in the Western press about the possibility that Samantha might meet in person with Andropov, who had been out of public view for some time.

Although the Soviets never made any promises one way or other, the Smiths held out hope that they might see Andropov until the last day of their trip. Then one of Andropov's deputies, Leonid Zamyatin, came to Samantha's hotel room bearing gifts with Andropov's calling card—a silver samovar (tea-maker), a china tea service, and a hand-painted laquered box (*palech*) with a painting of Red Square and St. Basil's. Samantha, in turn, presented him with the gift she had brought for Andropov: a book of Mark Twain speeches. "I'm sure we would have met him if it had been at all possible," says Arthur. "But it wouldn't have been particularly suitable to have somebody who was in dialysis and too frail to stand up have to endure a photo session. They said he was busy, but we just assumed he was sick."

Samantha flew home with scrapbooks of photographs of her visit, seventeen

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suitcases filled with gifts, and some very strong opinions. "Things are just the same over there. I mean, they're just people. There's nothing wrong with them, they're just like us."

"Well, things *are* a little different there," cautions her father.

"Well, yeah, it's a lot stricter there, but that's nothing to *accuse* them of. It's just a different way of living. It doesn't hurt us, and it's not like the Nazis or anything." Before she wrote her letter, Samantha says, "I really think I got [the Soviets] mixed up with Hitler a little bit. Because in my letter I said why do you want to conquer the world? So at that point I thought [Andropov] was Hitler and I thought he was mean and he wanted to just bomb us all off." She has since learned a great deal, she confides. And while she's never heard of the term "citizen diplomacy," she has great faith in what it can do. "People should know that peace is always possible if we try hard

enough. Us kids have made friends, and we're really no different, just smaller versions of grown-ups."

Samantha does have one citizen diplomacy remedy waiting in the wings—what she calls the Granddaughter Exchange. The idea is to take the granddaughters—and, she supposes, the grandsons too—of the world's heads of state "and just scatter them all over the place," she says with a wave of her arms. "Then they could come back and tell people what the place was like, and hopefully, usually, most of the news would be these other people are nice people."

Days of Future Passed

SAMANTHA'S MAIL INDICATES that she is still inspiring and provoking people to clarify their thoughts on Soviet-American relations. About 6000 letters have arrived for Samantha in the last two years, many

from children from all over the world, including a hefty number from the Soviet Union. Frequently they send pictures of themselves and postcards of their towns or cities. Several hundred have yet to be translated. Arthur has kept them all, bundled in rubberbands in boxes under his desk.

Samantha pays little attention to the dozen or so letters that still arrive every week; she obviously considers the mail to be Daddy's territory. Arthur made an attempt at answering them, at first, with a thank-you card that had Samantha's signature, but he gave up after the first 600 or so, when he discovered that such answers only encouraged people to write for extra autographs, signed photographs, or other special requests. Ironically, the girl who has made something of a career out of getting a reply from a famous person has no time or interest in answering all of *her* mail now that she is a celebrity. The exception is her regular correspondence with Natasha, her best friend in the Soviet Union.

Arthur Smith is saving those letters for a reason. One day, Samantha will go into the study, pull out those boxes, and start reading those letters herself. She will think about what has happened to her from a new perspective. She will have lost some of her childhood perspicacity, but she will have learned other things in the meantime. Samantha is a moving target, a chimera. Any snapshot of her will soon be dated. Perhaps she will grow up into another Helen Caldicott, and start perusing the *New York Times*, and keeping up on the latest weaponry arguments. Perhaps she will, someday, become a "super-person peacemaker." Or perhaps she will remain only "concerned." Who Samantha Smith will become is very much an open question, but she appears quite capable of deciding that for herself. And if we are all lucky, the adult Samantha will be just as direct and original as she is now.

"It all seemed so dumb to me," Samantha said. Millions of people on both sides of the cold war have thought the same thing. The difference is that Samantha acted. She and her journey to the Soviet Union will continue to intrigue and infuriate. For her brilliance, or her crime, was to ask the questions that persist in hovering like ghosts around the superpower conflict. Why are the Russians our enemies? Why must we have nuclear weapons? Why can't the grown-ups get along? Why . . . ■