

**ANOTHER CHARACTER AT THE JAVA JOINT**

By John Hildebidle

Once we'd become familiar, I greeted him once with a few lines from "The Ancient Mariner." He chuckled. Ill-shaven, more than a little wild-eyed, he favors vaguely nautical gear. Later he took the opportunity to inform me he was descended (in some complex, collateral fashion) from Herman Melville. Sketched out all the genealogies on a napkin. I conferred, later, with some experts – they didn't dismiss the claim.

Now it's Audubon, as well. He has as yet taken no position on the question of whether the artist was in fact the missing Dauphin of France, and thus whether he should be sitting on a royal, if only ceremonial, throne.

By now, I'm pretty certain he's just plain daft. But not dangerous, at least.

-John Hildebidle