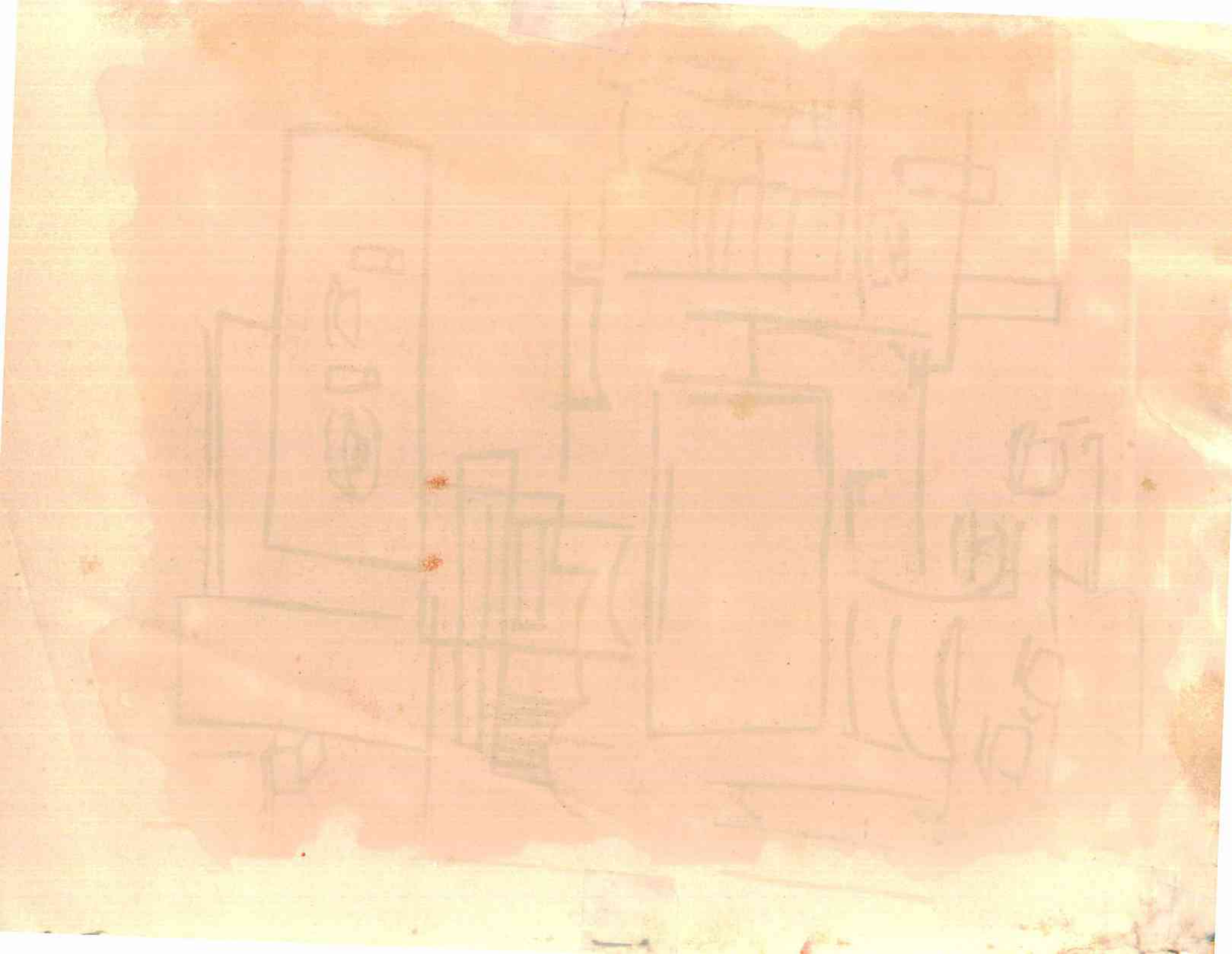


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Brillig ————— 13

CONTENTS

- ECHO ... P 2 the editor
--GEISTERINGS P 7 Dick Geis
-- A SALUTE
TO TELEVISION P 13 Jim Weber
-- I KEEP
HEARING VOICES P 20 excerpts
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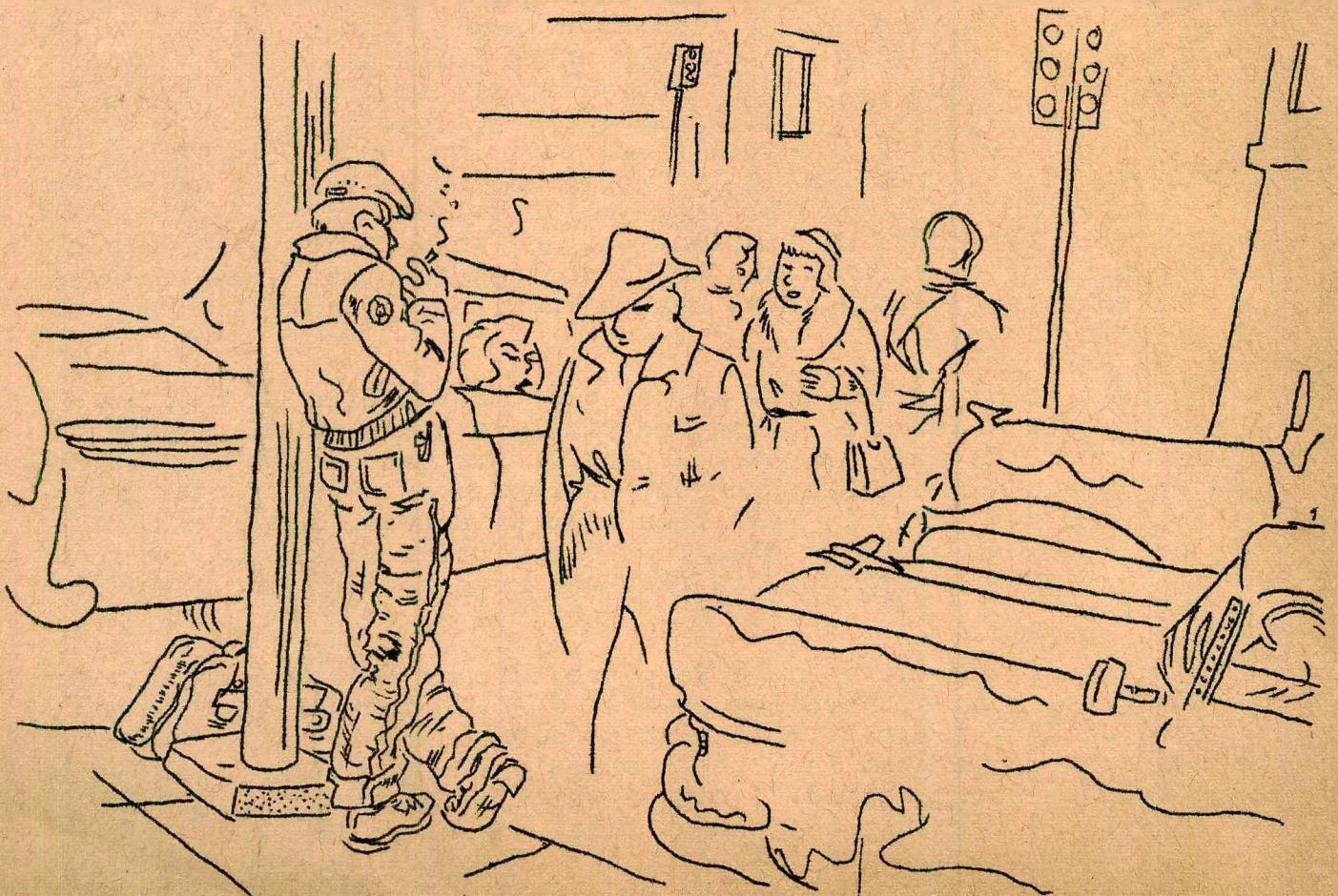
The editor-2 (W/ Geo. Metzger)-7-19-20

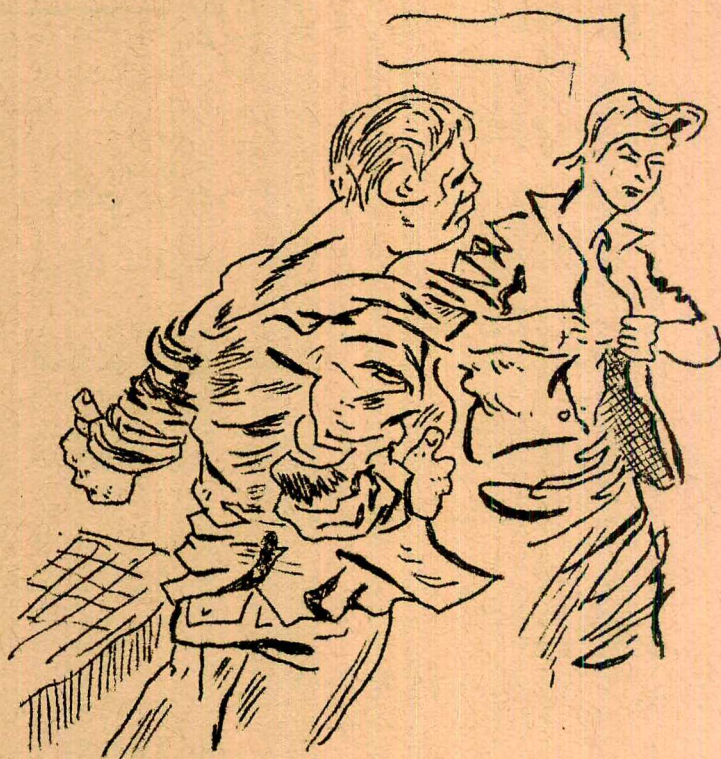
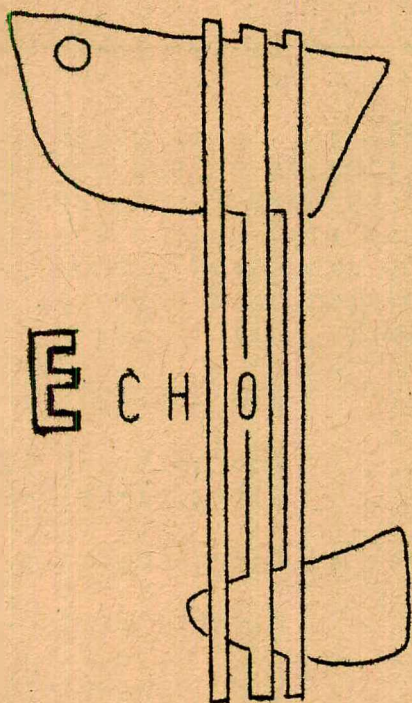
George Metzger -1-5

Linette Mills -8

Bob Stewart -11
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To begin with you start somewhere around here, and then with luck you end up somewhere around there, finding a sort of ending while pausing here and there extracting the essence of whatever it is you want at the time, and somehow, if you're lucky, it all ties in because there is a coherency about the whole business, a colloidal suspension of ideas forming a whole gluebottle of composition. And if something falls apart it is hoped that only experience and knowledge has caused the cleavage and not the inner image which twists and pulls pieces of mediocrity in its nadir of inspiration. And then it may be a sacrifice of choices, or perhaps the wrong choices, for that elusive something known as creativity is at best a tactiless intangible. You take it from there.

Clayton Kent Moomaw died, Oct. 13, died of self inflicted injuries. His passing was a shocking thing, partially because of the nature of his death, but the most shocking aspect of his death was the fact that he was a gifted, intelligent person, perhaps even a genius. He wrote very well, he may possibly have been a great writer, but he will never write again, or do anything else for that matter. Dick Geis has inadvertently written an epitaph, in fact one much better than I could have written:

"I can't shake the scene I keep projecting: Kent kneeling in the weeds and bushes, steeling himself for the convulsive movement of mind and muscles that will send a razor into his flesh, into his veins. I can almost feel the keen pain of the wounds and almost see the spurting blood. I wonder which he slashed first, throat or wrists? Probably the throat first, then one wrist, then perhaps with even more resolution, the other wrist. I wonder at the inconsequential thoughts that passed through his mind above the

domination of ragged pain. Did he think about now the blood would stain his clothes? Did he wonder now we would take the news? Did he wonder how long it would be before they found his body? Did he know any body shaking fear when he realized he'd passed the point of no return, that nothing could save him? Whatever his reasons for doing it, I respect him. He had guts. Some may say that suicide is a cowards way out. May be. But it takes a lot of guts to be that kind of coward with a razor.

If you happen to like cynicism, cynicism laid on thick, you'll like a certain story in DISCOVERY 4, a pocketbook, consisting of poetry and short stories in what the compiler calls, "the experimental vein." This particular pb is edited by Vance Bourjaily and sells for 35¢. (DISCOVERY 4, Pocket Books Inc. -35¢.) The story in question is called Sweetie and Bobo, written by Mrs. Barbara Donnelly. This story is somewhat amazing in content, partially due to the absence of any particular type of upbeat or downbeat ending. The ending gives the feeling, the sense of indecision and one realizes that nothing good will come of the union of the main characters in a half friendship borne out of...

But I'm getting ahead of myself. Sweetie and Bobo are two inhabitants of a Sorority and such a Sorority is like nothing ever before experienced or imagined...or is it? It seems suspiciously true somehow. The inmates are all shallow, uncaring, they do the most useless and futile things imaginable. There is not a single good point about this sorority, and nothing good about any member, no aspect of each ones personality having any likeable trait. Not even the heroines, the main characters in the story, have anything worthy of being called a virtue. The story of course is a fairly obvious blast against Sororities, and as such is an effective piece of propagandizing, aside from being a well done piece of writing.

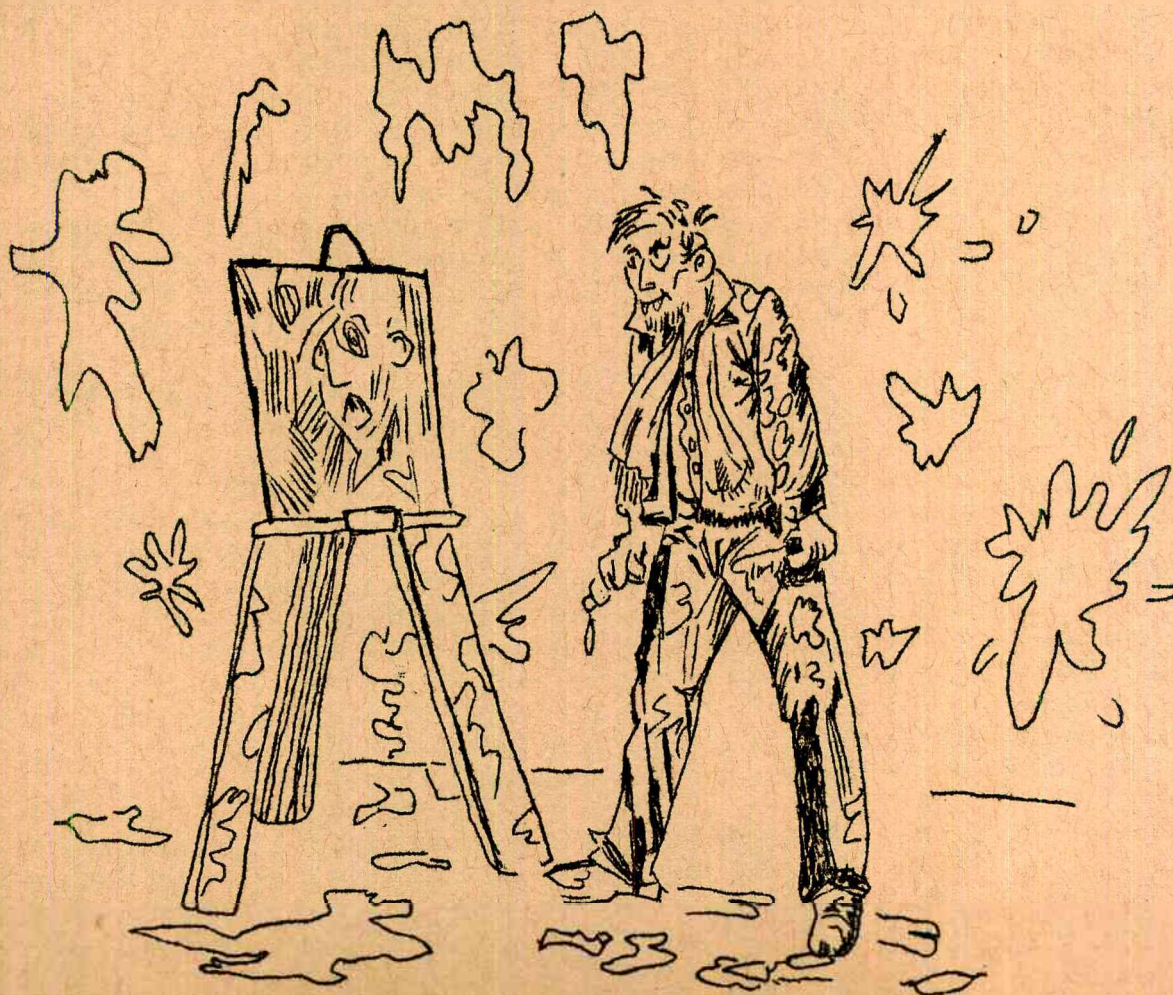
The characters, Bobo and Sweetie, Bobo being a thin bookish sort to the point of almost complete rejection of outside influences, unattractive, who lives in the Sorority free of charge only because she manages to have extremely good grades and boosting the house average in the process. She helps the girls, all of whom seem all too unintelligent, with their homework, and she has a raging appetite for which she will do almost anything to appease. Sweetie is a slob of a girl, unintelligent, cowish, who was admitted to the Sorority only because her father is rich and has donated much money to its upkeep. The girls look upon Sweetie as nothing more than, "new pine paneling in the library." Sweetie drinks...and is filthy, uncaring. She has nothing and knows she is unwanted, not only by her sisters in the Sorority but by her father as well.

The tales end, rather a breaking off of the continuum, leaves one the feeling that nothing has been gained, nothing has been accomplished, and decisions made are not quite right, but not particularly wrong either, a feeling of continuation with no hope of betterment.

We have Dick Geis this issue in GEISTERINGS with a philosophical bit on why people today are such schnooks and I suggest you pay some attention to this...especially if you happen to be one of those schnooks, and then there's Jim Weber who has a play all about television titled, A SALUTE TO TELEVISION which he has graciously let me print, a segment of which I've titled "Your Chance To Live". This is to distinguish it from another segment running concurrently in John Quagliano's QUAGMIRE #2. The play is being acted somewhere in the vicinity of Chicago and if you see the title on a billboard somewhere why not pay a visit to the theatre. You certainly won't be wasting your money. The rest of the issue consists of the things I do, and letter excerpts, the idea of which I stole from John. I KEEP HEARING VOICES contains all the odds and ends of letters etc. I find interesting, and I think you'll find them interesting too.

Mercenary section:

If you like silk screen prints you may be interested in buying up my stock of extra covers from Brillig #12 and #13. Each print is unmarred by staples or other blemishes and each sells for 35¢ post paid. Be the first in your neighborhood/city/state/nation, to have an original silk screen print lying somewhere around the house, unlike any other print you may have lying about the house at the moment.



On the hot dusty road outside of a small town somewhere in Nebraska I had waited for countless minutes which in turn had turned into hours, while the water in my canteen had been turning progressively warmer and I had had to take a swallow every so often because it was so dry and hot, and grabbed a do-nut in the cafe down the road, but I still felt somewhat sick to my stomach. A rich car late model pulled up and let me in, the man inside a convincer for a business college who persuaded people to join his organization day after day and dressed nicely in good clothes and a cynical exterior and oddly enough he had been a student in psychology, psychoanalysed for five years he had said. From listening to him I knew he knew all the answers to everything and he told me about my aunt, how she wanted to possess me, I knowing of course that she had played a very important negative part in my young life, and he talked about himself his early poverty working in the cotton fields at ten years old, his strict, upbringing, and I knew, at least later, that he had taken up psychology like others to find out his own particular private problems, I could see he was full of them. "My brother told me that if I was a good boy, kept my nose clean and kept my peter in my pants I would end up by going to heaven," he said. "I had my first piece of ass in the fields when I was twelve. I kept praying to God every night 'Please God, iff'n you give me just one lil' ol piece of ass I'll never ask for anything else ever again,' and if my folks idea of God had been right, I would have been struck with a bolt of lightening right there." He paused a moment, talking about something, thinking for a moment. "These people talking about God make me sick. I picked up a fellow, one of those religious cranks, who, the minute he got in the car asked me, 'Brother, have you been saved?' I told him I hadn't and then he proceeded to tell me that although I might not like it, it was his bounden duty to save me from my sins, so I told him, 'If you're going to keep up with this I'm going to let you off at the next town, so which is it going to be? Either you shut up or I'll let you off.' 'I'll shut up,' he said. Boy, that just goes to show you, these people are really insincere about their religion." We kept moving as it got slowly dark and the prairie and farmlands rolled by as he talked about his life.

* * * *

Another continuation of the long road, across the whole damn country with the most amazing differences the most amazing sights, it was exciting like a first awareness, a first witness to a hanging, a first time in the hay, it was strange. The desert, the farmland, the plains, the cities, the almost impassable big cities—you don't get anywhere in the city friend—and the long lonely stretches where no one wants to pick you up and you wait, thinking of irrelevant things and wondering why. Across the road which has turned to dirt at the edge so far out, because the cop on the cycle had said, "You'll have to go out of town to hitchhike her buddy," which was why the road was that way. A long walk of miles and my foot were tired and they burned like my throat and the rest of my body, because it felt that way without any food or sleep to speak of, and sometimes it was worse. Across the road, close to the stone arch that advertised the city, a motel existed in the dust constructed earth, grimy and unappetising, but the rooms were three dollars a night and up, they

were scarce, around here. Out of the cabin, the one closest to the road, an indian girl, fat, rolling in flesh, a repulsive blob of brown material with a listless vacuous look on her misshapen face, walked out of an open door and began mopping the porch. It was only for a minute but the thoughts came one after the other, of how it would be like to have to live with her, to see her every morning when I got up, when I went to bed...year after year, perhaps. Perhaps, and that was how it goes on the highway. Thinking compulsively of so many things, trying to pass the time until the next car goes past, and the next, and then the next.

I noticed the painting on the wall of the mattress filled room. "O," he said, "that's Linda's." The design interested me, it was no more than that, and I wondered idly if the artist's personal design was also interesting. I wondered about the girl behind the painting and what she might be like. From what I knew of the group she, I supposed, must have been way out, a mistaken impression, a way of thinking I fall into too easily, to form opinions from the most bizarre unrelated facts, and curiously, I'm often wrong. "Like she's a real weird girl," he said. "You know, with a face like a ghost, and this red hair falling down over her face, and she's real kicks. She likes to take the initiative, if you know what I mean. She wants to do the love making you know. But boy, if she once falls in love with you..." I got her phone number, found her address and called her up, a voice sounding mature and I formed a picture of a sultry Vampira-type who is saying come-on-over-sometime, and damned if I didn't actually go.

I walked up the steps almost hesitantly, wondering what sort of person this girl happened to be, my preconceived configuration rather formidable, and a young thing with diffusedly shiny red hair, a marvelous shape clad in shorts and an orange sweater, a beautiful childlike face opened the door and invited me in. It was the same voice, but that was all. My surprise should have shown in my face because it was running through my mind all that evening as I continually looked at her and listened to her talk, the form of which sounded like some sort of nightmare, airconditioned or otherwise. She looked rational in every way, even her eyes were gentle, but somehow something inside had gone blank, or of that similar nature because she talked incessantly about all the people she knew, and each one of them had some sort of mental difficulty, and number of violent aberrations, the fellow who used to stand on tavern bars and point an old bomb at the old drunks sitting on the stools and preach the end of the world, the fellow who tried to kill himself most of the people she knew had tried to kill themselves at one time or another. She talked about her mother's boy friend who was supposed to cry all the time, who sometimes sat out in front of her house in his car for hours, the men who would come up to her door and demand to see her all hours of the day or night, and strangely all she talked of were these people, all men, who were all unbalanced in some way, telling how she had eluded or fought every one of them off, and her boy friend who was an exterminator, and even he had tried to kill himself.

At four in the morning she went to bed, and although it might have been a nice thing to join her, I felt it wouldn't gel so I left and walked the early streets back home.

geisterings

EDITORIAL ABOUT UTOPIAS



In the May 1958 Scientific American there is an article titled "A Study of Self-Disclosure", by Sidney M. Jouard. The sub-heading on the contents page reads: "How much people tell others about themselves is investigated by questionnaire."

The substance of this article is that women disclose more than men, that negroes are more reticent with everyone except their mothers, and that both men and women both white and negro, tell their mother most about themselves, with the married spouse next in confidence. College married people were more willing to confide in their spouse than were older married people.

But the most interesting thing to me in the article is a short comment made by the author in the beginning of the piece. He says:

"But the question of self-disclosure goes deeper than mere willingness. People often cannot disclose themselves, even if they would, because they do not know their real selves-- what they really want, feel or believe. Karen Horney has called this phenomenon of being a stranger to oneself "Self-alienation," and she finds it characteristic of neurotics. It may be significant of modern society that so many people have taken to the psychoanalyst's couch to try to know themselves."

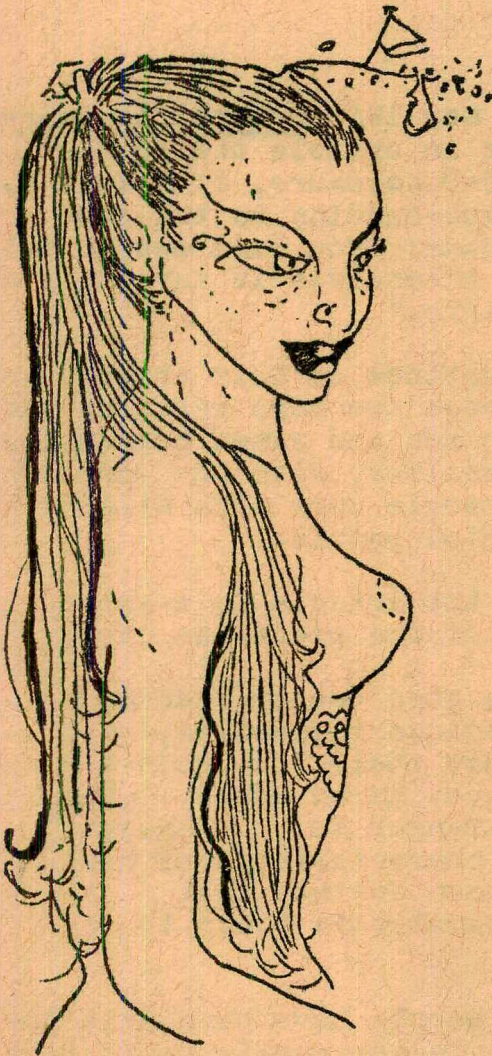
Perhaps what is significant is that so many people have been able to afford a psychoanalyst since self-alienation is apparently so prevalent today. I have the sneaking suspicion that psychotics and neurotics have always been around in great numbers proportionate to the population, but that they haven't been thought about as much as today, and haven't been aware of themselves as much. Today every media of communication is prattling about mental health. It's almost obsessional.

If you accept the premise that parents cause most of the psychic trouble in people during the early formative years, then surely kids were at least as brutally twisted during earlier more ignorant times. Talk of modern social forces being the main cause of "alienation" is probably right, but I think the social pressures and instabilities of earlier times were just as strong. A person might be a slave one day, freeman the next, a member of a religious majority in an area one day, and a heretic the next as a result of a decree from Rome. The nationalistic philosophical change, the scientific advance, the constant change of moral, ethical and cultural values, all this combined with the almost total "small town" environmental pressure to conform probably caused as much psychological trouble as the hectic forces of today.

Mr. Jourard finishes his article with these words:

"If we live in an age of "self-alienation," it may be well to look into its causes and consequences frankly and directly. Perhaps our culture has made it "bad form" to disclose oneself, and rewards those who present themselves in flattering, though false colors. But psychologists and doctors know that a person who cannot disclose himself as he is and establish a close relationship with at least one other human being stands in danger of mental breakdown. To paraphrase Paul Tillich, the philosopher and author of The Courage To Be, the courage to be very likely entails the courage to be known."

The "self-alienation" Mr. Jourard is speaking of is beautifully described by Erich Fromm in his book The Sane Society. People are being made to fit into our machine dominated society to serve the machine. They are not looked at as individuals, they are now necessary units of the economic totality whose function is to use up the products and keep them flowing. And they are now thinking of themselves as de-personalized things who peddle social skills and "Personality" for a price on the Labor Market.



Purely as an aside, isn't it hilarious to listen to the industrialists and big businessmen who, after doing their level best to shape people into mindless slaves of advertising, now try to shift the responsibility for the mal-functioning of their "planned obsolescence" economy onto the "consumers" who "can make or break the free world by not buying and using up goods." Pity the puzzled schmoe who would like very much to buy lots of stuff...only he can't afford it in cash, and his easy-pay installments have mounted to the point where he can't afford more. I might ask these same businessmen why they are cutting down on their purchases and planned expansions. These guys wanted the ball, they ran with it and shouted, "Look how fine a system we have, nobody can beat it." But now that the ball has turned into a hot potato they'd much prefer somebody else hold it. X

To get back to the paragraph quoted above, if people are becoming mentally splintered tools of a vast machine economy:, thinking of themselves less and less as individuals, and more and more as "consumer," "engineer," "typist," then is it surprising to find that they are unaware of themselves as unique individuals, important in themselves.

I've listened to a grown man break down and cry because he "didn't" know who he was." There was a frightening emptiness inside him. He had no personal identity. His social life was breaking down and he had no inner life to fall back on. He didn't exist except as a reflection from others. And now for emotional reasons he couldn't "fit in" and "find himself." He was out of a job and so he was a Nothing. His identification had been torn off!

Is he typical? Are we becoming more and more a society of shallow extroverts with no inner resources?

Let me quote a bit from the article "Teenage Attitudes" by H.H. Remmers and D.H. Radler which appeared in the June Scientific American. Some of the things shown in this article frankly shocked me. The authors say in part:

"The most significant place to start our examination of the results of these polls is to look at what U.S. teenagers list as their most common problems. At the head of the list is the wistful plea: "Want people to like me more." And most of the things that 25% or more of the teenagers list as problems express, in one form or another, the same sentiment. A majority of teenagers want to gain or lose weight or otherwise improve their appearance; they want more dates, more friends, more popularity; they get stage fright before a group, worry about their lack of self-confidence. Their overriding concern emerges again when they are asked direct questions about their feelings with respect to approval by others. More than half admit that they try very hard to do everything that will please their friends; 38% declare that the worst of all calamities is to be considered an "oddball."

Let me break in here and add my own two bits concerning the horror of being thought an oddball. I heard a commercial late the other night which was extolling the delights of dancing, and learning to dance at

this certain dance studio. The announcer said in part something like: "People who don't dance, won't dance, or can't dance are considered oddballs. Don't let this happen to you."

Now here is an advertiser using overt social pressure for commercial advantage. Of course advertisers have always done it, but this is the first instance I've ever come across where it is so obvious, so raw. It may be that the dance studio in question was hard up and needed business, so the manager decided to pull out all the stops and really hit the kids and young people where they lived. Perhaps he read this very same article and decided to use its findings to his advantage.

A friend showed me an ad in a woman's magazine recently which provoked much humor and joking. It showed the rear of a woman in a gir-dle like apparatus, and shouted: "DON'T BE FLAT! New! Foam rubber padded for that rounded, natural, feminine look! \$3185 Curv-ette. Farewell to flats. Now add those glamorous inches if you are flat behind. Strategically placed foam rubber pads in power net elastic panty gir-dle gives you exciting curves. No side seams. One piece crotch..."

This one is the old "Buy-this-and-look-like-a-better-lay appeal which has sold junk to women for generations. It has no particular relevance to the subjects under discussion, but I couldn't resist throwing it in for kicks.

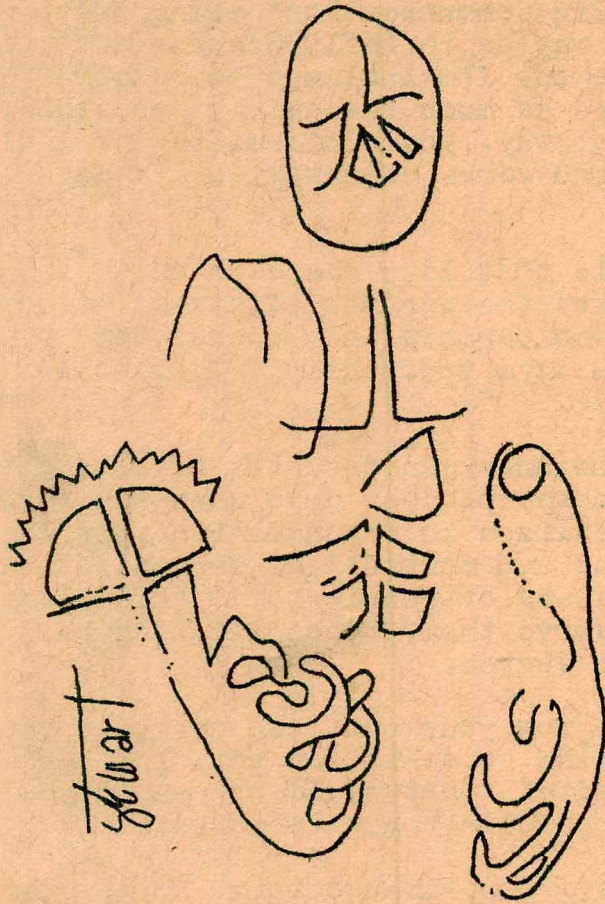
Getting back to teenage attitudes, let me quote more from the article:

"American teenagers show substantial class differences in many aspects of their behavior, problems and aspirations, but in their desire for popularity and their conformist attitude they are as one: low-income or high-income, their highest concern is to be liked.

And further:

As a nation we seem to have a syndrome characterized by atrophy of the will, hypertrophy of the ego and dystrophy of the intellectual musculature.

This rather unpleasant portrait is an inescapable conclusion from the mass of data on the attitudes of the younger generation. More than half of our teenagers believe that censorship of books, magazines, newspapers, radio and television is all right. More than half believe that the Federal Bureau of Investigation and local police should be allowed to use wire-tapping at will, that the police should be allowed to use the "third degree," that people who refuse to testify against themselves should be forced to do so. About half of our teenagers assert that most people aren't capable of deciding what's best for themselves; fully 75% declare that obedience and respect for authority are the most important habits for children to learn. On practically all questions of social policy the youngsters lean strongly to stereotyped views."



This provokes thoughts in me along these lines: that we are drifting toward more and more central control by government as a result of these attitudes as well as the willingness by the people to have a paternal government take over running their lives for them. Ike's popularity has been attributed to the benevolent father image he presents, the stern but loving (and loveable) facade which is his public self, the "Boss" who will take on our troubles and tell us what to do in this sorely troubled time. And, curiously, it is when he seems to be shirking this role that the most criticism is heaped upon him. The country needs "strong leadership" we are told, and curiously still, it is the liberals who are most vocal in this.

It is astonishing to note that it is the liberals and leftists who are striving toward more and more government, while the conservatives and reactionaries want less and less government. The liberals say we need more control to save us from big business, big labor, etc., instead of ad-

vocating more actual freedom, they prefer less. Controls are all right, they say, provided they are applied our way.

The conservatives seemingly want more freedom so that they can make more money and be bothered less by government regulation. Of the two the liberals seem to have the inside track with history. And now back to the article.

"Such soundings of the younger generation's attitudes uncover some of the roots of anti-intellectualism in the U.S. Almost three quarters of the high-school students believe that the most important thing they can learn in school is "how to get along with people."

No doubt part of these attitudes are due to the relatively new "progressive education" theories which the followers of John Dewey have hashed out of his philosophy. If he were alive today Dewey would probably curse the educators for what they have done in his name. No doubt at the moment he is spinning in his grave like a top.

The educator's so called "group adjustment" party-line seems to go along with and reinforce all other pressures in modern society

toward conformity in our youth. But is this a separate force or is it in some way dictated by the huge power centers now becoming more and more centralized and distinct. I mean, is the power of Big Government, Big Corporations, and Big Communications being felt, not directly, but indirectly in such a way as to influence the attitudes of educators, school boards, and so on. I'm inclined to believe that these power nuclei like people to be as much the same as possible; they are much easier to handle that way. Non-conformists and individualists are always screwing up the works some way. Ain't it a shame?

There is much more to the article that is perhaps as valid as what I have quoted here. And it makes the further point that most of these attitudes are inculcated by the parents and pounded home by the mass media. The great sin these days apparently is not to be popular with others.

So what picture do we have of the American society: a value system that has changed radically from the pioneer days when men were individualistic and largely decentralized in organization. Now the society is more and more centralized and controlled. Mechanization has made it impossible for great masses of people to do things for themselves; they must have others serve them. Socialization has come about to a greater and greater degree.

You do not make your own shoes, grow your own food or build your own house. You depend on somebody else to do it for you. You are dependent on others for your very life! What would happen to you if the electricity went off, if the food didn't get to markets?

In a situation where others, the group, the society, holds your very life in their collective hands, isn't it natural to put a premium on getting along with the group, of being well liked, and popular? Isn't this the new road to security?

But how much security is there, really, when you have to do what others want you to do or suffer severe social and economic consequences? Who likes to depend on others for his basic life requirements? Is it little wonder, then, that a deepseated insecurity is felt by everyone today as a result of almost total dependence on others?

People as well as nations want to be self-determined, they want freedom to do as they like, yet such self-determination, such freedom is growing more and more difficult today. Who can say what he'd like to do in defiance of somebody who holds his well being in his hand? A few courageous ones, perhaps, but very few. Freedom is dying because people are dependent on someone or some group or some organization for the basic necessities of life. A pioneer could pick up and seek out new land and total freedom. Where can a man go now?

The more people need others to survive, the less freedom they have. If it were comfortably possible to be self-reliant and almost totally self-sufficient in modern society THEN you would have individualism and non-conformity!

Is such self-reliance and self-sufficiency possible now? I'll have more to say on this next issue.

a salute to television

This is a short scene from a play about television as the title should have clued you, and is printed concurrently with a different scene in Quagmire #2. It illustrates how good television actually is and how you should watch it all the time since it is so "good for you"...and all that sort of jazz. lsb

"YOUR CHANCE TO LIVE"

JIM WEBER

ANNOUNCER

Good evening, ladies and gentlemen, I'm happy to welcome you to television's most heartwarming show: "YOUR CHANCE TO LIVE!" presented by "HAPPY DAYS," the body cream that's not a deoderant!

(TWO ASSISTANTS ENTER AND CIRCLE STAGE WITH LARGE SIGN READING "APPLAUD.")

ANNOUNCER

But before I say more about "Happy Days," folks -- really there's so much that can be said -- let's meet our contestants for this evening.

(1ST LADY STEPS FORWARD.)

ANNOUNCER

Hello, madam, what is your name, please?

1ST LADY

Mrs. Irene Kozlowski, Bronx, New York.

ANNOUNCER

Right in our own backyard, hey? Ha-ha. Now, madam, what is your problem?

MRS. KOZLOWSKI

Recently my husband died. I have five children. I work but I'm not able to make ends meet. My smallest child, Bobby, He's three years old, is a victim of multiple sclerosis and he requires special care which is expensive and sometimes I don't have the money and I . .

ANNOUNCER

(CUTTING IN) All right, Mrs. Kozlowski, that will do, thank you. Very touching, indeed. Now let's meet Contestant NO. 2 who is . .

2ND LADY

(STEPPING FORWARD) Mrs. Catherine Grey, Toledo, Ohio.

ANNOUNCER

Ha-ha, for a moment I thought you said Catherine the Great, you know, the famous Russian empress, ha-ha. Well, Mrs. Grey, we're glad you're here in New York and we want you to know that we don't call our body cream "Happy Days" because it's going to make you sad. Ha-ha. Now, Mrs. Grey, what is your problem?

MRS. GREY

My husband is a steeplejack. He's been a steeplejack for twenty-one years. Last month, he fell and broke his back. He has to have an expensive operation if he ever is going to work again as a steeplejack or anything. He will never be able to walk if he doesn't have this operation. My husband has always been an active man, he loves his work and without it I don't know what he'll do to himself, I . .

ANNOUNCER

All right, Mrs. Grey, thank you. I almost called you Catherine the Great, ha-ha. And now here is a gentleman, folks, who has come tonight to try for "His Chance To Live!" May I ask your name, sir?

GENTLEMAN

Mr. Edward Hapstad. Miami Beach, Florida.

ANNOUNCER

Miami, Beach, are you sure, Mr. Hapstad? You look pretty pale coming from the land of Sunshine. I'm sure you're not representing the Florida chamber of commerce. Ha-ha. And what is your problem Mr. Hapstad?

MR. HAPSTAD

My wife had been confined to a mental hospital. She requires many special treatments -- shock treatments, baths, drugs. I had to sell my drug-store to meet these expenses but I don't know what I'm going to do when the money runs out.

ANNOUNCER

Why was your wife taken to a mental hospital, Mr. Hapstad?

MR. HAPSTAD

(SLIGHT PAUSE) She tried to kill herself.

ANNOUNCER

I see. We never know, do we, when misfortune will befall us. And now our last contestant for the evening, ladies and gentlemen, Contestant No. 4. What is your name, madam?

(3RD LADY STEPS FORWARD. SHE OPENS HER MOUTH TO SPEAK, IS UNABLE TO UTTER A WORD, AND GULPS.)

ANNOUNCER

Your name, madam?

(LADY STUTTERS BADLY, SPEAKS IN QUICK GASPS.)

3RD LADY

Mrs....Mrs. Rose..Bollen.

ANNOUNCER

Well, Mrs. Bollen, it's nice to have you with us this evening. Now where are you from, Mrs. Bollen?

(MRS. BOLLEN TRIES TO SPEAK BUT CAN'T)

ANNOUNCER

Come, come Mrs. Bollen, speak up. Aren't you from the Far West?

MRS. BOLLEN

(BARELY DISCERNIBLE) San Diego . . California.

ANNOUNCER

San Diego! San Diego, California! All the way from San Diego, California to New York City, New York! You're to be congratulated, Mrs. Bollen, for having the courage and determination to make that long and arduous journey for the sake of "Your Chance To Live!"

MRS. BOLLEN

I wouldn't have come if you hadn't paid the plane fare.

ANNOUNCER

Yes. Now, Mrs. Bollen, why have you had the fortitude to come all the way to New York alone as you have?

(MRS. BOLLEN TRIES TO ANSWER BUT STAMMERS INCOHERENTLY.)

ANNOUNCER

(GENTLY) Yes, Mrs. Bollen?

MRS. BOLLEN

(HER HEAD HANGING) I need help.

ANNOUNCER

And why do you need help, Mrs. Bollen?

(MRS. BOLLEN REMAINS TRANSFIXED.)

ANNOUNCER

Why do you need help, Mrs. Bollen? Do you have any children, Mrs. Bollen?

MRS. BOLLEN

Yes

ANNOUNCER

How many children do you have, Mrs. Bollen?

MRS. BOLLEN

Four.

ANNOUNCER

Mrs. Bollen, I'm here to help you. Hasn't disease lowered its ugly head in your family?

(MRS. BOLLEN NODS FEEBLY.)

ANNOUNCER

Isn't that disease tuberculosis, Mrs. Bollen?

(THE NOD OF MRS. BOLLEN'S HEAD IS IMPERCEPTIBLE. SHE STARES AT THE FLOOR IN FRONT OF HER FEET.)

ANNOUNCER

How many of your children have tuberculosis, Mrs. Bollen? Is it one? Is it two? Is it three, Mrs. Bollen? Mrs. Bollen, isn't it true that all four of your children have tuberculosis? Isn't that true, Mrs. Bollen?

(MRS. BOLLEN LEAVES THE IMPRESSION OF HAVING NODDED.)

ANNOUNCER

Can't your husband help you, Mrs. Bollen?

MRS. BOLLEN

I'm a widow.

ANNOUNCER

You're a widow? (IN AMAZEMENT) You mean to tell me that you have four children, all of whom are afflicted by tuberculosis, and you are a widow?

(MRS. BOLLEN STANDS MUTE.)

ANNOUNCER

Thank you, Mrs. Bollen, that will be all. Now that you have met our contestants for this evening, folks, and before we enter the contest portion of our program, let's reflect for a moment on "Happy Days," the body cream that's not a deoderant.

(ANNOUNCER STEPS FORWARD SEPARATING HIMSELF FROM THE FOUR CONTESTANTS WHO STAND IN A LINE THEIR EYES STARING NUMBLY AND UNSEEING BEFORE THEM. ANNOUNCER'S VOICE BECOMES SOOTHING, CONFIDENTIAL, INTIMATE.)

ANNOUNCER

Folks, "Happy Days" may look like a deoderant. You use it like a deoderant. But "Happy Days" is different. It is a revolutionary new formula which has taken the scientists in our laboratories more than seven years to develop.

Why is "Happy days so different from a deoderant? Well, for one thing more than half the ingredients that go into making a tube of "Happy Days" are ingredients normally used in the production of perfume. You can smell this rich fragrance in every tube of "Happy Days." With "Happy Days" you clothe yourself in a rich, sweetsmelling robe that is as much a part of you as your appearance.

Folks, "Happy Days" is not a deoderant because deoderants are negative. Deoderants imply there's something that has to be gotten rid of. We don't believe there's anything about you that should be gotten rid of and we know you don't believe it either. That's why we say "Happy Days" is not a deoderant. No, on the contrary, "Happy Days" is an odorant. "Happy Days" accentuates the positive. "Happy Days" is an utterly new kind of body cream that bathes you in tantalizing scents while accenting your natural body charms! Yes, folks, you'll be happy to know that "Happy Days" will make you proud of yourself -- because "Happy Days" takes the "odorousness" out of odor!

(ANNOUNCER STEPS BACK, SMILING. TWO ASSISTANTS ENTER AND CIRCLE STAGE WITH LARGE SIGN READING "APPLAUD.")

ANNOUNCER

I thank you. And now, folks, it's time for "Your Chance To Live!" We have four contestants here with us on the stage! Each contestant has a problem. But only one contestant this evening will get "A Chance To Live!"

And the judge of the contest, folks? The impartial, fair analyser who will decide which of these four contestants had the greatest

need to get "A Chance To Live"? Here it is, folks, concealed in the palm of my hand. It's so tiny you can hardly see it -- another amazing product of this wonderful age that we live in. Another triumph of American industry. Here it is, folks, the little wonder of science that makes this program possible -- the "Painometer"!

(TWO ASSISTANTS ENTER AND CIRCLE STAGE WITH LARGE SIGN READING "APPLAUD.")

ANNOUNCER

The "Painometer," ladies and gentlemen, measures screams of human agony and suffering in terms of decibels, a scientific unit of sound measurement. Absolute fairness, therefore, is insured in the contest.

Each of our contestants will be given ten seconds to express to the best of their ability the agony and suffering that they are feeling. Most of our contestants prefer screaming. And while each contestant is performing, our little scientific marvel, the "Painometer," will be registering the contestants' agony in terms of decibels. The contestant getting the highest score will get "A Chance To Live"!

All right, let's go! Ready, contestants? All right! The "Painometer" is ready, too! All right, contestants, here it is! Here's the night you've been waiting for! Here's "YOUR CHANCE TO LIVE!" Light's out!

(THERE IS A COMPLETE BLACKOUT. ANNOUNCER'S VOICE ASSUMES THE HURRIED, BREATHLESS, EXCITEMENT-CONTROLLING TONE THAT ANNOUNCERS AT SPORTS-EVENTS USE.)

ANNOUNCER

All right! Contestant No. 1, Mrs. Irene Kowlowski, a widow, mother of five children, her youngest child a victim of multiple sclerosis!

(MRS. KOZLOWSKI SCREAMS.)

ANNOUNCER

Just a second, Mrs. Kozlowski. I'll tell you when. Four, three, two, one, GO!

(MRS. KOZLOWSKI SCREAMS FOR TEN SECONDS.)

ANNOUNCER

All right! All right! Thank you, Mrs. Kozlowski, you're in the running! Contestant No. 2, Mrs. Catherine Grey, her husband has a broken back and will never walk again if he doesn't have a major operation! Mrs. Grey, stand by! Five, four three, two one, GO!

(MRS. GREY SCREAMS FOR TEN SECONDS.)

ANNOUNCER

Thank you, Mrs. Grey! Folks, I can feel the "Painometer" getting warm in my hand. These contestants mean business! All right! Contestant No. 3, Mr. Edward Hapstad, his wife is committed to a mental institution and may kill herself if she does not get the necessary attention immediately. Mr. Hapstad, stand by! Three, two, one, GO!

(MR. HAPSTAD SCREAMS FOR TEN SECONDS.)

ANNOUNCER

Thank you, Mr. Hapstad! (A CONFIDENTIAL TONE) Folks, a word of explanation. The Painometer is capable of differentiating between male and female voices. In case you were worried that Mr. Hapstad might get a higher score due to the fact that his voice is heavier and deeper than the voices of the ladies, you'll be relieved to know that that "Painometer" is not affected by the physical quality of the voice, only by the pain and anguish that the voice expresses. Thank you. All right! Contestant No. 4, Mrs. Rose Bollen, a widow and a mother of four children all afflicted by tuberculosis! Stand by, Mrs. Bollen! Six, five, four, three, two, one, GO!

(THERE IS SILENCE INTERSPERSED BY ONE OR TWO "MRS. BOLLEN'S" FROM THE ANNOUNCER.)

ANNOUNCER

That's all, Mrs. Bollen. I'm sorry, Mrs. Bollen, did you understand the rules? Mrs. Bollen? Lights, please!

(THE LIGHTS FLASH UP. MRS. BOLLEN IS LYING INERTLY ON THE FLOOR. TWO ASSISTANTS RUSH ON STAGE.)

ANNOUNCER

It doesn't look like anything serious, folks. Mrs. Bollen seemed to be in perfect good health when she came on the program tonight. Let's hope it's just something she ate. Take her out, boys.

(TWO ASSISTANTS LIFT MRS. BOLLEN AND CARRY HER OUT.)

ANNOUNCER

At least we know Mrs. Bollen will receive the best care possible, folks. Mrs. Bollen will be personally attended by a well known physician and his staff at Union Memorial Hospital where she is now being speeded in a private limousine. And all at the expense of "Happy Days," folks, the body cream that's not a deodorant.

All right! The contest is over! Let's turn to the impartial, impersonal judge of this contest, the "Painometer," to see which of our contestants gets "A Chance To Live"!

(ANNOUNCER GAZES DOWN AT THE "PAINOMETER" IN HIS HAND.)

ANNOUNCER

This is wonderful! Folks, this is wonderful! There is a three-way tie for first place! A three way-tie! Mrs. Irene Kozlowski, Mrs. Catherine Grey, and Mr. Edward Hapstad, all tied for first place! All three contestants ran up a score of 37 decibels, the highest score we've ever had on the program!

That means that you, Mrs. Irene Kozlowski, get all expenses paid at a hospital of your own choosing for your youngest child who is suffering from multiple sclerosis! That means that you, Mrs. Catherine Grey, get all expenses paid for an operation on your husband's back! That means that you, Edward Hapstad, get all expenses paid at a mental hospital of your own choosing while your wife is being treated for mental illness! That means that you, Irene Kozlowski, you, Catherine Grey, you, Edward Hapstad, get "YOUR CHANCE TO LIVE!"

(TWO ASSISTANTS ENTER AND CIRCLE STAGE WITH LARGE SIGN READING "APPLAUD.")

ANNOUNCER

And if we have three winners, folks, why not make it four so that the evening will be perfect. And so, although Mrs. Rose Bollen failed to even register a single decibel on the "Painometer," "Happy Days," the body cream that's not a deoderant will provide all expenses for her four children while they are being treated for tuberculosis.

And so, folks, won't you agree with me that whether we're beautifying underarm perspiartion or living our lives, we can all look forward to "Happy Days." And it's all because we gave you "YOUR CHANCE TO LIVE!")

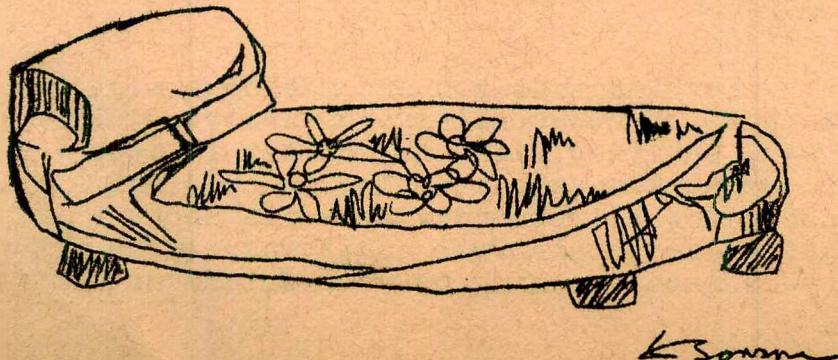
(TWO ASSISTANTS ENTER AND CIRCLE STAGE WITH LARGE SIGN READING "APPLAUD" WHILE ANNOUNCER SMILES GENIALLY AND WAVES AND THREE CONTESTANTS STAND TRANSFIXED.)

And since Brillig will be out so close to Christmas, perhaps a Christmas poem is in order. To give you a realization of Christmas fellowship here is Dick Geis with:

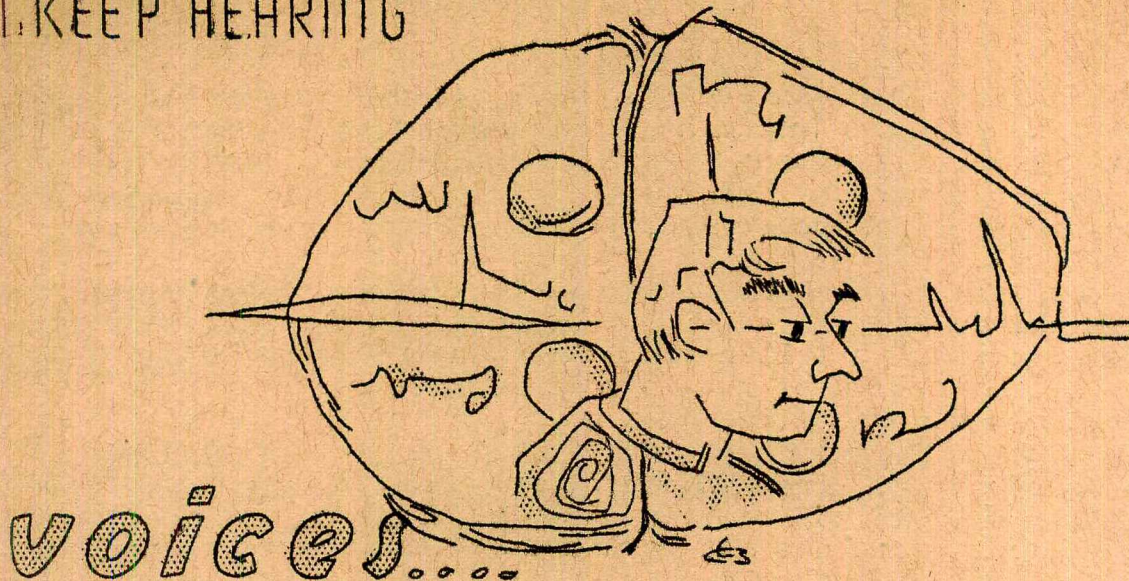
MERRY...Did you think something?

A wreath on the door for all to see.
("Put a spotlight on it or no one will know!")
A tree in the window with lights and tinsel.
("Had to move all the furniture but worth it!")
A gift wrapped in a splended golden bow.
("Damned ribbon cost more than the tie inside!")
A visit from loved ones and happy hours.
("Christ! They drink a fifth and give a pair of sox!")
Such are the wonderful joys of yuletide.
("Ohhh, two hundred dollars in debt!")

---Richard E. Geis



I KEEP HEARING



BOB LEMAN: I Can't accept your dictum that it's improper to parody Kirs--or any other writer, for that matter. As it happens, I agree with you that Kirs has a quite considerable talent; that he has a gift for the apt and colorful image, a sensitivity for words, and an impressive capacity for conveying atmosphere. But he also is addicted to a pretentious and derivative little-magaziney style, which fairly begs to be parodied--which is, indeed, very close to being itself a parody on, say, William Gaddis. Kirs has one of the biggest talents in fandom; his chief need now is to develop a style that is less precious and--above all--one that is a natural outgrowth of his own personality, talent and material, rather than one derived from others.

But even if he were an accomplished and respected professional writer, with no flaws whatever, he would remain fair game for parody. Any writer is. The writers most parodied today are, I should think, Faulkner, Hemingway, Cozzens, Joyce and Wolfe; and surely no one would contend that a parodist sets himself up to be a better writer than these great novelists, or that by burlesquing their styles he is engaging in irresponsible criticism. Indeed, most parody has no didactic aim whatever; its sole aim is simply to have some fun. The writer with an unusual or strange style is naturally easy game; the out-of-the way mannerisms can be exaggerated to produce something humorous but recognizable. One might well say that by parodying Kirs I was paying him a compliment; I was taking for granted that his style was distinctive enough, and well-enough known that most fans would know what I was up to. **

John Quagliano: I think that you are making a mistake in writing in a self-conscious, oh-how-sensitive-am-I-style. All sensitive people feel this way, but they fight to not let it stop them from doing things. You are doing the same by going to camp and hitchhiking around and looking for whorehouses. So write about what you see, and make us see what these people feel and think, and don't waste time talking about your shoes hurting or your friend not wanting to look

at the paperback racks. Try and write about what is going on around you. And one thing more, read Proust. He'll spend thirty pages describing how he tossed and turned one night and you will toss and turn. If you want to write like that you should write about every goddamn ganglion in your foot so my feet will hurt too. If you want to write about what's going on in your head, you have to give us all the impressions from all of your senses that are coming into your skull, so we will know how you feel that way and will feel the same way ourselves. Read Celline. He'll make you barf crossing the channell. No one would even listen to Celline let alone understand him if he didn't give us the hallucination of reality. It may not be the way he describes it but you don't realize that when you are reading him.

*

I recieved the wonderful grettings yesterday and on October 22 at 7:30 a.m., I, for the first time in my short career, will do things and go places that I did not set my heart on shall we say. I've done an awful lot of things and held an awful lot of jobs that have been tougher but this is the roughest time of my life because I am not free and my hands are tied behind my back. Of course I will try and make the best of it and lead the good life and try and not forget how comforting a cunt can be and study hard in case I want to go to grad school and play that role and try to sneak in some time with myself to see if I want to play the role of writer or storyteller or what have you. But right now since I don't know where and what and how, I am grabbing and snatching at the simpler pleasures -- listening to jazz till four in the morning, watching the world series on TV with a case of beer in the ice box, roaming around that big New York that will never be my home, digging jazz in spots that have sprang up while I was gone and out, and trying to say the right words to sleep with Greenwich village girls who know what's right and with it but who remind me of the midwest and who I know will be pregnant before I get out of the service and become a man. I'm not writing anything, I hate writing the vew letters that I must. I am reading like a kid locked in a candystore, you know with both hands and I know that I will be doing this every chance I get for the rest of my life. I'm doing a lot of resting with a beer can and a late movie on TV and I'm dredging my mind to remember how NY was and the people who have touched me and all this is going on while Clark Gable is deciding to kiss Lana Turner in the next reel.**

GEORGE METZGER: Like: there is this friend of mine who digs getting an education, only a sick homelife prevents it..so he has moved away and is living with another friend outside of Oroville...Much of his finance was provided by another friend..Only the kid's sister, who is damned spoiled doesn't like this, figuring he should stay at home in the country so he can drive her to and from school/dances/boy's houses, etc...But he made for school, and she, not being able to understand what we're doing for him interpreted it another way. They're a bunch of homos...and she told her parents who tried to have cops make kid come home but they stay out of these things. They're lazy anyway. But the accusing was done at night in a street with houses all around...So the story passed around that the kid and the friend with the \$\$ were/are queers..what they say about the guy who's furnishing the place to build and live on I don't know. They think he's terribly fast with the wimmen and all, but actually he is too damned moral about them...he gets so far and can't go on...Anyway,

I being a friend to them both I got drawn in. I've heard it vaguely. I'm not surprised. This's the kind of theing they'd love to hear, feed, and spread. Some of the types I've come across are kinds who love to tell it, do, and don't care to whom, where, when, who else is around, or how loud.

*

Big wreck by the school a few days back. Nearby is an overpass, the supporting beams dividing the road. Cross beams with two supports, at each entrance to pass, with a sign and a flashing light for detection. Some guy going like a bat from hell and weaving all over the road piled into it. I heard and went over. The pickup truck had gone on into the pass sideways, a jumble of twisted green parts...There was a blanket over the body, the cops standing all around, not seeming to know what to do. One got accounts from eyewitnesses. A young fuzz looked unhappy. He didn't seem to like to go near the wreck. On looking it could be seen that the steel beam had caught the truck inside the left fender, wrapping it around the beam, and plowing on thru the motor's side, twisting the wheel and axle under the car, I never could find the tire, and it continued on into the cab. Later, when someone came to peel off the parts from around the beam uncovering the sign, (it was replaced by the time school was dismissed), I saw them peel the door off the top of the fender. The glass, (doors?) had gone on and lay cracked in the other lane past the truck. Scattered for a hundred feet were a hunting rifle and some equipment..As the beam had torn into the cab, the vehicle must have swung around and into the underpass for the bed wasn't crushed, but rather a bit folded from the forward crash and the floor boards stuck up in the air or went thru the back of the truck. The cab was a bit tipped back and I could see the back of it. It was one big splatter mark of blood behind the driver's seat. There was glass all over. Finally one white-shirted cop took out a heavy flash camera and figeted about. Then they took the blanket off. The body hung from the waist down over a jumble of truck, what part I couldn't tell. He wore a short sleeved shirt, open at the front, exposing the muddied red cavity in his chest, throat and face where the beam had struck him. His face was dark muddy red. and it was shadowed in the underpass...I could see only one eye. Blood pooled the road, but he didn't seem to be bleeding now. Nor breathing. He stopped that a long time ago. His left arm hung down, looking unusually clean and tanned. The hand looked funny: of course..only a part of the palm was left. Later a man came with a box and picked up the fingers. The young cop didn't want to touch him, but forced himself to reach over the body and into the cab where we couldn't see the steering wheel, and get the identification tag. He didn't try and get the wallet. He shook it as if to wipe the horror from it, tho there may have been blood I couldn't see, and handed it to the cop with the clipboard who made notes. The camera-work was done but they hadn't gotten to putting back the greybrown blanket. The ambulance, 15 or twenty minutes late, shrieked thru the underpass and stopped. The driver got out and looked, shook his head, and went back the way he had come. Some kids couldn't understand this but it WAS a waste. One cop settled back to his cycle and did a sharp turn and took off up the road. Business as usual I guessed. Motorists moved past slowly, some stopping, absorbing the rare scene. Finally they threw the blanket back on. The arm showed...It shook when one cop thru something into the back of the truck. The herse came and backed in near. They took out a stretcher on wheels and wheeled it into position. The attendant took off the blanket but the cops stayed back. The two men from the herse seemed to be more adapted

to this sort of thing tho, I thought, never used to it. They grabbed the body after looking for a grip and jerked. There was a ripping noise, cloth? and the body came out, the right foot still in the pantsleg and the shoe a big workshoe, the other foot a bit bloody, but the shoe still on. They laid the body on the stretcher and pulled it up until the head laid upon the cleanstiff white pillow, the redness standing out sharp in the contrast. The shoes hung over the edge. They took out another sheet, tv commercial extra clean too and stretched it without a crease over the man. Then they lifted him into the hearse and left as the wrecker hove to into view. I decided to go back to class. One fellow artist looked sick. He was. We went away, behind us a cop stood by the blood smeared and scratched beam waving at traffic. Someone said, did the action inspire me to go paint a real juicy picture, and from the look of excitement on his face you would of imagined he drank blood. I just picked up where I had been when I had left. It was a highly impersonal event. I sat and painted and ate cherry pie. Yesterday two cars ran into each other there.

It began to rain, a thing expected, yet not prepared for by the summer clad kids by the yellow-warm bus...But I stood happy..No one said metzger you crazy bastard why do you wear that coat and scarf and I stood there while I got water all over my new slacks like anyone else. I felt pity for the guy who had just left on his motorcycle.....**

ROCKWELL B. SCHAEFER

----A U T U M N R E Q U I E M

A rumbling chirped by unmelodic birds
Accompanies the whirl of brittle leaves
Along the cooling eddies of November's flight.
A swallow flings its changeloss song straight up-
An arrow quivering a single throbbing note.
It spreads a ring of sound that slowly fades
Descending into dust-holes of the wind.
The air-gusts circle feathered ruffs
Around the muted throat.

A cloud of buzzards float pretending
An indifferent flight.
They patiently secrete destructive thunderheads
And sail in an armada buoyed
With vulture augury of ominous decay.

KENT MOOMAW: I can remember lots of things worth putting down even now; sleeping fitfully on a bench in the Tulsa Bus station after 36 hours with no rest...being let out of a car in the middle of the Ozarks with the stars overhead and no assurance whatever that I'd ever pick up another ride...showering in a Dallas mens room...talking to a guy on the bus en route to construction work in Texas who sank down in his seat every fifteen minutes or so to take a big swallow of whiskey, ignoring the signs all over the bus...dozens of greasy diners with the bony waitresses staring resentfully at the people coming in off the road, envying them their hurry, their rushing toward their destination, the simple fact that they had a destination...

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