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THE WISCONSIN

OCTOPUS

Dec. 1955
Vol. 34 #3



SWITCH FROM BC TO AD



25¢

SUMAC

In Madison . . .



nearly everyone reads the Octy

Yes, in Madison people *do* read the Octy. Some read it because it's so low in cost—only 25c. Others read it because it is sold on newsstands all over the city. Still others read it because they think that it's funny. The great majority read it because they find it lying around and have nothing better to do. No matter why people read the Octy, the experience is invariably educational and stimulating—highly recommended by the Octy Business Manager.

The Wisconsin Octopus

Letters to the Editor from People

To the Editor:

I read your item 'How to Complain About the Octy', and believe me I'm ready to go. You say come to the Octy office. Okay. I've looked all around the 800 block on State Street and I couldn't find your office any place. Are you guys hiding? You asked for complaints, though, and are you going to get them when I find you. I haven't been on the football team very long but I'm down to 220 and am in pretty good shape. Now—how do I find the guys that put out that rotten magazine.

With anticipation,

An Irate Reader.

Ed. note—It's much too difficult to explain. Would you care to talk to us over the phone? The number is extension 2110.

Dear Sir:

I read 'How to Complain About the Octy' and, though I have no complaints, I would like to talk to you. The magazine was very good and I would like to work on your staff. My experience is limited to editorial work on the New Yorker and the Saturday

Evening Post, but I'm willing to learn. How do I find your office?

Yours truly,

An Interested Reader

Ed note—I'm sure you will be able to find our office without any difficulty. It is located in the University Club building and has a basement entrance on the Murray Street side. The name 'Wisconsin Octopus' is on the door. If you can't find it call us and we will send a delegation out to escort you here.

Dear Sir:

I have a complaint to make about your circulation department. Last fall I shelled out \$1.25 to that obnoxious guy that was selling subscriptions to shut him up, but he wouldn't let well enough alone with that. No, he has to send me your obnoxious magazine, too. Will you please see to it that I don't get it any more?

Thank you,

An Irate Non-reader.

Ed. note—Odd, that's not the kind of complaint we usually get about our circulation department.

To the Editor:

What is this crud about 'Letters to the Editor'? I don't think anyone wrote you those letters. Certainly the IBM Corporation didn't send you \$5,000! Why don't you give us the truth? **YOU WRITE THOSE LETTERS YOURSELVES, DON'T YOU?**

A Fed-up Reader

Ed. note—Yes, you have found us out. We make every one of them up. We even made up yours.

Dear Sir:

I heard a joke the other day that you might be able to use. One guy says to another guy, "Who was that woman that I saw you with last night?" And the other guy says to the first guy he says, "That was no woman, that was my wife." How about that, huh?

You're welcome,

A Helpful Reader

Ed. note—Thanks a lot; that is a hot one all right.

Dear Sir:

I'm a new student at Wisconsin and just read the Octy for the first time today. It's a good news magazine and all that, but did you ever think of putting some humor in it? Other schools that I have been to have magazines that have nothing but humor all the way through them. I think it would be a lot of fun to have one here at Wisconsin.

Your humble and most obedient,
Servant.

Ed. note—If you liked it so damn well at those other schools why don't you go back there?

Dear Sir:

I am one of the poor unfortunates living in Emergency Housing. I am living with three other girls in a re-converted phone booth in Bascom Hall. While we have become adjusted to living in close quarters, we have two problems. When we close the door to go to sleep at night the light goes on and keeps us awake, and when we finally fall asleep, the bells ring at fifty minute intervals to awaken us. As we have no other place to live, please advise us what we can do about our situation.

Cramped.

Ed. note—College is a place where you have to make adjustments. You are here to get an education; your parents have sacrificed much to make college possible. We find it rather disturbing to receive such trivial letters from our future adults. Stick with it girl, show us the character you're made of.

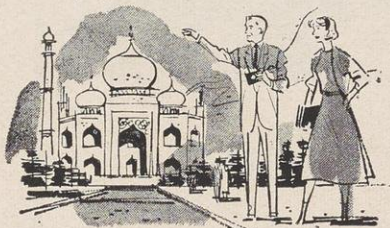
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A man walked into a newspaper office and placed an ad offering a \$500 reward for the return of his wife's pet cat.

"That's a pretty high price for a cat," remarked the clerk.

"Not for this one," confided the man, "I drowned it this morning."

Remember, fellows, a girl always appreciates candy and flowers. Let her know that you remember—speak of them occasionally.

"Are you a little boy or a little girl?"

"Sure, what the hell else could I be?"

A Protestant minister died and went to heaven, expecting to be admitted pronto, but was told by St. Peter to sit on a nearby bench and wait. The same thing happened to a Catholic priest, likewise a rabbi. The next fellow that came along said he drove a cab in Madison; St. Peter told him to go right in. The three reverend gentlemen rushed up to St. Peter and asked him why the favoritism. St. Peter told them the Madison cabbie scared the hell out of more people than the three of them put together.

Some women are easy to look at. Others pull their shades.

"Is my face dirty or is it my imagination?"

"Your face is clean, I don't know about your imagination."

"Hey, Jones, are you using your sport coat tonight?"

"I'm afraid so, old man."

"Splendid, then you won't mind lending me your tux."

Papa Robin returned to his nest and announced proudly that he had made a deposit on a new Buick.

Housemother: "I know my girls don't drink when they go out, because they're always so thirsty in the morning."

"What made you quarrel with Melvin?"

"He proposed again last night."

"What harm is there in that."

"I accepted the night before."

He: "Will you go out with me some time?"

She: "Don't be ridiculous, I can't go out with a baby."

He: "Excuse me, I wasn't aware of your condition."

Husband: "The iceman's been bragging that he's kissed every woman in the building except one."

Wife: "It must be that snooty Mrs. Jones upstairs."

"You say he has bad breath."

"Does he have bad breath? Why last Hallowe'en they pushed him over three times."

Beginner at fishing: "Oh, I've got a bite. Now what do I do?"

Fisherman: "Reel in your line."

Beginner: "I've done that. The fish is tight against the end of the pole. Now what do I do?"

Fisherman (disgusted): "Climb up on the rod and stab it."

Cowboy: "Take this steak back and cook it!"

Waiter: "But that steak is cooked."

Cowboy: "Shucks, man, I've seen cattle hurt worse than that get well."

Freshman: "I don't know."

Sophomore: "I'm not prepared."

Junior: "I don't remember."

Senior: "I don't believe that I can add anything to what has been said."

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FROM THE EDITOR'S BROWN STUDY

An editorial word of warning to freshmen: do NOT take books home for Christmas vacation.

Oh yes, we know quite well how much work you are planning to get done over the long vacation, but we will tell you right now that you won't get it done.

Watch those who have gone through one Christmas vacation, who have lugged books uncomfortably long distances and brought them back without so much as opening them. Only the slow learners persist in this ridiculous ritual.

You are to be admired for your good intentions. At one time we shared your plans for getting up every morning at seven or eight, just as if you had to go to classes, and hitting the books until noon. They are noble plans, a part of the Great American Dream; but it just doesn't work that way.

Try to remember these plans for solitary mornings, afternoons, or evenings of study when the time comes. Satan and the tempting game never had it so good as with would-be students back home for Christmas.

The plan usually calls for good times at night and study all day, but the result is good times at night and recuperate all day.

What? You're going to take them home anyway? Okay. That's your business, but do us one favor. Remember us when you walk back into your room with the same load of books under your arm.

On second thought, don't bother. You'll be too busy worrying about when you will be able to make up all that work you had been planning on doing over the vacation.

—ED EDWARDS

THE WISCONSIN OCTOPUS

THE BOUNDERS OF THE CAMPUS ARE THE BOUNDERS OF THE STATE

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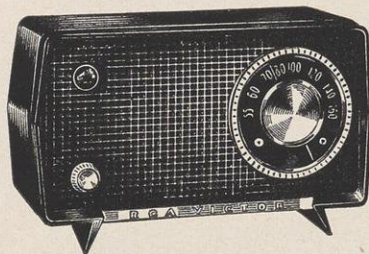
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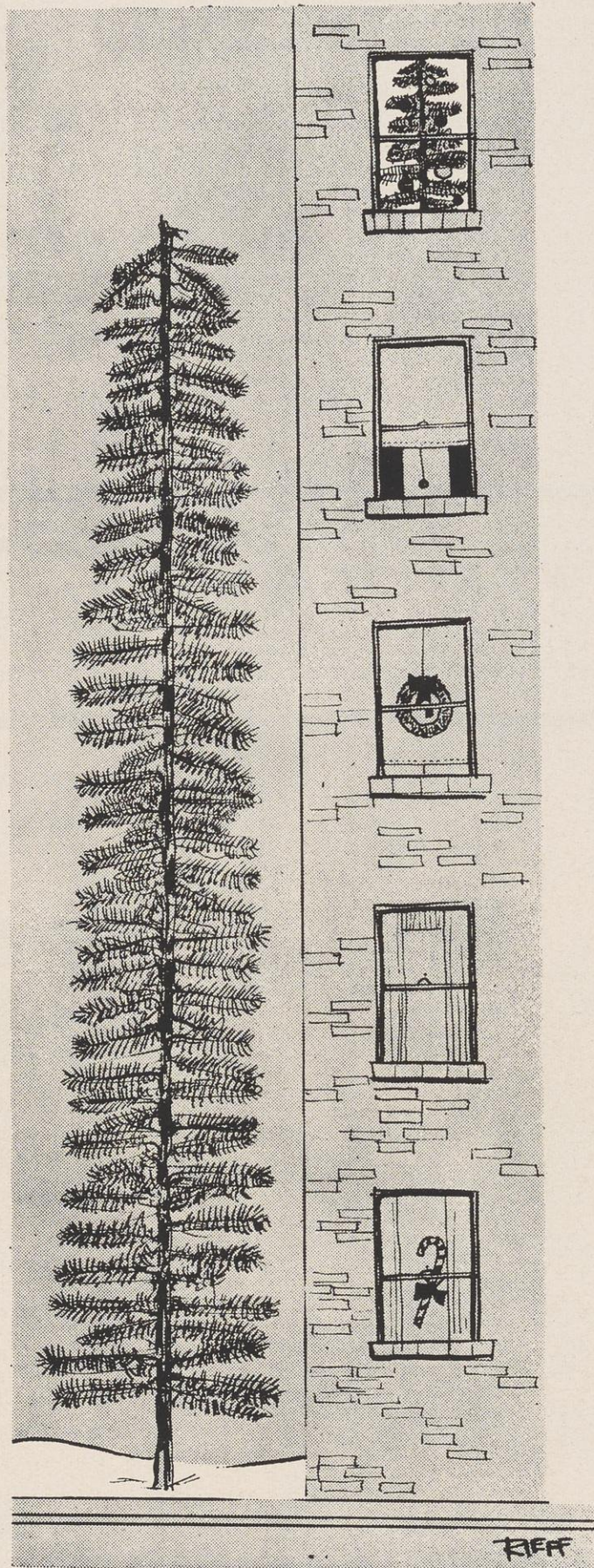


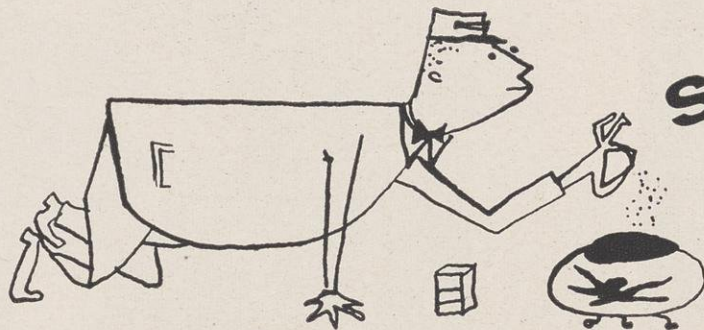
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Squid blings

THE DAILY CABDINAL has done it again! Faced day after day with the frightening necessity of finding or making NEWS and ISSUES out of the humdrum of campus life, they never fail to dredge them out somewhere. This time they have come up with one that has great public appeal—opposition to the move of the Madison city council to raise the beer drinking age from 18 to 21. What thought could penetrate to the heart of the campus, to the heart of even the most apathetic students, as sharply as the fear of prohibition?

IT WILL BE SEEN that this is tied up with another of the Cardinal's pet issues, namely the parking problem. If we can't get beer in Madison, obviously we have to get cars to get to the out of town beer joints. If we have cars, obviously we have to park them. Let's face it men (and women), they're closing in on us.

OUR TOLERANT NATURE will inevitably win out in the end, though, for after a long war between the opposition, which wants no one to drink beer and ourselves, who want everyone to drink beer, we will accept an amenable compromise to leave everything exactly as it is.

THIS WHOLE BUSINESS puts the Octy in a sad position in determining its all-important stand on politico-social questions. Students all over the campus, Madison citizens, the city councilors themselves are awaiting our stand. Despite our long-standing policy of disagreeing with everything the Cardinal says or does, we have come to a fateful juncture. The Cardinal is 100% right.



a campus chronicle

IN FACT, we will go them one step better and tell Mr. McCormick that beer is a necessary part of college education. Allow us to repeat that if we may. Beer is a necessary part of a college education. We would refer to the plaque on Bascom Hall which, it is rumored, says something about "sifting and winnowing." How, pray tell, are we going to sift and winnow in regards to beer if we have to go out of town to get it?

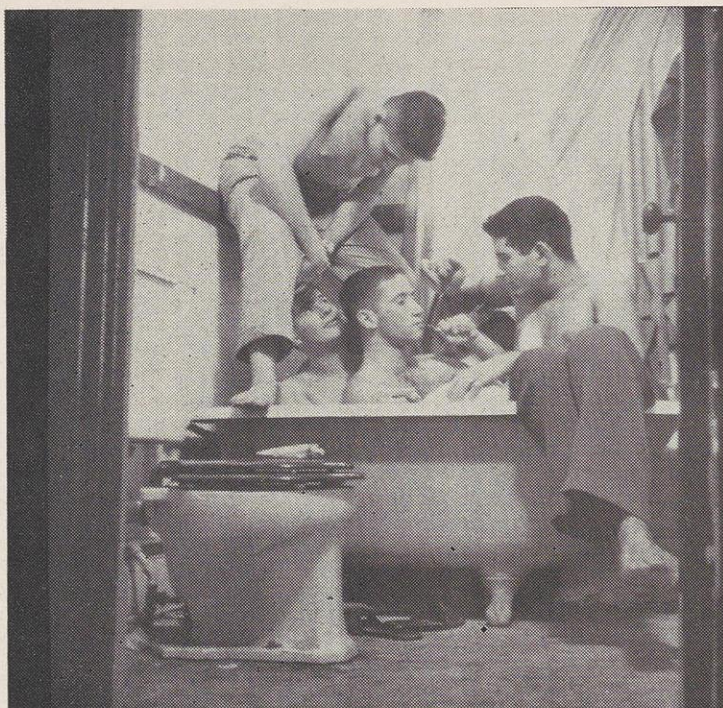
WE WILL FIGHT BACK of course. Perhaps it would be the best course to examine the reasons for such an unfair movement as this one ever coming up. Maybe we have been too tolerant in the past. It will be noticed that we have never insisted that anyone drink beer. It was there, if they were tee-totalers they didn't have to drink it. If this has been our failing, then the only thing to do is to start a counter movement to force everyone to drink beer.

THERE ARE, of course, other reasons why this vicious movement might have arisen. We might look for the influence of scheming special interest lobbies on the city council. If this is the case we can summon the spirit of Old Bob to our side and have the Capital Times, as well as all the good Progressives in Madison on our side.

WE MIGHT LOOK, for instance, to see if the taxicab interests or the used car interests are working to improve their profits by capitalizing on the move to the country which will inevitably take place.

THEN AGAIN, it could be the liquor interests, who know full well that students, if forced to drink on the sly, will go whole hog and drink liquor. After all, who would run the risk of getting tangled up with the law just to have a bottle or two of beer?

THE ISSUES AND PROPOSALS in this matter have been, and will be, highly debated. Whatever the outcome—whether reason or prohibition wins out—the general opinion of the student body can best be summed up, we feel, by the words. Sssssss, BOOOM ahhhhh, (whistle), BEER!



Octy found that unbelievably cramped and squalid living conditions furthered the educational purposes of the University by teaching teamwork and community spirit. Here a group of roommates, unable to use the bathroom separately before morning classes, work together smoothly to get each member ready to face the outside world. Net time was twenty-eight minutes and twelve seconds for the four men.



Our typical group has learned to amuse themselves together in their one and a half room apartment. Reeds have been removed from clarinet and music box, and drummer avoids hitting pan so that they will not disturb neighbors on all four sides.

Student Living



During study hours, cramped conditions teach the group to study together, thrashing out scholarly questions together. Study period is carefully observed by this group from 7:00 to 7:01 each evening.



In sleeping, teamwork is again inspired by necessity. Unable to roll over individually, the group turns simultaneously when a bell sounds each half hour.

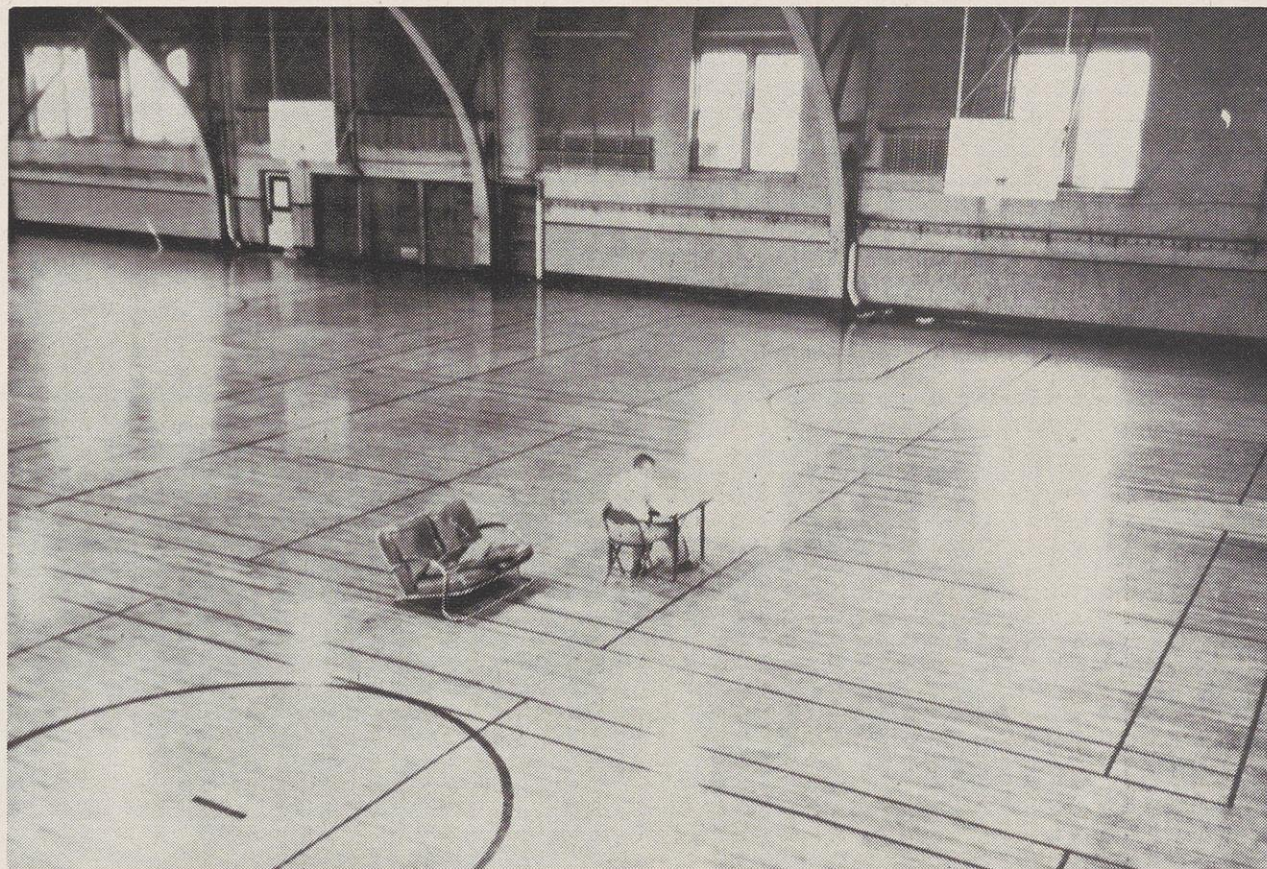
A Squid's Eye View

Conditions

photos by mike lien



Groups with cooking facilities learn economy of diet and cooking. Here one member who has burned an expensive piece of meat is encouraged by his roommates to eat it so that it won't go to waste.



Although Octy found the condition of the cramped group typical, there are exceptions. Shown above is one of the more wealthy students on campus in the study of his spacious apartment. Deprived of intimate interchange of ideas, his marks are low.

SORORITY OPEN HOUSES TURNED INSIDE OUT BY DAVE TRUBEK

Yearly, when the round-up is over and the new pledge class is getting its first taste of the saddle and bit, the fraternities and sororities sponsor charming little affairs known as "open houses."

These are designed to "introduce the pledges to the campus." This is a noble aim, but behind this institution is a subtler purpose, part of the great goal of our social organizations: the valiant attempt to make human beings out of the livestock that annually descend upon us in the form of a freshman class.

In some parts of the world the home and the high school carry the burden of civilizing the human animal. There he is taught all the basic rules of ethical and moral conduct: how to shake hands and say "Pleased to meecher" almost as if he meant it, how to remember the name of the plain girls as well as the pretty, and finally how to carry on a completely vacuous conversation with anyone of any age, sex, or social position while sipping warm coca-cola and eating soggy potato chips.

But in the sovereign state of Wisconsin somehow the wiley critters sneak by the attempts of home and high school. Some souls, God help them, probably remain in their natural state until death. These noble savages are part of Wisconsin's great frontier tradition. Others go to the University.

And, naturally enough, they join fraternities and sororities. Whatever the motives that lead them to that great cattle show known as Rushing, they all mill around from house to house, while the cattle merchants and dealers in horse-flesh pinch their manners, poke their social position, and generally gauge the quality of the material.

Then comes the great auction, and by the end of September the freshmen wake up to find they are pledges. Then the real business can begin. The dealers

take off their store-bought shirts, celluloid collars, and fancy gallusses, drop the grins and the smiles and the handshaking, roll up their sleeves, and start in to do something with another consarned bunch of pledges.

Pity the drill sergeant with his company of raw recruits. Sympathize with the kindergarten teacher, or the missionary out to civilize the naked heathens of the African jungles. But do not miss the sorry task of the Active, who must yearly bear the white man's burden into the stinking jungles of the freshman class.

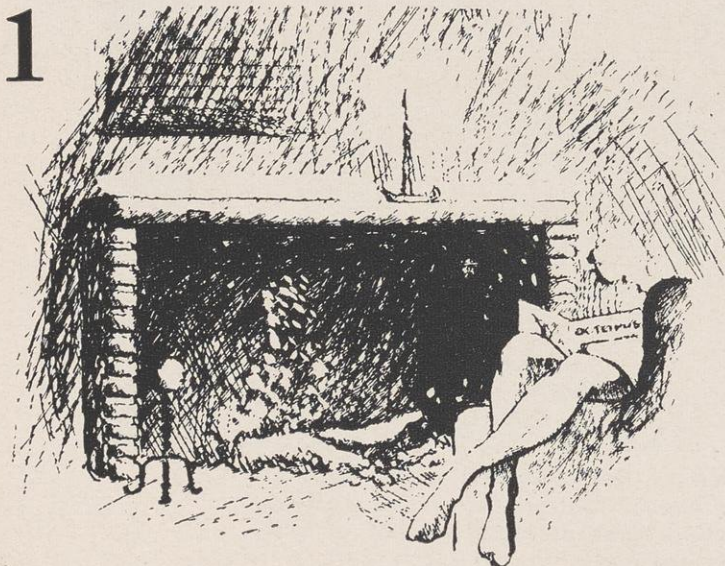
And so, after years of experience, the harried actives have devised an institution that ranks with the Dancing Class and the Church Choir as a foundation of American society—the Open House.

Whether the Open House sprang full-born into the world like Minerva from the head of Zeus, or whether it is the result of a long complex institutional evolution is a question for scholars. We are concerned only with the institution itself, as it exists today mature, complete, and to judge by bulletin board and Cardinal Society page, flourishing.

Take some forty well dressed, well groomed sorority girls, wise in the ways of the social world, place them (standing) in a large, well furnished living room, add a three piece band that produces a sort of emaciated jazz one can only describe as "Droopyland" and you have the start of a standard open house.

Then gradually, starting about one half an hour after the scheduled starting time, begin to introduce in about equal parts fraternity actives, dragging fraternity pledges, and bottles of coca-cola, and you have completed the formula.

They come in large groups. The actives, who have been through this before, lead confidently up to the door. They either know the girls here or a hundred others like them, and can easily think of the right things to say.



The pledges hold back, sticking together, making nervous jokes: "Come on Fatso, they ain't gonna bite."

"Ah, shut up, will ya. What ya say we duck out and go ta flic, huh?"

"Come on, ya'll meet some real nice chicks."

"Oh, sure, sure."

By this time they have reached the door. Like most sorority houses, this one looks like a mansion out of some period of American history. It may be the antebellum South, pre-revolutionary Virginia, early 18th cen-



tury Boston, or victorian Chicago. None of them look quite right here in south-central Wisconsin in 1955, but after one has become accustomed to seeing a pseudo-colonial mansion with rather Cape-Codish dormers and furnished like Marshall Field's colonial American showroom sitting ten feet from a pseudo-georgian brick monstrosity furnished like a downtown YWCA, one has seen Langdon Street in its entirety, and nothing can shock any longer.

At the door stand several girls assigned to door duty. Contrary to a popular myth, door duty is not assigned as a punishment, but is often given to some of the most

charming members of the sorority. However, sometimes this system, like all other human systems, will fail, and door duty is assigned to a "silent."

A "silent" can wreak havoc with the smoothly flowing operation of the Open House. It takes a seasoned trooper to deal with some of the more intrepid visitors. For instance, if a smiling young buck in white bucks comes up and says:

"Hi-ya Suzie you are Suzie ain't ya? I'm Dick Burke this is a swell day don't you think how'd ya like the ga—oh say excuse me will ya there's a cute girl I . . . " all this while looking over the girl's shoulder trying to case the set-up within. Sometimes he will, staring beyond her, push her aside to see some face she is blocking.

An old hand will take this cur, stop the flow of talk with a calm, "Why, yes, and why don't we go in and meet some of the girls?" and lead him forthwith right to the exact spot where another man is needed.

A "silent," however, will be bowled over and probably let him get in to circulate promiscuously. Speak softly but take no guff—that is what the oldtimers say.

So, our visitor is brought into the arena, where about sixty or seventy people are milling about in groups of two or three or four, trying desperately to keep up a stream of conversation while at the same time looking about for someone more interesting than the present company.

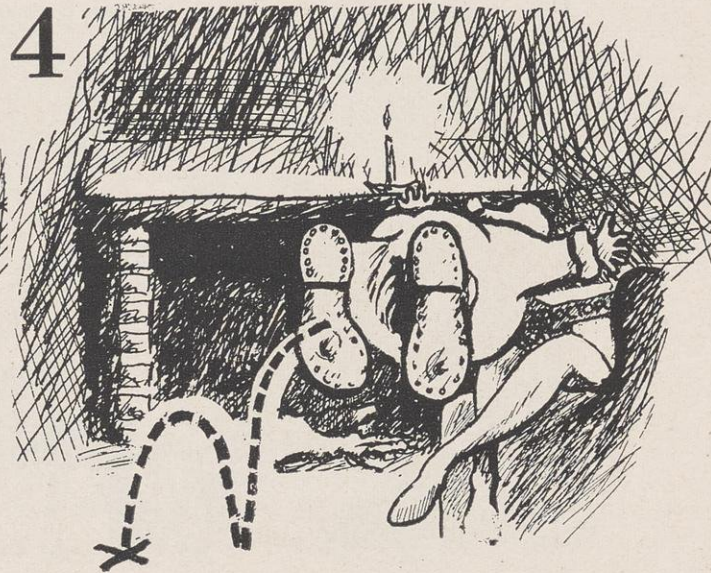
The oldtimer, or first wave introducer as they are technically called, will bring him into a group, preferably one of sweet young pledges. Things from there on usually go like this:

Oldtimer: Hello, Suzie. (Suzie has been having an almost interesting conversation with a *terribly* cute Chi Phi. It turned out they have a common interest. However, such conversations are frowned on—after all, they may lead *anywhere*—and it is the oldtimer's job to insure "circulation.")

Suzie Grumph . . . (All last names at Open Houses are Grumph. Sometimes Phlugh, but these are rare.) . . . this is Charlie Grumph.

She Pledge: Hello. (Said with a smile. The art of smiling at Open Houses is a delicate one. There is the danger of seeming insincere, and the greater danger of seeming sincere. After three years of experience, a girl learns to affect an air of eager boredom. This is no mean trick, but here the Open House serves as basic training

(continued on page 18)



Help Fight TB

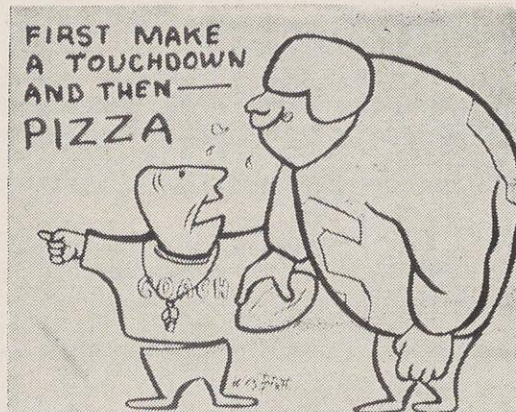


Buy Christmas Seals

COMPLIMENTS OF ARTHUR J. ROSEN

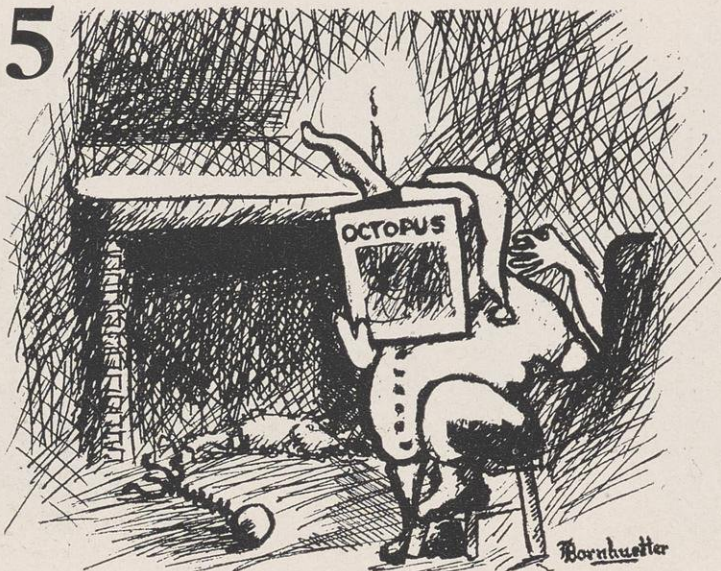
PAISAN'S FOR PIZZA

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821 UNIVERSITY AVENUE



She was trying to work her way through college by selling subscriptions to the Saturday Evening Post, but all the fellows wanted to take Liberties.

Many a student walks into quiz with the knowledge in the palm of his hand.

Junk man: "Any beer bottles for sale, lady?"

Old maid: "Do I look as though I drank beer?"

Junk man: "Any vinegar bottles for sale, lady?"

"What is a bar stool?"

"That's what Davy Crockett stepped in."

"Honey, we're going to have a swell time tonight. I have two tickets to a lecture."

"But I don't like lectures."

"No, but your mother and father do."

The spinal column is a bone formation. The head sits on the top, and you sit on the bottom.

"Yes, this is a nice little apartment, but I don't see any bath."

"Oh, pardon me! I thought you were one of those college boys who want a place just for the winter."

A professor, tired of clock-watching students, hung the following sign over the face of the classroom clock: "Time will pass. Will you?"

The weaker sex is the stronger sex because of the weakness of the stronger sex for the weaker sex.

Daughter (admiring mink coat): "I can hardly imagine that such beautiful furs come from such a small slinking beast."

Father (sobbing): "I don't ask gratitude, but I think you could show a little respect."

Familiarity breeds attempt.

Scene: A lonely corner on a dark night.

A voice: "Would the gentleman be so kind as to assist a poor, hungry fellow who is out of work: Besides this revolver I haven't a thing in the world."

Silent Night

A CHRISTMAS CAROL

By
Henry Summerall

I COULD HEAR THEM SINGING a Christmas carol. It sounded far away, as though I were hearing it through a haze. It was close enough that I could tell the bass was stronger than the alto and the tenor was out of tune, and the soprano was oversung like it always is. "Si-i-lent night, ho-oh-ly night." It's funny how you think about such crazy things in a time like that. The first thing I remember was hearing the singing. It was a peculiar sensation. I couldn't see anything, it was all dark. I thought I felt cold, but I couldn't seem to move my hand to see if the cover was pulled up. I wanted to move my arm but I couldn't my back was so cold. I kept hearing the music. "All is calm, all is bright."

I tried to open my eyes, but everything stayed dark. My hand! All of a sudden it started moving. The bed felt cold and smooth. As my hand touched the hair on my leg, I remembered that I had forgotten to put on pajama pants. No wonder my legs and back were so cold. My hand moved up under the cover to touch my eyes. It's funny how you expect to touch your glasses when you first wake up and it surprises you that they aren't there. My glasses weren't there, but I felt some kind of cloth-like something that felt like band-aids. One corner of one was loose and my fingers pulled it off. Now my eye opened and I could see blue light vaguely through a haze. I could still hear the music, coming slow and far away. "Round yon virgin."

My cover had crawled up over my head, and I pushed it back with my arm. I could see the ceiling now, the squares of tile lit up by the dim blue light. I kept exploring with my free arm. The other one began to come to, as if I had cramped it during sleep, paining as the blood filled it. I found another adhesive on my forehead. When I pulled it off, causing the skin to itch and burn, I saw it had my name on it and the date, December 24, 1955. I hadn't realized it was so close to Christmas. Those carols had been playing since Thanksgiving. I pulled the tape off my other eye, making it pull my eyelashes caught in the adhesive. Still the music came, "Mother and child."

Now I smelled the mild antiseptic odor, a clean smell though not particularly fresh. My legs were waking up, but they seemed restricted and cramped. My back and rump were especially cold on the smooth surface. I managed to raise my head and look around. The room was very symmetrical. Five slabs that looked like doctor's tables on a side with an aisle down the middle leading to a door. I managed to sit up so I could see better and all my cover fell off my torso. I had forgotten to put on my pajama top too. Three of the side tables on one side were empty, and two on the other side, just stone slabs. The

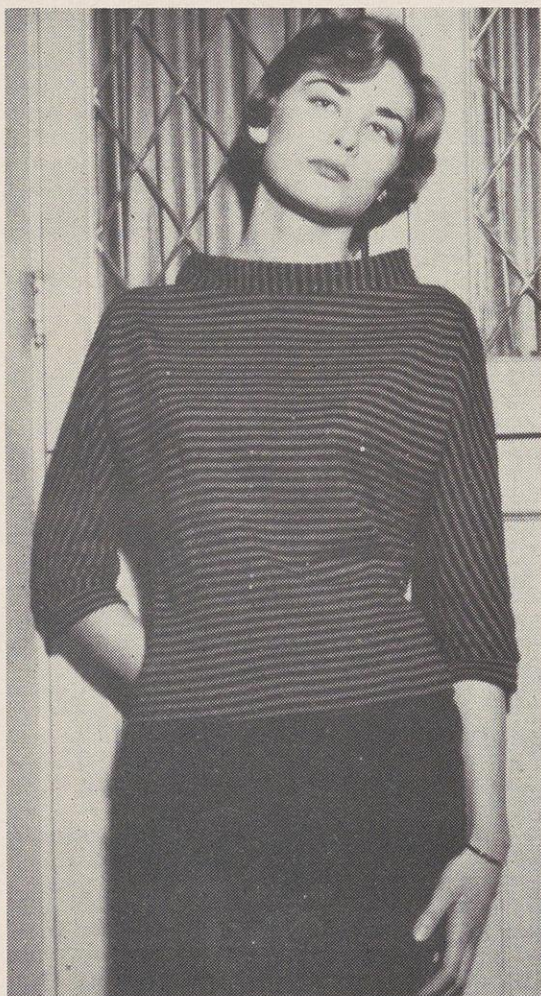
rest of them had lumpy sheets over them. I had to roll over on my side to pull the cotton out. It was cold on my shoulders when I rolled over. There was a tightly tied string, but I couldn't untie it. It was hurting me, it was tied so tightly. I kept hearing the singing. Now the tenors seemed a little better on key. "Holy infant so tender and mild." My legs were tied with a cord, but it was loose enough to slip them out.

I sat up on the edge and started to step down. My toes barely touched the cold floor. I started across the floor to the door. I was cold all over now, and my teeth were chattering. As I went to the door, they were singing "Sleep in heavenly peace" with the long upward slur on the end of the line. I made it to the door, but there was no door knob. It opened from the outside, above the door a sign said "Morgue". I knocked on it and banged with my fists and kicked it with my feet until I almost broke my toes and almost fractured my left heel. Why don't they come? Oh God, on Christmas, help me. Help me. I started crying. I couldn't help it. I was so cold, and the door wouldn't open. God, why don't they hear me? Everything blacked out in front of me and I fell to the cold floor in front of the door. "Slee-eep in heavenly peace."



OCTY DREAM GIRL

Smiling, Luaine shows the rollicking good spirit that comes with being a resident of White House from Howards Grove, Wisconsin. Despite this all-American background, she shows that she can be . . .



Luaine Bender

. . . sultry, befitting a sophisticated senior in music. Phone number: Univ. 2254. Personality: friendly and charming.

—Photos by Jerry Spiegel

The Joke Racket

PART THREE

—In which the mysterious hide-away that jokes come from is revealed to Fred Belmar

CONCLUSION

Fred Belmar decides in the middle of a joke session at the University of Wisconsin that he must find out where jokes come from. Failing to find anyone in Madison who makes up jokes, he goes to Hollywood, figuring that this is the logical place to look. The only result of his research in this city, though, is that he annoys an alleged joke writer and is kidnapped by a pair of mysterious orientals. These two men take him on a plane flight to India, where they hire horses and ride far into the Himalayas until they come to a long valley. Fred sees at the other end of the valley an enormous palace built on the side of a mountain, which he is certain is the place where jokes come from.

THE PALACE HAD SEEMED only a hundred yards or so away when Fred had first seen it, but the group rode for minutes across the grassy valley floor without reducing the visible distance at all. This greatly frustrated our hero who was leaning forward in his saddle in eagerness. He could hardly be blamed for his eagerness, either, as he saw ahead the end of his search for the place where jokes came from coming to a successful conclusion and a story beyond his wildest dreams rapidly taking shape.

Leaning forward was not much help, though, and Fred thought that it must have been a least fifteen minutes before they were at the main gate of the palace and the magnificent building of granite and bricks towered over them and reached from left to right in a great expanse.

The guard, a holster at his hip,

looked quizzically at Fred. "A writer?" he asked the escorts as though he didn't believe it possible. Fred was not insulted; he supposed he didn't look like the kind of person a joke factory would hire as a writer.

"No," one of the escorts chuckled, and he showed the guard a long sheet of yellow paper. It was apparently a thousand-word cablegram of instructions which the men had received in Los Angeles.

"Well," exclaimed the guard, looking at Fred. "It's not often we have a personal visitor to the Commandant."

Fred cleared his throat modestly. The gate was opened and the three of them rode past the guard into a large courtyard.

The courtyard was deserted except for another man with a holster who stood beside a large door at the far end. They rode directly toward him while Fred gaped at the height and complexity of the palace on the sides of the courtyard and the mountain, towering still higher at the end.

This guard was also treated to a look at the cablegram which seemed to be Fred's passport into this strange sanctum. He read it over and looked at Fred admiringly. Fred again cleared his throat. "You may dismount. The Commandant will see you now."

He sprang to the ground with great agility, smiling as much like Douglas Fairbanks, Jr., as he could. Pity that he couldn't think of any excuse for scaling the walls and smashing into

a window, swinging on a velvet cord. The setting lent itself to such a scene admirably. Instead he stood on the balls of his feet, ready for action, tucked in his shirttail all the way around, and combed his hair perfunctorily with his fingernails.

"This way, please," said the guard, and Fred followed him, waving dashing to the two silent men who had captured him and brought him half way around the world. One of them nodded quietly.

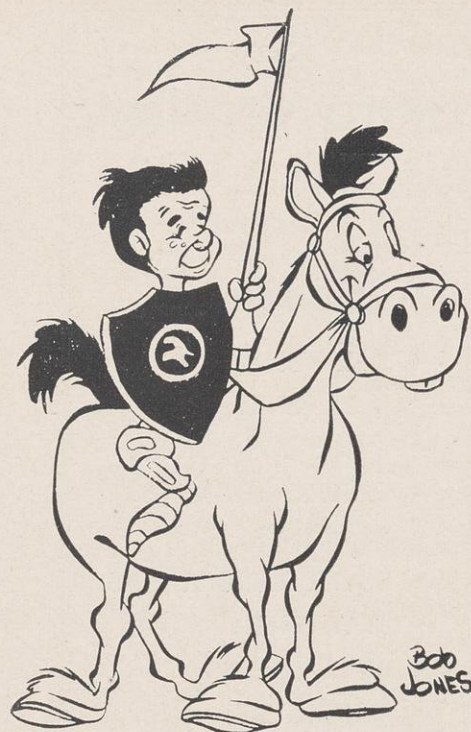
The guard led him to a door and motioned him through.

FRED ENTERED a long, narrow room. At the other end was a white-haired man seated behind a massive mahogany desk. This man was obviously the Commandant.

Fred, continuing to be Douglas Fairbanks, Jr., strode to the desk, extended his hand familiarly, and chuckled with the nonchalant air of an explorer discovering as he had one of the most secret spots of the globe. "The Commandant, I presume?"

"Yes, be seated please," said the Commandant without looking up from his papers. Fred put his hand back in his pocket and sat down in the red leather chair which sat facing the desk.

The Commandant read his papers intently, chuckling occasionally. He finished them at last, shifted his body somewhat causing a buzzer to sound in some adjoining room, probably by means of a pedal, and began to (continued on next page)



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THE JOKE RACKET (continued)

sign the sheets he had been reading one by one. One of the panels on the left side of the desk opened, and an oriental came out and stood beside the desk expectantly.

"Yesterday's product is acceptable, Cato. Tell room five that they were funnier than usual." The oriental took the sheaf of papers, bowed shortly, and entered the desk as silently as he had come out.

"Now, Mr. Belmar." The Commandant looked up at last. "It is Mr. Belmar, I assume."

"Yes." Fred smiled.

"You seem to have put us all in an embarrassing situation, Mr. Belmar."

"Well, sir, I just decided that I was going to find out where jokes come from and I set out to do it."

"That was your first mistake, Mr. Belmar. You should have considered the possibility that in finding this place that you would jeopardize its very existence."

Fred squirmed. True, he had never thought of that. Yet, he must stick up for himself. He knew that it was futile to argue, though. Why was it that white-haired men behind solid wood desks could always put him in a one-down position? "Well, sir, I'm not at all sure that I approve of the existence of this place. Perhaps I'm glad that I have put it in jeopardy."

The Commandant shook his head and smiled. "Ah, well. It appears as though I'm going to have to show you. This younger generation! You just don't seem to understand matters like this."

There he goes again, thought Fred. One-down. You just can't beat these white-haired fellows.

"Come with me," said the Commandant.

They left the room by a door at the back of the room and Fred found himself in a long, tiled hallway.

"We'll go room by room," announced the Commandant. This is room one." He nodded toward a room on the left. The top half of the door was glass, and Fred could see about ten men, intent looks on their faces, pouring over advertising literature. While he watched, one man broke into a broad smile, slapped the man next to him on the back, and said something. The entire group burst into laughter, and a small man with a pad of paper wrote something down.

(continued on next page)

THE JOKE RACKET (continued)

"Room one is devoted to jokes about advertising," said the Commandant. "These men spend the entire day reading ads and making—yes *making*—jokes about them. You just now saw a joke being created."

Before Fred had a chance to consider the full significance of this fact he was led on down the hall and the Commandant motioned toward another glass door, which had a two on it. Inside was another group of about ten men. Their source material seemed to be pictures of the latest cars, books of traffic regulations, pictures of collisions, and newspapers.

"Room two works on jokes about cars and driving," the Commandant explained. "This is one of our busiest sections nowadays."

He led Fred on down the hall indicating each room and explaining its function. "Room three: offices—jokes about water coolers, raises, stenographers, the boss, and that sort of thing. Room four: sex. Always a busy one. You'll see that we have twice as many men in this job. You know what kind of stuff they

turn out—traveling salesmen, sorority girls, prostitutes, college men, newlyweds. Pretty sordid.

"Room five: drinking — drunks, bartenders, pink elephants. Room six: smoking. People quitting smoking, worrying about getting lights, bumming, picking up butts, and the like. Room seven: marriage—late poker games, new hats and dresses, the iceman, rolling pins, slaving over a hot stove. Room eight: the family. Arguments over the family car, television, do-it-yourself, picnics; children who don't know about sex, swearing, and the rest.

"Room nine: sports. That's self-explanatory. Room ten: minority groups—Scotchmen, Irishmen, Jews, Catholics, Frenchmen, Methodists, hillbillies, Texans, New Yorkers, and all that rot."

They had moved down the hall too fast for Fred to get any more than a glimpse of the men in each room, intent over the tools of their trade, occasionally laughing uproariously. It was indeed a strange assemblage.

"Room eleven: ugly jokes—the kind you say 'ugh!' when somebody tells them but you laugh anyway. You'll notice the men are dressed for the occasion." Inside the room Fred

saw men in every manner of slovenly dress—pajamas, coveralls, shorts, nightshirts—all unshaven and unwashed. "The men only spend one day a month in here. They can't take any more."

"You mean you rotate them?" asked Fred.

"Oh, of course. It wouldn't work any other way. Can you imagine a good humorist making up the same dull jokes about the same dull topic all of his life? Of course there is one exception," said the Commandant moving on, "here in room twelve: literary jokes. These men were all English instructors. You know—witty. They love it here. We give them all the books they can read and of course the jokes just come naturally to them."

"Twelve rooms so far," remarked Fred. "Is that all?"

"Yes, that's all."

"But not all jokes are on these twelve topics. How about puns?"

"No, this doesn't cover all jokes. The rest come out off hand during the course of the day or during the evening. Then of course we get quite a variety in the sabbatical reports. As

(continued on next page)



"Gold, Frankenstein and Who?"

SUMAC + OLLIE

THE JOKE RACKET (continued)

for puns, we have a machine that does them. The lowest form of wit, you know. Ha, ha."

"What are sabbatical reports?" asked Fred. It always made him mad when people tossed off private terminology as though he should know what it meant.

"Those are the jokes that the men hand in after their sabbatical leave. Every seventh year they get a year's vacation with pay to the U. S. The men wouldn't stay here without it; besides, we get some of our best jokes that way."

"You say they go to the U. S. Don't you write jokes for other countries too?"

"Oh, didn't anyone tell you? This is just the U. S. branch here. The other branches, one for every area of the world, are located throughout the rest of the palace. I must say, though, mine is one of the biggest." The Commandant thrust his thumbs under his vest.

"Then you aren't in charge of the whole palace?"

The Commandant removed his thumbs from his vest. "No. But there are those who say that I will be the next Joker. The Joker is the head

man, over all the Commandants."

"You mean like the Joker in Batman?" asked Fred, drawing on his vast liberal education.

"Well the one in Batman is a rather naive representation of the real Joker. He doesn't go in for crime or weird costumes and he's a bit more erudite. I must admit, though, the Batman stories have always been popular around here for that reason."

"How can you say that he doesn't go in for crime? Isn't this whole cartel a criminal organization?" asked Fred, feeling he was penetrating to the heart of the matter.

"Dear me, Mr. Belmar, I see you still don't understand. Let's go back to my office and I'll try to explain it to you."

WHEN FRED WAS BACK in the red leather chair and the Commandant was seated authoritatively behind his desk, the Commandant began to fire questions at him without giving him a chance to answer. "Mr. Belmar, you've seen that operation in there. Do you think it would be possible without organization? If we were to be dissolved in the manner that you Americans dissolve your piddling little corporations can you imagine jokes being produced at a fast

enough rate to satisfy the American public? Do you have any idea the problems involved in selecting the wittiest men of a nation, training them, and organizing them in a working joke-producing force? Do you think it would be possible to operate if we were exposed to public pressure and conniving for control? Realizing that, would you end the world's joke supply for an indeterminate length of time, could you bear the responsibility of exposing us?"

"No," said Fred sadly, seeing his dreams of glory rumbling before his eyes.

"Good! Good boy!" the Commandant exclaimed, standing. "And just for insurance we'll keep an eye on you and drop you a check now and then. Don't change your mind now."

ONLY A FEW WEEKS after he had left Madison, Fred Belmar returned to school. He was climbing Bascom Hill the next Monday morning when he heard a friend shout to him. "Hey Belmar! Did you ever find out where jokes come from?"

"No. Ha, ha! I guess that was a pretty wild idea wasn't it?"

Fred Belmar smiled a knowing smile.

(THE END)

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A nurse was puzzled by a patient in the insane asylum who did nothing but sit in the corner and scratch all day long.

"Why do you stay in the corner all by yourself and scratch all day long?" she asked.

"Because," he replied, "I'm the only person in the world who knows where I itch."

An elderly gentleman was walking past a drug store when, without warning, a young man dashed out, took a flying leap in the air with his legs wide apart, and fell in a heap in the gutter. The older man, mystified, hurried over to him.

"Dear, dear," he said sympathetically, "Did you hurt yourself?"

"No," was the sharp reply, "But I'd sure like to get my hands on the guy who moved my bicycle."

"How about going out with me Saturday?"

"I have a date for Saturday."

"Then let's make it Sunday."

"I'm going out of town Sunday."

"How about Monday?"

"All right, dammit, I'll go out Saturday."

PLEASE READ BEFORE ATTEMPTING
TO AWAKEN ME

1. Do not jostle me, unless I do not respond when you call my name (see item 2).

2. Call my name in a low voice, three (3) feet from the head of my bed.

3. DO NOT BLOW IN MY EAR.

4. NEVER THROW BACK MY BLANKETS!

5. Enter the room quietly and leave in a like manner.

6. Be able to account for general weather conditions and breakfast menu.

Breathes there a man with soul so dead,
Who never to himself has said,
"To hell with school, I'll stay in bed."

"Cheer up, pal. A woman's 'no' often means yes."
"How about her 'phooey'?"

A woman complained to an elderly man, who every evening walked his dog by her house, because the pup always paused by her new shrubs.

"I wouldn't worry," he said. "I always start around the block the long way. By the time he reaches your bushes, it's only a gesture."

When Smith walked into his friend's office, he found him sitting at his desk, looking very depressed.

"Hello, old man," said Smith. "What's up?"

"Oh, it's my wife," replied the other sadly. "She's hired a new secretary for me."

"Well, nothing wrong in that. Is she blonde or brunette?"

"He's bald."

"Shay, bartender, hash Smith been here?"

"Yes, he was here an hour ago."

"Am I with him?"

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SORORITY

(continued from page 9)

for Women's Club teas, DAR receptions, and all the other rigors of adult female life in these United States.

Male: Hello.

There ensues a period of silence, punctuated by the munching of potato chips.

Another feature of the standard Open House are the reticents, or "readers." Reticents often are engineers, home ec. majors, etc. They, unlike their more gregarious Commerce and Liberal Arts brethren are here to learn a trade, and feign a lack of interest in the Open House. They attend out of duty, or perhaps a secret curiosity that may be compared to the motives that lead the neighborhood children to sneak around peeping in the windows while the high school prom goes on.

They are called "readers" because after two or three false starts at getting a conversation going on the thermodynamic properties of titanium or the seven ways to make cranberry upside-down cake, they usually take refuge behind one of the 1945 or '47 magazines and newspapers that are scattered about at Open Houses.

Students of the Open House are divided on the issue of magazine placement. One school holds that these magazines are kept in storage between affairs and only brought out on special occasions to give that sense of tradition and continuity with the past that sororities, through their architecture and their rituals, aim to achieve. Opponents of this view say this is not a conscious effort, but that the girls, being somewhat innocent as to the course of world affairs, place their faith in 1947 TIME magazine the way other unsophisticates place their faith in Holy Writ. This problem needs more study, however.

So, the Open House goes on. Throughout the large room people drift back and forth, moving from group to group when their stock of conversation gives out. The band continues to play, though the clarinetist is more interested in the girls than his music, and the piano player munches potato chips with one hand and improvises with the other.

Slowly, as the sun sets over Langdon street, the men will drift away, and another Open House will be over. Then the girls will pack up the ancient magazines and the yellowed Cap Times, put away the potato chips and the careful smiles, and go back to the regular routine of college life.

On the surface, nothing will have changed. But in the hearts of the pledges, and perhaps in their manners, a breach will have been made. Into this breach the actives will try, in the future, to cram a little refinement.

The click of the knitting needles, the creak of the rocker, and the ticking of the grandfather's clock were all that disturbed the silence of the warm, sunny room. Little Gloria was watching the purls and stitches.

"Grandma," she asked, "why do you knit?"

"Oh," wheezed the little old lady, "just for the hell of it."

An ashtray is something to put cigarettes in if the room hasn't got a floor.

Mama Mosquito: "If you children are real good I'll take you to a nudist colony tonight."



Real Estate Agent: "Now here's a house without a flaw."

Harvard grad: "What on earth do you walk on?"

There was once a fellow who had the habit of collecting and putting stones in his bathroom. He had rocks in his head.

An elderly British bachelor was being married. A newspaper account of the ceremony reported: "The groom's gift to the bride was an antique pendant."

Moe: "How was your date last night?"

Joe: "No good. She was a stuffed shirt."

"For \$4,000 I'll endorse your cigarettes," said the movie queen. "\$4,000! I'll see you inhale first," replied the agent.

The neighbors were complaining of the racket Mrs. Jones' husband was making. "All the time he goes around cackling like a chicken," they griped.

"I know," Mrs. Jones said. "We get tired of it too. Sometimes we think he's not in his right mind."

"But can't you do something for him? Can't you cure him?"

"Oh yes, I suppose we could. But we do need the eggs."

"I don't like your boyfriend."

"Why not?"

"He whistles dirty songs."

Drink and the world drinks with you; swear off and you drink alone.

"Do you know what good clean fun is?"

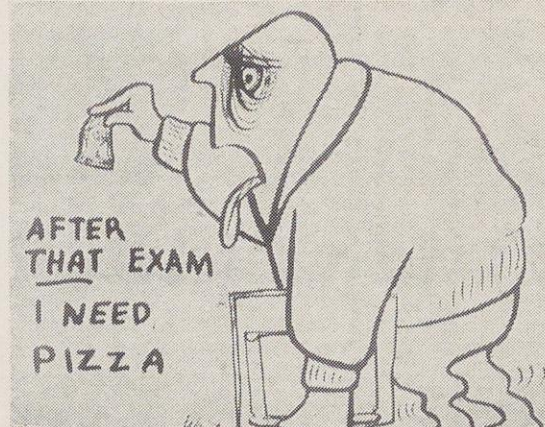
"No; what good is it?"

"You should be more careful about pulling your shades at night. Last night I saw you kissing your wife."

"Ha, ha. The jokes's on you. I wasn't home last night."

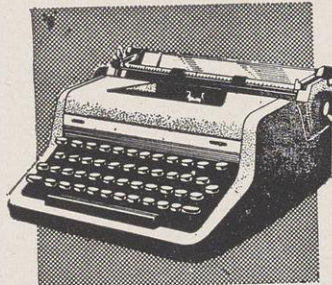
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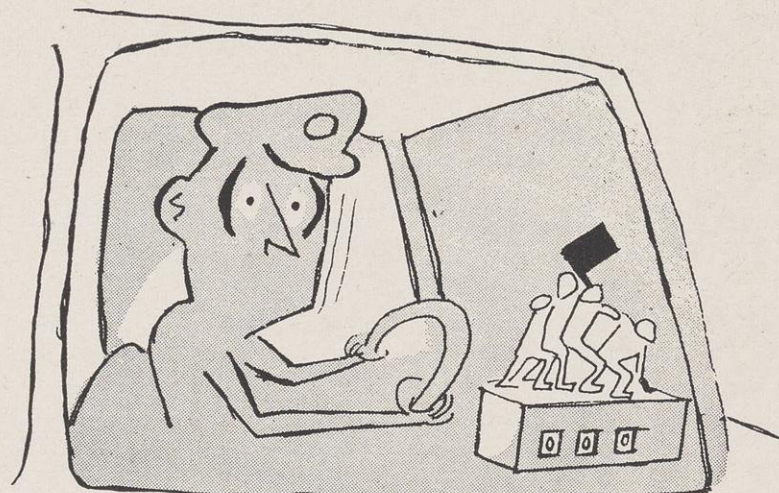
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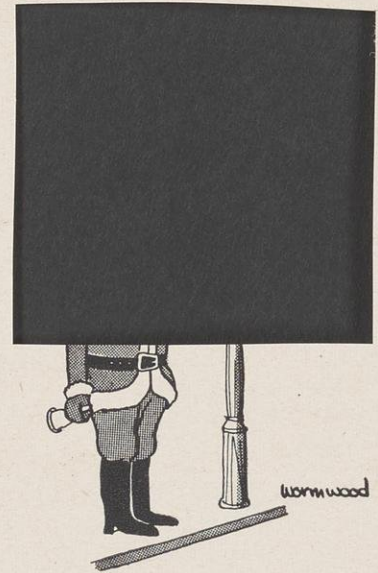
CARLSON



"Ho, ho."



"Ho, ho."



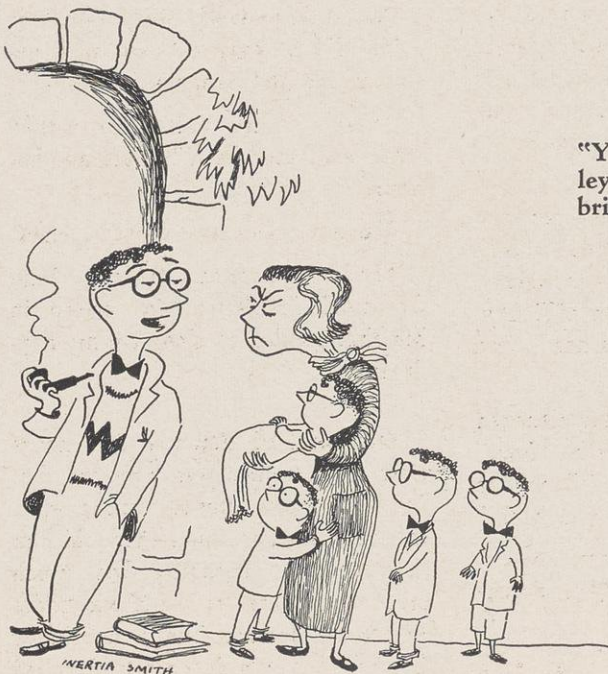
"Tee, hee."

Wormwood



INERTIA SMITH

"You mustn't think of yourself as having failed, Bentley; think of it rather as the beginning of a long and brilliant military career."



INERTIA SMITH

"All you have is circumstantial evidence, Miss Jones."

OCTY OLDIES
QUITE FUNNY

HOMECOMING

*Written anonymously by
Phil Schaeffer and Ed Edwards*

Clackety, clackety, clackety, clack.

John Greenleaf Finklestein leaned back, stretched, and snuggled comfortably into the upholstery of the Milwaukee-bound day coach. His smile was as contented as a Pet Milk cow, for today was John Greenleaf Finklestein's day to be deliriously happy.

As the train hurtled across the snow-covered farmland of Wonderful Wisconsin, it was every moment bringing him closer to a long-awaited respite from his arduous scholastic labors at the University of Wisconsin. Christmas vacation had come to John Greenleaf Finklestein!

Clackety, clackety, clackety, clack.

What did Christmas vacation mean to him? He took a long drag on his pink Vogue cigarette, buttoned the lower button on his tartan wescot, and considered the pleasures that lay before him.

He saw himself walking briskly through the white, clean December snow. As he turned a corner, he paused briefly, lit up a baby blue Vogue cigarette, and surveyed the street before him. It was HIS street, the street where he had romped as a child, an eternity of Christmases ago, gaily packing rocks into his snowballs and lifting little girls' dresses.

Yes, it was his street, and he eagerly covered the few remaining yards to the front step of HIS house. His house, a modest, unpretentious place, in the true colonial style with two

story marble columns in front.

At this moment the family gardener ran out of his shack and exclaimed, "Massa John, Massa John, you have come back at last to Finklestein Manor." John graciously allowed him to kiss the hem of his stormcoat.

Dismissing the gardener with a nod, he continued up the walk to the house. Briskly he rapped on the door with the highly polished brass knocker. His heart pounded; the blood rushed to his temples, because he knew that behind that door would be . . .

The door opened. It was—MOTHER. There she stood, a warm smile on her face, a red and white polka dot apron around her waist, one strand of greying hair across her forehead. She had obviously been at the stove preparing with great care John's homecoming dinner. John knew already what it would be—mashed bananas and milk.

"Son!" she cried, and clasped him to her breast. Overwhelmed by this show of affection, John wept openly. He extricated himself with difficulty, and there, beside his mother, stood DAD.

Good old DAD, his briar clenched firmly between pearly teeth. "Son," he said, and the briar fell to the floor, "it's good to have you back."

He shook John's hand warmly and with his free hand stuffed a twenty dollar bill in his pocket.

Father and son looked at each other for a moment.

"My son, my heir," thought DAD.

"My father, my benefactor," thought John.

"Where's Sis?" he asked.

"Here I am," came a sweet, innocent voice from the back of the room, and there she was—SIS. She was dancing nymphlike around the gaily decorated Christmas tree, tossing tinsel on the uppermost branches.

It was an enormous tree, and around its base was a mountain of Christmas boxes. "How are things at the distillery, Sis?" he asked as he debonairly picked up a string of popcorn, stuffed it in his mouth, and pulled out the string with a swift yank.

"Mary Lou has been calling you all day, John," said MOM, "why don't you give her a buzz?"

DAD nudged him in the ribs and winked knowingly. "Like father like son," he chuckled lecherously. "You have a way with the ladies, just like the old man."

John lit a canary yellow Vogue cigarette as he dialed the telephone. "Hello, is Mary Lou there?"

"John, it's you!"

He smiled and took a drag on his cigarette. "Yes," he said.

"John, I must see you at once." Over the phone he could hear the surging passion of her voice.

"Control yourself, Mary Lou," he said, "I'll be over as soon as I finish my mashed bananas and milk."

"Yes, I must wait. I've waited these long months, I'll wait another hour. But do hurry."

Clackety, clackety, clackety, clack.

The train rolled on and John Greenleaf Finklestein fell asleep in his chair, lulled to sleep by his daydreams.

John arrived home a few hours later. His mother was annoyed that she had to keep dinner waiting when the train was late; his father told him that he was spending too much money; his sister talked about Eddie Fisher all through dinner, and Mary Lou was out on a date when he called her. He retired at 9:30 p.m.

"My goodness, George, this isn't our baby!"
 "Shut up, it's a better carriage."

Housemother: "Who was that man I saw you kissing last night?"
 Coed: "What time was it?"

Many a coed thinks she bought a gown for a ridiculous price when in reality she has bought it for an absurd figure.

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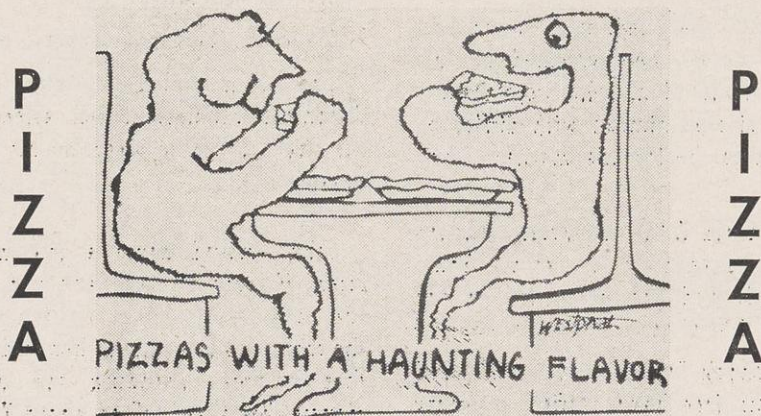
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"Hey, man, what happened to your hand?"

"Oh, I was downtown getting some cigarettes yesterday and some smart aleck stepped on it."

Newlywed: "I'm bored with marriage. Harry hasn't kissed me since my honeymoon."

Friend: "Heavens, why don't you divorce him?"

Newlywed: "I can't. Harry isn't my husband."

I gotta have poems,
 I gotta have booze,
 I gotta have bread,
 I gotta have youse.

Omar Khayyam

"Why don't you go with Miriam any more?"

"I couldn't stand her vulgar laughter any longer."

"I never noticed that her laughter was offensive."

"You weren't there when I proposed."

"Writing home?"

"Yeah."

"Mind making a carbon copy?"

"I suppose you heard that Jones killed his wife yesterday."

"No! How?"

"With a golf club."

"How many strokes?"

He: "Since I met you I can't sleep; I can't drink."

She: "Really? Why not?"

He: "I'm broke."

Student: "I understand the administration is trying to stop necking on weekends."

Friend: "Next thing you know they'll be trying to make students stop too."

Blind date: "I've been asked to get married lots of times."

He: "Who asked you?"

She: Mother and Father."

"Oh, darling, I love you so! Say you will be mine. I'm not rich like John Brown and I haven't got a car like he does, but I do love you. Will you marry me?"

Two soft snow white arms reached around his neck, and two ruby lips whispered in his ear, "Who is this man Brown?"

"How come you were born in Oklahoma?"

"Well, you see, I wanted to be near my mother."

A coed proudly announced to the girls in the dorm that she had gotten pinned during the evening, but when she took off her jacket she was horrified to discover that the pin was not where it should be. Fearing that she had lost it, she searched through her pockets frantically. At last the pin was found by one of her roommates. It seems that she had her sweater on backwards.

An armless man walked up to the bar. "Give me a beer," he said.

"Sure!" said the bartender as he sold the foamy stein to the thirsty one.

"Sorry," said the customer, "but I have no arms. Wonder if you'd be so kind as to hold it up while I drink?"

"You bet I will," said the bartender—and he did.

"Now," said the armless man, "I wonder if you will please get in my hip pocket and get my handkerchief—then wipe the foam from my lips?" And again the accommodating bartender complied.

The bartender got his money, rang up the sale and turned again to the armless one, who started a conversation.

"It's tough" he said, "to be like this. It causes me no end of embarrassment to be always having to ask people to do things for me. By the way, where's your rest room?"

The dependent old gentleman emerged from his club and climbed stiffly into the limousine.

"Where to, sir?" asked his chauffeur respectfully.

"Drive off a cliff, James," the old gentleman replied. "I'm committing suicide."

Drunk: "Shay, call me a cab, will ya?"

Uniformed Bystander: "My good man, I am not the doorman; I am a naval officer."

Drunk: "All right, call me a boat, but I gotta get home."

"Wouldn't it be fun if you could walk on the ceiling?"

"No, because then you'd be a fly."

A wife is someone who sticks by you through all troubles you would not have had had you not married her.



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and
A Happy New Year

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