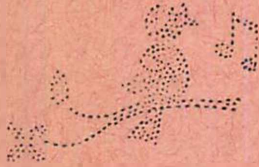


# SPACEWARP

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SAPS Mailing 69



Little Willie, joining SANE,  
Gave his colleagues quite a pain  
By picketing a Harlem slum  
With placard reading: BAN THE BUM!



I haven't become an ex-fan, just, it seems, a minac one. (Besides, the universe is closing in on me; space is vanishing. Look at all the spaces that vanished out of these lines of typescript, if you doubt. (Somehow, I doubt -- that letting two-year-old Steven play with this typer was a good idea, that is.)

Now and then, tho all too seldom, something I read in a fanzine stirs the urge to comment. The most recent such item, as I recall, was not in SAPS, but in the final FAPA mailing we ex-FAPs received (August, I believe it was). Therein, one of the beatnik-types which infest coastal fandom (both coasts), waxes lyrical over the joys of getting away from our crummy civilization and living it up in a Zen Bhuddist hideaway in the desert. Being the uninformed sort who always had the vague impression that Bhuddism was the religion which so reverences life that you aren't even allowed to swat a fly, I was considerably amused to note this FAPAN relating how refreshing to the spirit of contemplation he found the sport of sitting on a hillside at eventide and blowing stray jackrabbits in half with a shotgun.

Alas, the perils of first-drafting; or rather, touching up one's first draft on stencil rather than with a blue pencil. In rewording the foregoing paragraphs I thoroughly demolished the transition thought which I had cleverly used to segue into the next topic of discussion. Nothing to do but backtrack and pick up the dropped thread of oneway conversation: Bhuddist refusal to kill flies and other insects helped to account for the appalling infant mortality in those benighted countries, much to the despair of earnest missionaries preaching the virtues of Scripture, vaccine and laundry soap.

Alas, time has turned full circle and now the economists, if not the missionaries, lament the fact that infant mortality in the no-longer-benighted, but instead undeveloped, countries has dwindled to civilized levels, and in consequence their teeming millions are on the point of becoming teeming billions, much to the dismay of Occidentals who cannot enjoy their chlorestorel-rich diets in peace, knowing that some 5,000 miles directly beneath their feet brownskinne skeletons are expiring for lack of calories. There was quite an elaborate governmental research project going a few years back to discover ways of turning wheat flour into synthetic rice, it having been determined by someone or other that the proposed Oriental recipients of US drop surpluses would rather starve than eat bread instead of their accustomed diet. Or more likely, Moscow threatened to come up with an acceptable synthetic rice and the West had to beat 'em to the punch or else suffer tremendous loss of face in the battle for the political allegiance of the coolie crowd.

Sometimes I wish the statesmen in charge of our destinies would make up their minds whether we are going to preserve face, or teach the Asiatics that Western philosophy is more PRACTICAL. As 'tis, we throw away about half our

advantages in material strength, purity of ideals and nobility of character because we refuse to play what Americans (particularly those Americans belonging to the political faction out of office at the moment) consider dirty pool. This ignores, of course, the fact that 9/10 of the rest of the world's citizens and 10/10ths of its politicians EXPECT us to play dirty pool when it might be expected to give us an advantage.

That's the reason most other countries are so jumpy in dealing with the US: they never know what to expect of us.

There's seldom any doubt where you stand (as a small nation receiving economic assistance, for example) with Russia. You know that if you let the Kremlin boys get a foot in the door they'll do their damndest to shove an ankle in behind it. This makes the planning of political strategy much simpler for the small nation than the comparable circumstance when they're listening to assurances from State Department that the USA is magnanimously bestowing upon their country the surplus material wealth we don't have any other use for nohow, and at the same time wondering if CIA and Standard Oil are cooperating with State or pursuing goals of their own in their activities within the tiny nation's borders.

I bet the majority of Asiatics think of Americans as far more two-faced than any American ever considered the wily Chinese in Bret Hart's bygone years.

This is no moral condemnation, by the way. I'm simply observing that we seem to be unnecessarily handicapping ourselves in a competition where chivalry is almost as dead as it is in SAPS. If we would simply announce to all the rest of the world that we were out to take care of our own interests first, but aside from that as long as it helped us to help them they were welcome to our money and materials, with the slight proviso that as soon as they stepped out of line, WHACK would go the axe on the flow of golden eggs -- well hell, maybe some of these countries that are now quite successfully playing USSR-v.s.-US might have to decide which side was likely to come out winner, and thus worthy of their allegiance.

There's nothing particularly underhanded in financing an out-of-power clique in some country where we want, for our own reasons, to have them replace their current rulers. But it DOES seem fairly idiotic to finance both the nationalists and the insurgents, as we are currently doing in half a dozen places around the globe.

Little Willie was perplexed  
Which protest movement to join next;  
His choice, while lowdist, was the shrewdest;  
He's now the crudest Buddhist nudist!

The biggest hypocrisy, of course, is our continual proclamation that democracy is the ideal form of government and therefore we favor the overthrow of any other form of rule which has a halfway chance to be replaced by at least a lip-service to the ballot box and a universal electorate.

Surely the events of the past few months have shown that there are still a few bugs to work out of even our own form of democracy. Or do YOU think that people who are out on the streets this evening tossing molotov cocktails at the cops are going to cast intelligent votes when election day comes round? I imagine a good many of the Hell's Angels motorcycle club, if not the Newport Beach collegiate crowd, are, by the laws of our land, entitled to decide next November whether Lyndon or Barry rules our destiny the next four years.

Occasionally I think J'Ghod had a pretty practical notion a couple years back when he suggested an economic test of qualification for citizenship. Surely the better off a guy is living, the more he'll want to preserve the status quo that provides his income -- and that includes eliminating such conditions as might induce the less-privileged portion of the citizenry to overthrow the government.

Little Willie put a hex  
On the head of Malcolm X  
In malicious hope that fright  
Might cause that leader to turn white...

Don't you think it's somewhat of an anachrosism that in America, the same country which traditionally brags about how citizens can move from one state to another without all the bureaucratic red tape and passports necessary to cross foreign borders -- that the very artifact of our culture which provides this mobility is tangled in the worst state-law morass of anything escape maybe marriage and divorce? (Sure that sentence makes sense, you just aren't paying attention. Involved, yes. Turgid and confusing, yes. But incomprehensible, no. Fans are slans and onstencil composing is fraught with syntactical peril).

At any rate, what I'm talking about is automobiles. In Europe or Africa or Asia, for instance, you can get something called an International driver's license which is recognized by just about every country in the world -- except the USA. In the USA, every time you move to a town across the state line from where you've been living, you have from 3 to 90 days to buy a new set of license plates and to qualify for a new driver's license (by passing the test which shows that you have mastered all the little peculiarities of that state's traffic laws.) Of course, if you're just a visitor, not a resident, your home-state license is valid and you can zip over the highways in blissful ignorance of whatever peculiarities are written into the local statutes.

It would also be helpful if the US would adopt the International Traffic Signs used by all the rest of the world, signs which present their warnings in picture form with only an occasional word or numeral (such as a numeral in a red circle, which indicates speed limit in kilometers per hour). Of course, that's probably the main reason why the US hasn't adopted the International system: it would require several thousand semi-literate drivers to familiarize themselves with the rudiments of the metric system, which might take some of them as long as a week or two, and come next election they'd resentfully vote the incumbent politicians out of office for saddling them with such an un-American system.

Have I mentioned that the Italians have one intelligent rule that would be even more practical in the US? Over here, at night in towns where the street lighting is adequate (visibility 100 meters or more), the use of headlights is forbidden; you use parking lights only. Anyone who has used this system will forever after curse at the blinding beams of approaching traffic on well-lighted city streets. Of course it means the driver has to go to the extra bother of switching from headlights to parking lights and vice versa as external lighting conditions change, and I notice in the States a lot of idiots can't even be bothered to switch from high to low beam headlights when they pass through a city. Which is why the manufacturers are trying to perfect automatic beam-switchers, widely heralded a few years back but which I've heard nothing about lately.

Little Willie's croggled quite  
By a synchronous satellite  
But wishes it had more to show  
Than musclemen in Tokyo.

In the past few months we've filled half a dozen reels of tape to Trai Ballard and Betty Kujawa with goshwowboyoboy reminiscence about the radio programs we remember from more youthful days. Betty just thought of one I'd forgotten completely until now: Clara, Lou & Em. Anybody else in the audience old enuf to recall THAT one? It must be a sign of middle age, tho, for us to devote tape to such activity as singing the Maxwell House Showboat themesong to each other, not to mention imitations of the ushers' announcements at the Little Theater Off Times Square. Anybody remember the words to the "Highways are Happy Ways" song?

Will can hardly wait to see  
Commercials used on world TV.  
"How apropos," he says, "how nice,  
To sell the Japs on Minute Rice!"

Alas, by the time we return to the States, I'm afraid we'll have lost all our painfully-acquired immunity to radio and TV commercials. Even now, Statesiders occasionally refer to such-and-such a commercial in such a way as to take it for granted that everyone knows what they're talking about, and we can only guess at their meaning. Maybe we're happier not knowing.

Not that European radio doesn't have commercials. On AFN, of course, they are announcements of what's going on at the Heidelberg NCO Club and so on, but on the civilian stations they are complete with strident voices, attention-gathering chimes, and repetition of hard-sell phrases (I guess). The advantage to us, of course, is that we can only guess at what they're talking about. A lot of them on the Italian stations, however, end up with "...Coca-Cola, grande!"

Well, on the other hand there's always the BBC, whose commercials are limited to interminable announcements of the coming week's programming.

Willie fame and wealth foresees  
Manufacturing luxuries:  
His newest product's selling great  
--Aerosol Bicarbonate!

Incidentally, to skip back a thought or two, Coca-Cola is responsible for one of the cleverest, if slightly croggling gimmicks I've seen in years of looking at advertisements. Early one morning when St. Mark's Square in Venice was all but deserted, some enterprising advertising agency sent its employees out there to scatter feed on the pavement in such a way that the cluster of feeding pigeons spelled out the words COCA COLA for the benefit of a photographer in some high window overlooking the square.

Willie is inclined to fret  
At being chosen teacher's pet;  
Says it makes it hard to think  
Of better ways to be a fink.

Tsk, you can tell I'm running out of ideas when the Little Willie verses start coming more and more frequently. And here I've a minimum of two more stencils to fill.

One reason this zine is even more last-minute than usual is that I've been in the field the past couple weeks on the annual NATO maneuver, this time known as FALLE' 64. By some unknown whim of Roscoe, we had an unbroken stretch of fine weather, something unheard-of during FTX's; in fact, it didn't start raining until the day after we returned to garrison. And the temperatures stayed warmish for this late in the fall; we never did have to fire up our space heaters, and the only times I even found it comfortable to wear a field jacket were around 0530 when it got a mite coolish before the sun came up.

We emplaced at various spots near Udine on the Veneto Plains north of Venice, where the grape harvest was in full swing. Whole families were in the vinyards picking grapes and huge wagons pulled by infinitesimal donkeys hauled the fruit down the roads to the wineries. I noticed that almost every farmhouse had several aged and well-used wooden hogsheads soaking in the roadside irrigation ditch, to swell the wood and keep them from leaking when filled with the grape juice. By American standards of sanitation this is probably a dubious advertisement for Italian wines, since these same ditches are used as duckponds, washtubs, and no doubt any other purpose requiring a water supply.

When we first got over here I took pains to point out to Nancy the spectacle of Italian housewives kneeling beside the ditch doing their family wash, telling her she should be grateful for modern conveniences. She refused to adopt the proper attitude, tho, merely stating that if the Italian women had any sense they'd pester their husbands until they got washing machines.

As for the military, the Caserma just acquired a new, Stateside-type automatic laundry and dry-cleaning plant, which is a vast boon both to GI's and dependents. Of course, before this we had both the PX and QM laundry available, but either one took a week or more, which wasn't much help when you needed clothes washed in a hurry.

OUR APOLOGIES to the following people (mostly SAPS, you note) for saying they don't reply to tape-responce:

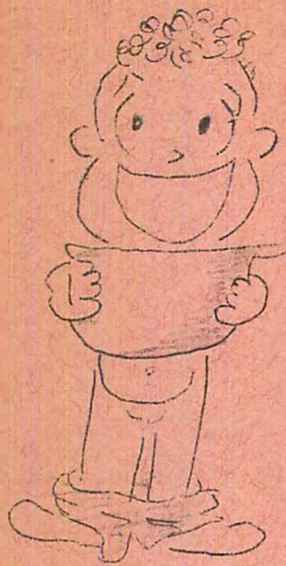
Ed & Anne Cox  
FM & Elinor Busby  
Rich Eney  
Roy Tackett

I'm sure that by the time you read this we'll have received replies to the tapes we sent them. If not, well then we withdraw our apologies.

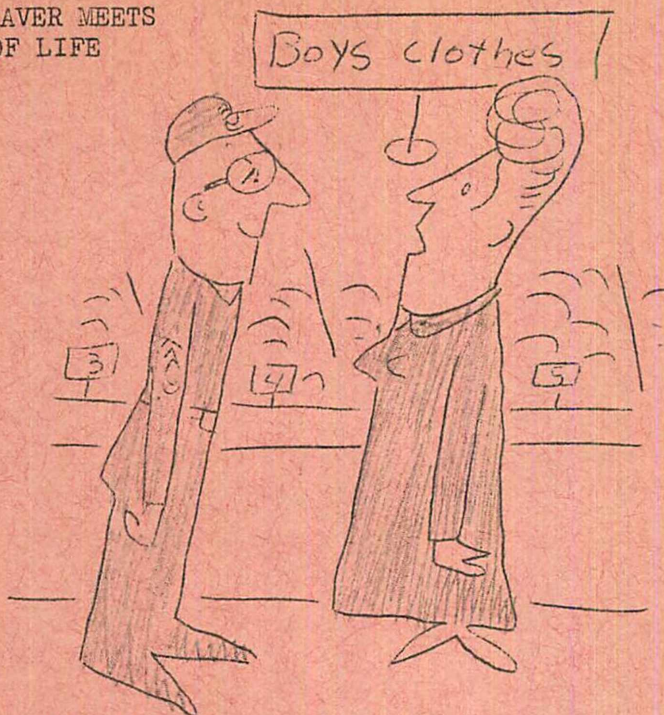
If any other SAP (or non-SAP who happens to read this) is interested in learning the latest news from sometimes-Sunny Italy, straight from the ~~Morses~~ Rapps' mouths (two big fat ones), well, we've got a 3-3/4 IPS, 4-track recorder, and let's hear from YOU.

And we will conclude this skimpy SAPS zine with a portfolio of comic art, the kind SAPS like. (Ghcd, how many SAPS are still around who remember when that phrase was popular in the bundles?)

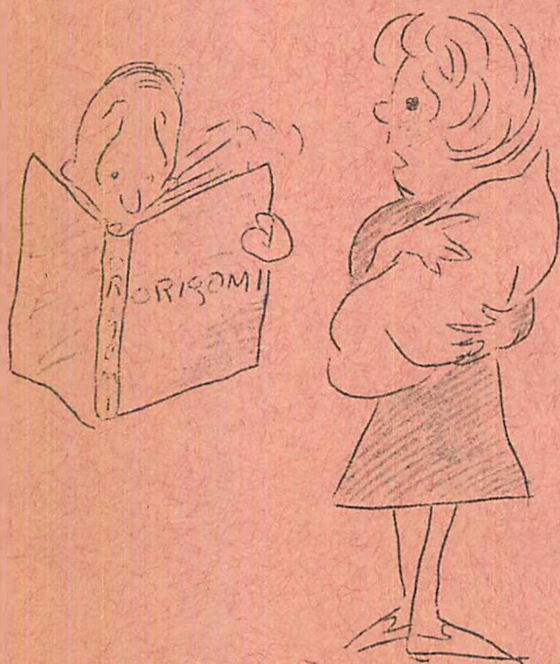
THE EAGER BEAVER MEETS  
THE FACTS OF LIFE



Look what I did in my potty!



"Now let me get this straight, sir. He's two years old, so he would normally take size 3, except that he's big for his age so you get him size 5 to grow into since size 4 fits him..."

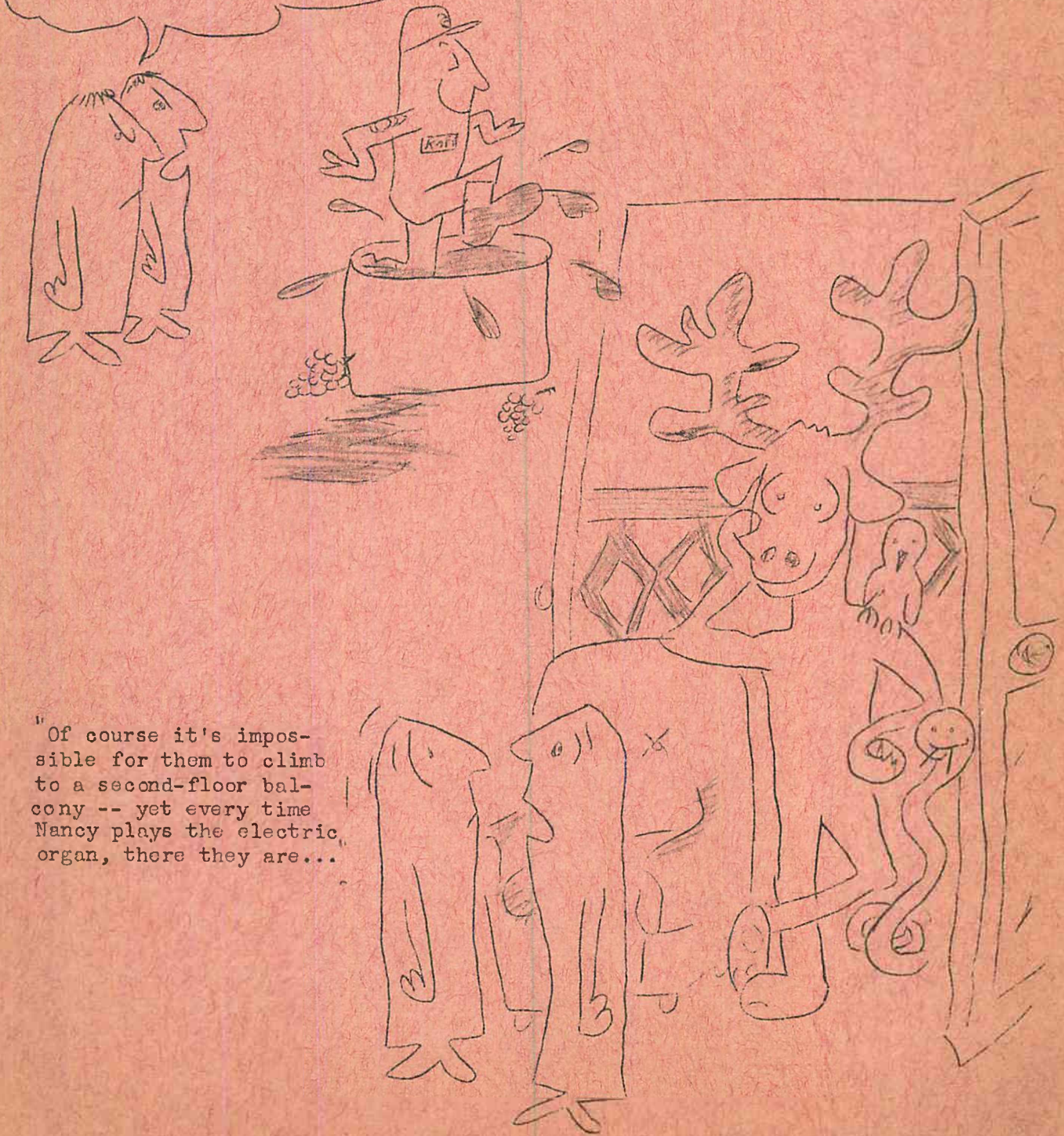


"John...does it have any instructions on folding diapers?"



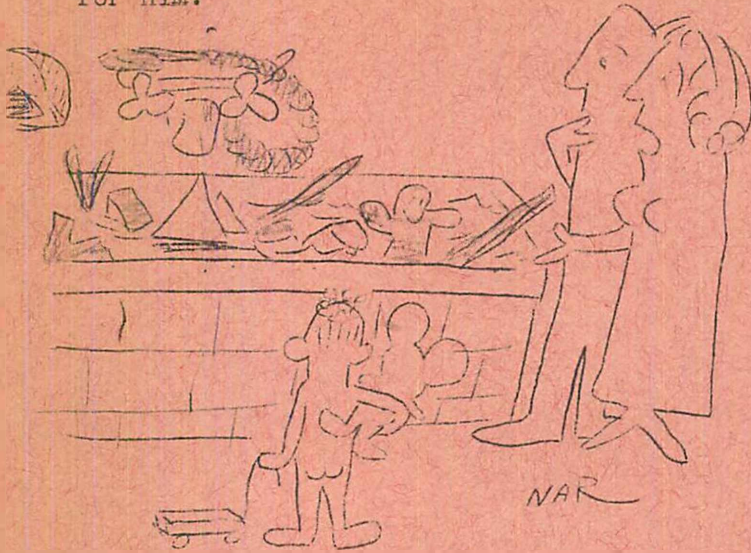
"Of COURSE it's taking your laundry exceptionally long to dry, Signora. The driers are over there -- you have placed your wet clothes in the TV set."

Momma mia! I'm all for promoting  
the Italian-American friendship -- but  
who ever heard of trampling the grapes  
wit COMBAT BOOTS?

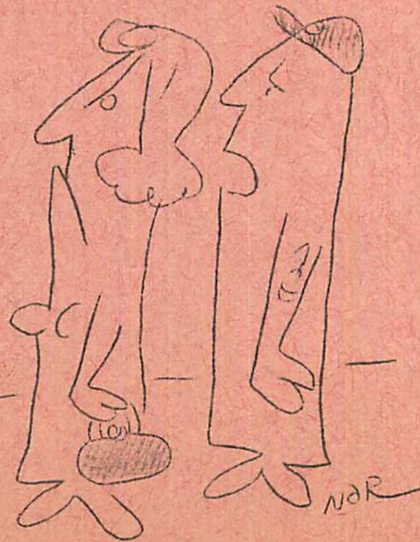
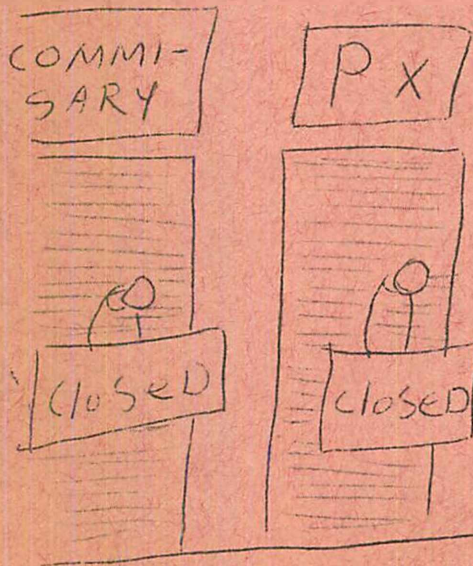
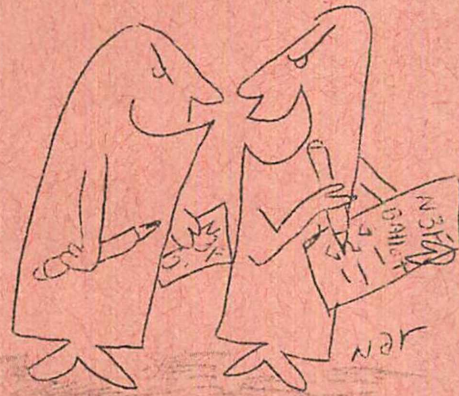


"Of course it's impos-  
sible for them to climb  
to a second-floor bal-  
cony -- yet every time  
Nancy plays the electric  
organ, there they are..."

"The only trouble is, with all his tub toys in there, there's no room for HIM."



"But how in the world could we possibly vote for Tackett as an N3F Director? After all, he's our FRIEND..."



"No no, it was YESTERDAY they were closed for inventory. Today they're closed for an Italian holiday. Tomorrow they start remodeling..."