

Monthly publication of the HORATIO ALGER SOCIETY,
a magazine devoted to the study of Horatio Alger, Jr.,
his life, works, and influence on the culture of America.

Newsboy



Horatio Alger, Jr.

1832 - 1899



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Jerry Friedland (this is our President?!) clowns with Bob Sawyer during the skit at the Cleveland Convention last May. Hosted by HAS Treasurer Dale Thomas, the auction at the annual meeting raised over \$1900 for the benefit of the society - an all time record.

HORATIO ALGER SOCIETY

CHANGES OF ADDRESS

To further the philosophy of Horatio Alger, Jr., and to encourage the spirit of Strive and Succeed that for half a century guided Alger's undaunted heroes — lads whose struggles epitomized the Great American Dream and flamed hero ideals in countless millions of young Americans.

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Please make all remittances payable to the Horatio Alger Society. Membership applications, renewals, changes of address, claims for missing issues, and orders for single copies of current or back numbers of Newsboy should be sent to the Society's Secretary, Carl T. Hartmann, at 4907 Allison Drive, Lansing, Michigan 48910.

A subject index to the first ten years of Newsboy (July, 1962 — June, 1972) is available for \$1.50 from Carl Hartmann at the above address.

Manuscripts relating to Horatio Alger's life and works are solicited, but the editor reserves the right to reject submitted material.

* * *

REMEMBER: The HAS Convention — the "Connecticut Conclave" — will soon be here!! Hosted by HAS Vice-President Brad Chase, the May meeting will surely be a noteworthy event.

* * *

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* * *

THE RIVALS

by Horatio Alger, Jr.

(The following Alger short story is from the collection of Past HAS Vice-President Evelyn Grebel. It originally appeared in the May and June, 1866 issues of Student and Schoolmate. Thanks go to Evelyn for sending me this).

"Attention, boys!"

James Perkins, A.M., Principal of the Select High School in the town of Wrayburn, emphasized these words by a rap on the teacher's desk.

There was deep silence throughout the school-room. All eyes were directed towards the speaker.

"I have long been desirous," he said, "to do something to stimulate you to improvement in English composition, and with that object in view, I have decided to offer a prize to be awarded to the writer of the best essay, which shall be handed by me a fortnight from today, on the subject which I shall assign. I have selected as the prize a neat edition of Longfellow's Poems, in two volumes. The subject I have fixed upon is, "The Life and Character of Oliver Cromwell." I do not of course suppose that you are sufficiently familiar with Cromwell's career to write intelligently on the subject without some preliminary reading. In your histories you will find all that you absolutely require, though I shall not object to your availing yourselves of any other sources of information that may come your way. I desire all to write, even such as have no hope of winning the prize, since they will at least be benefited by the practice they will obtain."

This announcement naturally excited considerable interest, and was the subject of animated conversation at recess.

There were two boys who were generally admitted to excel in composition. One of these was Gilbert Simmons, son of Squire Simmons, the lawyer of Wrayburn and a prominent citizen of the town.

"I'll bet on Simmons," said one of the younger boys.

"I won't," said another.

"Why, who do you think will get it?" asked the first.

"Fred Bangs."

"No he won't. He can't write half as fast as Gilbert Simmons. Gilbert's a regular steam-engine."

"The prize wasn't offered to the one that could write the fastest, but the best," said David Eaton.

"Well, Gilbert can write the best."

"I ain't so sure about that."

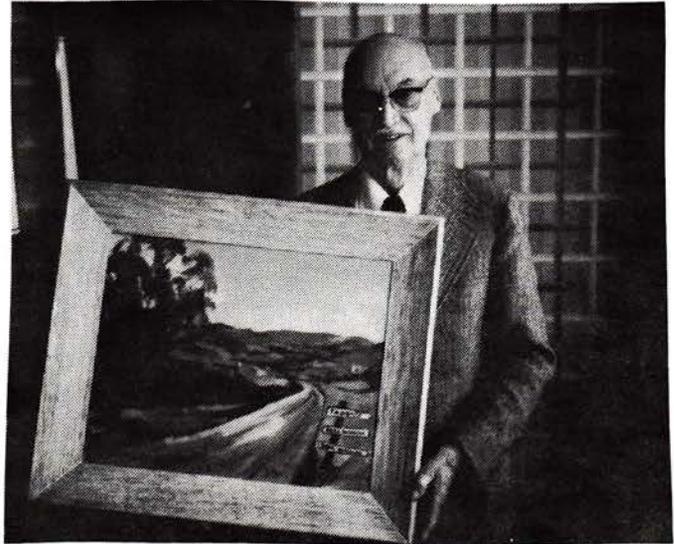
"Well, I am."

"Time will show. Perhaps neither of them will get it. You may get it yourself, Tom."

At this there was quite a laugh, for Tom Jackson, though a capital hand at marbles, baseball, and other boyish sports, was never cut out by nature for an author. His compositions invariably made the boys laugh, but he was fond of fun, and always joined in the laugh so good-naturedly, that the boys sometimes fancied he might do better if he tried, and really designed to create amusement.

It is time to say something about the two rivals.

Gilbert Simmons was a showy boy, with very good abilities, but superficial. He prided himself on the short time in which he was able to prepare himself



HAS Co-founder Ken Butler with the picture that he painted for the Society Auction at the Convention in Cleveland.

for his recitations, forgetting that no one ever does himself justice who will not allow himself sufficient time. He was ambitious, and had always maintained a high position in school. His compositions, like himself, were show, but superficial—full of high-flown sentences, which on examination proved to contain very little solid thought.

He had his admirers, however, unthinking boys who were impressed by the dashing manner in which he despatched his tasks, and the pretentious character of his efforts in writing. Tom Jackson pronounced him a "genius of the first water," though he would have found it a little difficult to define what this phrase signified.

As for Gilbert, he accepted very graciously the flattery which was heaped upon him by his train of admirers and was vain enough to consider that he had a full claim to it all.

Fred Bangs was quite a different boy. He was somewhat younger than Gilbert, and as careful as the other was careless. He never allowed himself to be hurried in his preparations, but always

took time enough, and never failed to acquit himself creditably. Though not as quick naturally as his showy rival, he proved a very formidable competitor in consequence of his assiduous painstaking. He too was ambitious, and when the announcement of a prize for the best essay was made, he determined to exert himself to the utmost to deserve and win it, knowing that such a success would be particularly gratifying to his parents and friends. In order to avoid haste, he determined to commence reading up at once. He thought it would be a good plan to spend one week in gathering materials for his essay, and the second week in writing it with as much care as possible.

In the evening he obtained from his father one or two volumes which were likely to throw light upon the character of Cromwell, and commenced reading them at once.

Gilbert Simmons took it for granted that he should be able to win the prize and that without much effort. He casually mentioned to his father at the tea table that such a prize had been offered.

"I hope you will get it, Gilbert," said Squire Simmons.

"I mean to," said Gilbert. "A little more toast, father, if you please."

"Are you likely to have any rivals?"

"None that I'm afraid of. There's Fred Bangs; some of the boys think he'll get it, but he's a slow coach, and I ain't afraid of him."

"What is the prize?"

"A copy of Longellow's Poems."

"I hope you will succeed. Not so much for the value of the books as for the name of it. I could easily buy you the books, but that wouldn't be the same thing."

"All right, father. A fortnight

hence I'll bring home the books."

"When shall you begin to write?"

"Oh, next week some time."

"Don't put it off too long."

"I ain't afraid. I can get up in a day as good an essay as Fred Bangs can in a week."

"Be sure and allow yourself enough time," said his father.

"Oh, I can get that in fifteen minutes well enough. I'm thankful I ain't one of those plodding fellows that have to study and dig from morning till night."

Gilbert did not commence his essay till two days before the time for handing them in. He ran through the account of Cromwell contained in his history in half an hour, and without stopping to reflect on the facts which he had read, sat down immediately and dashed off a showy essay, which he read over afterwards with considerable complacency.

"There," said he, "that's done. Only took me two hours and a half, with reading up and all. I dare say that fellow Fred has been digging away for a fortnight."

By this time too, Fred had finished his essay. It was carefully thought out and composed, and was much the best thing he had ever written. He showed it to his friend, David Eaton, who pronounced it "splendid," and assured the boys at school that he had seen Fred's essay, and he was sure he would win the prize.

This report came at last to the ears of Gilbert Simmons. At first he paid little heed to it, but finally it made him a little uneasy. He had so positively assured his father that he should win the prize that he felt that he should be exceedingly mortified if anything occurred to interfere with his success. Indeed he would in the event

of failure have preferred that any other boy should prove his successful rival than Fred Bangs.

Fred was induced to show his essay to one or two other boys, who at once agreed with David that there was no doubt of his success. Gilbert was most staggered when his particular friend and adherent, Tom Jackson, after reading both essays, ceased to prophecy his success, and joined in his rival's praises.

Altogether Gilbert felt rather uncomfortable when he returned from school in the afternoon, and was disposed to think less highly of his brilliant essay.

"What will father say?" he thought. "He will blame me for not taking more pains. Besides, I am almost sure he meant to give me a present if I succeeded - perhaps a watch - and now I shall lose it. I wish something or other would happen to Fred's essay. If it could only be blotted, that would destroy his chances."

This was an unfortunate suggestion, for it tempted Gilbert to an unworthy act. It occurred to him that Fred would leave his essay in his desk over night, since it was not to be handed in till morning, and in the meantime---what?

The school house was locked, but it would be easy to open the window, and slip into the room. It would be possible for him to do so, and visiting Fred's desk, to deface and blot the essay so that it must be withdrawn from the lists.

Even Gilbert shrank at the meanness of this act, but he saw no other chance of success. He silently resolved to try it. After supper he took his sled, telling his father that he was going out coasting. He pulled his sled after him, and when it was sufficiently dark for his purpose, approached the school house.

Leaving his sled in the yard, he went to one of the side windows, and found as he anticipated that he could lift it. He easily climbed in, and lighting a match which he had taken the precaution to bring with him, steered for Fred's desk. He fumbled about until he felt the essay, and drawing it out, made sure that it was the right one by lighting another match. There was no mistake about it; the neat handwriting he at once recognized as Fred's.

He dipped his finger into the ink bottle, and without compunction made two or three blots with his finger. He then carefully folded up the essay and put it back.

"I rather think, Fred Bangs," he said to himself exultingly, "that you don't stand much chance of getting the prize tomorrow. I would carry it off and destroy it if I dared, but there is no need. Mr. Perkins will never forgive a blot, and he won't know but Fred blotted it himself."

Gilbert had now accomplished his shameful work and prepared to go home. He clambered out of the window, shut it carefully after him, and seizing his sled walked hastily away. He flattered himself that no one would ever know.

But he was mistaken.

Some one had seen him open the window, had looked in, wondering what could be his object, had identified Gilbert, and discovered what he was about.

This observer was David Eaton.

He withdrew softly, not wishing Gilbert to know that he had been observed, and hid behind the corner of the school house.

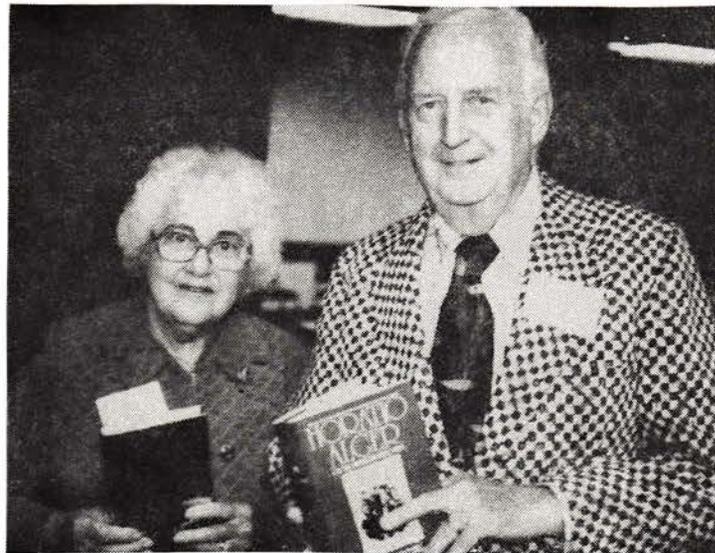
"Well, my son," said Squire Simmons that evening, "what hopes of winning the prize?"

"I shall win it," said Gilbert.



Bill Russell and Neil McCormick look over Algiers for sale at the annual book sale during the HAS convention last May.

Dr. and Mrs. Gilbert K. Westgard II are two HAS members who regularly go to each convention.



Dorothy Seiler and Hazel Ondray were the waitresses for the convention's banquet. They did a great job, and they'll get a Newsboy with their pictures in it.

"You seem to be pretty confident," said his father.

"I am sure of it," said Gilbert.

This concludes Part I of "The Rivals." The second part will appear in the next month's issue of Newsboy.

The following article originally appeared in the June 24, 1979 issue of the Baltimore Sun. Thanks go to Alger Society member Gene Hafner for sending it to me. (Note reference to Alger in the article).

A real-life Nancy Drew also writes of Hardy Boys and Bobbsey Twins

By MARIA LENHART

A few years ago an 11-year-old Michigan girl was kidnaped and thrown into the trunk of a car. Instead of panicking, she asked herself what Nancy Drew would do in such a situation. Then, in a move worthy of the ingenious Nancy, she found a toolbox, pried the trunk open, made a call from a nearby telephone booth and had her assailant arrested.

Not long afterward, another Nancy Drew fan, Amy Carter, caused minor ripples by ignoring foreign dignitaries at a state dinner. The reason? She had brought a book with her to the table and between courses was busy poring over her heroine's adventures.

When Harriet Adams, the creator of all 57 Nancy Drew books, read of the above incidents, she was pleased but not surprised. Ever since the first Nancy Drew mystery made its debut in 1930, she has heard from thousands of children who have longed to climb aboard the girl detective's little blue roadster and track down what the adult crime fighters cannot.

But few of the letters Harriet Adams gets are likely to be addressed to her real name. Readers of the Nancy Drew and Dana Girls' mysteries know her as Carolyn Keene, readers of the Hardy Boys' mysteries know her as Frank W. Dixon, and the readers of the Bobbsey Twins know her as Laura Lee Hope.

Prolific story writers

Fewer readers still are likely to know that Harriet Adams is the senior partner of the Stratemeyer Syndicate, a five-member writing concern that has produced over 2,000 books for young readers since its founding by Mrs. Adams's father, Edward Stratemeyer, at the turn of the century.

Mrs. Adams is now 86, but instead of planning retirement, she is planning the five mystery stories her new publisher, Simon and Schuster, wants from the Syndicate next year. A visit to her offices in

Maplewood, N.J., finds her amid a book-filled environment that she did so much to create; the colorful jackets of books that have delighted several generations in 20 countries and in 14 languages serve as a most appropriate backdrop.

Perhaps the letters she gets have something to do with her plans to keep filling yet more shelf space. "I'm always hearing from children who say that Nancy has inspired them in some way," she says. "And I get letters from their parents, too, who say that my books were the ones that got their children interested in reading, that they were lured into the joys that books can provide."

She also hears from people who claim to have read all the Nancy Drew or Hardy Boys books when they were young. This amuses her because they quite often have read less than half of the series and are quite unaware that new and updated stories come out each year.

Followed in his footsteps

In all Harriet Adams has written 180 books herself and originated the plots of some 1,200, outdoing even her prolific father who wrote 150 and created the plots and outlines of 650 more.

Together they have originated some 180 series, most long since out of print, and have used almost as many pseudonyms. Edward Stratemeyer alone wrote under 88 different names because, as his daughter explains, "he didn't think that anyone would believe that one man wrote all those books."

The story of the Stratemeyer Syndicate began in the latter years of the last century when Edward Stratemeyer was employed by *Munsey's* magazine, a journal of stories for children to which Horatio Alger was a frequent contributor. When a promised story failed to arrive in time for publication, Stratemeyer went ahead and wrote it under the contributor's name.

A literary partnership with Horatio Alger began this way and when the writer of luck-and-pluck stories became ill, he

asked Stratemeyer to complete some of his manuscripts. After Alger's death, he was asked by the author's sister to work several remaining outlines into stories. He later went on to write 12 Alger-style tales on his own.

A re-finished ending

"One of my most cherished possessions," says Mrs. Adams, "is a manuscript that begins with Alger's handwriting and ends with my father's typing."

Soon afterwards the energetic Stratemeyer was branching out into his own series, the most famous being the Tom Swift and Bobbsey Twins books. Because he could not keep up with all of his own ideas, he began preparing outlines and employing newspaper reporters to fill them in.

Harriet Adams grew up in the midst of the burgeoning Stratemeyer Syndicate, but it was never thought by her or her father that she would one day guide the family business. When she entered the Wellesley College class of 1915, it was to study music, an area thought more proper for young ladies than the inky world of children's books. The year between graduation and marriage was spent working in the Stratemeyer offices, but not as a writer.

"I had asked him if I could write for him on a steady basis, but I wasn't allowed to," she recalls. "His standards were strict and he didn't feel women should work. If they did it was a disgrace and meant their fathers couldn't support them."

Birth of Nancy Drew

But in 1930 when Edward Stratemeyer passed on, the management of the Syndicate and the bulk of the writing fell on her shoulders. Her father had left behind the manuscripts for the first three Nancy Drew books, which she promptly rewrote and sent out for publication. Through the following years, with the particular help of her late partner Andrew Sinclair, she greatly expanded and developed the Bobbsey Twins and Hardy Boys series as well.

While creating the myriad of plots, Mrs. Adams draws on her many trips around the world to trigger ideas and lend authenticity to the frequent international settings found in the books. Even the smallest of incidents are filed away for future use such as the time in Africa when she averted a curious baboon from lifting a wig off a woman's bald head. Later, when writing "The Spider Sapphire Mystery," she let him get away with it.

The syndicate has enjoyed steady success even during Mrs. Adams's early years at the helm which coincided with the Depression and during World War II when the government ordered that the copper plates of all books selling fewer than 100,000 copies a year be turned over to the war effort. Many series were lost in this way, but the Bobbsey Twins, Tom Swift, the Dana Girls, Nancy Drew and the Hardy Boys (these last two have sold over 100 million copies) survived.

Gummy gumshoeing

Another problem surfaced during the war years when the FBI sent agents out to investigate the Stratemeyer Syndicate which, because of its name, was feared to be a ring of German spies.

"One morning two young gentlemen came to the door and began asking all sorts of questions," says Mrs. Adams. "I asked them if they were from the FBI and they were surprised that I knew right away. 'Well,' I told them, 'I do write mystery stories, don't I?'"

Later in the 1960's widespread objections were raised concerning the heavy use of dialect in the earlier books that minority groups, particularly blacks who objected to the speech of Dinah and Sam in the Bobbsey Twins, found racist and demeaning.

"We went back and cleaned up much of the dialect and now everyone speaks standard English," says Mrs. Adams. "My father was especially fond of using whatever foreign and ethnic dialect he could — every time the Bobbsey Twins visited a foreign country a new one would crop up.

Some of the original Bobbsey Twins books are virtually unreadable because of it."

New look to old heroes

Another change will occur this fall when all new Nancy Drew, Dana Girls, and Hardy Boys titles will be published by Simon and Schuster instead of Grosset and Dunlap, which has issued them for nearly 50 years. The new books, four of which will make their debut in October, will be in quality paperback form and feature illustrations more suited to young detectives sleuthing through the 1980's.

In recent years fans of Nancy Drew and the Hardy Boys have seen the mystery adventures acted out on an ABC-TV series, a disappointing development for Mrs. Adams, who has taken issue with the network over what she feels is an excessive use of violence in the programs.

But she is somewhat vindicated by the letters she gets from readers who say they like the books better. "I have always been proud of the fact that my books have succeeded without relying on violence, heavy romance and profanity," she says. "Perhaps that's something modern writers and TV producers might take into consideration."

One thing that has remained constant through the years and is likely to remain so is the portrayal of Nancy Drew as a remarkably self-sufficient young woman. Mrs. Adams feels this is directly responsible for the attachment many girls have to the heroine.

"I am often asked nowadays if Nancy Drew is the first women's libber," she says. "I hadn't intended it to be that way, but perhaps she is."

Then comes the inevitable question of whether or not Harriet Adams, who, like the girl sleuth, has frequently leaped ahead of her father's footsteps, is the real Nancy Drew. After considering it for a moment, she laughingly replies, "Well, yes, I guess I am!"

Christian Science Monitor News Service

"The New York Newsboy" originally appeared in the December, 1912 issue of The Century Magazine and is from the collection of Jack Bales. Jacob A. Riis was a famous social reformer of the 19th century whose book, How the Other Half Lives, is regarded as a classic in its pictorial portrayal of living conditions among the poor of New York. As the following article illustrates, he was a frequent visitor of the Newsboys' Lodging House.

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THE NEW YORK NEWSBOY

BY JACOB A. RIIS

Author of "How the Other Half Lives," etc.

WITH SKETCHES BY J. R. SHAVER

THE newsboys of New York were having their Christmas dinner, and I was bidden to the feast. I stood at the door and saw them file in, seven hundred strong, to take their places at the long tables. Last of all came the little shavers, brimful of mischief waiting to break out. The superintendent pulled my sleeve when he set eyes upon them.

"Watch out now," he said; "they 'll be up to something."

I saw them eye the lay-out as they went down the line, where turkey and mince-pie stood waiting, and make quick, stealthy passes with their hands, but nothing happened until they had taken their seats. Then up went eight grimy fists, and eight aggrieved voices piped out:

"Mister, I ain't got no pie!"

The superintendent chuckled.

"How is that?" he said. "No pie? There was one; I put it there myself, at every plate. Why, what is that?" And he patted each of the little rascals in the region of the bread-basket, where something stuck out in a lump inside the shirt.

"Me pie," was the unabashed reply. "I was afeard it 'u'd get stole on me." There was just the ghost of a wink.

"Well," laughed the superintendent, "we 'll forget it. It is Christmas. Go ahead, boys, with your dinner." And they fell to.

It was great. Talk about the charge of the Six Hundred. These were seven hundred, and they used their knives, their forks, and their tongues all at once and for all they were worth. The noise was deafening. You could not have heard yourself think. One alone among them all did no shouting. He devoured his dinner like a famished little wolf, and all the while he never took his ferret eyes from my face. It was in the days when New York had a

militant police commissioner, who set the town by the ears every other day with his unheard-of ways of enforcing dead-letter laws, and rattled its dry bones. All of a sudden the boy snatched his fist from his mouth and pointed it straight at me.

"I know you," he piped in a shrill treble that cut through the Babel of tongues like a knife. "I seen yer picter in de papers. Ye 'r'—ye 'r'—Teddy Roosevelt!"

Instantly there was the silence of the tomb in the big hall. Where just before one would not have known that a dray went over the pavement outside, one could all at once have heard a pin drop. Looking down the table where the miscreants sat who had tried to get a double allowance of pie, I saw something stirring, and the stolen pies appeared and were swiftly and silently deposited on the table. The dreaded name had brought them back even on a false alarm.

That was seventeen years ago. Chance carried me past the Newsboys' Lodging-House the other day at the dinner-hour, and I went in to have a look at things. There were no newsboys there. The little shavers with their gimlet wits were gone. The boys who sat about the tables did not hail from Newspaper Row. They were older, and evidently earning their bread in shop and factory.

"Gone," said the superintendent to my question where the little fellows were. "Societies got them, and they don't run in the street. The old times went out a dozen years ago. Before that we had them at six, even at five, and more and more of them up to fourteen. They overflowed from the city's tenements in homeless hordes. They don't any more. The boys we now have average seventeen or eighteen; they come mostly from out of town.



HOW CAN HE HOLD SO MANY PAPERS,
WITH ONLY ONE LEG AND
TWO HANDS?

The lure of the city, the *Wanderlust*, gets them. Now and then it is a stepfather. Here we sift them, get them work if we can. A few sell papers, but not many. There are not half a dozen newsboys in the house to-day, and its name might as well be changed. Less than one third belong in New York. Last year when Christmas was coming on we had a talk here, and the speaker touched the string of mother waiting at home for her wandering boy.

There was a tremendous demand for note-paper that week, and seventeen run-aways were returned to their homes.

"The newsboy of to-day is another kind of chap, who has a home and folks. No, Santa Claus has not lost the way. We still have our Christmas dinner. Come and see for yourself."

What he said was true. The newsboy of old, who foraged for himself, who crowded street and alley about the newspaper offices and mobbed the pressmen, who curled up by the steam-pipes or on the manhole-covers in the small hours of the morning for a "hot-pipe nap" till the

clatter of the great presses began below, and was rounded up there by the "Cruelty man" in zero weather, is a rare bird nowadays.

In his place has come the commercial little chap who lives at home and sells papers after school-hours, sometimes on his own account, but oftener to eke out the family earnings with what may be the difference between comparative comfort and abject poverty.

Shorn of his lawless privilege of sleeping out and of imperiling his life a hundred times a day by jumping on moving cars in his hunt for trade, he is still a feature of metropolitan life, even holds the key to some of its striking phases; for, as the circulation manager will tell you, he is the one who *makes* the sales. The dealer at the stand merely registers the purchaser's desire for a paper; the boy prompts it. He has surrendered some of his picturesqueness to become a cog in the industrial wheel, small but indispensable.

Like all business in our day, he is being



A YIDDISH "NEWSLADY" ON GRAND STREET.
SHE SELLS NOTHING BUT HEBREW PAPERS

concentrated, capitalized. From an atom he has become an asset, quite without his assistance.

It was neither the change from the jovial Irish to the sunny Italian, nor from him to the sharp-witted Jew, that wrought the transformation. It was something

them off at points where newsdealers and boys were waiting. Year by year the routes were extended, and they are growing yet. The old distribution centers under the equestrian statue in Union Square, in Greeley Square, Times Square, Columbus Circle, and at the Grand Central,

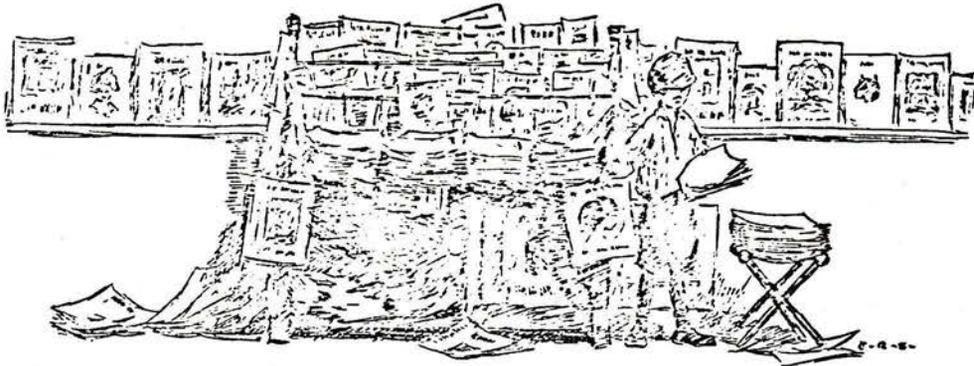


UNDER THE SYSTEM OF "RETURNS" THE WEeping NEWSBOY HAS DISAPPEARED

more potent than either or both. It was the Spanish War, with the great boom of the sensational papers that set a new pace in the press-rooms. Where there had been one afternoon edition, half a dozen grew. It was clearly impossible for the boy to go down-town every half-hour for his papers; he would be traveling all day if he did. So he stayed where he was. The clamoring crowds about the newspaper offices disappeared. Pony expresses and automobiles carried the editions up-town, throwing

have been multiplied many times. In this rush of development the little fellow has been caught up as in a whirlwind, and is being carried on with a speed that leaves him and, for that matter, the rest of us little chance to think or ask where he is going.

Thus lassoed by the big business of the time, what sort of lad has the little pirate of the past become? And what is he, with the training of the street, in the way to become? It depends on the angle from



THE YOUNG NAPOLEON OF FINANCE

which he is seen, and angles he has in plenty. Let it be said at once that the boy who weeps in the street at night, appealing to the tender-hearted with an armful of unsold papers, whatever he was once, is not now the typical newsboy. He can return his papers now, if "stuck," or at any rate a fair share of them. Nine chances to one the tearful one is a preposterous little fraud. If he confronts you with a plea for a quarter, "to make the dollar and a half he needs to go to the camp," the tenth chance is gone. He does not have to pay a dollar and a half to go to camp. The

Newsboys' Home Club gives him all its privileges, including the summer camp, through the whole year for a quarter. He is the crafty little rascal upon whom the "Cruelty man" keeps a wary eye, for he knows that he will encounter him in the Children's Court some day, or, rather, that he will take him there. It is this lad who is responsible for the showing of the reformatories, that more than half of the prisoners "sold newspapers" in their day. Doubtless they did, and they made short change to begin with, and picked pockets a little later on. But they are no more representative of their class than the get-rich-quick swindlers, to whom the post-office authorities forbid the mails, represent the honest business of the land.

There is evil enough abroad in the streets. Its touch, with all that is cheap and tawdry and vulgar, from the perennial cigarette to the vile bar-room and worse that open upon it, sharpens the lad's wits and too often tends to dull his morals. Seen from that angle, he gives the philanthropist concern with cause. Despite child-labor laws, he is on the street at too early an age and too late an hour. The law now forbids him to cry his extra after ten o'clock if he is under fourteen. This winter an effort will be made to shorten his hours by two and send him to bed at eight, while raising his age to sixteen. Even then there will be mischief enough and to spare in his path. School licenses and badges do not banish it. The lad does not always take them seriously.

"Where is your badge?" asked a man suddenly of a little fellow who pushed a paper at him. He was dirty and out at



THE VETERAN NEWSBOY OF PARK ROW

elbows. The rent in his trousers was mended with a bent nail.

"Left it home on the pianner," he grinned, and dodged a vengeful grab.

Seen from the angle of his friend in the "club," he is an honest little fellow whose earnings out of school help make both ends meet at home. The very independence that is arraigned as tending to defiance of authority, to irregularity and loose habits, in his view helps make a man of him early, "if it is in him." He will point to the lad who just left his desk after arranging to take his week in camp in Sunday doses, and tell you the reason: he cannot get away from business. A Jew

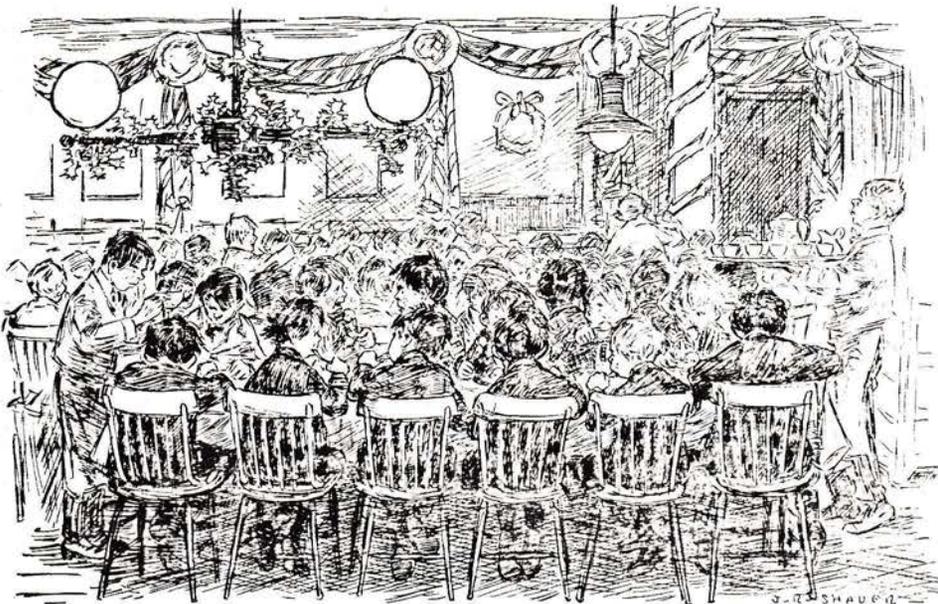


THE FRIENDLY GRATING

has set up a stand on his corner, and it is up to him to meet the competition, which he does by hiring another boy to way-lay the customer in the middle of the block while he forages at the crossing. That other boy over there is going into a silk house on the first of the month, and his younger brother will take over his route. That boy began, as most of them do, by making six or ten cents a day. For a long while now he has brought home five dollars a week to his fa-

ther, who presses clothes for a living, and weekly earns little more than that the year round.

From the point of view of the circula-



CHRISTMAS DINNER IN A NEWSBOY'S BOWERY LODGING-HOUSE



COUNTING THE DAY'S RECEIPTS: HAS HE THE
"PRICE" OF A LODGING?

tion manager, who, after all, perhaps knows him best, it being to his interest, the lad is just a boy who, if he goes crooked, goes fast and far, but who grows straight in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred, and, whether the one or the other, can take care of himself. The one needs no one to weep over him; the other will "do" you while you are at it. It is the circulation manager who has housed him in his own club, once the dignified home of the Historical Society, at Eleventh Street and Second Avenue, sends him to camp in summer, has culled the chaff from

the wheat generally, and given him a social footing because of the commercial one he has conquered.

Fresh from its humanizing influence, I corralled one of the species on the avenue and catechized him, investing at intervals in his stock to hold his attention. He was thirteen and had no badge. "My boss has one," he said. The boss proved to be an older boy who "had the corner" and bought the papers at two for three; that is, for every two one-cent papers he paid for, he received one free. That was his profit. My boy was hired for the hours between half-past four and seven on all school-days at a wage of sixty cents a week. Here then was the capitalist at the beginning of things.

"Why don't you get a corner yourself?" I asked.

"They 're all took."

The boy was German, and it seemed safe to ask:

"He has no more right to the corner than you have; why don't you fight him for it?"

"He 's my boss," was the dogged reply.

"But suppose some stronger fellow drove him away?"

The answer was prompt:

"I 'd get other boys and get it back for him."

Does that help you to understand the following of

Big Tim Sullivan and such leaders? Big Tim was a newsboy once, and he sticks up for them always. I tried once more.

"Did you ever hear of any one taking a boy's corner—just taking it?"

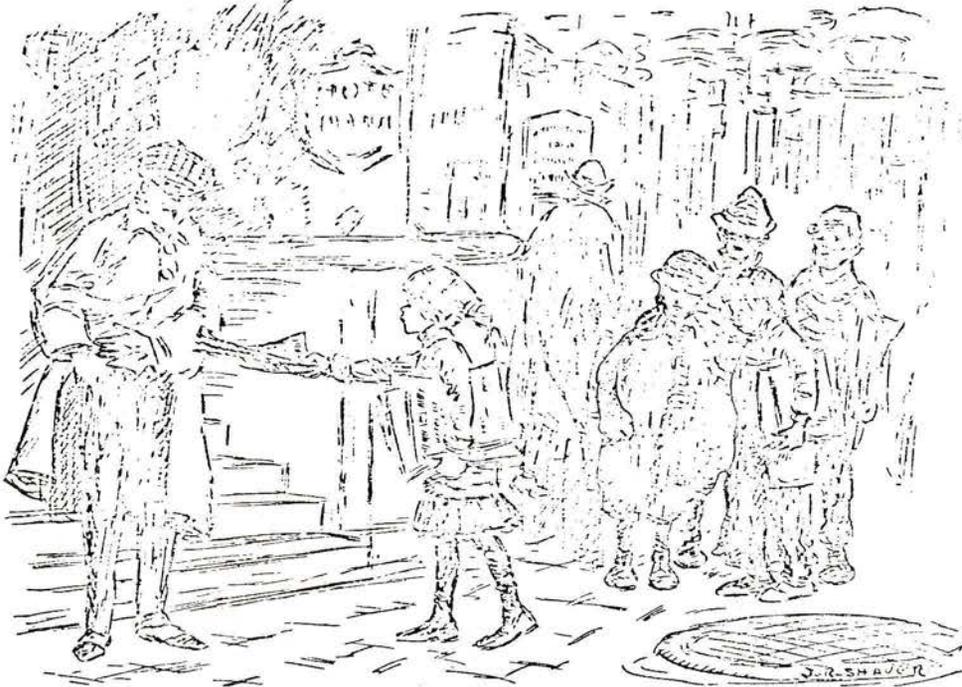
"I heard of it, but I never knowed it. It is *his* corner."

I felt for the tribal instinct on another tack. The boy had been to camp. It is on the salt water.

"Can the fellows swim?" I asked.

"Most on 'em."

"Is there any one to save those who can't if they get in too deep?"



THE BOYS: "HANG WOMAN'S RIGHTS, ANYWAY"

"Pinochle does—Pete's his name. He pulled some out already."

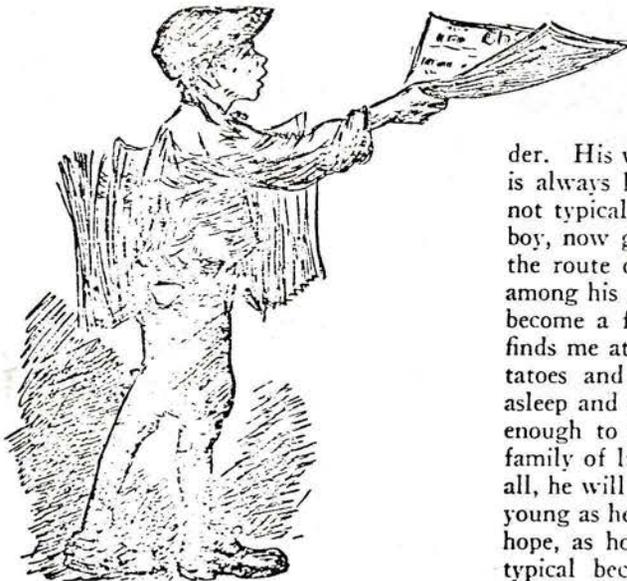
"If he should n't be there, and a boy be drowning, would any of the others go in to help him?"

"They'd all go." It was plain that he was not boasting; he stated a simple fact.

Some kingdoms have rested on no better claim than the boss's corner. There was one boss who took the title with the power,

but neither lasted long. Jack Sullivan, "the King of the Newsboys," lies in the Tombs at this writing, mired in the infamy that bred the Rosenthal murder.

His was the choice of the gutter that is always handy to the street, but it was not typical. Neither is that of the newsboy, now grown to man's size, who owns the route on which I live and counts me among his subjects. Knowing that I have become a farmer, he lingers whenever he finds me at home, to hear the news of potatoes and crops. He dreams of them, asleep and awake, and he has saved nearly enough to buy his farm, beside raising a family of little children. When he has it all, he will sell his route to another boy as young as he was when he began and, let us hope, as honorably ambitious. He is not typical because it is not often that the newsboy's longing takes the shape of a farm, though I know of at least one, a



9:30 A. M. "THE CENTURY" OFFICE NEWSBOY

graduate of one of the Children's Aid Society's lodging-houses, who did the same. He is a settlement worker now when he is not farming. Another, who came out of the same place, is superintendent of a boys' club in a New Jersey town. And there is one, a cripple, of whom some of the readers of this article have doubtless bought papers, whose domain lies on the north side of Forty-second Street and yields him a revenue of five dollars a day, so they say in the Forty-fourth Street lodging-house in which he used to live, and which he now supplies with papers.

But the newsboy's ambition is more apt to run to business or the professions. There are clergymen, lawyers, and bankers in New York who began their careers crying newspapers in the street. I know of a distinguished physician on Madison Avenue who so paid his way through college. At the entrance to the Brooklyn Bridge one sells newspapers to-day who is in his last year in the medical school. Another, around in Fulton Street, will be gradu-

ated with the next class from the dental college, and up at the Grand Central I brush against one who is taking his second year's course in the law school. All these are still at their posts, making the money that pays for their education; but I pass them all by, when bound up-town, and buy my paper or magazine of one who stands at the corner of Twenty-third Street and Fourth Avenue. Let me tell you his story.

From his window across the street one of the officers of the Gerry Society saw a boy with a crutch and an armful of papers dive into the hurrying crowd on the crossing and snatch a customer from under the very nose of a big, bearded man, also a news-vender, who in revenge struck him an angry blow that sent him sprawling in the dirt. The boy picked himself up and limped back to his corner, where the officer found him brushing off his coat and attending to business as though nothing had happened.

"It is all right," was Fred's only com-

ment; "I was n't hurt, and I guess it was his sale, anyhow."

The boy had just passed fourteen. He had no time to waste in fighting, for his father was sick at home and the support of the mother and three younger brothers was upon his frail shoulders. That was fifteen years ago, and he still sticks to the corner that is his by right now. And this is how he met his responsibility, for the father died without ever earning another dollar: one brother is a capable engineer connected with one of the great electric companies, another is in the employ of an express company; the third is a stenographer. Fred's earnings brought them all up and gave them their start. One of the brothers helped him sell papers when not in school. The family have left the tenement where the father died, and live in a nice home. Fred, as I said, sticks to his corner. It is the key-note of the man, as it was of the boy—to stick it out. He has seen the tide of little Italians succeeded by a flood of Jews, big and little, but through it all has held his own serenely. Best of all, he no longer walks with a crutch, though he still limps. Open air *plus* his dogged grit has triumphed also over this obstacle and made him whole.

A good many years ago word came to the office of the "Sun" that there had been an accident in which a newsboy was hurt. I went out and asked the old news-woman at the bridge entrance who it was. I remember, as though it were yesterday, her answer:

"Little Maher it was."

"Well, where does he live? Who looks after him?"

"Oh, no one but God; and I guess He is too busy with other folks' boys to mind him much."

The little Mahers of that day are happily no more. Society has taken over the duty of looking after them, and attends to it. Their successors follow business principles, but that they have not lost either their wit or their spirits in the change you will discover before you have kept their company long. Last autumn I went to New Haven to lecture and, stepping off the train at dusk, had a paper poked at me by one of the tribe. On the front page was my picture.

"Who is that?" I asked the boy, pointing to it. He took one look at it and at me.

"Oh," he said, "some old duffer. There 's lots of 'em here."

NEWSBOY BOOK REVIEW

by Jack Bales

An Ethnic at Large: A Memoir of America in the Thirties and Forties.
By Jerre Mangione. New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1978. 378 pp. Index. \$12.50.

An Ethnic at Large is an autobiography, the story of Jerre Mangione, a firstborn child of Sicilian immigrants.

But it is more than a typical rags to riches tale. It is a moving story of his struggle in coming to terms with his own ethnicity in the United States, of his inward torment as he tries to understand his parents' and other relatives' opinions and beliefs.

"Pretext or not, on any Sunday or holiday a score of relatives would crowd into our tiny house at the invitation of my father, whose capacity for hospitality far exceeded his income, . . . As long as the celebrations were held indoors away from public scrutiny, I could enjoy them, . . . but in the summer months, when they took to serenading one another in the dead of the night, . . . I would be tormented with the worry that they were making a bad impression on the Americans around us.

"A mindless conformist like most children, I was incapable of appreciating my relatives' insistence on being themselves, or realizing that this was their way of coping with an alien world that was generally hostile."

Graduation from Syracuse University in 1931 brought a number of jobs, including a short stint with Time and a position at the Cooper Union Institute Library that that he eventually lost because of his sympathy towards the Bowery alcoholics who frequented the place angered the tyrannical head librarian. But because of his writing ability he was offered an editorship with a New York publishing firm, a position which he eagerly

accepted.

"My elation was soon put to the test by the squelching reality of having to deal, almost exclusively, with writers whose chances of publication were either dim or non-existent. [These] included a fanatical middle-aged woman who held my hand while she assured me that her manuscript was bound to have a tremendous sale because it had been written, word for word, by God Himself. She disclaimed being its author, describing herself as an intermediary who, heeding His call, had sat at a typewriter while His words passed through her fingertips on to the machine."

Throughout his life, activist Mangione never lost his almost fanatical interest in people and their lives - especially the lives of his own countrymen. This life-long personal odyssey even took him to the White House at the personal request of Eleanor Roosevelt. "'Why,' asked my Uncle Peppino at the time, 'would the head of the world's richest nation want to sit down with a young man who earns less than I do as a bricklayer?'"

His family, I suppose, never really understood the purpose of all his travels nor the projects in which he was involved or this question would never have been asked. But read the book. It is not a suspenseful cliff-hanger of international intrigue, nor will you be glued to your seat. But it provides a personal view of an ethnic outsider looking at a sometimes unfeeling America - and coping with all the problems and triumphs that it gives him - during the first half of this century.

* * *

The photographs in this issue of Newsboy were taken by Gilbert K. Westgard II. As the photos in these last few issues of Newsboy point out, all had a great time at the convention. See you at the next one in Connecticut?



FROM THE EDITOR'S SCRAP BOOK

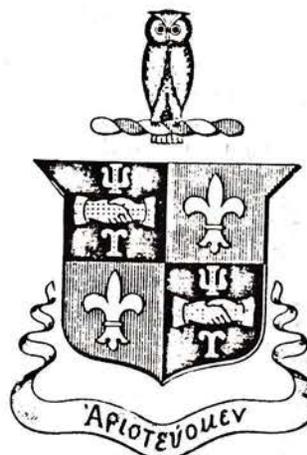


Ever hear of Leo Edwards, the boys' book author who wrote the Jerry Todd and Poppy Ott books? Dick Bales sent me two interesting clippings, both from the Ottawa, Illinois Daily Times. "Edward Edson Lee Put Utica on the Map," is from the March 22, 1978 issue, and "Easterner Illustrated Utican's Books, Covers" appeared in the March 29, 1978 Times.

Gil Westgard has been doing some research on Alger and recently sent me some material on Horatio at Harvard. As many HAS members probably know, Alger was a member of the Alpha Chapter of Psi Upsilon Fraternity at Harvard. Here are pictured the Fraternity's crest and that of the local chapter. I'm hoping that Gil will do an article on Psi Upsilon and Harvard as he has gathered much information.



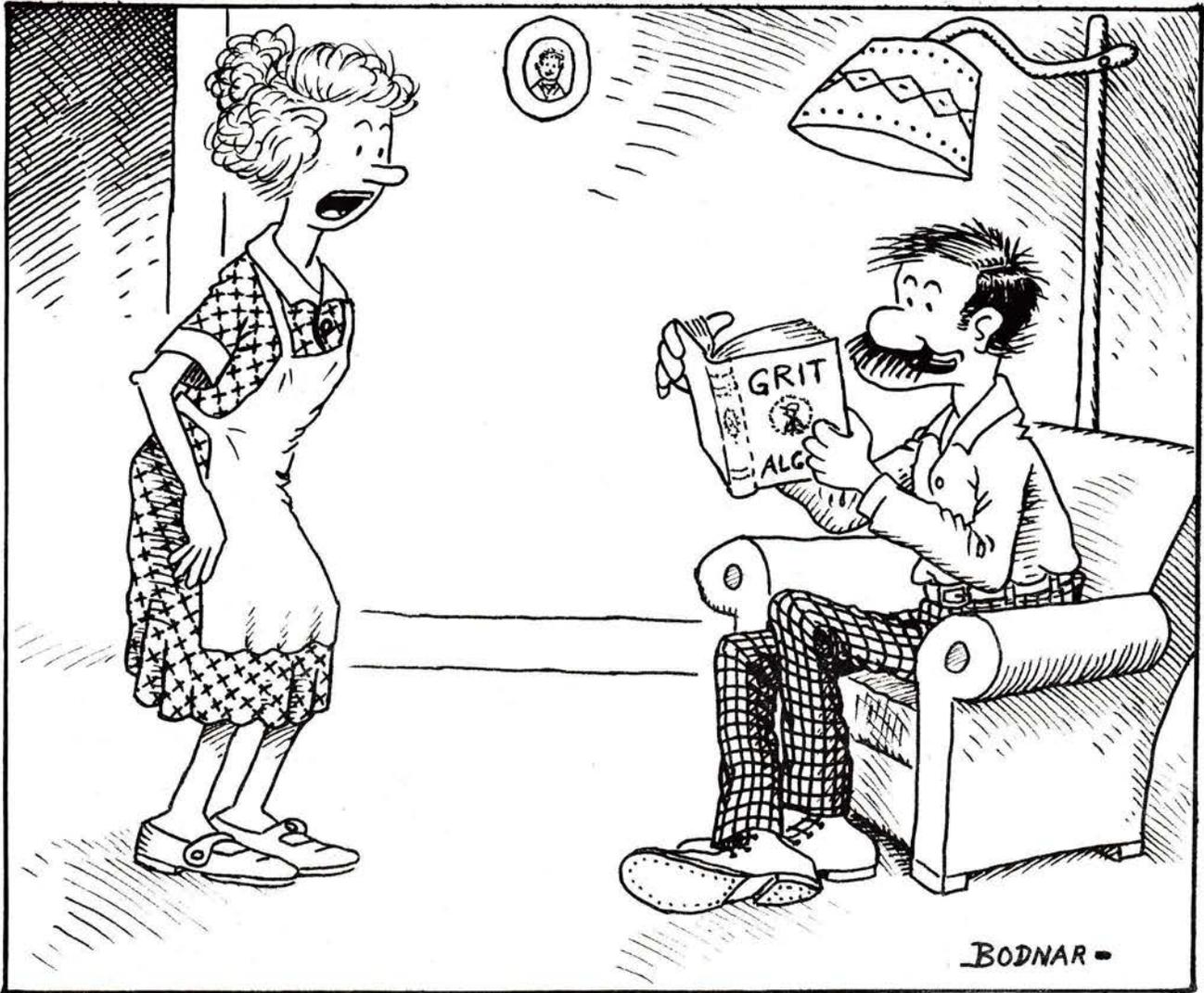
The Arms of the Fraternity



Alpha Chapter

Bob Williman sent me some Alger references that appeared in two books by Stephen Birmingham. (The Grandees: America's Sephardic Elite, N. Y.; Harper and Row, 1971; "Our Crowd": The Great Jewish Families of New York, N. Y.: Harper and Row, 1967). Both passages are similar to each other. In the first book mentioned, Birmingham is talking about the tutor that Albert Cardozo hired for his son, Ben. "Small and roly-poly, with a round bald head and squinting, nearsighted eyes, Mr. Alger was described by one of the family as 'a dear, absurd little man.' He was certainly a far cry from his rags-to-riches newsboy heroes in such then-popular romances as Ragged Dick and Tattered Tom. He was flutily effeminate, with mincing ways and a fondness for practicing ballet positions in his spare time, crying out such exclamations as 'Oh, lawsy me!' or bursting into wild tears when things went wrong."

In the last Newsboy I announced that I would print an Associated Press release on Dick Bowerman and his Alger collection. However, Dick tells me that he was not satisfied with the piece and that he will send me something else.



--"Supper's ready!"

--"Supper will have to wait!! I want to read more from Grit!"

(Cartoon was created and drawn especially for Newsboy by Louis Bodnar, Jr., 1502 Laurel Ave., Chesapeake, Virginia 23325).