

# PROFILES

## TAX ANGLER



J. K. Lasser

**A** LITTLE over a year ago, the *Wall Street Journal* printed a brief analysis of two of the briskest-moving commodities in the contemporary world of letters. The *Journal* noted that the sales of one of them, "Gone with the Wind," a book it appraised as "colorful," had by then reached the robust total of six million copies. Even so, the *Journal* observed, Margaret Mitchell's phenomenally popular novel was running four million behind the other book under scrutiny, which the financial paper rated "a dull and definitely dreary work of non-fiction." The literary property thus belittled was "Your Income Tax," a paper-bound manual that has been paying substantial dividends to its publishers, Simon & Schuster, since the fall of 1935, when they first issued it, and that since the fall of 1938 has been got up annually by an intense, nervous, fifty-six-year-old certified public accountant and prolific writer named Jacob Kay Lasser. In many sections of a society in which taxes have come to play an increasingly prominent role, Lasser's book, in its by now familiar yellow covers, has achieved nearly Biblical status. Not only is it the gospel of hundreds of thousand of bewildered citizens who seek in its meaty pages comfort and guidance as they gird themselves for their yearly tussle with their finances; it is also referred to frequently by agents of the Bureau of Internal Revenue and by tax practitioners in the course of their occupational duties. So widely recognized a tool of the last group's trade has "Your Income Tax" become that, according to a half-jocular saying among accountants, all a young man aspiring to success in the tax game

needs to get along nowadays is a serious mien, a polished desk, and, resting on the desk, an expensive-looking leather portfolio with a copy of "the yellow book"—as Lasser and others often call it—tucked inside.

As of the first of this month, sales of the yellow book since it came under Lasser's aegis had risen to over twelve million. Unlike Margaret Mitchell or Fannie Farmer, the author of another best-seller that is sometimes compared to his, Lasser is no mere one-book wonder. In the last ten years, he has written, collaborated on, or edited a torrent of books and magazine articles having to do with taxes and related topics. It is widely believed that no other writer has ever made such grim subjects so intelligible, if not exactly entertaining, to so many readers. Some of Lasser's books, like "Your Social Security," "Your Personal Income Tax," and the yellow book itself, have been directed primarily at the general public. The majority of them, however, like a 1945 volume entitled "How to Speed Up Settlement of Your Terminated War Contract," have been aimed at a somewhat more circumscribed audience. No matter whom he is addressing, Lasser dotes on the second-person pronoun; he believes that its use forges a sturdy link between himself and his readers.

From his appearance, no one would ever take Lasser for an eminent man of letters. He is pudgy, jug-eared, and bald-headed, and has a flattened nose, the result of youthful sorties into football and prizefighting. He is only five feet five inches tall, and when in repose is fond of curling up in a chair, like a kitten, with his heels above his head. A man of almost childlike candor, he sometimes refers to himself as "a thick-headed little guy." He is an unusual writer in other respects, too. For instance, he cheerfully concedes, in striking contrast to most authors, that he is utterly unendowed with literary skill. In expounding on this deficiency, he has been known to assert, almost with pride, his firm conviction that no one, aside from an occasional proofreader, has ever sat down and read any of his books clear through from beginning to end. His favorite adjective for the quality of his work is "sloppy." Aware perhaps that his professed opinion of his own craftsmanship may be discounted as mere

modesty, he often cites the confirmatory view of Leon Shimkin, a vice-president of Simon & Schuster, who conceived the idea of "Your Income Tax" and is one of Lasser's closest friends. "Leon thinks I'm the lousiest writer in the world," Lasser says. There is, however, a contradictory school of thought. For one thing, few other tax writers have managed to inject into their copy such crisp, breezy touches as are exemplified by this fairly typical Lasser sentence: "Profit-sharing trusts to buy company stock get a whale of a shove from the 1951 tax law." Moreover, while Lasser's works are rarely dealt with in book-review columns outside technical journals, Sterling North, a lay critic, was once moved to acclaim him in the *World-Telegram & Sun* as "one of our most admirable and useful contemporary authors," and to add, "If literature is the art of communication, the defense of a way of life, and an aid to the orientation of the individual in his society, J. K. Lasser may be suspected of fulfilling several of its requirements."

**T**HESE days, many an individual's orientation to his society is predicated upon his tax status. People who used to worry about maximizing their incomes now worry more about minimizing their taxes. A lot of financial schemes are hatched solely because of attractive tax features supposed to be inherent in them: Estate planning, charitable contributions, pension schemes, capital investments—the nature of them all is more apt to depend on taxes than on anything else. The tax angle is the thing. No one has thought harder about tax angles than Lasser. Not long ago, when he and a collaborator, William J. Casey, brought forth a booklet called "Tax Sheltered Investments" and priced at twelve and a half dollars, they were hailed by the business-books reviewer of the *Times* as "a couple of financial Houdinis." (Heartened by the reception accorded this work, Lasser and Casey swiftly got going on two sequels—"Tax Shelter in Business Transactions" and "Tax Shelter for the Family.") In "Tax Sheltered Investments," the authors diligently explore various ingenious means, some of them incomprehensible except to other financial Houdinis, by which people can make and hold on to money even in an era of high income taxes—for example, by put-



Peter  
Arno

*"I said you don't know how lucky you are!"*

ting their investment funds into oil, timber, cattle, orange groves, and other capital-gains fields on which an acquisitive eye can still be profitably focussed. "My aim is to keep writing for you and talking to you long enough so you'll go in for some of these gimmicks," Lasser told a friend recently, lapsing into the second person more because of habit than because of the friend's financial circumstances. "I want to make you tax-conscious. I want to make everybody tax-conscious." Lasser has lately been discussing tax-consciousness both with a major stock exchange, which has engaged him to make a study of possible changes in existing tax laws that it might recommend for the benefit of investors, and with a female elevator operator at the Beverly Hotel, on East Fiftieth Street, where he has a four-room apartment. The elevator operator was not sure how she should go about collecting a tax refund she had coming to her, and, like the governors of the exchange, turned to Lasser for solace and enlightenment.

Being extremely tax-conscious himself has rewarded Lasser well. His income from writing about taxes, along with his share in the profits of the accounting firm of J. K. Lasser & Co., of which he is senior partner, have put him in the seventy-per-cent tax bracket. He lives considerably below his means, however. At present, he has two homes—the suite at the Beverly and an unpretentious five-room house that he and his wife built last year at Pound Ridge, in Westchester, where he and two cronies—Shimkin and New York Supreme Court Justice Bernard Botein, the author of "Trial Judge"—jointly purchased a hundred-and-twenty-three-acre tract. Like most of Lasser's first-name acquaintances, Shimkin and Botein call him Yoc, a diminutive of Jacob as pronounced by Central Europeans. Among the few luxuries he permits himself are costly Havana cigars and an electric typewriter. There are circumstances that exten-

uate both indulgences. Lasser consumes only one cigar daily. Soon after getting up in the morning, he sticks one in his mouth, where it remains, unlit, throughout the day, not so much chewed upon as clamped. As for the electric typewriter, he needs it because he puts in a great deal of time typing and has had to devise a way to conserve energy, particularly since 1949, when he suffered the second of two severe heart attacks, and was warned to take it easy. Always a prodigious worker, he is currently trying to ration himself to ten hours' toil a day, seven days a week. Sometimes he hits fifteen or sixteen, despite himself. For four months a year, he works at Pound Ridge, rarely visiting his office. Wherever he is, he rises at five, and by five-fifteen is perched at his typewriter. Not infrequently, he pecks away at it for five hours at a stretch. (As a hedge against the possibility of a thunderstorm's knocking out the power lines at Pound Ridge, and thereby silencing his electric machine, he keeps an old-fashioned, manually impelled one there.) Unlike many other authors, Lasser never finds himself at a loss for something to write.

"If I can't generate new stuff every day in a field as dynamic as mine, I don't deserve to be in it," he says. Sometimes he types feverish memos, to himself or to someone else; he hates to let any thought that takes refuge in his hospitable mind go unrecorded, and a friend who has had a chat with him one day is apt to receive a two- or three-thousand-word document, typed at dawn the following day, under some such heading as "Gassing Here About Early Morning Ideas on Yesterday's Talk with You."

Lasser's literary output is varied. Twice a month, for a publishing organization called Business Reports, Inc. (its founders regarded it as a promising venture chiefly because Lasser had agreed to write for it), he turns out a tax letter called "J. K. Lasser Reports on Taxes." The letter has twelve thousand subscribers, who pay fifteen dollars a year for the privilege of picking Lasser's brains on "There's Tax Shelter South of the Border," "Is Orange Juice Here to Stay?," and similar subjects. Lasser began writing a tax letter for Business Reports in October, 1950. Originally, he called it "J. K. Lasser Reports." A



*"I hope you realize this isn't the usual analytical empathy, Miss Lupton. I really go for you."*

year later, finding a single missive inadequate for the dissemination of all the intelligence he felt he had to convey to his readers (including the observation that "August is a Dreaming Month—so comes a letter to you on *thinking ahead*—stuff that comes out of talking and lounging in the country"), he split the reportorial part of himself in two and began getting out "J. K. Lasser Reports on Taxes" and, at the same price, a companion piece, "J. K. Lasser Reports on Accounting." He abandoned the latter project after four months. He had become bored with it, the more so because fewer than two thousand subscribers had indicated their eagerness to hear him out on such topics as "What's the Annual Cost of a Single Drawer File?" (He computed it to be \$195.19—\$155.34 for the file's share of the salary of the file clerk who attends it, \$13.75 for the rental of the floor space it occupies, \$19 for the cost of materials kept in it, and \$7.10 for amortization of its purchase price.) Lasser's preoccupation with drawer space must have come as no surprise to his partners in J. K. Lasser & Co. He has a low opinion of cramming things in drawers, and when at his office sets what he considers a proper example by working at a table without a single drawer. (The table's annual cost, including its share of the income Lasser earns while at it and its appropriate fraction of one cigar daily, has been estimated by a thoughtful accountant at \$1,385.72.) Once, when one of his partners was at lunch, Lasser sneaked into the man's office, which was equipped with a conventional desk, burrowed into its drawers, and merrily flung their contents into a wastebasket. It was Lasser's premise that the partner thus joggled probably wouldn't refill his drawers without thinking twice about it, and that in the course of this reflection a lot of superfluous paper would surely be discarded. Unfortunately, it developed that Lasser had thrown out several important documents, which it took a year to replace.

Lasser also writes from fifteen to twenty magazine articles a year, not counting a monthly department, "The Tax Clinic," that he has been contributing since 1943 to the *Journal of Accountancy*, a magazine published by the American Institute of Accountants, in which he discourses eloquently on subjects like "Snares in Personal Holding Companies," "The Lucky, Lucky Farmer (Taxwise)," "How to Run a Collapsible Corporation," and "Who Owns a Coed's Clothes?" From time

## CAT GODDESSES

A perverse habit of cat goddesses—  
 Even the blackest of them, black as coals  
 Save for a new moon blazing on each breast,  
 With coral tongues and beryl eyes like lamps,  
 Long-legged, pacing three by three in nines—  
 This obstinate habit is to yield themselves,  
 In verisimilar love ecstasies,  
 To tatter-eared and slinking alley toms  
 No less below the common run of cats  
 Than they above it—which they do for spite,  
 To provoke jealousy, not the least abashed  
 By such gross-headed, rabbit-colored litters  
 As soon they will be happy to desert.

—ROBERT GRAVES

to time, he writes for all sorts of professional journals, and he also writes for dozens of general-circulation magazines. To *Nation's Business* he has contributed "Eleven Ways You Can Raise Money," to *Coronet* "Fourteen Ways to Save on This Year's Taxes," to *Good Housekeeping* "Twenty-five Ways a Wife Can Help Save on Income Taxes," and to *Parents' Magazine* "Thirty-three Ways Parents Can Save on Their Income Tax." Lasser, himself a parent of two grown children—a son and a daughter—elaborated on this last theme in an article he collaborated on for the December, 1951, issue of *Today's Woman*, entitled "Let the Millionaires Show You How to Cut Down on Income Taxes." He urged any of his readers who were contemplating marriage around the end of the year to bear in mind the tax advantages of having the ceremony performed before the first of January, so as to benefit from the option of joint tax filing in two tax years rather than one. This piece of counsel may have been inspired by the fact that his own daughter, like so many children who disregard their parents' practical advice, had the year before permitted herself to be swayed by sentiment rather than by tax-consciousness and had done ex-

actly the opposite of what her father advocated, announcing her engagement in December, but failing to get married until January. Lasser's son, who may not have been aware of his father's attitude toward matrimony, got married on January 23, 1950. Lasser himself got married on the first of January, but that was long before joint-tax filing meant what it does now.

NOTWITHSTANDING all the journalistic commitments Lasser fulfills, most of his hours at the typewriter are devoted to writing books. Each year, he revises two perennials for Simon & Schuster—"Your Income Tax" and "Your Personal Income Tax," a complementary volume dealing with individual income taxes only. Every eighteen months, he revises a related work devoted to business-tax problems. He has also written eight other full-length tax books in the past ten years and collaborated on eight more, and has edited, and written large hunks of, seven additional ones. Eight publishing houses have shared the task of converting this massive flow into book form. Some of the works that he has prepared strictly for professionals have done astonishingly well, considering their seemingly limited appeal. For instance, one of his editing jobs, "Estate Tax Handbook," published in 1951 and priced at fifteen dollars, sold at the rate of a thousand copies a month its first year out, and another, "Handbook of Accounting Methods," has gone through fourteen printings since it appeared in 1943 and has sold a total of fifty thousand copies, at twelve dollars each. The latter is part of a set of Lasser-edited handbooks that also includes "Handbook of Cost Accounting Methods" and "Handbook of Tax Accounting Methods" and that is soon to be augmented by a volume he has just finished, "Hand-





*"Technically nobody can touch him—but he has nothing to say."*

book of Auditing Methods." The three already out add up to a total of three thousand five hundred and ninety pages. In an attempt to distinguish between his books, and to save time, Lasser usually refers to them, in writing and in conversation, merely by initials. "I'm revising 'HAM,'" he will tell a comparative stranger, possibly puzzling the stranger, since the initials could apply to more than one of his works. Despite this device, he himself is sometimes puzzled by the names of the abundant crop of books he has produced. An acquaintance of his in the tax business once noticed that in the front of "Lasser's Business Tax Handbook" for 1949 (the title used that year for a work that has had four different titles since Simon & Schuster first published it, in 1941) the author was credited with writing a book called "Tax Procedures" and editing one called "Small Business Guide." Never having heard of either, the acquaintance questioned Lasser on this point. Lasser was stumped. Later, he

discovered that Simon & Schuster had been referring to a couple of volumes of his that, at the time "LBTH"<sup>49</sup> was going to press, were being put to press by a couple of other publishers, who at the last minute had changed their titles to "Handbook of Tax Techniques" and "How to Run a Small Business."

Lasser's books are not invariably successful. He flopped resoundingly with one called "Farmer's Tax Handbook," for which, in view of the number of its potential readers, he had entertained high hopes. "I concluded that farmers either don't pay taxes or don't keep records or aren't interested," Lasser said afterward. "Or maybe the trouble was that they know more about the subject than I do." Another fizzle, relatively speaking, was "How to Live Within Your Income," which he wrote for Simon & Schuster with Sylvia F. Porter, the *New York Post's* lady economist. They had anticipated sales of a couple of million, but the general public, per-

haps having no desire to live within its income, bought a mere hundred and twenty-five thousand. The authors, making the best of things, recently revamped the work, giving it the less austere title of "Managing Your Money," and it has just been brought out by Henry Holt & Co. Lasser is forever rehashing stuff he has used before. Nearly every book he has had published contains great wads of material, some of it hardly reworded, that he has pried from earlier books. He has fashioned numerous booklets out of "Your Income Tax," including a special one, for the Calvert Distillers Corporation, that urged taxpayers to keep their wits about them while working on their returns and added, "Clear Heads Choose Calvert." Lasser and his publishers are ever on the alert for by-products of his past performances. Eight excerpts from "How to Run a Small Business" were once made available to any magazine that cared to use them, provided that the magazine gave a plug to "HTRSB"

itself. Lasser was gratifyingly obliged by the editors of, among many other coöperative journals, *Food Service News*, *Toys and Novelties*, the *Gift and Art Buyer*, the *Sporting Goods Dealer*, and *Butchers' Advocate*, *Dressed Poultry and the Food Merchant*, as well as *Esquire's Apparel Arts*, which not only boosted the book but said that being allowed to print a portion of it constituted "one of the biggest scoops in our twenty-one years of publishing *Esquire's Apparel Arts*."

Lasser is presently fiddling around with ideas for a book to be called, unless the title is changed, "How to Get a Capital Gain." He won't do much more than fiddle with it until Simon & Schuster have conducted a survey to find out whether there is a waiting market for it. Many Lasser books are similarly pretested. Explaining this procedure, Lasser says, "A publisher will send a letter to ten thousand people telling them, 'We've got this book forthcoming by Lasser, and would you like to be a charter subscriber?' Eight times out of ten, this pretesting takes the author off the hook. If the response isn't encouraging enough, Lasser doesn't write the book. I hope the tests are O.K. on 'HTGCG.' It's an intriguing title, I think. The book will cost five dollars. You can get everything you want on the subject, of course, out of 'YIT,' at less than half the price, but the theory is to re-write the yellow book more attractively and take out a lot of the extraneous stuff."

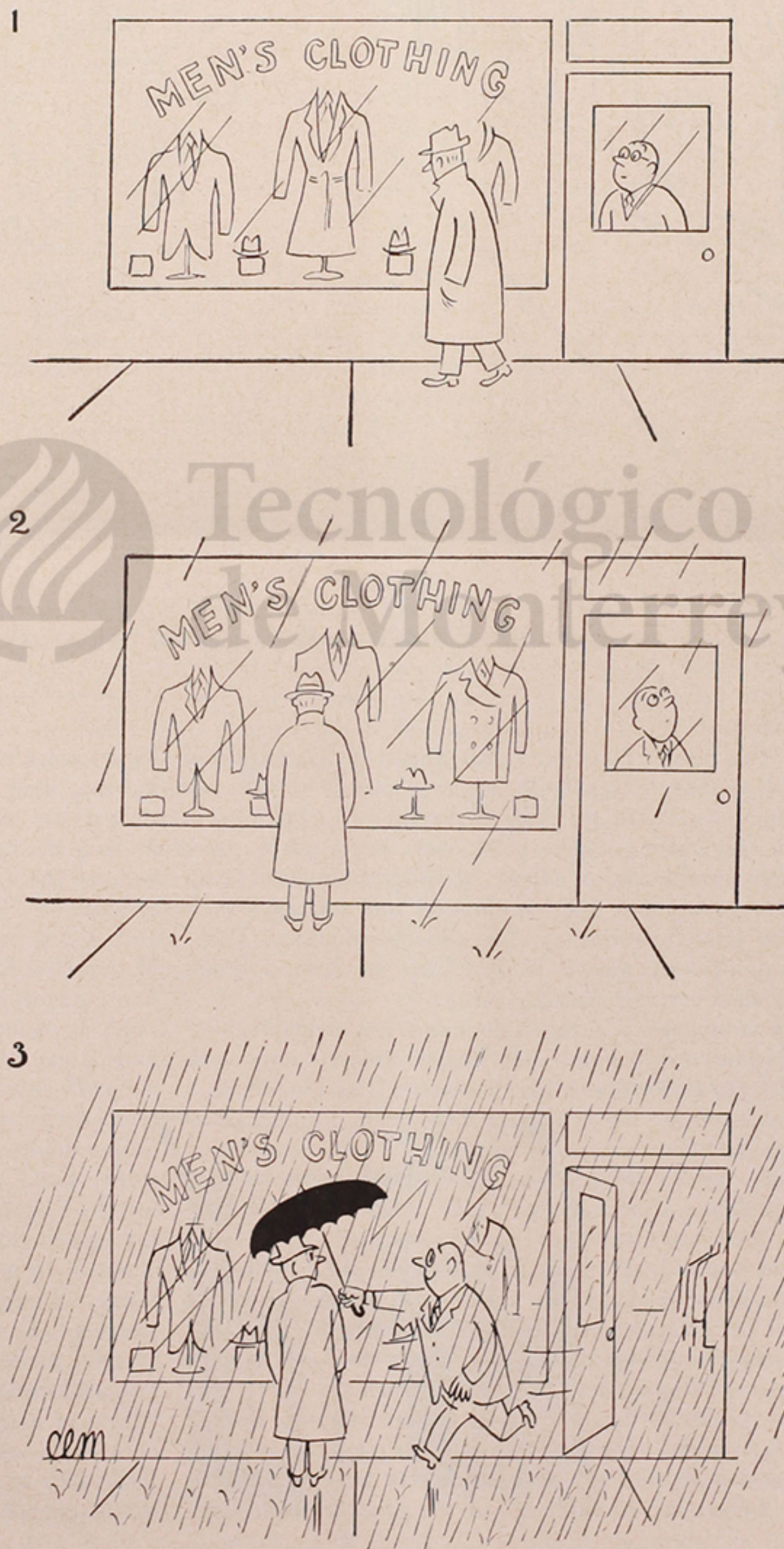
Lasser always has a flock of books in the process of composition; at the moment, he is working on eleven—six revising jobs and five originals—and there are eight others in what he calls "a pipe-dreaming stage." For every book he is actually working

on, he maintains a large black loose-leaf binder. Into each binder he tosses whatever copy he writes that is appropriate to the book in question and whatever fragments he has chipped out of old books for it. "This crazy Lasser, twenty-five things at a time!" he is apt to mutter as he contemplates his works in progress. One reason for his tackling so many projects at a time is that he does a vast amount of long-range research on most of them. For one pipe-dreaming job, now tentatively entitled "How Employees Filch

Your Money," he has been accumulating material, or evidence, for nearly six years. Another pipe dream, a favorite of his, is an "Accountants' Encyclopedia." "I hope to get it done in another ten years," he said not long ago. "My research is coming along nicely, and I expect to have that finished in five." He is also doing research on a book on research. Lasser is no ivory-tower scholar. In the course of adapting "How to Live Within Your Income" into "Managing Your Money," he decided to find out for himself just


how the man on the street would fare if he were in need of financial assistance of one kind or another. At one point in his inquiry he dangled his wristwatch, worth a hundred dollars, in front of a Third Avenue pawnbroker. The pawnbroker offered him twenty-two dollars on it, and said he could redeem it on payment of what Lasser swiftly computed to be forty per cent interest. Lasser muttered something about usury, put his watch back on, and stalked out of the shop.


LASSER'S colleagues in the field of technical-book writing view his productivity with awe, particularly when they reflect that, in addition to writing, he puts in what for most men would be just about full time as head of his accounting firm—a large one, with a hundred employees. "Yoc's performance is really amazing," a rival author of tax books remarked recently. "The average guy writing a book on this complicated, involved stuff has got to have a library. Well, Lasser has hardly any library—at least at home, where he does all his work—but there aren't many people who can get taxes down on paper so expertly, so succinctly. Yoc just sits there at that typewrit-





## Things you can't forget

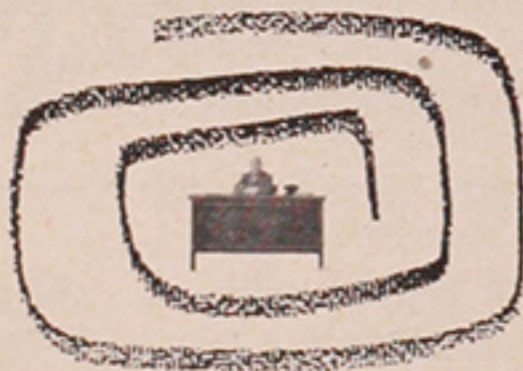
Roy Eastman, a dean of researchers and a darn good writer, wrote the other day that the only things that will do us any good in this life are the things we can't forget.

 We like to believe that. We think you will, too. You sometimes hear, "I can't burden my mind with such things." Is the mind a marketbasket that will run over if filled too full?

 We know 800,000 businessmen who don't think so. If they did, they'd never read *Nation's Business*. They'd settle for short and snappy news letters that just clickety-click along... "sell stocks, buy bonds, no tax reduction yet, watch Berlin, farm policy to change..."

 And that would leave our editors holding the bag. They talk about taxes, farm policy, foreign affairs, sure, but talk, also, about the new 8 o'clock day in official Washington, parking problems, oil reserves, saving lives, the Senate barbershop, chin-chilla farms, wooden money, colleges for auctioneers, wrecking buildings, barn owls, the corporate heart, and heaven knows what else.

 Remember when you left that cocktail party and your wife said: "Wasn't Mr. Beckert an interesting man?" Did you think she might have seen a gleam of Gable in him? Chances are he just talked interestingly about interesting things he couldn't forget. And for all we both know, he may have read them in *Nation's Business*, a general magazine for businessmen, Washington 6, D.C.



(Advertisement)

er and pounds away. Sure, the stuff comes out rough and raw. Sure, it's garbled sometimes, but it's always full of ideas. I guess you could call him the Thomas Wolfe of our profession." Lasser would never dream of calling himself any such thing; the literary figure he most admires, and whose notions about style he works hardest to emulate, is Leon Shimkin. Lasser has borrowed from him, and tried his darnedest to observe, a basic set of rules—that a paragraph should consist of no more than three sentences, that a sentence should consist of no more than twelve words, and that in every sentence there should be no more than one word of over three syllables. He is constantly compelled to violate the third rule, owing to a lack of suitable synonyms for such polysyllabics vital to his work as "compensation" and "deductibility." But he does his best. One student of his style has noticed that whereas ten years ago in a book on tax filing he employed the phrase "Don't procrastinate," in a subsequent edition of the volume he changed this to "Don't put it off until the last minute."

Thomas Wolfe had to be edited extensively. So does Lasser. Unlike the novelist, Lasser has faced this nettling matter head on; he has for quite some time been dependent on outside help to make what he puts on paper technically precise. For the past five years, he has employed two full-time assistants who do nothing but sift, correct, and straighten out his raw material. They refer to themselves as his Book Department. For a while, in the early days of "Your Income Tax," he relied on a handyman he employed on a place where he then lived, in South Orange, to pass on the comprehensibility of his prose. "I would sit him down in a chair and ask him to read the stuff and see whether he could make any sense out of it," Lasser says. "I guess I kind of imposed on him." The weeds in the garden grew to enormous heights while the handyman pored over allowable deductions. Then the handyman, possibly to his relief, was drafted into the Army, whereupon Lasser engaged a professor of English at C.C.N.Y. to replace him. The professor lasted five years, at the end of which he had grappled with so much unrefined Lasser that, in his employer's opinion, his judgment had become impaired. "He was too strongly influenced by my style, and as a result he became insufficiently critical," Lasser says. Lasser's present chief watchdog is a lawyer, whose disciplined mind has

100%  
DuPont  
ORLON  
RAINCOAT  
\$20



### ORLON'S RIGHT AS RAIN!

100% waterproof. Won't leak, crack or stick. Sponges clean with soap and water. No dry cleaning. Feather-light to wear or pack or carry in its own self-envelope. Under-arm vents. Raglan-cut in lustrous light Tan. Regulars (36-46) Shorts (36-44) Longs (38-46).

Mail Orders Invited

*Rogers Peet Company*

NEW YORK · BOSTON

Write: Rogers Peet, 5th Ave. at 41st St., New York 17, N.Y.

Visit America's

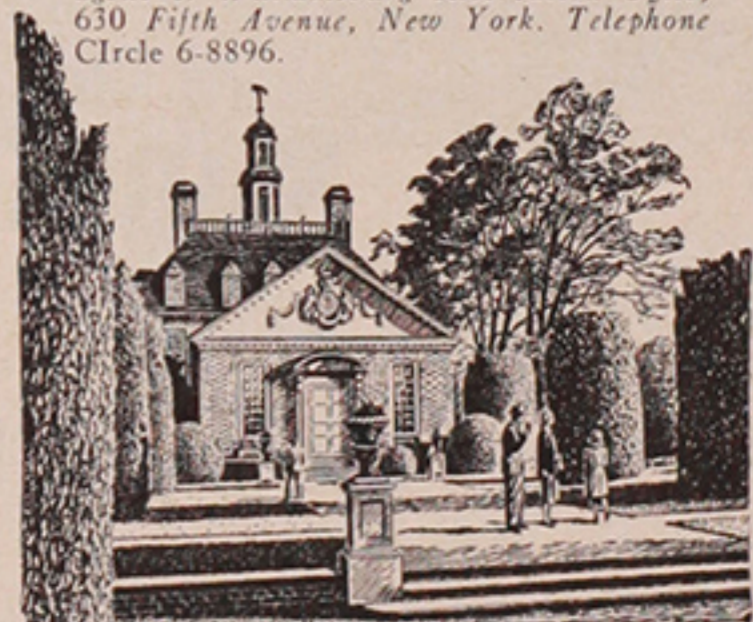
*Williamsburg*  
VIRGINIA

Find inspiration in the famous buildings, historic shrines, and beautiful gardens in the colonial capital of Virginia where Thomas Jefferson, Patrick Henry, and other great patriots lived. Dine in its unusual taverns—King's Arms and Chowning's. Fine lodgings at modern hotels and colonial guest houses—golf, tennis and cycling.

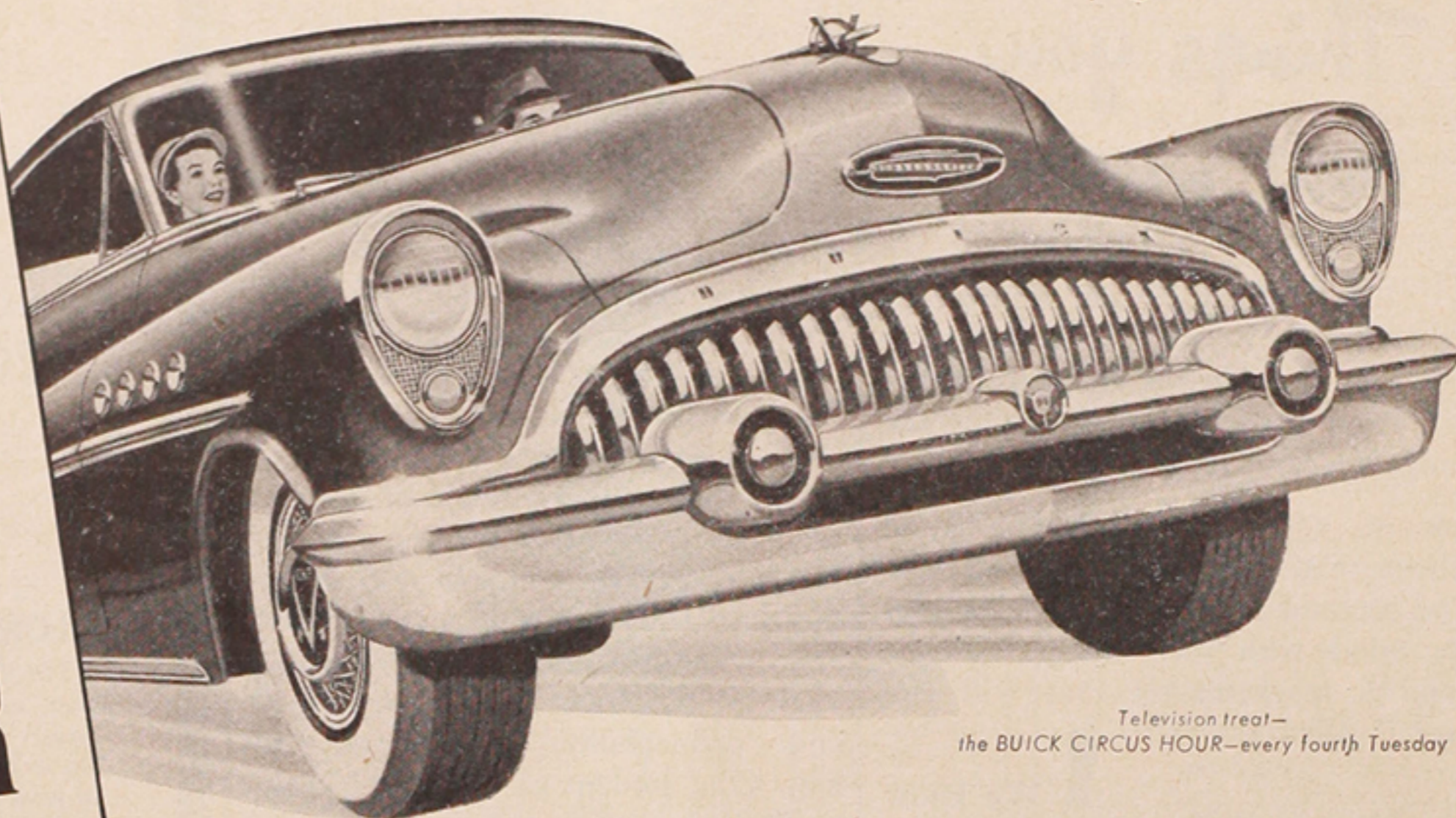
*Williamsburg Lodge & Taverns*  
Double from \$6.00

*Williamsburg Inn & Cottages*  
Double from \$10.00

For information: write direct, see travel agent or Williamsburg Reservation Office, 630 Fifth Avenue, New York. Telephone Circle 6-8896.



World's  
newest  
V8



Television treat—  
the BUICK CIRCUS HOUR—every fourth Tuesday

**UP**  
**GOES THE**  
**POWER**  
**OF EVERY**  
**BUICK-**



**Special**

**Super**

**and**

**Roadmaster!**

It's more than pride that makes a man want a lot of horsepower beneath the hood of the car he owns.

For the real point in reaching record horsepowers and compression ratios goes beyond miles per hour. *It steps up performance and economy in normal driving.*

That's what Buick engineers did when they upped the power and compression of each 1953 Buick — SPECIAL, SUPER and ROADMASTER — to the highest figures in Buick's fifty-year history.

In the SUPER and ROADMASTER, they put a new kind of V8 Engine — first passenger-car V8 with 8.5 to 1 compression, and a long list of other major engineering advances.

For the SPECIAL, they redesigned the famed F-263 Fireball 8 Engine — gave it shorter flame

travel, faster firing, higher horsepower and compression.

And to these spirited engines they coupled the new Twin-Turbine Dynaflo Drive\* that adds flash-fast, quiet getaway to utter smoothness.

Just to give you an example of what all this means: *The 1953 Buick SPECIAL with Dynaflo can beat the mighty 1952 ROADMASTER on getaway — can reach 30 mph (when the law allows) with a combined speed and jerk-free smoothness no other car can equal.*

Of course, there's far more to these new Buicks for 1953 — some seven dozen *new* features alone.

But why not come in and see for yourself that these are the greatest Buicks — and the greatest values — in fifty great years?

\*Standard on Roadmaster, optional at extra cost on other Series.

When better automobiles are built Buick will build them

SEE YOUR BUICK DEALER



"LIVELY, LAVISH, EXUBERANT!"  
—Richard Watts Jr., Post

HELEN GALLAGHER • THOMAS MITCHELL  
BENAY VENUTA • JOHN HOWARD  
JACK WHITING  
In The New Musical Smash

**"Hazel Flagg"**

MARK HELLINGER THEATRE, 51st St., West of B'way  
Eves. at 8:30 • Mats. Wed. & Sat. at 2:30

CRITICS' AWARD BEST MUSICAL  
VIVIENNE HAROLD  
SEGAL • LANG  
in  
**"PAL JOEY"**

BROADHURST THEATRE, West 44 St.  
Eves. 8:30 • Mats. Wed. & Sat. 2:30

"SMASH HIT MUSICAL!" —WALTER WINCHELL

Leland Hayward and Joshua Logan present  
**"Wish You Were Here"**  
A New Musical Comedy

Arthur Kober and Joshua Logan  
Music and Lyrics by  
Harold Rome

Evs. \$7.20 to 2.40. Wed. Mat. \$4.20 to 1.80. Sat. Mat. \$4.80 to 1.80. Tax Incl.

"SPECTACULAR" N. Y. TIMES

IMPERIAL THEATRE  
255 W. 45 St., N. Y. 19

"GAY and INVENTIVE."  
—Gibbs, The New Yorker

"ORIGINAL and FUNNY."  
—Atkinson, N. Y. Times

COURTNEY BURR and ELLIOTT NUGENT present

**"the seven year itch"**

by GEORGE AXELROD  
Directed by JOHN GERSTAD

with TOM VANESSA  
EWELL • BROWN

Robert Emhardt • Neva George  
Patterson • Keane

Mon. thru Thurs. Evgs.: \$4.80 to 1.20. Fri. & Sat. Evgs.: \$6 to 1.20. Mats. Wed. & Sat.: \$3.60 to 1.20. (Tax Incl.)  
Please enclose stamped, self-addressed envelope

FULTON THEATRE, 210 West 46th Street, New York 36

BERNARD SHAW'S Cockeyed Comedy Smash!

# Misalliance

► "An Unqualified Triumph!"  
—KERR, N.Y. Herald Tribune

► "Constantly funny...vastly entertaining."  
—ATKINSON, N.Y. Times

► "Rare fun...a continuous joy. By all odds the most delightful and stimulating entertainment to have arrived all season."  
—WATTS, N.Y. Post (Mar. 1, 1953)

MAIL ORDERS PROMPTLY FILLED

Evs. 8:40—\$4.80, 3.60, 3.00, 2.40, 1.80. Mats. Wed. & Sat. 2:40—\$3.60, 3.00, 2.40, 1.80. Prices include tax.  
BARRYMORE THEATRE, 47th St., West of B'way, N.Y. 36

to date remained impervious to his client's corrosive style.

LASSER and his Book Department devote part of their time the year round to "Your Income Tax," which customarily goes on sale early in September of the year preceding the ides of March it deals with. Immediately after publication day, the Book Department men rip apart a couple of bound volumes of "YIT," paste each page on a sheet of paper with wide margins, and begin to scribble in their corrections and revisions, along with Lasser's own, for the next edition. Right now, the Book Department is whipping next year's edition into shape. "Your Income Tax" was a much less carefully organized operation at its start. This occurred after a dinner party one night in the summer of 1935, at Shimkin's home in Larchmont. There had been a good deal of muddled, uninformed talk about taxes. The guests had scarcely departed when Shimkin had an inspired thought. "Why the hell doesn't somebody take that god-dam complicated tax law and explain it so that people can understand it!" he recalls exclaiming to himself. Soon afterward, he got hold of a couple of tax lawyers, told them what he had in mind, and persuaded them to write a manual, which he called "Your Income Tax." This was the 1936 edition. It sold for a dollar, had a yellow cover, consisted of ninety-one pages of text set in large type, and achieved a sale of twenty-five thousand copies. The second year, Shimkin shifted to a blue cover, one of his authors dropped by the wayside, and sales held at about the same level. The year after that, the remaining author begged off, and there wasn't any "Your Income Tax" at all. Shimkin does not give up easily. In the fall of 1938, casting about for someone to revive the project, he came across a tax bulletin written for the American Book Publishers Council by its accountant, who was Lasser. Shimkin at once dropped in on Lasser, and a couple of days later had himself a new author. Lasser, who up to then had done a negligible amount of writing, had a new career.

Under Lasser's stewardship, "Your Income Tax" resumed its yellow cover, and its character changed radically. It grew bigger and bigger—the latest edition contains a hundred and ninety pages (plus a fifteen-page supplement), each jam-packed with three columns of small type—and more and more expensive. Today, although Lasser still sometimes absent-mindedly refers to it as

R  
&  
H

YUL BRYNNER  
in  
RODGERS & HAMMERSTEIN'S  
**The King and I**

A New Musical Play  
with CONSTANCE CARPENTER  
ST. JAMES THEATRE, West 44 St.  
Evenings at 8:25: \$7.20 to 1.80. Matinees  
Wednesday & Saturday at 2:25: \$4.20 to 1.80.  
ALL EVENINGS (INCL. MONDAYS) AT 8:25

MARTHA GEORGE  
WRIGHT BRITTON  
In The Pulitzer Prize Musical Play  
**South Pacific**

with MYRON WILLIAM MARTIN  
McCORMICK • TABBERT • WOLFSON  
and JUANITA HALL  
MAJESTIC THEATRE, West 44th St.  
Eves. at 8:30. Mats. Wed. & Sat. at 2:30.  
ALL EVENINGS (INCL. MONDAYS) AT 8:30

"NO. 1 SMASH!" —WALTER WINCHELL

The Theatre Guild & Joshua Logan present  
**"PICNIC"**  
A New Play by WILLIAM INGE  
RALPH MEEKER JANICE RULE  
and PEGGY CONKLIN  
Staged by JOSHUA LOGAN

Evs. 8:30. Mon. thru Thurs.: \$4.80-1.80. Fri. & Sat. Evgs.: \$6.-1.80. Mats. Thurs. & Sat. 2:30. \$3.60-1.20. Tax Incl.

MUSIC BOX THEATRE, 239 W. 45 St., N. Y. 36

We like to forget the time  
in which John and  
Elizabeth lived.  
But it is our  
eternal pride  
the way these  
lovers lived it.

**THE CRUCIBLE**

"A powerful and exciting play."  
—ATKINSON, N. Y. Times

MARTIN BECK Theatre, W. 45 St. Eves. 8:30. Mats. Wed. & Sat. 2:30

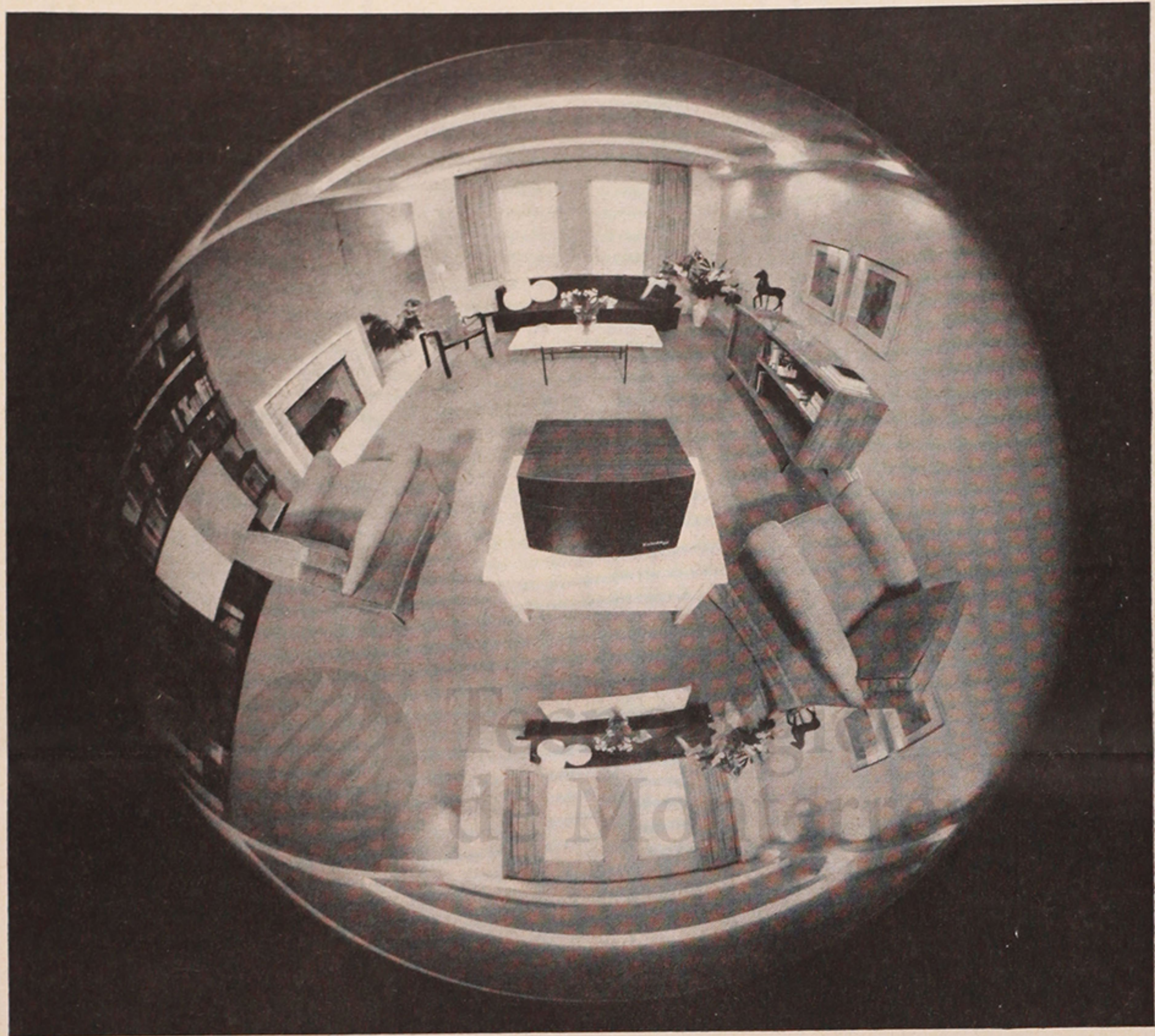
"THE BEST PLAY OF THE SEASON"  
—WARD MOREHOUSE, World-Tele. & Sun

LILLIAN HELLMAN'S  
**The Children's Hour**  
PATRICIA NEAL • KIM HUNTER  
IRIS MANN  
CORONET, West 49th St., Evgs. 8:40. Mats. Wed. & Sat.

"AN IRRESISTIBLE COMEDY!" ATKINSON,  
N. Y. TIMES

MELVYN DOUGLAS in  
**Time Out For Ginger**  
with POLLY ROWLES  
LYCEUM THEA. 149 W. 45 St. Mats. Wed. & Sat.

SWITCH IT ON AND THE WHOLE ROOM PLAYS



FAR FINER THAN A PHONOGRAPH

# THE NEW COLUMBIA 360


The ability to radiate sound *around* its listeners inspired the name Columbia 360, the 360 degrees of the perfect circle. Two sound outlets, at each side of the cabinet, create the remarkable effect of "Hemispheric" Sound.


• • •  
Engineered and built by Columbia Records and CBS Laboratories. Available in limited quantity . . . Priced at \$139.50 in mahogany.



You can now hear for yourself the room-filling reality of sound produced by an amazing new instrument playing all records—any speed. Be your own judge of the exciting difference between this new conception and ordinary phonographs—even console sets at 3 to 4 times the price! Hear for the first time the thrilling advances in fidelity, clarity and range of sound offered to you in today's Columbia Records!

EXCLUSIVE DEVELOPMENT OF  
**COLUMBIA RECORDS**

ORIGINATOR OF  THE MODERN LONG PLAYING RECORD

Trade Marks "Columbia,"  Reg. U. S. Pat. Off. Marcas Registradas. "360" Trade Mark.

**N. Y. DRAMA CRITICS' PRIZE MUSICAL**

# GUYS & DOLLS

A MUSICAL FABLE OF BROADWAY

"A TRIUMPH!" Atkinson, N. Y. Times  
 "A PERFECT MUSICAL!" Chapman, News  
 "AMERICA'S SWEETHIT!" Walter Winchell

Evenings: \$6.60, 4.80, 4.20, 3.60, 3.00, 2.40, 1.80. Matinees Wed. & Sat.: \$3.60, 3.00, 2.40, 1.80, 1.20 (Tax Included)  
**MAIL ORDERS FILLED PROMPTLY**  
 46th ST. THEATRE, West of Broadway

"A LOVELY PLAY... A DARLIN' PLAY."  
 —BROOKS ATKINSON, Times

# SHIRLEY BOOTH

in  
**The Time of the Cuckoo**

by ARTHUR LAURENTS  
**MAIL ORDERS PROMPTLY FILLED**  
 Mon. thru Thur. Evs.: \$4.80, 4.20, 3.60, 3.00, 2.40, 1.80, 1.20.  
 Fri. & Sat. Evs.: \$6.00, 4.80, 4.20, 3.60, 3.00, 2.40, 1.80, 1.20.  
 Mats. Wed. & Sat.: \$3.60, 3.00, 2.40, 1.80, 1.20. Tax Incl.  
**EMPIRE THEA., B'way & 40 St., Mats. Wed. & Sat.**

"... marked by a really distinguished piece of acting... by Menasha Skulnik... a unique actor..."  
 —WOLCOTT GIBBS, The New Yorker  
 GEORGE KONDOLF presents

# MENASHA SKULNIK RICHARD WHORF

IN "THE 5th SEASON"

by SYLVIA REGAN — Staged by GREGORY RATOFF

**CORT THEATRE, 48 St. East of Broadway**  
 Tues. thru Sun. Evgs. (No Mons.) \$4.80, \$4.20, \$3.60, \$3.00, \$2.40, \$1.80. Mats. Sat. & Sun. \$3.60, \$3.00, \$2.40, \$1.80, \$1.20 (Incl. Tax).

"AN EVENING OF COMIC PERFECTION"  
 —Atkinson, N. Y. Times

Edward Duryea Dowling presents

# \*\*An Evening With BEATRICE LILLIE\*\*

with Reginald Gardiner

**BOOTH THEA., 45 St. W. of B'way. Cl 6-5969**  
 EVES. 8:40. MATS. WED & SAT. 2:40

"YOU'LL HAVE A FINE TIME AT THE ROYALE." —Gibbs, The New Yorker

Leonard Sillman's

# New Faces OF 1952

"BROADWAY'S NEWEST MUSICAL HIT"  
 —Ed Sullivan

Staged by JOHN MURRAY ANDERSON  
**ROYALE W. 45 St. Evs. inc. Sun. Mats. Sat. & Sun.**  
 Seats Available • Mail Orders Promptly Filled

"the dollar book," it retails at a dollar ninety-five. Its peak editions were those of 1942 and 1943, which sold, between them, close to three million copies. When the 1943 edition reached the million-and-a-half mark, its publishers, who never do things halfway, presented to its author two handsomely boxed copies of it, each affectionately inscribed by Messrs. Simon, Schuster, and Shimkin, and each specifically identified by the trio as the one-million-five-hundred-thousandth off the press.

"Your Income Tax" has become so fat and far-ranging a volume, as Lasser has poured into successive editions of it new tax lore, not to mention various tidbits he admires in other books of his, that much of the material now in it is too recondite for the run-of-the-mill taxpayer. Accordingly, for the last three years Simon & Schuster have been bringing out "Your Personal Income Tax," a much less comprehensive Lasser manual that sells for fifty cents and is designed to appeal to taxpayers whose problems are relatively uncomplicated. Its cover proclaims it "The Simplest Tax Guide Ever Written." When it first came out, one custodian of a tax library, who has a good memory, blinked hard and expressed the opinion that Lasser seemed to have borrowed heavily in the preparation of the book from a twenty-five-cent manual put out by Simon & Schuster in 1943 and credited to D. B. Chase, which was entitled "Your Personal Income Tax Guide" and was hailed on its cover as "The Simplest Tax Guide Ever Written." What the librarian had no way of knowing was that the Chase book, which was never reissued, had also been written largely by Lasser. He brought that one out in an effort to protect himself against competitors, who, impressed by the rocketing sales of "Your Income Tax," had begun flooding the market with rapidly compiled, low-cost imitations of the yellow book. At the time, Lasser and the publishers didn't feel that his name was securely enough established to appear on two income-tax guides at once, so they prevailed upon Chase, a good-natured lawyer who was, and is, not only a tax expert in his own right but also a partner in J. K. Lasser & Co. and Lasser's brother-in-law, to collaborate with Lasser and to let his name appear alone on the twenty-five-cent manual.

SINCE 1949, Lasser's competitors have included the Bureau of Internal Revenue, which annually puts out a twenty-five-cent pamphlet called "Your Federal Income Tax." Lasser,

"Fresh, Imaginative and Gay!"  
 —WATTS, POST

THE THEATRE GUILD and ALDRICH & MYERS present



**REX HARRISON LILLI PALMER**

# The Love Of Four Colonels

A New Comedy by PETER USTINOV  
 with **LEUEEN MacGRATH**  
 Directed by REX HARRISON  
 Settings and Costumes by ROLF GERARD

**SAM S. SHUBERT THEATRE, 225 W. 44th St.**  
 MATS. THURS. & SAT.

**RADIO CITY MUSIC HALL**  
 Rockefeller Center

"THE STORY OF THREE LOVES"

Kirk DOUGLAS • James MASON • Farley GRANGER  
 Pier ANGELI • Moira SHEARER • Leslie CARON

An M-G-M Picture  
 plus SPECTACULAR STAGE PRESENTATION

**MADISON SQ. GARDEN**  
 BEGINNING

# WED. Night, APRIL 1

TWICE DAILY, Incl. Sundays, 2:15 & 8:30 P. M.  
 THROUGH SUNDAY NIGHT, MAY 10

# SEATS NOW

At Madison Square Garden Box Offices



**RINGLING BROS AND BARNUM & BAILEY CIRCUS**

**PRICES** (Tax incl.) NIGHTS & MATINEES:  
 \$1.50, 2.50, 3.00, 3.50, 5.00, 5.50, 6.50  
 Tickets admitting to everything (including seats)  
**CHILDREN UNDER 12 HALF PRICE**  
 Every Afternoon except Saturday and Sunday  
**MAIL ORDERS FILLED PROMPTLY**  
 Send check or money order with self-addressed stamped envelope to RINGLING CIRCUS, Mad. Sq. Garden

**MARK CROSS**

Fifth Ave. at 55th, N. Y.

FOREIGN MONEY PASSPORT CASE...

Pockets marked for passport, money, tickets, etc. 4 1/2 x 7".  
 Red, green, black morocco. **8.50\***  
 Other passport cases up to **55.00\***  
 \*add 20% excise tax



**HOTEL STUYVESANT**  
 Buffalo, N. Y.

A suite for the price of a room in BUFFALO





**She's chic on a budget**  
She uses Eaton's Open Stock  
**POST PREFERRED**

... she's known for her good taste and her smart shopping for value. No wonder her choice is an Eaton *Open Stock* Letter Paper with *matching paper and envelopes always available*. She buys paper or envelopes as needed (they're sold separately) wastes nothing, never has to apologize for mis-matched letters. Eaton's Post Preferred is an airy-light travel wonder, perfect for long, long letters, for air mail. The crisp envelopes are tissue lined to keep your messages private. White, Blue, Grey, Tan. At fine stores, everywhere.

*We do not sell direct*

Single sheets (5 $\frac{7}{8}$ " x 7 $\frac{3}{4}$ " ) 120 to the box, 95c  
Single sheets (7 $\frac{1}{4}$ " x 10 $\frac{3}{8}$ " ) 90 to the box, 95c  
Matching envelopes, either size, 25 to the package, 50c

**EATON'S FINE LETTER PAPERS IN OPEN STOCK**  
EATON PAPER CORPORATION • PITTSFIELD, MASSACHUSETTS



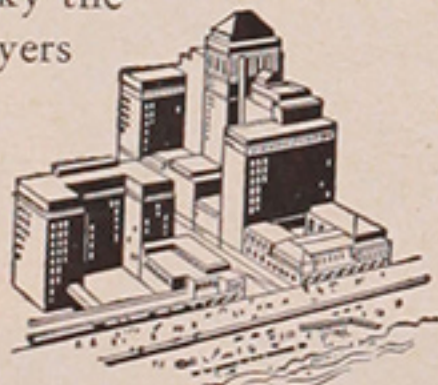
**WIDDICOMB**

THE ROBSJOHN-GIBBINGS CHAIR

FOR BROCHURE SHOWING ENTIRE COLLECTION, PLEASE SEND 10c IN COIN TO  
WIDDICOMB FURNITURE CO. • GRAND RAPIDS

### FAMILY CIRCLE

Here all the world's a stage with the sea and sky the principal players and you the appreciative audience.



### CHALFONTE HADDON HALL

on the Boardwalk, Atlantic City, N.J.  
Operated by Leeds & Lippincott Co. for 63 years  
Write for illustrated folder No. 3

### FOR SALE

### One of Jacksonville's Most Beautiful Homes on the St. Johns River

This fabulous Contemporary estate in Florida with swimming pool, cabana-lounge and yacht basin—with water on 3 sides—was developed in 1947 at a cost of over \$360,000. Now offered at a fraction of its value because of change in owner's plans. 11 spacious rooms include 42' living room, 3 master bedrooms, 3 baths, svts.' rooms. Engineered air-conditioning and heating system. Custom furnishings. Ask your local broker or us for illustrated brochure YN-80092.

### PREVIEWS Inc.

The Nationwide Marketing Service  
49 E. 53rd St., N. Y. 22 PLaza 8-2630  
270 S. County Rd., Palm Beach, Fla. Tel. 2-0151  
BOSTON • PHILADELPHIA • CHICAGO  
LOS ANGELES • SAN FRANCISCO • DENVER

who sometimes complains that there appear to be startling similarities between the text of this or that rival tax guide and the text of "Your Income Tax" or "Your Personal Income Tax," has never claimed that the government, too, cribbs from him. He does, however, point out on occasion that the Treasury Department was not notably addicted to the use of the second-person pronoun in its tax literature before his yellow book made this fashionable. (He is prone to overlook the fact that the "Your" in "Your Income Tax" antedated his association with the book by three years.) On the whole, his relations with the Internal Revenue Bureau have always been cordial enough, for all their somewhat antithetical attitudes toward tax receipts. "I regard the Treasury as an advocate for the revenue," Lasser says. "I'm an advocate for the taxpayer. We're just on opposite sides. That's the way it should be."

A year ago, on the basis of one of their recurrent mail surveys of users of "Your Income Tax," Simon & Schuster deduced that thanks to Lasser's book the members of this group had in their possession an average of a hundred and twenty-eight dollars apiece that they would otherwise have forked over unnecessarily to the Treasury the previous year. If all the book's purchasers over the years were as generously rewarded for their dependence on it, Lasser would seem to have deprived the national till of a total of about one and a half billion dollars. However, it could be, as he himself occasionally suggests, that he has actually helped the government in a monetary way—in part by educating people to make out their tax returns properly, and thus enabling the Treasury to economize on the administrative expenses of unsnarling inaccurately filled-out forms, and in part by informing his readers that certain types of income they may not have realized they ought to declare are, alas, subject to taxation.

In any event, Lasser believes that, given the opportunity, he could save taxpayers even more than Simon & Schuster believe he saves them now. "I don't think any good accountant could look over any income-tax form filled out by a layman who has any source of income other than a straight salary and not find an error of overpayment on it somewhere," he says. He is aware that the government has stated that nine out of every ten mistakes it finds on individuals' forms favor the taxpayers; Lasser says that this ratio is the result of the government's searching exclu-



The shortest night—the sweetest sleep—in our 2-piece bloomer pajama with smocked elasticized waist and cuffs. In striped cotton—white with blue, red or maize. Sizes 32-36, 7.95 Lingerie, Fourth Floor Lord & Taylor, New York

sively for that kind of mistake and closing its eyes to evidence of mistakes the other way around. "A lot of honest people are either uninformed or timid," he says, and he has no misgivings about depleting the national exchequer by informing honest people and bolstering their courage. Judge Learned Hand once observed, in a court decision, "Nobody owes any public duty to pay more than the law demands; taxes are enforced exactions, not voluntary contributions. To demand more in the name of morals is mere cant." Unawed by even this authoritative opinion, which Lasser has been happy to cite in several of his books, some small-minded people persistently insinuate that he favors tax avoidance. He is distressed by such criticism. "All I'm ever trying to do is show you all the methods there are—all the legal methods, mind you—of keeping your taxes down," he once explained to a friend. "Maybe there are ten ways of doing something. Well, it's up to me to show you which of the ten is to your best advantage. To take a simple case, suppose you come to me and say you and your brother are sharing the support of your father but neither of you contributes more than half his support, so neither may claim him as a dependent. Well, I'd say to you, 'For God's sake, use your head and make sure you support him entirely one year and your brother supports him entirely the next. That way, first you and then your brother can properly claim him, and the cost to both of you averages out the same.' I don't call that avoidance. I call it exercising an option under the law."

More often than not, Lasser thinks of the Treasury Department as an opponent, but there have been times when he has come close to joining its ranks, if only to try and swing it around to his way of doing things. In 1943, at the invitation of Henry Morgenthau, then Secretary of the Treasury, he sat in with a committee that had been set up to simplify income-tax forms. "My idea at the time," Lasser has since said, "was that the Treasury ought to get the hell out of the way and let its forms be drawn up by people like advertising copy writers, who are used to presenting things in clear and simple language. But I couldn't make them see it that way. I was frustrated by technicians and statisticians." He was frustrated again five years later, when the Treasury consecutively expressed interest and lack of interest in having him forsake all other activities for five years and spend that time trying to unscramble the jumbled

Matchless picture,  
tone and beauty

magnificent  
**Magnavox**  
television

BETTER SIGHT...BETTER SOUND...BETTER BUY

**POWER'S**  
IRISH WHISKEY

86 Proof  
An Irish  
Free State  
product



a  
taste  
of  
old  
Ireland...

Power's Three-Swallow Whiskey is as Irish as the Blarney Stone...and just as smooth. 7 long years, it ages in casks. And when you start with genuine pot still whiskey made of finest malt and barley, 7 years' aging develops an extraordinarily fine flavor. You'll like it.

SOLE IMPORTER:  
Canada Dry Ginger Ale, Inc., New York, N. Y.

For over 150 Years favored in the  
World's most Gracious Homes...

# HARVEY'S

The World's Foremost IMPORTED  
*Sherries & Ports*

## HARVEY'S "BRISTOL CREAM" SHERRY

The world's greatest luxury Sherry. A full, pale *oloroso*—it is available only in limited quantities.



## HARVEY'S "BRISTOL MILK" SHERRY

A rich tasting Wine similar in style to Bristol Cream. This is the only alternative luxury Sherry.



## HARVEY'S "BRISTOL DRY" SHERRY

A superlative *fino*—the finest tasting *dry* Sherry in the world. Premium quality; superb value.



## HARVEY'S AMONTILLADO SHERRY

A moderately priced Sherry that is ideal for daily enjoyment. An Amontillado of rare, fine flavor.



## HARVEY'S SHOOTING SHERRY

A full bodied, fine *oloroso*... medium rich... favorably priced. A superior Wine for every occasion.



## HARVEY'S HUNTING PORT

A soft, fine, *tawny* Port whose excellent qualities have earned the esteem of connoisseurs.



## HARVEY'S GOLD CAP PORT

A distinguished *ruby* Port that can be trusted to truly enhance your reputation as a host.



*For every occasion  
of Hospitality*

Your wine cellar should include a selection of these world-famous Harvey's Imported Sherries and Ports. Each is the finest of its kind—and a supreme value!

IMPORTED BY *Park & Tilford Distillers Corp. New York*

BY APPOINTMENT WINE MERCHANTS



TO H. M. KING GEORGE VI

laws, policies, and administrative practices involved in the determination and collection of excess-profits taxes.

Lasser has made more progress in dealing with smaller governmental entities. For many years, Vermont had a terribly complicated state-income-tax form, and just after the Second World War, Ernest Gibson, then its newly elected governor, asked Lasser to overhaul it. A corollary of Lasser's contention that federal-tax forms should be simpler is his contention that state forms should be simplest. "It is detrimental to our national temper to require those who have weathered the difficulties of preparing the Federal tax form to prepare an entirely separate state return," he once wrote in the *National Tax Journal*. With the national temper guiding his hand, Lasser undertook to get Vermont to adopt a form with only three blanks to be filled in: First, a statement as to what federal income tax the individual paid for the period in question; second, a multiplication of the first figure by a stipulated fraction, the result being the state tax due; and, third, the taxpayer's signature. The Vermont legislature declined to go along with anything quite as elementary as that, but it did compromise with Lasser on a handy ten-line form. "Vermont's new tax law recaptures some of the pioneering spirit characteristic of this nation," he reported exultantly in the *Tax Journal*.

Several years ago, Lasser stated in a magazine article that such occupational expenses as the cost of buying a nurse's uniforms and keeping them laundered ought to be tax-deductible. An impressionable nurse who read this claimed deductions of that sort on her next tax return. The deductions were disallowed, as similar ones had repeatedly been in the past. On learning of this, Lasser, feeling that he had somehow led the nurse astray, gallantly rose to the occasion. On her behalf, and without charge, he filed an appeal from the Internal Revenue Bureau's ruling, and won the case. Since then, the Bureau has permitted nurses to take such deductions. If it were to permit all uniformed workers to do this, Lasser's triumph would be monumental, but the Bureau has yet to concede that decisions in specific cases constitute adequate grounds for establishing general principles of deductibility.

This narrowmindedness piques Lasser, who feels that a tendency exists in this country to discriminate in favor of big taxpayers and against small ones, and who, as a result, is often moved to refer to the latter as "the oppressed." "This wacky, quixotic, somersaulting

*Martell* "The King of Cognacs  
- for every occasion"



The World's Renowned  
"All Purpose" Cognac Brandy

### MARTELL Three Star

For a superb Cognac brandy . . .  
in a sparkling highball, for mixed  
drinks, for after-dinner with  
the demitasse . . . MARTELL  
*Three Star* has long been the first  
choice of the discriminating.

The World's Most  
Cherished Liqueur Cognac

### MARTELL Cordon Bleu

For those very special occasions  
when only the absolute finest  
liqueur Cognac will do . . . connois-  
seurs make MARTELL *Cordon  
Bleu* their invariable selection.

Founded in 1715



A Great Symbol of France

MARTELL *Cognac*  
BRANDY

Imported from COGNAC, FRANCE by PARK & TILFORD DISTILLERS CORP., NEW YORK  
MARTELL THREE STAR 84 PROOF • MARTELL CORDON BLEU 80 PROOF

second edition...

**DIMINUENTOE** \*

**THE TINY TOE...**

**TINIER THAN EVER**

THE SILHOUETTE THAT MAKES ALL OTHER SHOES SEEM OLD FASHIONED. NEWEST SPRING MATERIALS, COLORS **19.95 TO 44.95**

\*T.M. REG.

**andrew geller**

EXQUISITE FOOTWEAR 18 WEST 57TH ST., NEW YORK

POOL or BEACH

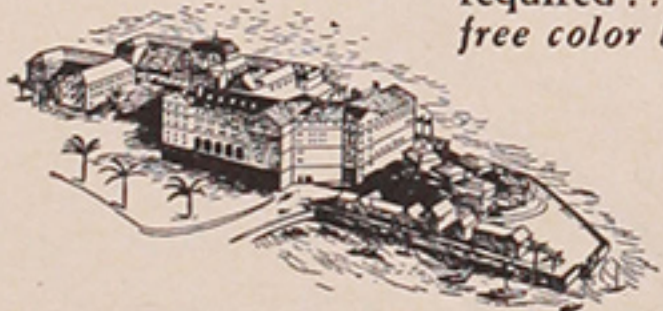
the Princess

HAS EACH!



The Princess has everything: colorful Cabana Pool and private Beach Club on the South Shore . . . tennis, boating, starlight dancing and entertainment . . . and it's only a two minute walk to historic Hamilton with its duty-free shopping and picturesque sights.

Big, bright, modern rooms, all with bath. From \$15 per person, per day, two in a room . . . and including three delicious meals daily. Romantic honeymoon cottages also available. No passport or visa required . . . only proof of citizenship. Write for free color brochure.



the Princess

**Hotel • Cottages and Beach Club  
BERMUDA**



NOW UNDER THE MANAGEMENT OF INTERCONTINENTAL HOTELS CORPORATION

Immediate reservations through our New York Office, 41 E. 42nd Street, MUrray Hill 7-3375 or MUrray Hill 2-4310 or see your travel agent.

federal tax law is just as silent as it can be when it comes to the small taxpayer," he remarked recently. "The law tells the businessman and the investor, 'You can have deductions if the expenses you claim are involved in earning income.' Oh, for them it's as sweet as can be! It's full of language giving them deductions on things like 'production,' 'collection,' 'management,' 'maintenance,' and 'conservation' of income. But the wage earner—what does the law say about him? Practically nothing. If I were writing a tax law, I'd have it deal equitably with all classes of people, instead of cramming it with special clauses that benefit cattle breeders or oil-well drillers or zinc miners or whoever. It's tough to fight the government. You don't often get on to cases like the nurse one, because it's hard to get people to let you defend them publicly, and because most cases can be settled without the taxpayer's getting involved in the interminable time and trouble and lawyers' fees that litigation entails, and also because most people are scared to death of the government and don't want to mix with it if they can avoid it. It takes a good deal of an extrovert to scrap with the government—not counting people like me, who scrap with it every day. We get a lot of *potential* test cases in our office, and every time one turns up, we're torn between a desire to persuade the client to let us make an issue of him and a desire to effect a quick, fairly simple compromise with the government and quit trying to be a hero. Anyhow, these things shouldn't have to be decided by making martyrs out of individual taxpayers but by changing the law."

Currently, Lasser is embroiled with the government in a test case in which he has an exceedingly personal stake. He established in 1942, and has ever since supervised, an annual ten-day tax seminar, known as the Institute on Federal Taxation, at New York University, where he is now a nonsalaried faculty member with the title of Adjunct Professor of Taxation. The Institute convenes in the fall, and for each of the last two years has attracted over five hundred disciples, who have listened to the latest views on tax matters as expressed by Lasser and a host of fellow-experts, whom he corrals as guest lecturers. "We give the most up-to-date, practical, detailed information we can," Lasser says. "Why, one year we had a whole hour devoted to how you should handle termite losses. It's really adult education at its best." Two years ago, a lawyer from Binghamton paid a ten-day visit to





## Spring says "Topcoat!..."

In this topcoat is a cloth, world-known, with smooth luxurious finish that accepts the art of the tailor's most detailed refinement. It deserves a place in the wardrobe of business man or "country gentleman."

WEST-OF-ENGLAND COVERT  
CLOTH TOPCOAT . . . \$110.00

Imported fabric; set-in sleeves; slash pockets. Tans, browns, blues and grays; all with faint overplaids. Sizes 36-46 in regulars, shorts and longs.

Send for swatches

## ABERCROMBIE & FITCH CO.

MADISON AVE. AT 45TH ST., NEW YORK 17, N. Y.

CHICAGO STORE:

VON LENGERKE & ANTOINE  
9 NORTH WABASH, CHICAGO 2, ILL.

GUNS • FISHING TACKLE • CAMP SUPPLIES  
SPORTS CLOTHES • FOOTWEAR

New York to take in the Institute proceedings, and later entered on his income-tax return a deduction of three hundred and five dollars for expenses connected with his stay here. This deduction was rejected, on the ground that, according to the law as interpreted by the courts, the cost of postgraduate courses, unless an employer requires an employee to attend them, is not deductible. Lasser was powerfully annoyed. He had, of course, been aware of this section of the law, but he insisted that his tax institute was not to be looked upon as a source of postgraduate education but simply as a means of helping people become more efficient in earning their daily bread and butter, and in coping with termites. Furthermore, he thought there was no logical reason that a lawyer's expenses incidental to a tax seminar should not be deductible, inasmuch as a businessman's night-club tabs run up in the course of a convention he is attending *are* deductible. The Binghamton lawyer, one of those rare taxpayers who are unfazed by the prospect of tackling the government, took his case to court, and Lasser rallied to his side, enlisting one of his partners to handle the case and appearing himself as a voluble witness for the plaintiff. Nonetheless, the lawyer lost. The ruling has been appealed, and no one is awaiting the final outcome more anxiously than Lasser, since, for one thing, a victory for his side could mean a total of a couple of hundred thousand dollars in tax-deductible expenses for his student body each year. Writing in the *Journal of Accountancy* shortly after the appeal was filed, the Adjunct Professor said, "The decision here is far from the last word on the subject. The case is going up. . . I'm still shaking my head in great pain."

LASSER was born in 1896, the son of a Polish couple who had migrated to this country, separately, in the eighteenthies and had met and married in Newark. His father was working in a hat factory there at the time of his son's birth; later, he ran a small grocery store in various locations in Manhattan and, finally, in Newark again. The only notable thing about Lasser during his boyhood was his girth. Nibbling at his father's stock of cookies whenever he was so tempted, he ballooned to two hundred and thirty-five pounds while still a high-school student. Since he stood just a few inches over five feet, his proportions were striking. They were regarded as providential by his school's football coach, who opportunistically designed a



Zodiac Constellation



Pendant-charm . . . diamonds and platinum trace the heavenly Pisces accurately . . . fishes in relief on 14K gold disc (1½" diam.) \$400.

Other Zodiac signs, \$300 each.

14K gold link bracelet, \$120.

Prices include Federal Tax.

MAIL & PHONE ORDERS FILLED  
PLAZA 1-2400



**GEORG JENSEN INC.**

Fifth Ave. at 53rd St., New York 22

NEW!



## KEYWORD

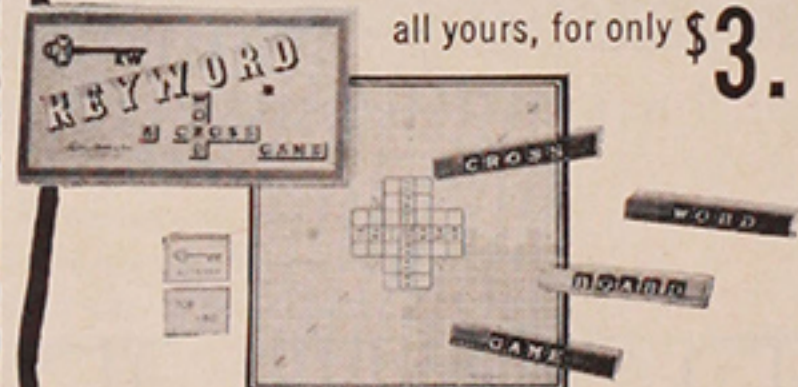
### New Crossword Board Game

More fun . . . with KEYWORD, the only game with this fascinating new Scoring System! Equipment includes colorful board, clever Keyword Cards, complete rules. Hours of entertainment for 2, 3, 4 players.

## KEYWORD

at leading stores

all yours, for only \$3.



### A FAMOUS PARKER GAME

Another one for family fun:

Crossword Lexicon—50¢, \$1.00



CHILD'S CHRISTENING CUP IN STERLING SILVER, GOLD LINED, (3½" HIGH) \$27.50 PRICE INCLUDES FEDERAL TAX

REED & BARTON

SILVERMASTERS SINCE 1824  
TAUNTON, MASSACHUSETTS

number of special plays for him; the basic idea of them all was that Lasser was to fall on top of three or four opponents at once, pinning them down, helpless, and giving his teammates a marked edge in manpower over the foe. Lasser's parents were not equally pleased with his bulk, and after a while they locked up the cookies and engaged a retired prize-fighter to pare their son down to normal size. Eventually, after doing six or seven miles of roadwork daily, swathed in sweat clothes, Lasser was melted down to unobjectionable dimensions. Nobody evidenced any further interest in his playing football.

In 1915, on graduating from high school, Lasser went to work as an assistant in the sports department of the *Newark Eagle*. Then he got a job as a bookkeeper in a manufacturing plant, at the same time taking night courses in commerce and finance at New York University. He presently became fascinated by industrial engineering, and in the fall of 1917 enrolled at Penn State to study that subject. After only a couple of months on the campus, he left to join the Navy, and spent nearly a year in service, most of it at shore installations in this country. On being mustered out, he returned to Penn State, and in 1920, having received credit for his studies at N.Y.U., graduated with a Bachelor of Science degree. He was taken on as an apprentice by an accounting firm in New York, but was quickly fired, on grounds of incompetence. Undeterred, in 1921 he applied for a job with a New York law firm that was looking for a young accountant to help its clients make out their tax returns. A partner in the firm who interviewed Lasser handed him a book and told him that if he could get the hang of it in two weeks, he could have the job. The book was a formidable two-hundred-page compendium of regulations prepared by the Commissioner of Internal Revenue and pertaining to the Revenue Act of 1918. Lasser, who has always had an extraordinarily retentive mind, memorized the whole book within the designated period, and was hired.

One of the major clients of this law firm was the United Publishers Corporation, which got out a batch of trade magazines. Lasser was soon devoting most of his time to United's tax problems, and within a year he had switched over to its payroll. The excess-profits-tax laws at that time provided that no corporation could be taxed at a rate higher than that applying to any of its direct competitors, and United Publishers had complained to the government

## The Welsh Named It; The Dutch Modified It; An English Queen Added Tory Accents...



and here it is, shaped to contemporary needs

in beautiful

*Stickley American*

Stickley American furniture glows with the rich beauty of by-gone ages. But it is never a slavish copy. Instead, it breathes with the vigor of a living furniture style, one gracefully adjusted to evolving needs and cultural standards.

Take this Welsh Dresser as an example. The Welsh originated it; the Dutch, whose sturdy imprint marks much of the early architecture and furniture in New York State's Cherry Valley, had a hand in tracing its elaborate scrollwork. But it remained for Queen Anne to add the cabriole legs and pad feet, as well as the Tory touch of a heavy cornice moulding.

Leopold Stickley—Cherry Valley's outstanding cabinet-maker—has blended them all in a timeless piece. One rich in history and romance, gleaming with the matchless finish of solid cherry wood, and rugged as the ancient craftsmen who shaped its distinguished forebears.



Ask your furniture dealer for a can of Stickley Furniture Dressing used in the Stickley workshops to produce the famed Stickley finish; if not in stock, send \$1.50 for a regular size container by postpaid mail.

"A Developing American Furniture Style," a fascinating story of American furniture art. 52 pages, 49 illustrations by postpaid mail for only \$1.00. L. & J. G. Stickley, Inc., Fayetteville, N. Y.

*Cherry Valley* WORKSHOPS OF **STICKLEY**  
OF FAYETTEVILLE, N. Y.

Add Spice  
to  
your Life



LATHER or BRUSHLESS

Old Spice



100  
plus tax

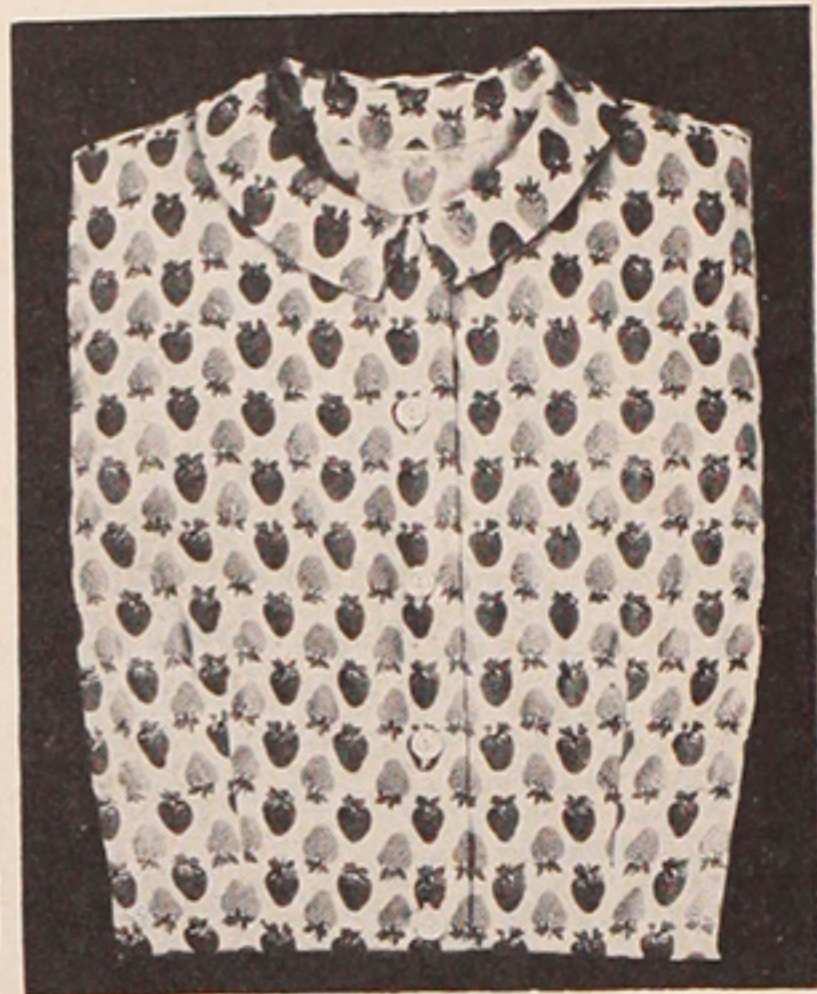
AFTER SHAVE LOTION

SHULTON  
New York Toronto

that it was being discriminated against in this regard. In the course of gathering data to sustain this plea, Lasser's retentive memory amassed so much information on all aspects of publishers' tax problems that he became recognized as the most knowledgeable source of tax dope in the industry. Meanwhile, he had gone back to N.Y.U. to take evening courses in accounting, had passed the certified-public-accountant examinations of both New York and New Jersey, and had got married to a Brooklyn girl named Terese Reuben. Early in 1926, fortified by the "C.P.A." he could place after his name and by the increasing confidence shown in his services by publishing concerns, he began to practice accounting on his own.

Lasser set up shop in a one-room office at 1440 Broadway, a building he has sentimentally stuck to ever since; at present, his firm is spread out over two floors. J. K. Lasser & Co. has thirteen partners. Of late, Lasser has been spending as little time as possible at 1440 Broadway; he would rather work at home. More than three-quarters of the firm's clients are either publishers of books or magazines or engaged in allied industries—printing-plant operators, bookbinders, photo-engravers, advertising men, and so forth. Lasser's relationship with publishers is, for an author, unique. Probably no one else in the country, author or non-author, knows as much as he does about the economics of publishing, and he thinks he may write a book about it someday. He is in constant demand, not merely as a writer but as an expert on publishing, at conventions of such organizations as the American Booksellers Association, the Book Manufacturers Institute, and the Advertising Federation of America. He is popular with other groups, too; because, for instance, of his vast knowledge of the tax aspects of fund-raising, he was invited to be a principal speaker at a Conference on Wills, Annuities, and Special Gifts held last December by the Joint Department of Stewardship and Benevolence of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the United States of America.

Lasser's intimate understanding of the economics of the publishing business naturally affects his attitude, as a writer, toward his own publishers. While they are reading his latest books, he is apt to be auditing theirs. From his privileged vantage point, he has concluded that it would be economically unsound for him ever to take more than a fifteen-percent royalty on any of his works, no matter how well they might be



**Fresh strawberries**—a McMullen sleeveless cotton blouse—red, blue or yellow berries on a white background. Sizes 12-16. **\$6.95**

The  
Bermuda  
Shop


554 Madison Avenue at 55th Street  
New York 22, N. Y.  
Mail orders invited.

GARNIER  
frappémint  
creme de menthe  
green



made specially for  
America's most popular  
Creme de Menthe drink  
the mint frappé

60 Proof

Let this seal be your guide to quality  
Julius Wile Sons & Co., Inc., N.Y.C.  IMPORTERS SINCE 1877

**B**e en-lightened...

travel with a

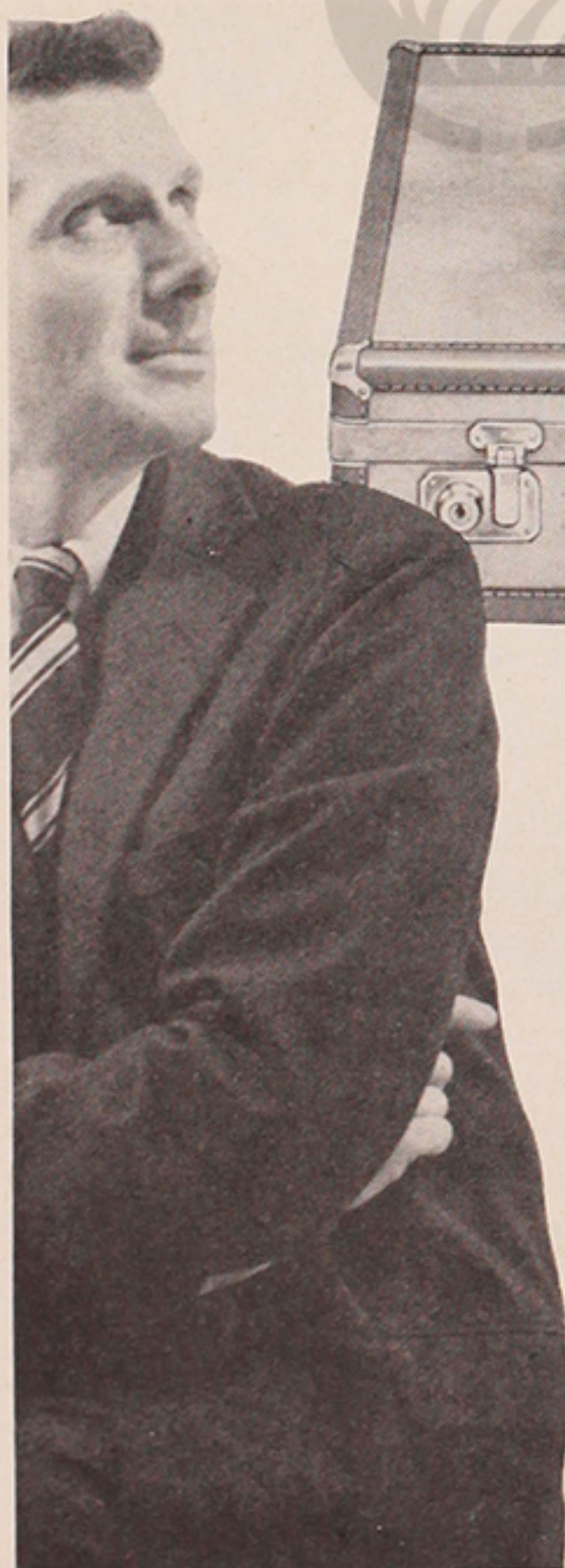
*Hartmann*

**SKYMATE**

and learn how weightless

luggage can be

Skymate Singleton one-suitier,  
Aerobe two-suitier,  
O'Nite case  
—in imported natural rawhide.  
Also in other distinctive  
coverings, and in other sizes.  
Skymate prices  
from \$47.50.



So convenient, too, and spacious and slim. Take, for instance, the Hartmann Skymate Singleton. Just five-and-a-half inches through. Who would think that it could carry a suit in perfect press, plus enough accessories for four well-groomed days! And every other piece of Hartmann Skymate Luggage is just as surprising. With the set shown, any man could travel anywhere for any length of time.

Are you taking a Winter vacation?

Write for the name of your nearest Hartmann Retailer

**HARTMANN COMPANY • RACINE, WISCONSIN**

going. "I know the economics of the thing and I know a publisher shouldn't pay more," he says. With an eye to the economics of the thing, Lasser most enjoys writing books that keep bringing in a steady income. "These books I write are one of the best forms of annuity you can possibly create," he says, indifferent to what any hovering muse may think of such talk. "If you've got a book for professionals, you can revise it every five years or so, and it can last practically forever. I've got orders now to redo nearly every professional book I've ever written."

Lasser is so wrapped up in his work that he has little time for social life. He used to play golf with furious concentration, but he had to give it up when his heart began to trouble him, and he has sought no recreational substitute. He doesn't really mind having no outside interests. "I happen to like woodworking," one of Lasser's partners in the accounting firm said recently, "and I have a little shop in my home. Yoc is continually nagging at me about it. 'Why waste your time in the cellar?' he'll say. 'You could be doing something worth while, like reading books or writing articles.' I once got exasperated and said, 'My God, Yoc, everybody has got to have some kind of hobby. Don't you have any hobby at all?' 'Certainly,' he said. 'My hobby is taxes.'" —E. J. KAHN, JR.

Mr. Reuther termed "short-sighted and contrary to the national interest" the lack of support for the proposals by Sen. Lister Hill, D., Ala., to obtain school funds from the sale of Thailand's oil.—*The Herald Tribune*.

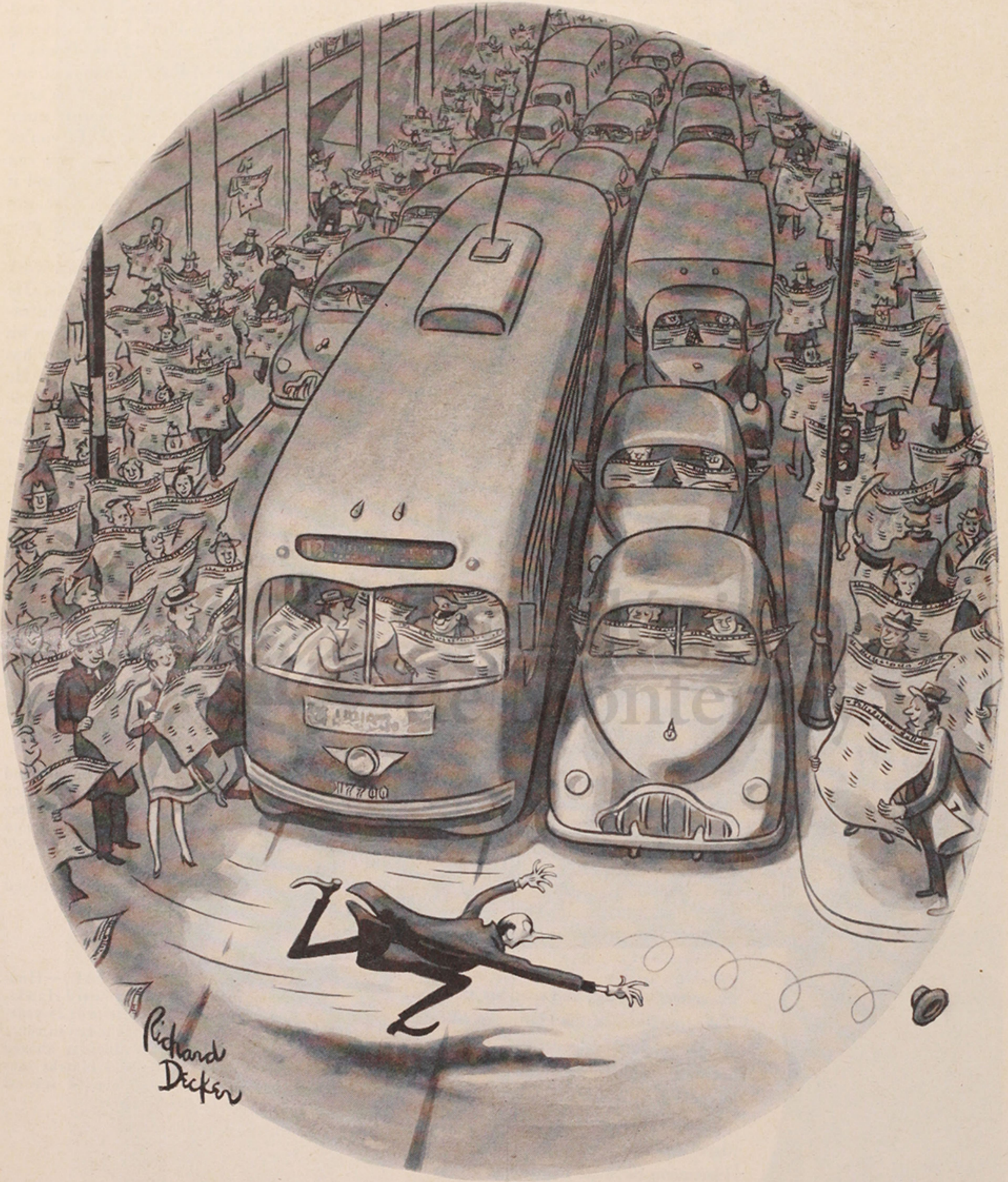
Some people just won't get enthused about anything.

SANTA MONICA, Feb. 21—(AP)—Honeymooning movie director Howard Hawks, 55, and his bride, Dee Hartford, 24-year-old model, fly to New York today en route to Europe. They sail Wednesday aboard the liner Queen Mary, and Hawks says they probably will stay aboard several years.—*New Haven Register*.

Oh, these bridegrooms!

**WORDS OF ONE SYLLABLE DEPT.**  
[Newsletter from a Manhattan Beach synagogue]

THE YOUNG ADULT LEAGUE'S dramatic group is preparing a program to be presented next month at the Temple. Danny Rothman and Millie Flamm report a dearth of talent in the organization which will be revealed when the drama group presents its program.



*In Philadelphia nearly everybody reads The Bulletin*

(Advertisement)