

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

No Lifetime Guarantee

A. H. RASKIN's "Automation: Road to Lifetime Jobs?" [SR, Nov. 28] gives some wrong impressions about the career Civil Service that should be corrected. . . . Mr. Raskin says, "The hourly rated worker is still far from enjoying the career assurance of the average civil service employee. . . ." This gives the reader the definite impression that the Civil Service employee has the assurance of a lifetime job—that even though jobs are abolished, the employees stay. This is far from the fact.

It is important that SR readers, who are, of course, also taxpayers, not misunderstand the facts. The Civil Service system is a merit system and was not instituted, as Mr. Raskin implies, to provide lifetime job protection for employees. It was established for two reasons: 1) to assure selection of the best-qualified employees on the basis of merit and 2) to assure fair treatment of employees—promotions, demotions, and other personnel actions based on established rules rather than on the caprice of individual supervisors. Nowhere in the Civil Service system is there a guarantee of "lifetime income cushions," "lifetime jobs," "employees frozen into" jobs that no longer exist. In the Civil Service system employees can be and are fired because of incompetence. And when jobs are abolished, there is a commensurate cut in staffing.

We frequently hear from job applicants who have the mistaken notion that a Civil Service position will assure them a lifetime job. It is statements such as those made in Mr. Raskin's article that not only mislead job applicants but also give taxpayers a wrong impression of how their tax money is spent.

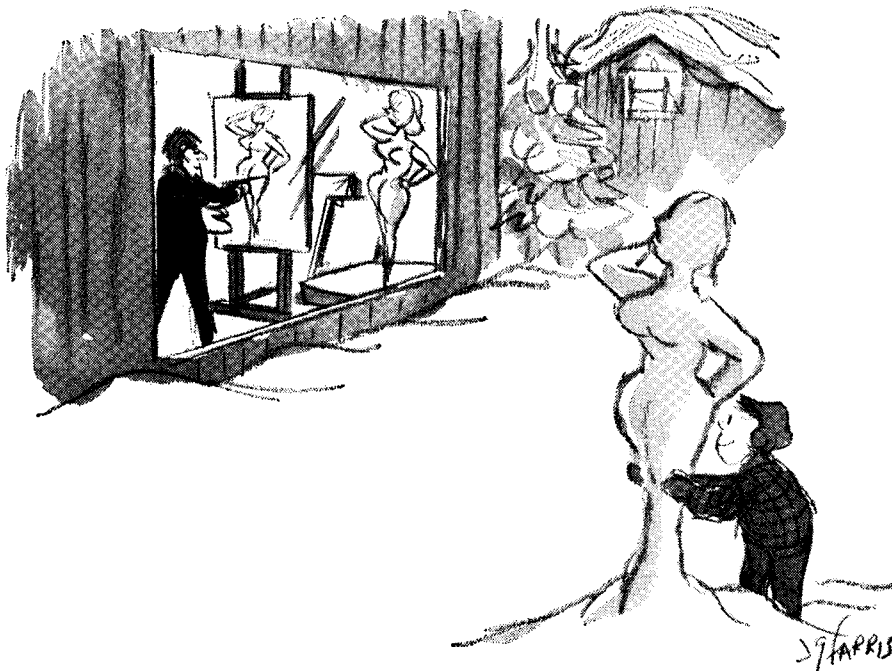
PAULA E. ZWINTSCHER,
District Manager,
Social Security Administration.

Oak Park, Ill.

Footnote

HORACE SUTTON'S ARTICLE about bagels [SR, Nov. 21] is excellent. I am sure he will be pleased to learn the facts concerning the discovery of the bagel:

In 381 B.C., in Crete, there lived a baker named Bagelus. Now, Bagelus had gout. At that time, the standard remedy for gout (cf. Hippocrates) was to encase the large toe in warm dough. One day Bagelus was basking in the hot sun, his feet propped up, in order to give his dough-ringed toes the full benefit of the heat. It was an unusually hot day in Crete. In fact, Cleides tells us (*Heat and Humidity in Ancient Athens*, Olympian Press, 1864) that the temperature on that particular day reached 117 degrees. The dough on Bagelus's toes hardened. When he awakened, he discovered on his toes a fully formed and hardened formation of large brown rings. He also discovered that all the animals in the neighborhood, attracted by the odor, were now pressing in upon him, trying to eat the rings off his feet. Bagelus removed the baked ringlet



from his left foot, sniffed at it, then bit into it, experiencing a most delectable and irresistible taste sensation.

It is not known whether Bagelus thereafter hired men to sit in the sun with baked dough ringed around their toes in order to get the authentic sun-baked confection, or whether he synthesized the product in his own bakeshop. Be that as it may, ancient Greece was introduced to the Bagelus ring, later known as the bagel.

It is true that the bagel has been appreciated and developed mainly in Jewish cooking; but now that the bagel is becoming universalized, it may be well to set the matter straight concerning its historical origin in ancient Greece.

CULL PEPPER,
Visiting Professor of
Ancient Mores,
University of Athens.

Athens, Greece

History Lesson

IT IS WITH concern that we, the senior class of Friday Harbor High, write this letter to you. It concerns the article "Fifty-Four Forty or Compromise," by Horace Sutton, [SR, Oct. 17]. Mr. Sutton has painted a very inaccurate picture of our island. Following are some examples:

Mr. Sutton stated, in regard to the Pig War, that "there is precious little else of historical import about, and the locals have to make the most of what they have." This is not true. There is other history; for example, didn't Mr. Sutton learn about the smuggling—of wool, liquor, and dope?

And the "old wagons full of petunias" consist of a grand total of one! And the man who Mr. Sutton said built Roche Harbor ("John McMillan, a patriarchal industrialist who had mined lead in the area") does not, and never did, exist. Roche Harbor was

founded by John McMillan, the lime king.

We suggest that the next time Mr. Sutton writes an article, he should first make sure of his facts.

THE SENIOR CLASS,
Friday Harbor High School,
Friday Harbor, Wash.

The Defenders

AFTER READING John Ciardi's "The King Who Saved Himself from Being Saved" [SR, Nov. 14], to the delight of as many of my friends as I could corner, I was pained by the letter of your "bored" correspondent of December 5.

I again zeroed in on the poem and still find it the most delightful piece of humorous satire to come my way. Its scope is so broad that I couldn't decide whether to send a copy to Billy Graham or Barry Goldwater. I did neither when it struck me that I would be attempting a bit of saving of my own.

NINO DE PROPHETIS, M.D.
Chester, Pa.

A LADY FROM Flushing, New York, is bored by Mr. Ciardi's quite delightful poem "The King Who Saved Himself from Being Saved." Too bad. Here the readers of your journal have a highly capable poet and critic, who is one of the freshest voices in literature that we now have, and she is bored!

Let's have more and more of Mr. Ciardi (although I would prefer to hear less about his family).

FULTON CATLIN,
Huntingdon, Pa.

WELL, YOU CAN'T win 'em all. But John Ciardi has a high enough batting average not to have to worry about one bored reader.

C. L. HAWKINS,
New York, N.Y.



Order vs. Liberty

THE NBC Television Network series based on President John F. Kennedy's best-selling *Profiles in Courage* is currently about one-third of the way through its projected twenty-six-week run. Each of the sixty-minute dramas on film relates a crucial incident in the life of an American public figure who displayed moral courage in holding to fundamental convictions when challenged by powerful political or social pressures. President Kennedy's book included only eight stories; the television show widens the scope of the concept, enlarges its historical dimension, and embraces more eras in its chronological sweep. One notices more than personal heroism if one views the programs regularly, and much useful light is thrown on the collective antagonist. He is the great tyrant, the majority.

"The will of the people," John Stuart Mill wrote, "means the will of the most numerous or the most active part of the people." The majority, he noted, may want to oppress a part of their number.

In the first program of the series the Ku Klux Klan exemplified this dangerous collectivity. It was a story about Senator Oscar W. Underwood of Alabama. Senator Underwood denounced the hooded organization at the 1924 Democratic convention, refusing to make a deal with men who purported to speak for the Klan at a time when it was at its peak of power in the South. *Profiles in Courage* showed, in two other recent programs, how prevailing community opinion, threatened by real or imaginary danger, sought to impose its will on secondary and higher education. Mary S. McDowell, a Latin teacher in a Brooklyn high school during World War I, was declared unfit to teach by the Board of Education because her Quaker principles prevented her from signing a loyalty oath or doing war work. Professor Richard T. Ely, economist at the State University of Wisconsin, made a successful public fight in 1894 to overcome charges that he was an anarchist or socialist because he

taught his students, during a period when labor was organizing in the United States, to examine all sides of economic controversies.

The heroes in the series are the independent, dissenting minority. The villains have been bigots or frightened people or superpatriotic education officials. Future episodes will show the tyrant majority in action from the days of John Adams to Robert A. Taft, as passions sweep citizens in war, crime, and labor riots.

Dissenters are unpopular in any era, and *Profiles in Courage* deals with those safely enshrined in contemporary favor. But the problem of nonconformity is very much with us today. John Stuart Mill also said: "There is a limit to the legitimate interference of collective opinion with individual independence; and to find that limit, and maintain it against encroachment, is as indispensable to a good condition of human affairs as protection against political despotism." What an excellent theme this would make for history teachers in our schools! Here are twenty-six television episodes—entertainment, available to all students—that can be assigned for extracurricular viewing and discussed in class in a continuing search for Mill's limit. It is the essential theme of Western democracy, the problem of order and liberty, the balance between the rights of the community and those of the individual.

The Teaching of American History in High Schools (Baxter, Ferrell, and Wiltz), a report recently published by the Indiana University Press, asserts that high school history teachers don't know their subject and that their students don't learn much; the latter view history with "apathy if not plain hostility." The three professors who wrote the report suggest intensive off-campus courses for teachers, who will read books, review them, and have conferences with university historians. "An informed, imaginative teacher can offer a good course with any of the standard texts," say the authors, "and without recourse to extravagant audiovisual aids, television, or other special devices." This is true, but the professors reveal a print-oriented bias in their slur at the newer electronic teaching tools.

A good history teacher, alert to the opportunities afforded by *Profiles in Courage*, could make his students see our unfolding history in a perspective that can capture their interest. Some 90,000 principals of secondary schools have received teachers' guides that may be used in studying these programs. Not only in subject matter but also in teaching methods should education encourage "the fearless sifting and winnowing—by which truth alone can be found."

—ROBERT LEWIS SHAYON.

Will you be Boo Sun's sponsor?



Boo Sun lives with 9 relatives in a one-room hut in an impoverished South Korean village. All she ever wanted was "to be a teacher, so I could make little children wise."

But education is not free in South Korea. And Boo Sun's parents are desperately poor.

They're also proud. That's why they refuse charity.

But if they had a cow to do the plowing, they could grow enough rice to earn money to send Boo Sun to school.

... Will you buy Boo Sun a cow?

Your contribution to Save the Children Federation, though tax-deductible, is not charity. It's used instead for self-help. Children, families, entire communities in Korea, Greece, Lebanon, Tanganyika, Colombia, Italy, and American Indians as well, are aided to stand on their feet through Save the Children self-help funds. As a sponsor, you or your group receive the story and photograph of the child you help to help himself, and the opportunity for person-to-person correspondence.

Won't you fill in the coupon?

Founded 1932
SAVE THE CHILDREN FEDERATION
Norwalk, Connecticut

I wish to contribute \$150.00 annually to help a
() girl () boy in _____ (countries
listed on left) or where the need is greatest () .

Enclosed is my first payment:
\$12.50 a month () \$37.50 a quarter ()
\$75 semi-annually () \$150 annually ()

I cannot sponsor a child:
enclosed is contribution of \$ _____

Name _____

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City _____ Zip _____ State _____

Contributions are income tax deductible. SR 12-26-4