

Continued from page 10
 novel, *A Talent for Loving*. He used the names of some eighty friends to make him feel more at home in the hostile Old West, the locale of the book. Each friend happened to be a more or less frustrated actor, diverted to other careers by the simple expedient of having to eat.

"All went well," said Condon, "until a few months after publication. Then the living cast of characters began to grow restive."

Indeed they did. Led by Frank Heller, the Goodson-Todman producer, and Benn Reyes, a union known as the International Brotherhood of Book Actors was formed, with Peggy Flinn of Martindale's Book Store in Beverly Hills as the executive secretary. Their object: to use collective bargaining to get roles in other novels and thereby pick up larger audiences. Just when Heller claimed he was negotiating successfully with Leon Uris and Francis Parkinson Keyes, Condon threatened to block any such nonsense and take them into the venue of legendary Judge Bean and the harsh law west of the Pecos.

Last reports were that the union is just about ready to dissolve itself.

It is with a great deal of trepidation that we quote a letter from Marjori Wihtol, of Middletown, New Jersey, especially after the soda biscuit crisis. We hasten to add that the prize for any answers to this request will *not* be ten pounds of soda biscuits, or anything else. Those who respond, however, may have the eternal gratitude of Mrs. Wihtol, who is suffering from a gnawing frustration.

"What I need, Doctor," she writes, "is a substitute in learning music for 'FACE,' 'Every Good Boy Does Fine,' 'All Cows Eat Grass,' and 'Great Bulls Do Fight Always.' Having departed from the piano in 1913 and arrived at the organ in 1963, I find this inane code has not changed a whit. Far more imagination is used by medical students in inventing sentences for nerves, bones, etc. Censorable, though!"

Maybe this is worth a few soda biscuits or cookies, but the supply is already too low to tamper with.

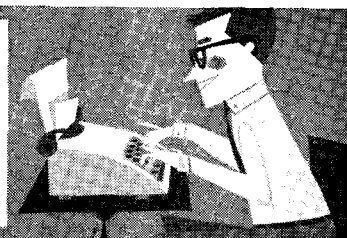
—JOHN G. FULLER.

SOLUTION OF LAST WEEK'S
 KINGSLEY DOUBLE-CROSTIC (No. 1592)

OLIVER HALE:
 COLUMBUS

This serious man whom Time made necessary . . . I think of him among the doubting men, his hands tiller and helm; the light strikes molten from the sun, and the wicks of his eyes blaze with fire of their own, whose core was kindled in a vision of far lands.

Top of My Head



How to Try in TV Without Really Succeeding

THE PROFESSIONAL critics were divided in their opinions of the comedy shows of the new television season. John Horn of the New York *Herald Tribune* said "lousy," while the more mildly spoken Jack O'Brian of the New York *Journal American* said "simply terrible." I didn't catch all the new shows but a few I saw lay somewhere in the middle of those two extremes, hovering between "mediocrity" and "Oh no!"

Two laugh tracks to which were attached what were purported to be comedy shows seeped into our living room—the Cara Williams show and *The Baileys of Balboa*. I don't know who produced these two epics, but the Cara Williams show turned out to be one of those cliché husband-and-wife situation comedies—the same old song and dance. The producer, whoever he was, attached the loudest laugh track you ever heard. As for me, give me the old soft shoe.

The premise of this comedic situation—hold on to your old straw hat—is that a man and his wife are working for a firm that does not hire married couples. How to keep the boss from discovering they are married will be the spectacle to which we will be treated for the next thirty-nine weeks. Unless they are legally separated from each other. Or from the show.

In playing the wife it was obvious that Cara Williams was having a ball. But it was the husband who summed up the whole program, after they had barely escaped being discovered as a married couple, when he said to Cara: "Everybody makes mistakes. But when you make one you make a *big* one." An epitaph to a producer if I ever heard one. How much more rewarding to have filled this prime half-hour time with some nice music. For instance the lovely DeMarco sisters. If he can get them.

The other show from this producer—*The Baileys of Balboa*—was about an old fisherman who in thirty-five years of fishing had never caught a white bass. But the four-year-old boy caught one with potato pancake as bait. The track on this show was up to its gills in laughter. Another program by this same producer was *The Reporter*. This was not supposed to be a comedy show. It only turned out that way.

I know there's somebody up at CBS

keeping score. I'm sure the respected and show-wise Mr. William S. Paley has already marked our boy 0 for 3. Well you can't win 'em all. CBS astutely invested in *My Fair Lady*. This time it turned out to be *My Foul Ball*.

It came as quite a shock, this surfeit of bad comedy shows that turned up on CBS. This is the network that regularly defeated the other networks in the ratings in this category. Its program department—those sensitive, inventive planners who gave us such lovely items as *Beverly Hillbillies* and *Petticoat Junction*—seemed suddenly to have lost their touch of genius, what with *Gomer Pyle* and *The Munsters* and *Gilligan's Island*. The last one I can understand. Without even seeing a script, you know at once that *Gilligan's Island* sounds funny. *The Munsters*, I must admit, was more patiently treated by the perceptive Jack Gould of the *New York Times* than it was by the other critics.

I'd like to think that Mr. Gould was so worn down by the unfortunate *Adams Family*, another spook show, that *The Munsters* seemed more palatable by comparison. This can happen in any medium where the standard is mediocrity. It's like the scoreboards in some ballparks that explode into fireworks and the sound of sirens when one of the home-team players gets a home run. But at the Washington Senators' ballpark it explodes when one of the home-town players gets a walk.

But the real critic has yet to be heard from. This critic has nothing to do with taste or sensitivity. His name is A. C. Nielsen and his feelings about what's worthwhile are as cold and calculated as a computer's.

However, all is not yet lost. It's early in the season and networks can rinse out their cobalt with Dristan, clearing all the passageways, and put up a sign that says "Oops! Sorry!" and start afresh. Especially with that thing on a Tuesday night or two ago—that was the weakest that was—and in color yet.

—GOODMAN ACE.



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State of Affairs



Candidate's Dilemma

WHAT has emerged so far from the election battle is the fact that the majority of Americans are moderates. They may feel unhappy about Castro in Cuba, they may dislike the expansion of federal authority, they may want to see Communism destroyed throughout the world, and they may worry about the Negro getting "too far too fast" in his demands for equality, but when they weigh all the odds a heavy majority seems to be opting for a moderate, forward-looking posture that avoids radical solutions and the active pursuit of what often sounds like adventurism.

It seems that this mood in the nation is Senator Goldwater's toughest problem. The drastic choices he has been advocating are the hallmarks of his policies. They helped him to catch the headlines, to arouse nationwide interest, and to stir up the enthusiasm of an eager minority. They helped him, above all, to his nomination. But gradually and inevitably, as the country listened more closely to what he was advocating, it also began to realize that he was not the true conservative he had advertised himself to be. After all, a conservative is a man who seeks to preserve, who tries to keep intact existing institutions, who aims to stabilize rather than to unhinge. As a consequence, many people seem to have come to the conclusion that Senator Goldwater is a radical rather than a conservative; and radicals in this country, whether of the left or the right, have always been viewed with suspicion and reserve.

This is of course an ironic development, for Senator Goldwater considers himself the apostle and crusader of conservatism. In almost every field of political, economic, military, and social endeavor he has extolled far-reaching changes. There is his idea that the United States should impose its will on the Soviet Union, if necessary by the use of military power, because, as he put it in his speech before the American Legion convention in Dallas: "If we follow the notion of a 'let's be friends' approach coupled with a defense establishment we are reluctant to use, we will run a very grave risk of war." There is his advocacy of reducing the budget and taxes when at the same time he is proposing a highly expensive build-up

of a manned bomber force. There is the controversial suggestion of leaving decisions about the use of conventional weapons in the hands of the NATO Supreme Commander rather than in the President's. And there are his many new approaches to social security, to agriculture, to economics in general that have aroused uneasiness and led to a narrowing of his own political base. In turn, all this has helped to broaden President Johnson's, who now delights in having been given so much political elbow room and, with considerable relish, is making the most of it. All over the country "Republicans for Johnson" committees have sprung up, and two of the traditionally Republican newspaper chains, Hearst and Scripps-Howard, have decided to support President Johnson. In this situation President Johnson does not need to sound clarion calls for new policies; he can rest on his record and make more of the same sound attractive to the voters.

ALTHOUGH the president was well behind Senator Goldwater in putting his philosophy between book covers, a paste-and-scissors job has now been rushed into print under the broad title *My Hope for America* (Random House). Perhaps the quotation that most aptly illuminates the difference between the Johnson and Goldwater philosophies comes when Johnson says that his dream "is not the grand vision of a powerful and feared nation, it concerns the simple wants of the people." The book, published both in hardcover (\$3.95) and paperback (95¢), is a collection of generalities from various utterances arranged under such headings as "President of All the People," "The War on Poverty," and "The Necessity for Strength," but they give in their simplicity, common sense, compassion, and basic truth a surprisingly coherent impression of the Johnson philosophy. They also confirm, as he put it in one quotation, that he has "no gift of prophecy, no special insight into history." The grander vistas and perspectives on the world are missing. Yet one is made to feel that this man is not without intuition and the broad understanding of his job and his responsibilities. He says, for instance, "The people of the world prefer reasoned agreement to ready attack;