



Edited by Martin Levin

Poem

One arrow points ONE WAY
and another points ANOTHER.
There is NO STANDING it
and NO PASSING it by,
SO WALK or DON'T WALK,
STOP or GO, but never YIELD!
He who WAITS in the NO
in the NO ENTRANCE at
the beginning, in the NO
in the NO LOITERING in
between, and in the NO
in the NO EXIT at the end
will be FOR LITTER NOT
FOR TRASH. He is the YES
of the arrow pointing up
and down: YES PARKING HERE.

—ALAN DUGAN.

Do-It-Yourself Art Review

*(Or How to Assemble an Art Review
with Scissors and Paste from Criticism
in Various Art Journals)*

ONE cannot fail to be struck by the professionalism demonstrated by Jorge Sylvester Wehkopf in his first one-man show. The work hits you like a rock hurled through a synagogue window. Smash! It erupts into one of the most vital dialectical tensions in contemporary American art and I find myself thinking not only of Hogarth and Stravinsky, but also of Goya. He is one of those rare painters of any period who is not to some extent deficient in a quality that might be described as animal insouciance—a disregard for the effect one makes in getting where one is going. For even as one struggles to separate the art from the artlessness one knows that the distinction is impossible, yet what, if not the *frisson* of their interaction, can explain the fascination exercised by Wehkopf's pictures?

Wehkopf as an artist has maintained the most consistently abrasive and erasable imagery of any of his peers. His work contains the very small chance to escape to a very big problem. The subtle rhythms resulting from his admission of voids bring to abstraction an exhilarating visual shiver. His passionate and arrestingly fetishistic personal poetic ambiguity is a metaphor for a high-spirited and optimistic vulgarity, a startling ambivalence, indeed. The shared discontinuities, his personal ver-

sion of an antiesthetic practical joke, achieve a triumph in their mastery of the cynical problem of oval space. And all from a position without geographic locus!

His is an art of programmed intricacy employing the rather sinister didacticism of chance where past and future appear to be equally empty. Behind its door (the disturbed face of ambiguous sex) are revealed the blunt images (horror and ecstasy) which interlock in an infinite impalement. The confluences of chance, feeling, and calculation, to say nothing of the severely reductive esthetic, convey the mysteriously passionate essence of with-it-ness while retaining a real sense of boyish delight.

Beneath the loose rubble suggested by scumbled surface paint, we see Wehkopf through the empty provocations of his endless erotic legions where the answer is always no. The gaping orifices and dark voids give rise to an extraordinary situation rather than sexual or pseudo-scientific innuendoes. His is an always eccentric iconography zeroed in upon his own insightful notions of the human (his own) condition which vibrates like a visual tuning fork in nonviolent protest.

There is something dramatically irrelevant about his paintings. Each of Wehkopf's strokes is a larval palpitation of pleasure in the liveness of the pigment—a stroke whose *morbidezza* and cadenced slowness strives to ideate sense itself. Colors for him are emotional commitments: "When I use a blue, I must be in that blue." His colors raise in a profound way important questions about the relationship between our visceral sensations and the nature of adventurous empiricism. As Sartre has remarked: "Color is man smiling; modeling, man in tears." An area of Monet-like pink cries out for recognition, but it is the color relationship itself which gently violates one's consciousness suspended in a white ambient. It isn't local



color; it isn't atmospheric color; it isn't plastic color; it isn't decorative color; it isn't poetic color—it partakes of all of these, but it's not exactly any of them.

Without question there are two reasons for believing that Jorge Sylvester Wehkopf is the finest American painter of this century: his early work and his late work. His art is idiatic, and one is left with quiet haunting echoes of a sort of metaphysical transvestism, that certainly confirms the existence of a *Zeitgeist*. These paintings as an esthetic experience are so much about nothing that they turn lack of meaning into a thesis. Jorge Sylvester Wehkopf has used modern art to make the supreme nonstatement, which reaches its inevitable, arresting climax in a wailing chant of outrage.

—WILLIAM FADIMAN.

Why I Never Celebrate Library Week

THE only time I have really had any trouble with librarians was when I was about eight years old. I had had a library card since I was six, and for two years had been taking out the maximum number of books and unfailingly returning them before the date they were due. I was a good citizen, a timid little boy who made no difficulty for his parents, his teachers, or those who dispensed books at the public library.

Then one day I received a blunt, coldly indignant note from the librarian. A book signed out by me had been returned in mutilated condition, and the cost of purchasing a new copy as a replacement must be paid at once or my card would be revoked.

The word "mutilated" was new to me, my vocabulary at that time not containing some of the words which, unfortunately, have since been added. But my father quickly made it clear. When I understood, I was shocked. I had never mutilated anything, except once when I had pulled two legs off an ant to see if it could still walk (it could), and afterward was very sorry and tried to put them back on (I couldn't). Besides, I liked books better than ants. After all, they didn't sting, or crawl all over your sandwich at a picnic.

"I didn't do it," I said to my father. "Cross my heart and hope to die. I didn't do it."

"But it says here you did," said my father, inclined to believe written evidence, any time, as against the oral testimony of his only son.

However, it was not my mutilating a book that raised my father's eyebrows, and would have raised the librarian's

(Continued on page 46)



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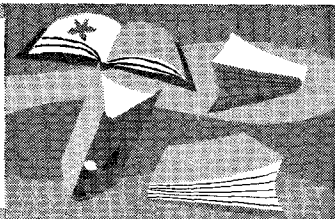
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Trade Winds



A Texan was being shown around a farm in Vermont by its owner. The Vermonter said, "Over there by that pine grove is the northern boundary. Then the line runs down through that



meadow and around to that stone fence and over to the trees."

The Texan spoke. "Well," he drawled, "my situation is a little bit different. I can get in my car in the morning, drive all day, and still not come to the boundary by sundown."

"I know what you mean," the Vermonter replied. "I used to have a car like that but I got rid of it."

This classified advertisement appeared last year, I am told, in a paper in Dayton, Ohio: "For sale—secondhand tombstone. Good buy for person named Murphy."

In the dining room of the Overseas Press Club in New York, author Cornelius J. Ryan asked, "What do you recommend?" Waiter Mike Sullivan looked at the day's menu, obviously for the first time, and quickly replied:

"The chef is very excited about the osso bucco."

Quips pilfered by me from unremembered sources on the radio:

"If the Russians don't pay their U.N. dues soon they're apt to give people the impression they can't be trusted."

"People who live in glass houses should dress in the basement."

"If her lips are like fire, and she trembles as you take her in your arms—lay off that chick, she's got malaria."

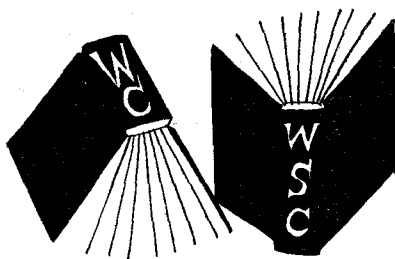
Like the cookbooks, the books on bridge are numerous and never-ending. It's rash of me, but I am going to declare that Albert H. Morehead's latest, *Morehead on Bidding* (Macmillan), must be one of the best. It is certainly the most entertaining I've ever seen. I discovered, for example, that there is an Easley Blackwood of Indianapolis

who, in 1933, invented the convention named after him. It's probably the first thing anyone learns about the game. The experts made fun of the Blackwood convention for years. Today, having eaten crow, they all use it.

Morehead relates a story about Ely Culbertson. The famous authority was lecturing in Cleveland on forcing bids. He devoted his entire time to explaining them—opening two-bids, jump bids, one-over-one forcing bids, cue bids. While he talked, a woman in the audience busily wrote in a notebook. On his way out Culbertson, curious, glanced at the notebook. The page was covered with doodling except for two words, her only notes on the lecture. They were: "Never pass."

Reading *The Letters of F. Scott Fitzgerald*, now available in a less expensive Delta edition, was made especially interesting to me as I ran across this from a letter Scott wrote to Zelda on May 11, 1940, from Encino, California:

"... I'm looking forward tomorrow to a peaceful Sunday spent in bed with Churchill's *Life of Marlborough*. Funny



that he should be Prime Minister at last. Do you remember luncheon at his mother's house in 1920 and Jack Churchill who was so hard to talk to at first and who turned out to be so pleasant? And Lady Churchill's call on the Countess of Byng whose butler was just like the butler in *Alice in Wonderland*?"

That's all there is to that. Too bad we don't hear more about that luncheon. In the meantime, I have looked in the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* and found the facts about the real Winston Churchill. He was born in St. Louis in 1871 and graduated from the U.S. Naval Academy in 1894. Having private means, he devoted himself to writing. His first novel, *The Celebrity*, appeared in 1898. His next, *Richard Carvel*, sold one million copies. *The Crisis* was also a tremendous success, as were his others. He is our Winston Churchill, and he is

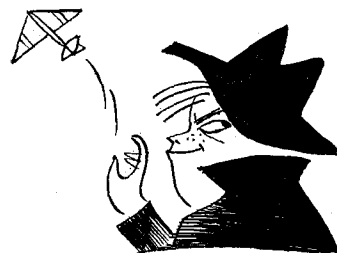
also the reason why all of the books by the one who just died are signed "Winston S. Churchill."

Sharps and Flats: In the motion picture *The Americanization of Emily*, which takes place in World War II, a fifty-star American flag is displayed.

► At Barnard College Joan Abelove got back a term paper on anthropology with an A-minus and the professor's written comment: "Watch out for occasional careless errors."

► In New York a theater ran a double feature, *Nudist Story* and *1,000 Female Shapes*. The marquee also noted, "For Adults Only."

► Teaching-Kids-How-to-Play Department: Gabriel Industries in New



York City has made a toy which is a U-2 spy plane that takes photographs.

► A lot of people who see the musical *Hello, Dolly!* are disappointed to find that Louis Armstrong is not in it.

► A few years ago John Kenneth Galbraith had a book published about the 1929 stock market debacle entitled *The Great Crash*. One evening he was walking through New York's La Guardia field terminal building and, like many an author, he stopped at the bookshop to see how it might be doing. He couldn't find the book, whereupon he asked the lady clerk about it, saying, "I forget the author, maybe Galbraith—but I think it was called *The Great Crash*."

She replied, "That's certainly not a title you could sell in an airport."

—JEROME BEATTY, JR.

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