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First of My Month

FOR THE PAST MONTH we have been listening to Happy New Year greetings for 1967. Question: "When does all this happiness begin?"

No sooner had the little fellow arrived four weeks ago in his spanking new bikini than we were treated to the ignominious sight of the wife of New York's junior Senator, Robert F. Kennedy, being hauled into a court in Virginia as a horse thief. She presented the fantastic story that she had seen a halfstarved horse standing on a neighbor's farm looking sorrowfully at her, and she couldn't resist a surge of compassion for the animal. She took it to her home to nourish it back to health. Five days later the horse died and the neighbor smacked a lawsuit on Ethel for \$30,000.

This unlikely story stood up in court. But only because a certain former attorney general wasn't the prosecuting attorney. I'm sure he would have come up with some tricky questions which would have reversed that jury's verdict in quick order.

"Mrs. Kennedy, you said 'When I took the horse he was almost dead. I could count his ribs.' Do you stand by that statement?"

"I do."

"Yes. How many ribs did you count?" "Well, I didn't actually stand there and count his ribs— I mean. . . ."

"You mean it was just a figment of your imagination?"

And so on. He could have won that case easily. Until he got home, of course.

Another sorrowful spectacle in this bright new year took place in our nation's capital, where a national figure who allegedly had been indulging in some hanky-panky in governmental dealings was finally dragged before a jury of his peers and it was forcibly made clear to him that his day of reckoning was at hand. I'm talking about Bobby Baker. Why? Who'd you think I meant? Oh, no, not him. It's Robert G. Baker.

Truth may be stranger than fiction. But it is also true that truth, though crushed to earth, will rise again. That's a natural law of man, as old as Adam himself. People who figure those things have said if Mr. Baker is convicted on all charges it will be forty years before he emerges to join in the joys of the Great Society — air pollution, sonic booms, sur-sur-surtaxes, and the arrival of Bobby Kennedy's thirty-fifth child.

No sooner had we adjusted ourselves to the fact that this shameful testimony will be dragged through newspaper headlines for a couple of months of our new year than our President delivered his State of the Union Message. First he told us that he and Russia were working on an agreement that there would be no surprise nuclear attacks from orbiting space vehicles. Then he exploded his own proliferating bomb on our citizens by proclaiming that there would be a 6 per cent surtax. There are no bomb shelters in which to hide from that.

As the President made each point, alert television cameramen panned across the chamber for the reactions of our lawmakers. When he mentioned we would stand our ground in Vietnam, Representative Gerald Ford applauded vigorously. When he stated he would offer a law to do away with bugging, the hands of Robert Kennedy stood mute. And so on.

I wondered if the President would mind very much if, when we pay our surtax, we might designate on the check which part of his program we applaud. Could we write: "My surtax is to be spent, half on beautifying America, half on the Head Start program, and you can use the other half on the war in Vietnam." This is known as surtaxation with representation.

Just how big a bite this surtax will take out of our income was graphically detailed in *The New York Times*. There were three tables. One showed the tax for a married couple with no dependents, another with one dependent, the third with two dependents. Of course the surtax with no dependents is the highest; with one dependent it's a little less, and with two dependents still less.

My eye fell on a four-line item tucked quietly away on the bottom of that same page. There was this story from the Associated Press:

"Senator Edward M. Kennedy today announced that his wife, Joan, is expecting her third child in June."

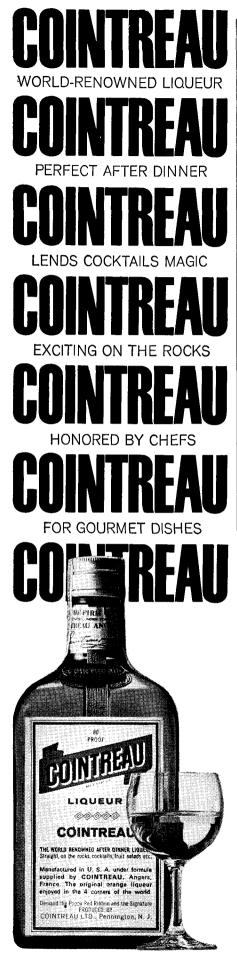
The surtax goes into effect in July. This is known as Planned Taxhood.

The surtax will not affect his brother Robert Kennedy at all.

-Goodman Ace.

SR/February 4, 1967

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Trade Winds

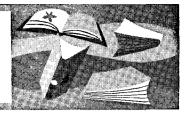
In his first TRADE WINDS column, dated July 18, 1925, Christopher Morley told of a man who entered the book business "because it is almost the only way, in America, that a man of taste can be sure of losing money with dignity."

It was a period when, though I already had been for five years in magazines, I, too, had a hankering for the fringes of the literary life. Various friends of mine were part of it. Two young ladies I was dating-I think it was about then-had opened the Crock of Gold bookshop, close by the Algonquin. They kept coffee fresh for buyers and browsers. To anybody who would listen, they read aloud passages from current best sellers. At the same time a man named Harry Marks had a rare book shop. He would open it evenings, for a few of us, and serve ale. He had for sale a fancy portfolio in which reposed more than a hundred nineteenth-century poems, all in original manuscript, all no good; but I didn't own any original manuscripts and I wanted them. Marks let me have the collection for \$1,000, with \$10 down. It took me two years to pay. Then for \$30 I disposed of my prize to an unenthusiastic gentleman at Barnes & Noble. Some of my ambition for the Round Table bit began to wane.

The two Crock of Gold girls went bust. I stopped dating them, but for other reasons. Last I heard, they were planning a new establishment. You'd be permitted to buy books in their shop only if you were a *member*. To be a member, you'd have to pay \$3. Then you could go in and have coffee and doughnuts all day long. Jascha Giller, proprietor of another book shop, on 59th Street, never failed to offer a glass of port. Hermann's was a bargain basement sort of place. Fourth Avenue, I guess. Seemingly all the books ever printed, used copies, for a nickel each. Hermann served tea. Had a samovar always at the alert. If you bought three or four copies, you might be treated to some Fig Newtons.

There was emphasis on conversation and food in those days. Now, in the Doubleday, or Scribner, or Brentano shops, or Fowler Brothers in Los Angeles, or any others that I know, everything is strictly business and no socializing. It's all terribly efficient and everybody, perhaps laudably, wants to make money. Except, I suppose, in Rizzoli's. There everybody is frighteningly formal, a little above it all, and so possessive of the stock that I am a little embarrassed about

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initiating a purchase. And, of course, there's no coffee, no tea, no snacks, no nothing. One of these days I'm going to fix up a picnic basket, carry it smack into that elegant atelier on Fifth Avenue, and offer everybody some goodies. Conceivably, the reserve will break down. Regardless of what Morley wrote, if you're going to lose money, why bother with dignity? Have fun.

Two books heartily recommended: *Masada* (Random House), by Yigael Yadin, who headed the recent archeological adventure in the Holy Land that confirms the fantastic last stand of the



Jewish Zealots against the attacking Romans in 73 A.D.; and *In Search of the Primitive* (Little, Brown), by Lewis Cotlow, who, among other gripping anecdotes, suggests how you can eat your favorite relatives.

Two record albums heartily recommended: Great Moments, Voices and Music of the 20th Century, organized and narrated by Ben Grauer; it can be bought only at General Tire stores, and costs \$3. It's a two-hour entertainment that deserves a much wider distribution. Then there is The Appreciation of Music, by Abram Chasins, which, in effect, is a complete course in understanding and the art of enjoyment. Twelve hi-fi records, with some 150 selections, it is wonderful for people like me who listen to music but know little about it; issued by Crown, the album, with printed commentary, sells for \$9.95.

In relinquishing his post as New York City's Commissioner of Parks—to which he gave a new and welcome dimension to become head of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, Thomas P. F. Hoving will be expected by a few of his friends to perform miracles of innovation. *Most* of his friends will rely on Mr. Hoving's superb taste and excellent judgment not to introduce into that museum tactics likely to detract from its prime function, which presumably is to acquire the best there is in art and make it available to as large a public as possible without the