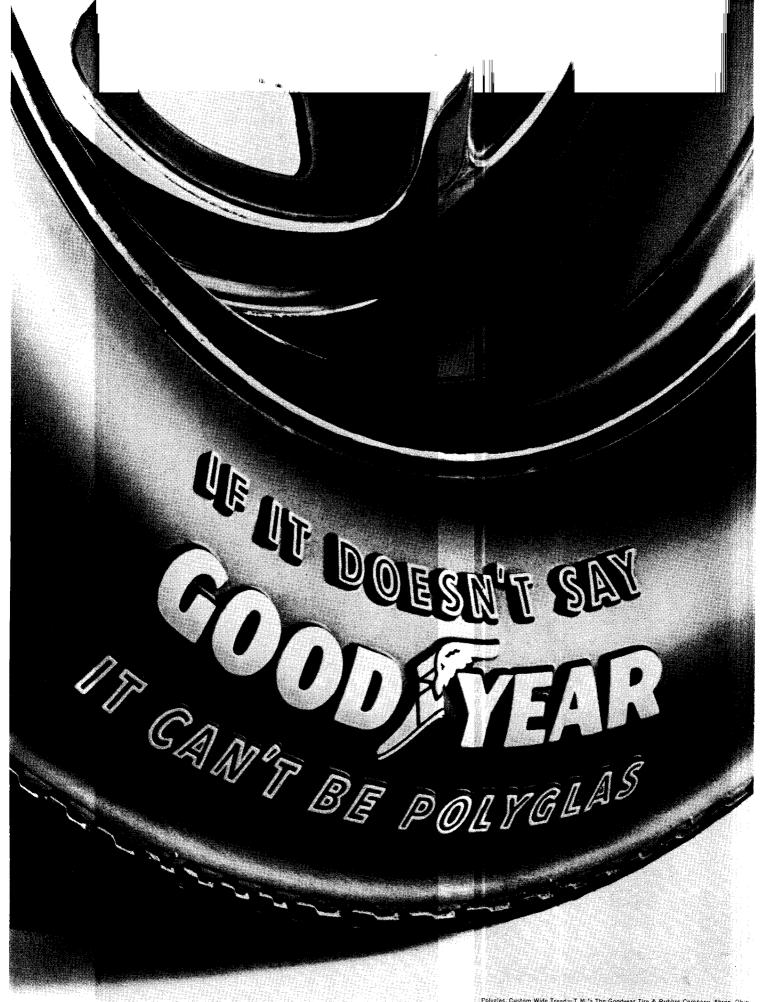


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Phoenix Nest

Edited by Martin Levin

The Laundry Box

IF YOU ARE under fifty you've probably never heard of a laundry box and if you're over fifty you probably wish you hadn't. Young people in college have so much money these days they think nothing of sending their laundry out, to be done professionally, but during the Depression, when I was an undergraduate, only wealthy sons of Detroit millionaires, daughters of doctors, and the downright profligate sent their laundry to the corner cleaner. The rest of us used a laundry box. Let me explain about a laundry box.

It looked like a small suitcase, a bit larger than an attaché, and was made of cardboard and cloth. It opened from the top and was closed by straps that never quite held together. The resultant constant shifting of contents did not, of course, make for satisfactory transit and, though soiled laundry went home without hazard, even the gentlest of postmen could not keep the clean laundry that was returned in anywhere near a pristine state. It usually arrived, in point of fact, a jumbled mess of wrinkles and cookie crumbs. Let me explain about the cookie crumbs.

Thrift aside, and that was quite an aside in the early 1930s, the laundry box was an easy way to communicate with home and from home to school. Letters, notes, pictures, clippings, pleas for sustenance always accompanied the dirty laundry; letters, notes, pictures, clippings, and sustenance always accompanied the clean laundry in return. At Ann Arbor, where for four vears I shuttled literally hundreds of laundry boxes to my mother in southwestern Michigan, and where she returned literally hundreds of pounds of food to 915 Oakland Avenue, I'm not sure I would have survived physically if it had not been for this unique postal service. Laundry cost, as I remember it, 16 cents in postage each way, and 16 cents was a hell of a lot better than sending shirts and shorts and socks to the corner laundry, whose bill was invariably over \$1. One dollar was more than I usually had at one time, after payment of the house bill. Let me explain about house bills.

Most men lived in either rooming houses or fraternities in Ann Arbor in those days because there were no men's dormitories. Unless you lived at home you had the choice of a room somewhere around town (they could be pretty jolly if you got hold of a motherly soul) or one of a hundred

fraternities, which were far more than snobbish social clubs. They were the center of the world for most of the male undergraduate population. House bills were issued by fraternities to each brother once a month. Mine usually ran about \$40 for room and board and my share of the phone and light bills, the salaries of the cook and Nelson, the Delta Phi houseman. Since I received \$50 a month from home, this left \$10 to squander at approximately 30 cents per day, laundry and dates aside. Let me explain about dates.

The University had put in a strict auto ban for everyone but graduate students or that rare bird, the married student with a family; so we walked everywhere, even on dates. Girls who insisted on taxis were never asked again, at least not by young men like me, for taxis could run as much as 70 cents each way if the girl lived way out in Washtenaw. Adding the cost of a movie (for two), refreshments afterward (nonalcoholic, of course), maybe even a sandwich apiece (if she was a Sorosis), you can see that walking your baby back home was more than a popular song. Fortunately, I knew three Sorosis girls who just loved to walk. yet there would be whole weeks on end when for financial reasons I dared not call anyone for a date for fear she might accept and even my laundry money might go down the drain. Not that a clean shirt meant much, of course, for we wore dark blue shirts much of the time, and you'd be surprised how many days you can wear a dark blue shirt, with different ties, and no one knows the difference. Or almost no one, that is.

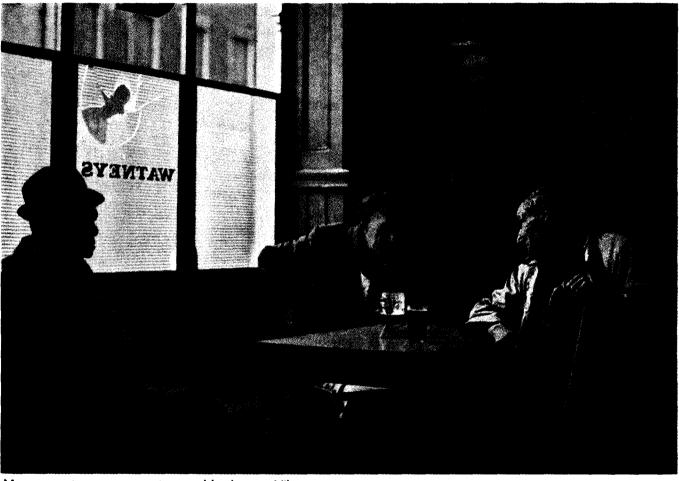
But getting back to the laundry box, the greatest treat I ever received by mail came in this precious fortnightly package just before Thanksgiving my freshman year. The box appeared to be a bit more lopsided even than normal, but it had an aroma unmistakable to someone from farm country. Pumpkin pie! There it was, large as life and about as messy. What matter that there wasn't a shirt fit to wear inside the box, or that the postage was 23 cents? A complete pumpkin pie had been anchored carefully between the shorts and socks, stuck to the inside of the laundry box with black mechanics' tape, and was more or less still intact. I remember having only a dollar or two left and here it was mid-November, and I was always hungry and I must confess that nothing before or since has tasted as good. Naturally, I ate the

A bit of common sense in the Drinking Society.



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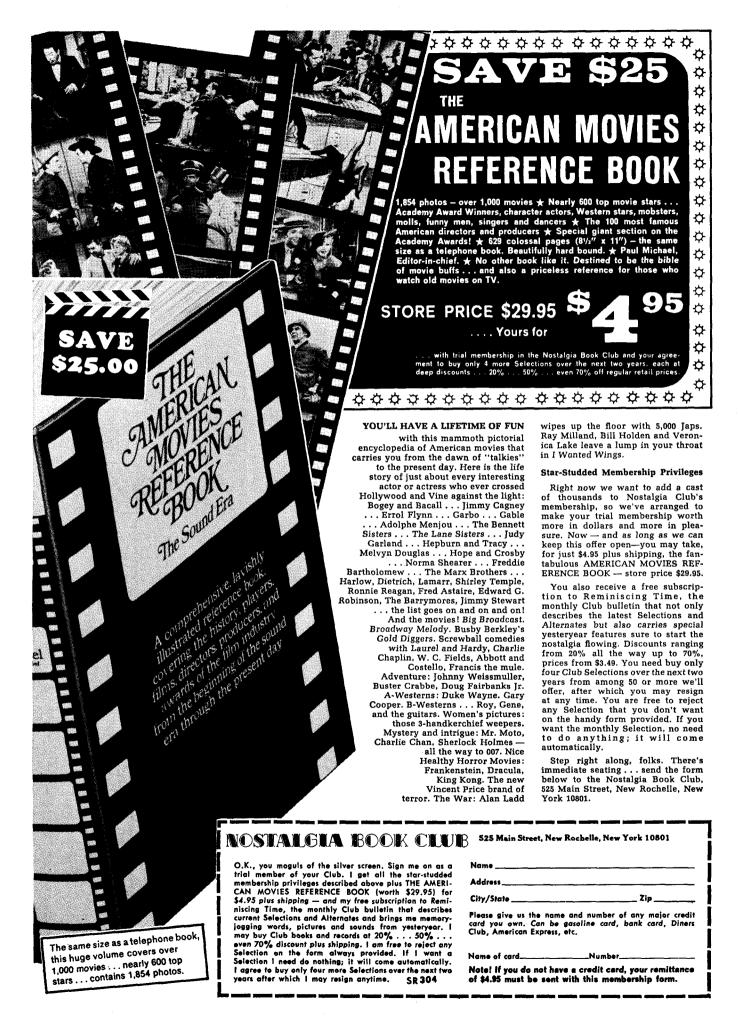
Daumier by Nikon



Many a contemporary master would rather use Nikon

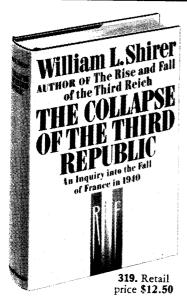
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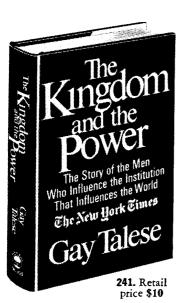
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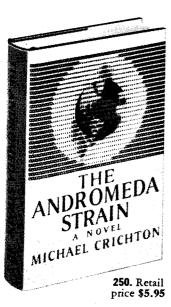


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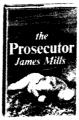








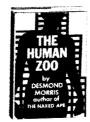
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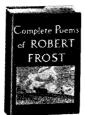
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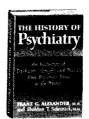
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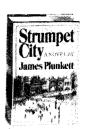


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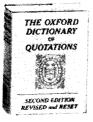


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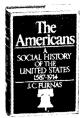
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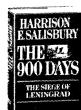
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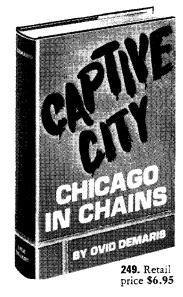
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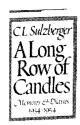


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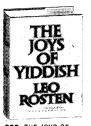




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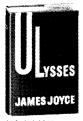
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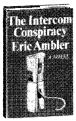
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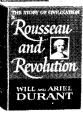
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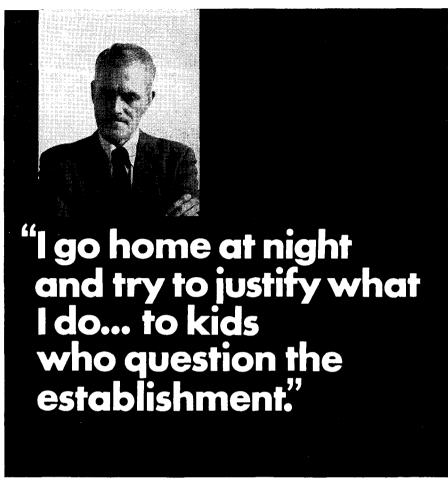
MY YEARS IN THE

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You're part of the establishment, my kids tell me. Your company makes profits from sick people while you sit in the laboratory doing research of doubtful value.

That's tough to take. And I read and hear the same things occasionally in the papers, the best magazines, on TV. Now and again I'm inclined to wonder why I'm in this business . . . until I'm back at the bench, mulling over a new structure that one of our scientific teams created. After thousands of steps and many years of faltering progress, we've been able to recreate in the lab what nature does daily, in an instant, in your body ... simply and beautifully. We've managed to get a look deep inside a molecule and discover a nuance of life . . .

Our discovery may someday help eliminate genetic defects, or it may even open avenues to whole new concepts of therapy.

I feel sure that I spent those years usefully. My industry, em-

ploying some 20,000 scientists and research people, and using its income from sales to finance more than half a billion dollars in research and development each year, has, by and large, used that money well. We are also accepting the smallest percentage (1.5) of government research money of any major industry.

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I'm proud of that record...It is good evidence that our system, by holding out the prospect of appropriate rewards for innovations in medicine, can function efficiently to meet the needs of people...I can't imagine anything more worthwhile.

Another point of view . . . Pharmaceutical Manufacturers Association, 1155 Fifteenth Str. N.W., Washington

whole thing that night while studying for a geology midterm. The shirts I wore anyway, yellow stains and all. I doubt if anyone noticed. Some of my friends didn't wear shirts at all. They didn't have any. —RICHARD L. TOBIN.

An Out-of-Fashion Plate Tells All

I HAVE a dilemma: whenever I buy single-breasted suits, they immediately go out of style and double-breasteds come in. Also vice versa. Thus, sartorially speaking, I always find myself either too amply endowed or pathetically flatchested.

The reason is clear. Somewhere—perhaps in a plush appartamento above the Via Veneto, or, more likely, in a loft building on Seventh Avenue—sits the cabal of master stylists who dictate fashion trends. I picture them—thin-lipped, cold-eyed behind their dark glasses—peering through their radar-scopes as I enter a shop to buy my biennial navy-blue worsted.

As the purchase is completed, the sales tax scored up, and my charge-aplate stamped, they smile and nod to one another. Mr. Big flicks a switch and whispers the words: "Change over!" And there I stand, my poitrine encased in an obsolete, already shopworn garment, once more hopelessly démodé.

Some years ago I tried foiling this plot. My jackets were all double-breasted, but I felt the winds of change rustling through my lapels. So I played it smart. Instead of buying new suits, I took the old ones to a tailor and submitted them to surgery. The herringbone lapels were removed, and, after a short convalescence, the suits were walking around again, as good as new.

But the mob was ahead of me. Reading my double-cross, they double-crossed me. That year, and for five years thereafter, there was no style change. Double-breasteds remained stubbornly in, leaving me to squirm uneasily in single-finned dowdiness.

To make matters worse, the scheme cost us a valued maid. One morning, when the girl approached the closet where I'd thriftily stored my severed swatches, I said, "Don't bother dusting that upper shelf. That's where I keep my breasts." Naturally the girl ran screaming from the house.

Today, affluent but insecure, I own a few jackets of each persuasion. In addition, my old breasts are still in the closet, ready for the morning the mob decrees the Picasso Look. ("Men! P Chic! Be Cubistic! Go Tri" ed!")

Comes that