Not A Drop To Drink—Dr. George Klotzbaugh holds a "dry raindrop" in the path of a radar beam at the Westinghouse Laboratories. The make-believe drops, made from a plastic mixture, have the identical electrical behavior of real rain. Using the drops and sensitive measuring instruments, scientists can determine the effect of rain, sleet and snow on ultra-shortwave radar, the kind used by military planes.

SPORTS & by A SIXBIT CRITIC

Sloth, ignorance or some other of the seven deadly vices caused us, in a recent column, to set down the number of tie games played so far in the National Hockey League as just double the quantity of these no-decision affairs that had actually taken place. In other words, we added up the number appearing in the league standings, and then neglected to divide by two.

* * *

We hasten to express our humble apologies for this contretemps—(if we know what we mean) — with the hope that no great harm has been done to QUOTE the world's fastest sport UNQUOTE.

* * *

But our regret for the boner by no means weakens our long-held belief that games were meant to be played to a decision, and that when no efforts are made to break a deadlook—well, it may be good box-office, but it certainly isn't sport. Also, we still contend that if the well-paid gladiators understood that, in case of a deadlock, they would have to play to a sudden-death finish or else that neither team would get a point in the standing, the public would see quite a different brand of hockey, especially during the final ten minutes or so of a great many games.

* * *

Those who have watched the development and increasing popularity of basketball, ever since its comparatively recent invention by a Canadian, of recent years have been viewing with alarm the growing tendency of coaches to search the highways and byways for players showing at least a trace of giraffe in their ancestry.

* * *

According to the Good Book "the race is not always to the swift, nor the battle to the strong"; but, as an old-time gambler once said, you'll need a very healthy bankroll to bet the other way. And in no other sport, not even football, has the "good big man" such an overwhelming advantage over his just as good but smaller adversary.

These profound remarks are occasioned by the news that there has at last appeared on the basketball scene a player who must be just about a coach's dream.

* * *

He is a gentleman of color, Ray Harris by name, and he measures a mere seven feet seven inches in height. (The dispatch didn't say if that's in his stocking feet or barefoot, but possibly that doesn't matter." If you'll take the trouble—and a yardstick — to measure seven feet seven inches on the nearest telephone post, you'll have a better idea of just what a picture Mr. Harris must make when he looms up on a basketball court.

* * *

Harris, who is presently performing with a Negro professional team, can sink the apple for a couple of points merely by reaching up as he runs bast the basket, not even having to go to the bother of jumping. But great as his scoring ability must be, it is on the defense that he is most impressive.

* * *

We have often wondered how it would be in hockey if a goal tender ever appeared so broad and hefty that he completely filled the space between the posts, making it impossible to jam the puck past hm. (And the way some of the goalies pile on the padding and tack these days, that is by no means the pipe dream it might have been a few years ago.)

* * *

Well, that is practically the situation rival basketball teams are confronted with when Ray Harris is on the defence. He simply stands by the basket and taps away opponents' shots as they come, making "lay-ups" impossible. Now they're saying that if Harris gets into the basketball "tig time" he may force a revision in the rules.

* * *

However, what with winter coming on, we can think of a lot of other things better worth worrying about, such as the price of coal, clothes, alcohol — for the car radiator, naturally — shoes et caetera. Basketball is just one of several major sports in which coaches and managers have come to think that their own personal records and reputations are of far more importance than pleasing the customers. One of these days a movement will start aimed at giving games back to those who play them.

Poodles In A Puddle—Out in Hollywood, Hjordis and David Niven treat their poodles, Baba and Suza, to a boat ride in the Niven pool. With such goings on, and a master and mistress like that, a dog's life isn't what it used to be.

Shed New Light On The Bible

The ancient Hebrew scrolls—found by accident, in a cave in Transjordan—possibly date, in the opinion of experts, from the second century before Christ. Professor Plenderleith, keeper of the research laboratory of the British Museum, describes the work he is doing on some of the fragments in "London Calling."

This would seem to be the most outstanding discovery of Biblical manuscripts ever made. The whole of the Book of Isaiah — a scroll seven yards long; a considerable fragment of another Isaiah; a commentary on Habbakuk; a selection of the Psalms; several sections of the Apocrypha, as well as some other documents of the greatest historical interest — all of these were found stored in sealed jars in a cave in the hills near Jericho.

Archaeologists have now examined the jars and the scrolls, and agree that the manuscripts are genuine, possibly dating back to the second century before Christ. It is an incredible piece of good fortune that, after 2,000 years, the finest of the scrolls are in such good condition that all have been unrolled without mishap. This, I understand, is in no small measure due to the protection of the jars.

Now why is this find so very important? As we know, the Bible has been handed down to us from texts copied and recopied many times. Two of the principal sources are the Hebrew text of the ninth century A.D., called the Massoretic text, and the Greek Septuagint, translated from the Hebrew about the third century B.C. The newly discovered documents are actually 1,000 years earlier than the Massoretic text, and must be almost contemporary with the Hebrew writings from which the Greek Septuagint was derived.

Scholars are translating and comparing texts, and already we are told that there is very little change to record; the Bible has been transcribed for us down through the ages with astonishing accuracy—a tribute to the strictness and fidelity of generations of devoted scribes.

Now, in a find of this kind, it will be understood that every scrap is of the utmost value; not a word must be lost. After the main scrolls had been removed, the cave was visited and searched by Mr. Lankester Harding, the curator of antiques of Transjordan. He gleaned every fragment left in the cave, from the floor and from the jars, and it is these gleanings that he brought to me at the British Museum for examination and treatment.

The manuscripts, I find, are composed of parchment, that is, animal skin prepared for writing—in this case, probably goat skin. The ink is a carbon ink, the most permanent kind of ink, traditionally made from a mixture of soot and gum. The Hebrew writing is black and as legible today as it would have been 2,000 years ago; but the fragments from the floor of the cave, not protected by the jars, are in a sorry condition.

Some of the pieces are no bigger than a thumb nail, and in wads of 10 or 12 layers, sticking together. It is my job to separate these layers. This may sound easy, but after so long in the arid climate of Palestine, the pieces are dry and brittle, so much so that they cannot stand the most delicate manipulation without fracture.

We know that in its natural condition, parchment is soft and pliable because it contains moisture, but when old and dry it becomes brittle. If we can restore moisture to brittle parchment it again becomes pliable. The obvious way to do this might seem to be to soak the parchment with water, but this would convert it into glue; parchment, when wetted, however lightly, gelatinises on the surface. There is great danger in using too much water. However, in the laboratory we have experience of old parchment and a simple piece of apparatus for a job of this kind.

The parchment is placed on a support, in a glass vessel. In the base of the vessel is a glycerine-water mixture, which has the effect of keeping the air in the closed vessel at a predetermined humidity. In time, the parchment absorbs the moisture from the humid air, and after two hours, the specimens have again become pliable, without change in appearance. It is now possible to ease the leaves apart, thus exposing fresh layers of writing as the work proceeds.

However, there was a serious complication. At one edge of some of the wads, holding the leaves together, was a black substance like pitch. It was not pitch, but was actually a localized decomposition of the tissue to parchment glue—decomposition beyond recovery. This glue absorbed more than its share of moisture in the humidifier and became like black treacle, and threatened to spread over the small fragments and obliterate the writing. It had to be hardened again, and quickly.

What was I to do? I put a trial piece into a refrigerator, and found that this worked. Soon, the black substance solidified and lost its stickiness; and it was now possible, with the aid of a scalpel, to slip it away from the text, and so separate the leaves entirely, so that they could be mounted between glasses in preparation for study.

It was going to take time and patience to read the many fragments in my possession, but when the work is completed, there will be the satisfaction of knowing that all of the remaining script has been saved.

Knows His Stuff

Disillusioned comment of a knowledgeable English trade unionist on the tobacco situation: "If they nationalize the smokes industry, the only thing that won't strike will be the matches."

Sad But True

Melancholy sigh of a British Tory industrialist with a Biblical education: "A profit is not without honor, save in this country!"

Mental Cruelty — Divorce judge —"Now, just why do you wish a divorce, Mrs. Whanglock?"

Mrs. Whanglock — "Your Honor, you know I am the mother of the child movie star, Dimpled Dumpling, and this man never calls me anything but 'the goose that laid the golden egg'!"

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Zoe — "No, what?"

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