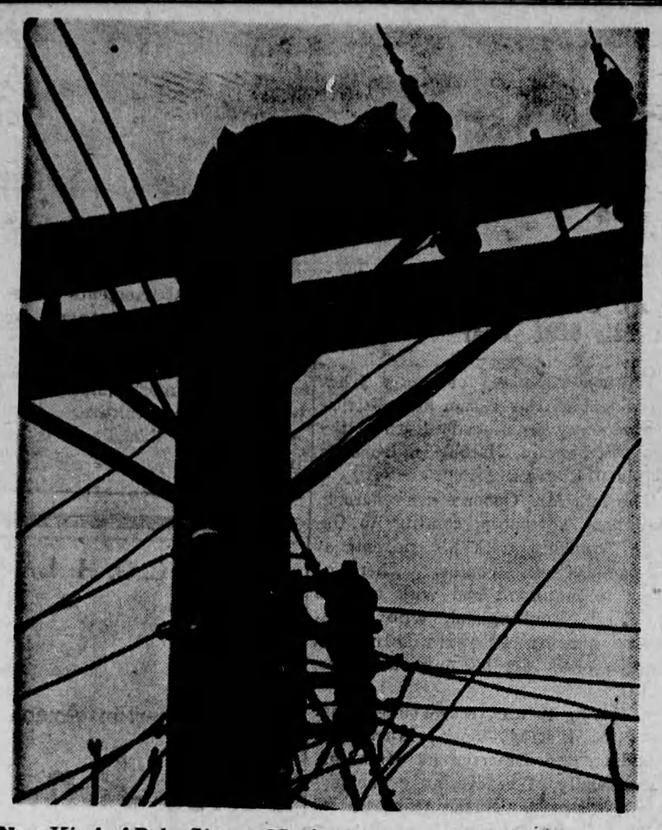

New Kind of Pole-Sitter—No food, no water, nothing for a week—that was the experience of this cat in Windsor, Ont., when chased up a hydro pole by dogs recently. The maze of live overhead wires stopped any attempt to rescue puss from the narrow crossbar 25 feet above ground—too dangerous, the hydro ruled. But the ending was a happy one. Coaxed by hunger, the cat finally inched its way through the wires that stopped man, to earth and safety.

THE FARM FRONT
by John Russell

In a fashion magazine, of all places, I ran across these verses, by an anonymous author, which I think will appeal to all fruit growers who read this column, and maybe some of the rest of you as well. The title is A FRUIT GROWER'S WILL and the verses go like this:

When I am dead
Don't send me, please
To a place with white crosses
And sad little trees.

Put me in the orchard,
Two spits deep,
Where the worms come and go
And the rootlets creep:

Where the salts and the acids,
The phosphates and lime,
Will make good apples
At apple-picking time.

And when pickers come
On an autumn day,
"That tree's a good one"
Is what they'll say.

* * *

Down in Tampa, Florida, bug-fighters from seven different countries recently attended the joint sessions of the American Entomological Society and the Association of the Economic Entomologists. And right now I'd like to say I'm glad I'm not the Mayor of Tampa—not if he had to get off those titles in his speech of welcome.

* * *

But in spite of their mouth filling tags, these scientists came out with some interesting facts about the never-ending fight against insects. Here's what one observer reported:

* * *

Men who study insect control are something like plant breeders. Theirs is a constant battle to stay one step ahead of nature. Now and then nature wins a round.

By the time Clinton oats were released, plant breeders had better varities well on the way. But nature crossed up the research men with Race 45 rust. Race 45 got here ahead of the better oats.

* * *

So it is with entomologists. This year, the European corn borer won a round. But plant breeders and entomologists win their rounds, too.

It is always a see-saw battle. For example, none of the entomologists were surprised at reports of DDT-resistant flies and mosquitoes. They knew that insects . many kinds have always built up a resistance to most poisons.

* * *

So entomologists and chemists dared not stop with DDT. They kept on looking for something better.

It is well established that many strains of flies and some mosquitoes have built up a terrific resistance to DDT in some areas.

* * *

For the moment, they can be handled with other chemicals which have not been so widely used. Nor used quite so long. It takes several generations of exposure to build up a resistant strain of bugs.

* * *

But in the Department of Agriculture laboratories at Beltsville, Frank H. Babers has one strain of house-flies that resist the action of DDT and five other chlorinated hydrocarbon chemicals in current use—like lindane and chlordane.

* * *

So it is to be expected flies will become resistant to lindane and the other chemicals now used. What will we do then? Go back to the fly-swatter?

Those resistant flies were bred so entomologists could work toward new killers. And new killers are coming. Already they have been tested, and work fine on flies. It remains to determine their danger to people.

* * *

One thing will work for sure, Entomologists at Tampa, Fla., who work with flies all agree on this. It is more important than chemical control.

Fly control begins with effective sanitation. Destroy breeding places. "Fly prevention is always better," in the words of Dr. S. W. Simmons.

* * *

What about other insect pests? Corn borers, wire-worms, cut-worms, sweet clover weevils, and so on? Do we have the answer yet?

The answer has to be "No." In corn borer research, it could be said we have come along far enough to now know how little we really know.

* * *

Maybe born borers will build up a resistance to DDT like some flies. Then we will have to use something else. One thing, however, is sure. No resistance is going to be built up until DDT corn borer control treatments have become a general practice for several corn borer generations.

* * *

Maybe by that time something better will come along — a new chemical, a resistant strain of corn, or a mechanical method.

* * *

One new approach appeals to some entomologists fighting plant-eating bugs. That is the use of brand-new chemicals that "translocate." Now we put the bug killer on the plant. In the new method, you use a bug poison which will be absorbed into the plant. It can go into the roots or through the leaves.

Then it translocates—moves into the circulation system of the plant. The bug takes a nip at the plant, or starts to bore into the stalk, and he gets a bellyful of poison.

* * *

But such a poison must not be harmful to animals or humans. That is also one of the problems facing DDT and the chlorinated hydrocarbons.

Enough tests have been made so scientists can tell you about how much DDT, chlordane, lindane or toxaphene you will find in meat, milk or eggs if animals are fed grain or roughage treated with a given amount of the chemical.

* * *

But no one can tell you what happens to humans who eat such meat, milk or eggs.

They know what happens to a rat's liver if the rat eats too much DDT. But no one knows what will happen to you or to kids that drink too much DDT in milk. Nor when it will happen. Nor how much is too much.

* * *

There, the Food and Drug Administration has to operate solely on the best opinion that can be mustered in the industry—and on the thesis, "if it ain't naturally in an apple, it ain't good for you."

For example, many research men are loaded with DDT they have absorbed. Probably spray operators are, too. Find a plump research chemist who has worked with DDT a lot. Gently slice a slab of fatty tissue from him, analyze it, and you will find DDT.

* * *

That gives you a rough idea of the problems facing entomologists. Chemicals have become vital to continued food production in many cases. These research men have to figure out something that will kill the bugs and still not hurt the people. And it must be low in cost, easy to use. It's some job!

SPORTS &c
by A SIXBIT CRITIC

"Was Joe Louis the Greatest?" is the intriguing title of an article in a recent Colliers Magazine. In it the author attempts—or at least starts out to attempt—settlement of tthe vexed question of who was the greatest heavyweight of all time. (And, by the way, no mention is made of a guy named Samson although, according to Cecil B. DeMille's latest opus, Swingin' Sam packed quite a wallop, at that. Still, Samson carried "the difference" openly, in the form of an ass's jawbone or some such, whereas more modern heavies concealed theirs in their mitts.)

* * *

We said "starts out to attempt" advisedly because, when we get to the end of the piece, we find the question still more or less unsettled. However, the author is a man whose opinion must be respected, even if not accepted, being none other than Gene Tunney, himself a pretty fair sort of leather-peddler and one of the few champions—you could count the others on the toes of a timber leg—to quit the ring with practically all his earnings intact, and his mental eggs unscrambled.

* * *

Not to keep you too long in suspense, Mr. Tunney quickly boils down the "greatest of all" contenders to a mere two—Joe Louis and Jack Dempsey. And surely it was merely by coincidence that we noticed, a couple of weeks after the piece hit the newsstands, that the Brown Bomber and the Manassa Mauler are due to "battle", some time this summer, in a movie entitled "The Battle of the Century". It wouldn't be that Mr. Tunney—and Colliers—are sort of ballyhooing that epic in advance, would it? Perish the thought!

* * *

Tunney's method of brushing aside all fighters other than Louis and Dempsey is simple—almost too simple. We'll quote just a bit of what he has to say about one of these; "By scratching out 'Black Jack' Johnson too, I'll probably earn the lifelong scorn of a small but vocal coterie which still insists that Johnson was the lad who could have leveled Joe Louis. A more or less accurate line on Johnson's real ability can be gleaned from a record book. In three of his outstanding contests, he did not register the effectiveness required of a great champion.

* * *

The three that Gene goes on to cite are Johnson's tilts with Tommy Burns, Stanley Ketchel and Jim Jeffries, pointing out that the first two were much too small to be real contenders, and that Jim Jeffries was a mere shell of his former self. But Tunney forgets to mention that in those three engagements, in fact in practically every fight he ever had, Jack Johnson was in effect fighting in handcuffs. Because of his color, and because of his out-of-the-ring antics, feeling against Jack Johnson ran so high that there are those who believe that never once, in all his career, did he dare to—or bother to—cut loose with everything he had.

* * *

"You don't have to take my word word for this apparently arbitrary dismissal of battlers whose names we were brought up to revere," continues brother Tunney. "And you don't even have to compare written records or refer to excellent treatises on the subject. Television has settled the argument definitely. Recently the coaxial cable moguls have disinterred ancient films showing every great fight since Jeffries surprised the world by kayoing Bob Fitzsimmons. These flickers, instead of supplying thrills and excitement, sent spectators into convulsions. They howled at the ridiculous-looking pork-and-beaner stances, the windmill swings and Donald Duck footwork, not to mention the beefy spare tires flopping over their trunks. Even Jack Johnson, who had a genuine touch of greatness in him, looks far from impressive in his best bouts when compared with the finely developed ring technique and clever footwork of Dempsey, Louis and others."

Gene Tunney is known, not only as a former heavyweight champion, but as something of a Shakespearean student as well. We suppose that if he should happen to see some old, scratched-up film taken of John Barrymore back in the days of the silent movies, he would conclude that Jack must have been a lousy Hamlet. Gene never happened to think that film technique might have improved considerably too with the passage of the years, did he? But no—"Television has settled the argument definitely."

* * *

Tunney describes at great length what he calls "one of the greatest ring battles of all time"—the Dempsey-Willard thing at Toledo on July 4th, 1919. Then, later on, he admits that he wasn't there personally but" has seen since in movies of the bout." Dempsey's long-swinging left hook, which smashed Jess Willard's cheekbone into fragments is, in his opinion, one of "the three mightiest blows delivered during the last three decades of boxing".

* * *

Now surely — although Gene Tunney never condescended to mingle much with the rude characters of ringdom—somebody must have told him about the very shrewd suspicion, which still persists, that Jack Dempsey, when he cut big Willard to pieces that sweltering July day, was carrying a teeny mite of illegal assistance. Some say that his bandages had been dipped into concrete which, after water had been poured over, quickly hardened into rocklike solidity. Dempsey himself has admitted that he had two or three times the legal amount of tape. There's no doubt that Willard took a terrific beating. But if his handlers had been as shrewd as those of the present day, we doubt if Dempsey would have flattened him in any three rounds, or even twice that many.

* * *

Space will not permit us to go much further into Mr. Tunney's very thought provoking article—but it is interesting to note how he goes out of his way to belittle most everything Joe Louis did and the majority of the opponents he fought. This is how he finishes the piece; "The answer to whether or not Joe Louis was the greatest ever gets down to what one thinks about Dempsey. For if Dempsey was not, surely Joe Louis was."

* * *

Tunney leaves little doubt in the reader's mind that his vote would be for the Manassa Mauler, if it came to a vote. Provoking the thought that, as he wrote those words, perchance Mr. Tunney might have been just toying with the idea, "I wonder if anybody will remember the lad who licked Jack Dempsey not once, but twice in a row—a lad by the name of Tunney."

* * *

Still, it's a fine article and one one well worth reading in its entirety, if you can manage to get hold of it. Still, it leaves us personally as convinced as ever that Joe Louis, at his best, would have licked Jack Dempsey, at tops. Also that Jack Johnson. AT HIS BEST AND WITH THE HANDCUFFS OFF, would have beaten both Dempsey and Louis—with Gene Tunney tossed in for good measure.

Iceberg Census

An "iceberg census" of the Baffin Bay region has been taken by aerial photography. It turns out that in the 1949 survey there were 40,232 icebergs in the region. These bergs later may become a menace to shipping in the Atlantic. Hundreds of spotted icebergs will disintegrate on the 2,000-mile trip before reaching the shipping lane. Others will not. Danger from these to ocean vessels on the usual routes to Europe is reduced to a minimum by the iceberg patrol of the Coast Guard.

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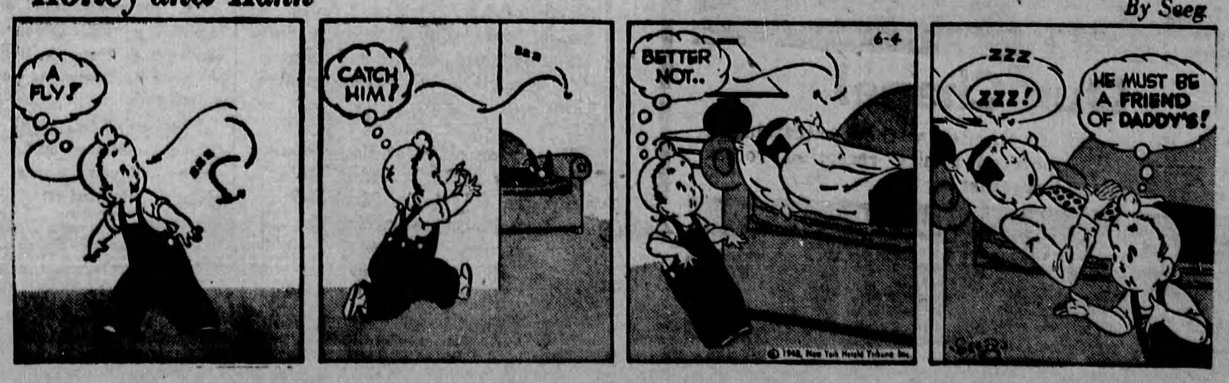
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