

Midwinter Picnic

A brilliant idea came to me recently, and wrote to a friend in California suggesting he put a black and white float in the Tournament of Roses parade next year — for people without colour television. I did not mention weather in my letter, but my friend's reply is now at hand, and he mentions weather. Why is this?

He doesn't indicate my suggestion prompted overwhelming enthusiasm; in fact he doesn't mention my suggestion at all. He just spends his time on the weather, telling about a shirt-sleeve picnic they held on the beach, where they luxuriated splendidly, and kept waving at glamorous celebrities who chanced to pass.

I get the idea that he felt I would like to know about this, since Maine's more rugged climate deprives us similar pleasures. There is something about the California mind, seemingly, which thus implies nobody can have any fun anywhere else, and I certainly am not going to write back and explain that I don't even go and sit on our lovely Maine beaches in the glad months when said beaches attract paying customers. I think I won't write to him any more at all.

Nonetheless, it so happens that we had a picnic here on the precise same day he had a picnic there, and while no glamorous personalities passed by, we didn't miss them much. Of course, a Maine picnic, when arranged by somebody like myself who knows what it's all about, is not just the usual, rough-and-tumble thing generally presumed about picnics.

I've seen these articles in magazines telling how to cook frankfurters 150 different ways so you can have variety at your cook-outs, and I am not talking about that kind of delusion. Cooking is done by the cook, and not by the fire, and when we say "picnic" we don't just mean for everybody to rush up and burn a hamburger. Anything you can do in a kitchen for a best-silver and linen show-off party can be done by a woods cook, if you get a woods cook. Just to loll on the sands and wave at celebrities and chew on sandwiches has no appeal in my circle. When we picnic, we do indeed.

So about midweek, when my kitchen help asked what might be good for Sunday dinner, I said, and I quote, "Remember that feed of fried chicken we had at Lake Helen?" She said she did. We were camping out across Ontario, and we saw so many people picknicking out of lunch



GETTING READY—Elvis Presley, in a move to prepare himself for an impending Army haircut, shows how he has had his locks trimmed to a "normal" length, including abbreviated (for him) sideburns. Presley, photographed in Hollywood, will report for Army duty in March after completing a movie.

baskets that we thought we'd educate them. We spread out our routine Maine woods-guide's outfit, and dispatched neat invitations to certain tents and trailers where we had picked up friendships, and they all came with their appetites hanging down about two feet.

We had a quarter of an acre of plump chicken breasts we had bought about 100 miles back. I made gravy, and cream-tartar biscuits, and gingerbread with whipped cream, and creamed some onions, and larded the potatoes into smooth joy, and even stomped up a turnip. It was a notable occasion at Lake Helen.

Thus I offered to repeat, and on this particular midwinter afternoon I loaded my gear on a toboggan, laced on the snowshoes, and proceeded to the clearing in the far piece, where the January sun was slanting in with more pretense than effect, and the tall pines were decked in snow. There was no wind, but the air was sharp and friendly.

I started up a whopping fire of dry pine and spruce limbs, and whaled around to provide a couple of logs to sit on. A big fire makes you stand so far back you can't get warm, but this one would dwindle to a comfy bed of embers by the time my friends arrived, and I lit a smaller fire to cook over.

Some came on snowshoes, some on skis, and some wallowed through the deep snow puffing like porpoises. Each, at a point in the road, paused to sniff the woodsmoke, as I expected they would. I had things under control when they came up and sat on the logs by the fire. No picnic should begin until the guests have had sufficient time to make wise cracks about the delay. They wouldn't be happy if all they did was start to eat.

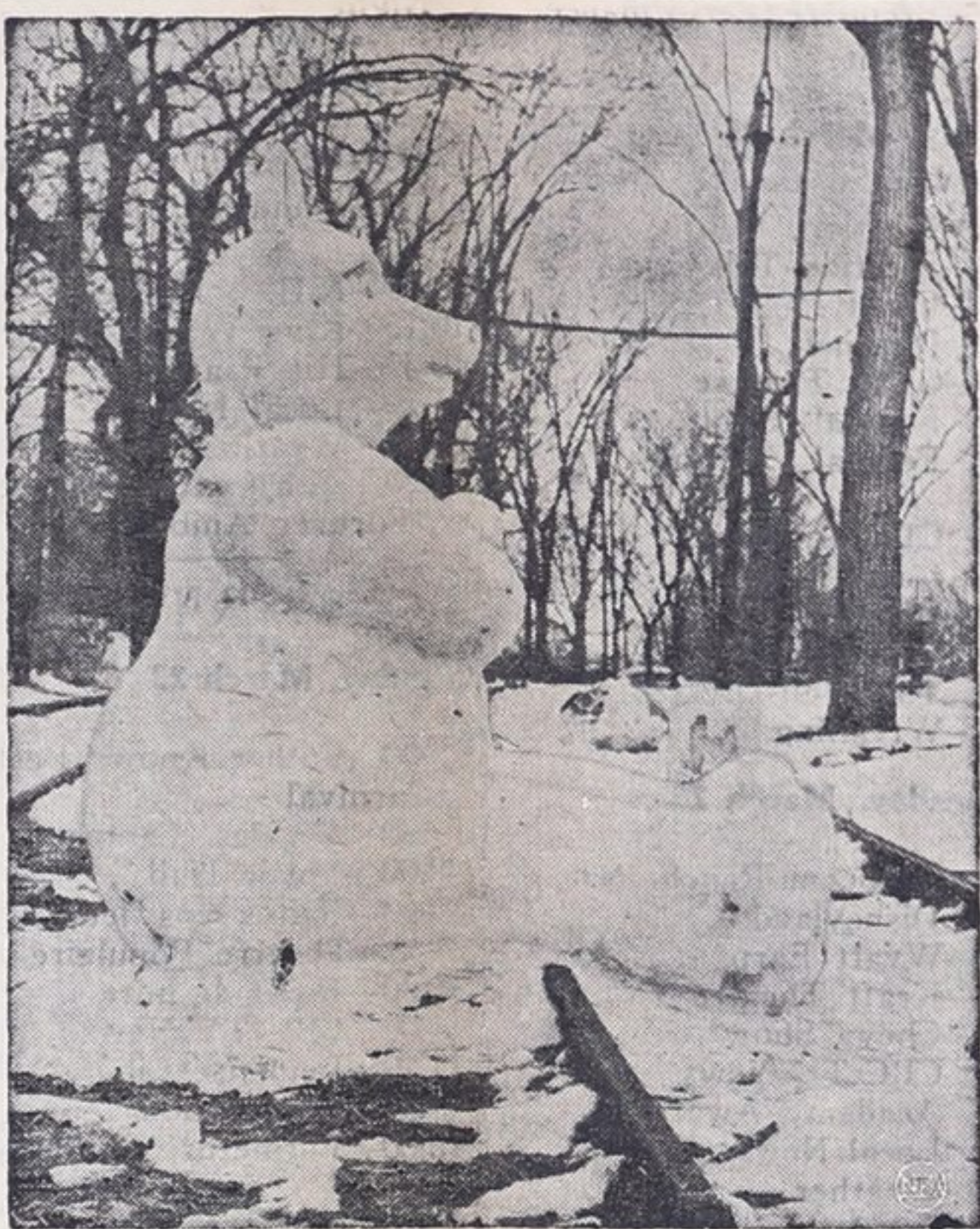
I threw some biscuits at them, but they complained because I'd omitted the butter. The butter had been frozen solid on the way from the house, so I moved it nearer the fire. It was jolly, I kept looking through the pucker-brush, wondering if some glamorous movie star might happen by so we could wave, but none did.

I always get in trouble when I mention fried chicken, but I must make it clear this is a Northern Fried Chicken, and good to eat. I do not wish to impugn any other kind, but I will say that when I cook a batch the entire region lights up with almost a hallowed glow, and people talk in whispers — as when in the presence of awe and majesty.

I kind of slap the chicken around, keeping it moist and free from the indolence of sedentary living. I let it brood a bit, and then wake it up by moving it to a hotter spot. The chicken, responding heartily, sizzles and sends forth a glad report. To one side I attend the livers, which on one of my good days are worthy of being framed and hung on the august walls of the Smithsonian Institution. Excuse me, I am carried away.

It was a wonderful picnic, in deep snow and in a chill winter temperature which kept the glamorous personalities away, as well as mosquitoes and ants. We devoured the assorted sundries down to the after-dinner mints I had stowed in the flap pocket of my mackinaw, and discovered the sun had passed over the knoll and on to his early bedtime. The evening star was peeking through the spruce tops, and her points were bright and sharp.

"We must do this often," I heard somebody say through the crunch of snow as we walked back to the farmhouse. I'd like to do it sometime for a bunch of these Californians who write about their wonderful weather, shirt-sleeves and personalities, just to see if they'd eat, or sit there and moon over home. — By John Gould, in the Christian Science Monitor.



SAFE, FOR NOW—Seated comfortably across the trolley tracks, this snow bear seemingly isn't worried about the possibility of being run over in Kansas City. Streetcars were discontinued in the city several years ago, so friend bear is in no danger of destruction—at least until the weather warms up.

THE FARM FRONT

by John Russell

Through their "Nickels for Know-How" program North Carolina farmers voluntarily foot the bill for a substantial part of the research which affects their business — the business of farming. They are well along on a hefty program to help themselves to pay the bill — or a part of the bill, anyway — for the research which contributes to their welfare, just as big industry does.

North Carolina is relatively a large state in area and population, and the most industrialized in the Southeast. It is a state, however, without any great cities. Here more people depend directly and indirectly on the farmer's welfare for their own living than in many other states.

This is, primarily, a state of small farmers. The average size of farms in North Carolina decreased from 100 acres in 1900 to 68 acres in 1956, while the national average increased from 140 to 242 acres. Presently, however, mechanization and other factors are considered to be reversing the trend in the Tar Heel State.

What prompted North Carolina farmers to start helping themselves?

In 1951 a group of "dirt" farmers, farm leaders and businessmen went into a huddle to discuss the future of the state's agriculture. They were agreed on what constituted the main problem: research. Yet just what could or might be done about it, beyond what federal and state appropriations were doing?

From these deliberations the bold and daring "Nickels for Know-How" idea took form. The name—and the program—stuck. It involved calling a statewide referendum of farmers to vote on whether or not they would pay a nickel extra for each ton of feed and fertilizer they

bought over a three-year period. The plan was that this money would be turned over to the North Carolina Agricultural Foundation at North Carolina State College in Raleigh, which in turn would channel it into vital research and educational projects.

Farmers voted virtually unanimously for the program, and have seemed to like it from the beginning. The referendum, encompassing every one of the state's 100 counties, was conducted with voluntary help and not a penny of taxpayers' money was expended. At the end of the initial three years, the farmers approved the program for another three-year period.

In 1957 they voted overwhelmingly for it again. And this time the program for the next three years was broadened to include also a levy on cotton—10 cents for each bale. In this latest referendum, 34,074 farmers voted for the program and only 2,633 against it, writes Henry Lesene in *The Christian Science Monitor*.

The "Nickels for Know-How" levy isn't, in the accepted sense, a tax. It is entirely voluntary. Any farmer can file for a refund of his contribution and receive it. Yet in six years there has not been a single request for a refund.

In the beginning, representatives of the American Feed Manufacturers Association strenuously opposed the whole idea. They raised the point as to whether such a program was actually legal. They feared, too, the idea would spread.

"It's a matter of principle with us," they argued. "If this tax goes unchallenged, it will go into every state in the Union and it won't stop at a nickel. It will become a dime, and then a dollar."

No other state, incidentally, has yet adopted such a program,

as far as is known here although State Agriculture Commissioner L. Y. Ballentine says that some inquiries are received from time to time.

In the first five years of the program, the nickels grew into a tidy sum of more than three quarters of a million dollars. That figure doesn't include the 1957 collections. Commissioner Ballentine estimates the program costs the average individual farmer about 30 cents a year.

For one thing, of course, the research is conducted in North Carolina on problems directly concerning the North Carolina farmer, and it is done by trained researchers who know the problems of the state's farmers. The program has, of course, involved almost every conceivable phase of agricultural research and encompassed every crop of any consequence in the state.

An important and significant part of the "Nickels for Know-How" plan, however, is that marketing programs are actively supported in all major commodity areas, with the objective of expanding the market for all farm products and reducing the costs of market.

For instance, working both with farmers and marketing firms, specialists engaged in the program are constantly bringing the know-how of marketing methods to the processing, packaging, and sale of the state's farm commodities.

This is considered perhaps the primary objective of the program—to get the abundance of farm commodities into the hands of consumers, to make them more enticing and serviceable and, for the farmer, more profitable.

The real strength of the unique program, according to Mr. Ballentine, is that it allows research specialists at the state college to move into areas of needed research without having to wait for federal or state appropriations.

But he notes that there have been some interesting outgrowths of the program. One, he says, is that there has been an increase in private contributions for agricultural research. Also, he says, it is a matter of past experience that a state legislature feels more inclined to help a segment of the economy that is already trying to help itself.

Rat's Tails As Movie Tickets

Most of the cinemagoers in the town of Gapan in northern Luzon are now expert rat-killers! Basilio Manuel, mayor of Gapan, couldn't persuade his townspeople to help kill the numerous rats in the district. But the people love going to the pictures, so Mayor Manuel had an idea and offered a free cinema seat for every ten rats' tails delivered to his cinema, one of the biggest in the town.

There were so many rats' tails within a few weeks that Mayor Manuel had to set aside a special night for those holding rats' tail cinema seats because the cinema couldn't cope with the crowds. Rats in the meantime are swiftly dwindling in Gapan.

Intellectual: Someone who knows when to quote what some bright fellow once said.

THE SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSON

By Rev. R. Barclay Warren
B.A., B.D.

The Church's Influence on Society (Temperance Lesson) Matthew 5:13-16; 1 Thessalonians 5:4-8; James 2:14-17.

Memory Selection: Learn to maintain good works. Titus 3:14.

Influence can't be accurately measured. Hence there are vastly different opinions as to the church's influence on society today. Some say that the church has become so worldly that her voice is no longer heeded. At any rate, it is not the pronouncements of ecclesiastical bodies that have the greatest impact for good but the everyday living of holy men and women.

Jesus said to His disciples, "Ye are the salt of the earth" and "Ye are the light of the world." As salt preserves food and makes it palatable, "so the disciples are to purify the society in which they move, setting a good example and countering every corrupt tendency." As light they are to dispel darkness and by their lives and their words bring enlightenment to those who are in sin. Their faith will find expression in good works.

The committee which sets up the International Sunday School Lessons designates one lesson in each quarter as the Temperance Lesson. Some Sunday School commentaries ignore the reference. Do you wonder why? Our guess is that it is too touchy a subject in many churches today. Many parents don't want temperance cranks telling their children that there is anything wrong with drinking. They feel it disturbs the children and may undermine their esteem for their parents who have drinking parties in their home.

Drinking reached an all-time high in Canada last year. Alcoholism is on the increase. So is the number of highway accidents and crimes in which liquor has been a factor. In this matter the greater part of the church has lost its voice. How can people who drink help those who happen to get into trouble on some occasion when they drink? Paul says, "They that be drunken are drunken in the night." But if we were to attend many of today's conventions, political and otherwise, he would find drunkenness long before nightfall. When will we waken to the evils befalling society through the use of strong drink? Drink increases our troubles. Jesus Christ can cure them.

Upside-down to Prevent Peeking



CROSSWORD PUZZLE

- ACROSS**
- Mr. Lincoln
 - Incrustations
 - Skating necessity
 - Babylonian god
 - Blind fear
 - Man's nickname
 - Past
 - Kind of mineral
 - Windlass
 - Irrigate
 - Body joint
 - Label
 - Portion
 - Syllable of hesitation
 - Droop
 - To (Scott.)
 - Religious discourse
 - Relay
 - Unclose
 - Immerse
 - Mother
 - Split
 - Tablet
 - Russian log cabin
 - Sea
 - Spotted
 - Opinion
 - Wing
 - Participial ending
 - British coins
 - Edge
 - Understand
 - Goose genus
 - Allow

- DOWN**
- Suddenly disconcerted
 - Started
 - Abscond
 - Low galter
 - Jeweler's watch
 - The pineapple
 - Large
 - Flat-bottomed boat
 - Mimic
 - Scotch marauder
 - Put forth effort
 - Doze
 - Look to be
 - Roam about
 - Staff
 - Muffin
 - Women's club
 - Noun of common gender
 - Reprise
 - Pinch
 - Suffering
 - Eucharistic plates
 - Dine
 - Move to muscle
 - Stop unintentionally
 - Misrepresent
 - Suit
 - Asiatic palm
 - Roman road
 - Low

Answer numbers on this page



RELIC OF THE QUILTING BEE—This is one of the quilts on display in the Shelburne (Vt.) Museum, where more than 300 bed coverings—the largest display in America—have been gathered together by Mrs. J. Watson Webb, founder and head of the museum. This covering, in a pattern called "Princess Feather", dates back to about 1835. The coverings are relics of the quilting bee, so popular in 19th-century America but rarely seen today.



NORTHERN BANANAS—Ronald F. Lauer, of North Olmstead, Ohio, examines the fruits of his home-grown banana tree. Lauer, an amateur grower of orchids, picked up a banana bulb while in Florida several years ago and now the tree has just about crowded everything else out of his greenhouse. Once each year the tree bears a stalk of bananas like the one above. This year Lauer, his family and friends will enjoy 156 northern-variety banana splits.