

# SUGAR AND SPICE

by Bill Smiley



## Bigtime in the bigtown

Burning desire of most city people in the blasting heat of mid-summer is to flee from the concrete canyons and head north, where there is cool, blue water and golden sand and you sleep under blankets.

Well, we live in the north, comparatively, and usually it's just as the city denizens picture it

But this summer, after sleeping under nothing but a film of sweat for three weeks, we decided to seek refuge from the heat.

How do you get it? Head farther north? Nope, you head south for the city and check into an air-conditioned hotel. With a swimming pool.

It was done on impulse, with no room reservation. We were lucky. After four phone calls, we found ourselves ensconced in a fine big room, cool as a tomb, overlooking the swank swimming pool. And yet it was right in the heart of the city.

Very pleasant. Free parking and free ice cubes appealed to my Scottish strain.

We called a few people, and by 8 o'clock the joint was jumping, room service was on the gallop, and the room was filled with everything from teenagers to a grandmother who had just knocked off her 79th birthday and was prepared to celebrate the event till dawn.

Fortunately, cooler heads prevailed, and by 11 p.m. all had gone their various ways. What to do? Too late for dinner or a show. Too early for bed.

My wife, who turns into a Go-Go Girl when she gets into a hotel room and hasn't any meals or dishes or laundry to worry about, suggested we hit the coffee-house circuit. My daughter, whose foremost desire is to do just that, but by herself, demurred.

"Who wants to go there with parents? And besides, I hear they don't allow old people into them."

"Waddaya mean, old people?" chorused her Old Lady and her Old Man.

When the kid realized there wasn't a hope of getting into

that teenage jungle on her own, she graciously permitted us to go along.

And that's how we found ourselves in famous, or infamous, Yorkville, at midnight, with about 4,000 young people strolling up and down the sacred couple of blocks, on their nightly pilgrimage.

Within five minutes, we'd been spotted by one of my students, who seemed delighted to catch Mr. Smiley in the act, so to speak. We took refuge in a cellar joint.

Maybe I'm getting old and crusty. But the coffee houses have changed greatly, and for the worse, in the five years since I've been there.

Then, they were run by enthusiastic amateurs, you could spend a whole evening for a dollar and a quarter, and the music was provided by young folk singers, some lousy, some good, but all serious and rather sweet.

Now they've gone commercial. There's a stiffish cover charge, coffee is 50 cents a wallop and rotten, and the music, provided by groups whose sole purpose seems to be to drive you right out of your skull, is one great blast of electronic noise and shouting.

Ironically, the places have become too expensive for most of the young people they were originally intended for. Perhaps that's why they walk up and down outside in one vast, rolling crowd that is always potentially a mob.

Oh, well, it was a good weekend. We had budgeted for one night only. But we didn't wake up until checking-out time, it was still steaming hot outside, and the girls came up with some of that weird feminine logic which proved that we could afford it if we cut down on something or other. So I was hooked for another 24 hours of pretending to be a millionaire.

We loafed, swam, watched the real rich people spoiling their kids, had an Italian dinner, and took in Eric Nicol's comedy, catching three seats in the sec-

ond row by pure luck. Enjoyed it, but I'm afraid it will hit Broadway about the same year I win the Nobel prize.

And home Sunday, up the highway north, rested and re-

freshed, and laughing all the way at those sun-burned, exhausted vacationers pouring south, on their way back from the sizzling north to the tropical city.



Mrs. Corrigan left, and Mrs. Helmink - Photo by G. Whiteley

Many friends and neighbours of Mrs. Rose Corrigan met together at her farewell party held Sunday in the basement of St. Martin's Church. It proved an overwhelming surprise to Mrs. Corrigan who came to the Church expecting to serve tea to members of the Catholic Girls' Club.

After being greeted by the welcoming committee of Mrs. Margaret Helmink and Mrs. Peggy Regis, an attractive corsage was presented to the guest of honour. A game followed - being won by Mrs. Whiteley.

Jane Persson entertained with two songs and while the lunch committee got on with their chores a general sing-song took place with Mrs. M. Simmer as accompanist.

In memory of her participation in many Rimmoli games her friends gave her continued page 8.....



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