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Antony Lovric and his 85 year old father, Bart, emigrated to this country from Yugoslavia. They are converting the ship in the background, LaMerced, into a maritime museum; a dream come true.
Klipsun
Contains
Volume 5, Number 6

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Josten's American Yearbook Company,
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Jane Starr isn't her real name, and being a housewife and mother isn't her only game. Jane Starr is a part-time prostitute in Bellingham.

Jane is a good-looking woman by an standard. Her long legs, proud carriage and good facial bones cause people to stop and take a second look at her. This day she was culturally tailored in a gray suit. She wore brown reptile pumps and carried a smart bag to match.

Her voice didn't quite harmonize with her appearance. Her words came out flat and clipped. She spoke with sardonic authority about her life.

Jane said she's not ashamed of her part-time work. "Listen, I used to be an executive secretary. I made good money, and I suppose it was an enviable job for a woman."

"I had to put up with twice as much crap and corruption on that job as I do now. I was really a prostitute then. I was not selling my body but I was selling my pride and my belief in myself."

We were sitting at a downtown bar. It was a little after the lunch hour and a few of the town's businessmen were still hanging around. Now and then I'd see a secret knowing look pass between Jane and one of the men.

One guy at the bar kept trying to catch Jane's words. He was trying to act disinterested but only managed to look like a clown.

Jane gave him a long, hard look. The look poured contempt over his head like hot syrup over a flapjack. She didn't raise her voice but the words reached every corner of the room. "Let's move to a table where we have some privacy."

A waitress came to our table and inquired about our drinks. Jane, in one of the few unfeminine motions she ever makes, snapped her half-finished drink to her lips, threw her head back with a spray of red hair and drained the glass. She wasted no words.

"Another one. Just the same." There was a furtive air of desperation in the way she stiff-armed the empty glass toward the waitress.

She gave me a sardonic grin. "Blessed booze. This memory will self-destruct in five minutes."

Her drink came and she continued. "Really, I was just a housewife in a tailored suit. I still had to take care of the petty things — the little unimportant things that the terribly brilliant, terribly important bosses didn't have time to fool with.

"And there was still the bedroom. Excuses for late night work usually ended in a suggestion that I go with the boss to some motel."

She laughed. The sound rippled across the room but it wasn't pleasant. "They gave a lot of reasons. It would relieve their tensions. Their wives didn't understand them. We could work together better after we got to really know each other."

I was still on my first drink. She ordered her third. "I usually said no. I usually did, but sometimes I didn't. Every once in a while a guy would come along with an offer I couldn't refuse. Like this one guy, he was ugly as hell, and I didn't think he even knew I was a woman."

"Then one day he walked up to my desk and said, 'I'm as horny as a three-peckered billy goat and you're a damned fine looking woman. Let's have dinner tonight,' and I went."

She remembered, and her green eyes went momentarily soft. "Damned if I know why I went. Not after a kookie opening like that, but later I was glad. He sure knew how to treat a lady. It was his honesty, I guess."

The dream left her eyes, and once again they were wise and knowing.

"Honesty. That was a pretty rare commodity in that business. Most of the guys I work with now are honest. They have no reason not to be. I know what they want, and they know my price. It's an uncomplicated business arrangement."

The bar was almost deserted. The bartender gave us an occasional bored glance. He knew Jane and probably figured I was trying to get her price down. The waitress ignored us except to refill the glasses when we motioned. I ordered another round and Jane insisted on paying. She sought no favors.
Most of the guys I work with are honest.

Her drink had a maraschino cherry in it. She took it out, laid it on the napkin and stabbed it viciously with a toothpick. When she started talking again, she changed the subject.

She said she had known me for a long time, and I had never been curious about her life before. She wondered why the sudden interest.

"I never figured you for a window peeper, so why the questions now?"

I told her I wanted to write a story. I thought she had seen a part of life that most of us only speculate about. I thought she had things to say that need to be heard.

Jane thought about it for a while. "What if I say no?" I told her I wouldn't write it if she didn't agree.

She reached across the table and laid her hand on mine. I had known her for a year and it was the first time we had touched. "I like you." It was a simple flat statement and it rang true. "You remind me of that three-peekered billy goat. Kinda honest and kinda horny. But I think you're also kinda horny for people's souls. Write it."

I said, "Jane Starr, you're one helluva gal." She gave me a smile full of mockery and said, "I believe I've heard that a few times before."

I asked her how she felt about married men coming to her.

"Hell, I don't mind. Their money is good." She lost some of the hard sound. "Anyway, a lot of those Johns really need a woman. You probably won't believe this but lots of them come to me and pay and don't expect sex at all.

"Some of them can't even get it up. Their ego has been busted down so far they've forgotten what the man act is. I'll tell you this. If a lot of those silly bitches whose husbands come to me would try my work for a while, there would be fewer divorces."

She said she was hungry and ordered the biggest steak on the menu, rare, almost raw. She kept trying to get me to eat. I said I wasn't hungry, and she said she stayed hungry. "I get a lot of exercise, you know." She said it matter-of-factly.

I asked her about weirdos. She said she gets some of them here, but not as many as she did in San Francisco. "I had a young guy out there that used to pay me 50 bucks to wear just a pair of spike heels and a hat with feathers in it. He'd lay naked on the floor and have me walk around on his stomach and crow like a rooster. It got so damned bad I was afraid I was going to start chasing hens."

I said he sounded like a guy that needed help. Her voice seemed almost soft. "I guess you're right. And I guess in some strange way I gave him some help. He always went away happy."

She said a lot of her clients had fantasies. I said I thought sex was all fantasy and she disagreed.

"Some of my guys are really basic. I mean they come to that bed knowing exactly what they want. No frills, no fancy stuff. Just plain hard baling. I like those guys."

I asked her how her husband felt about her work. I went too far. Her eyes glittered pain. "He doesn't know. At least I don't think he does."

She said he thinks the money comes from another source. She said, even though he's never been very successful in making or holding on to money, she thinks he's a good man and she respects him.

I asked her if she loved him, and she looked puzzled. "Well, sure I do. Didn't I just tell you?"

I said I didn't think of it as being quite the same. She gave me the quizzical look again, and said she didn't understand. I told her to skip it but she wasn't ready to go away from it yet.

"I want you to understand that it's important to me that he doesn't find out. I'm not ashamed, but it would hurt his ego, and I don't want that." I wondered if Jane Starr's honesty was covered by a thin veneer of rationalization.

I asked her about her kids. She was composed again and speaking in the peculiar clipped tones. She said there was no reason they would ever know. She said they had things now they wouldn't have if she didn't work. Material advantages seemed very important to her.

I asked about her family, the one that raised her. She didn't want to talk about it. She said they were very poor, and that's all she'd say.

The steak came. It was beautiful, and she cut into it and began to eat the blood-red meat with obvious pleasure.

"That's enough questions for today, heart."

And that was the end of the interview. After all, a working girl has to eat.
"When 10,000 things are viewed in their oneness, we return to the Origin and remain where we have always been." — Sen T'Sen

Teodoro Morca lives as dance. A composition in movement, a cycle of change. Teodoro Morca, dance, crisp and rhythmic, is a footpace, a footfall, clipping and sliding — thrust. Ordering direction, demanding attention, Teodoro Morca, one dance.

Widened eyes, dance stares and glares. Hypnotizing the hurried eyes, hassled from crowds and streets. Dance's eyes mesmerize prisoners — chained to new magic movement.

Cobra arms protracting coils. Unwinding, through foot cadence, in endless circles, whirling and twirling. Stop. The footfall changes. Quicker.

Skeletal fingers, voice of the dance, Teodoro Morca, stretching, contracting in shape-shifting rhythm, expanding the air around a billowing hood, above sensuous hips — thrust. Twisting a sigh, uttering a cry, OLE! Heel — ta-ta-, ta-ta, ta-ta. Spits a staccato burst! Awakening, ejecting Teodoro, dance. Clacking momentum, heel work compels body’s rhythms. A lashing turn, a foot slap down, rippling waves swelling to every eye. Morca, dance, 10,000 parts, one dazzling dance.

Complete in the Tao, poised at the peak, he snaps out and strikes. Silence.
The door swung open silently and Ted Stearns, a retired locomotive engineer stepped backward beside it. His smile, folded over the corners of his mouth, was hesitant and brief. A cigar smoked in his right hand. His face formed a home of memorable etchings. High cheek bones protruded outward, pulling his facial skin tightly from temple to chin. His nose, in a thin straight line, rose upward with immediate abruptness from his brow and continued downward to a rounded nub. Clear blue eyes flickered back and forth with nervous penetration.

Shoes, polished and neat, supported the weight of his thin frame. A bow tie in brown and white stripes jutted from beneath his jacket. Brown, double-knit slacks hung loosely from his waist. He shifted his weight uncomfortably, staring out into the morning light, a look of doubt folding lines into his face. It was 10 a.m.

His voice, in a stammering, weak monotone, finally broke with expression, "Please come in, come right in."
Once inside, he pressed his cigar against a porcelain tray waiting to receive it, and carried both across the room, placing them from sight atop a piano. Then, in quick short steps, he turned toward the living room and eased himself into a black vinyl chair beside the couch. A clock on the fireplace mantle ticked in successive, ill-tempered beats.

With gentle prodding and soft coaching, Stearns began talking about his railroad days. "I begun working on the railroads when I was 21. That was in 1919. Mostly I just enjoyed traveling around and seeing things."

Stearns was born third into a family of 10 children, five boys and five girls. He was raised on a farm in Chehalis, Washington, and has spent the past 77 years of his life living in the Northwest.

The railroads to Stearns as a child, seemed full of adventure and enchantment. Huge engines would rumble through and pass, as a boy, tucked away in an isolated community watched them move into the distance. Their mystery twisted longing into his life, and he began planning his future, dreaming of the day he, too, would ride the trains.

"When I was a boy, I was in love with railroads. On the farm I could see the trains going by and hear the whistles; I thought it would be wonderful to be out there."

Stearns crossed his legs carefully, studying the soft plaid pattern on his jacket sleeve. A few strands of thin, grey hair fell forward and he let them hang momentarily as though they were fragile fragments from his past.

Stearns first began his work on the locomotives as a coal shoveler on a 50-mile run between Chehalis, Raymond and Maytown, Washington. "But you wouldn't know where that was," Stearns smiled softly. "It isn't there now. It was just a little run then, now it's gone.

"We had coal locomotives with steam engines when I first started; it was a dirty job shoveling the coal by hand. I done a lot of it when I was a young man," Stearns said. "In 1928, we started using oil and it was a lot better."

Stearns' early work on the railroad netted him 26 cents an hour. "I worked from eight to 16 hours a day then," he said. "I liked it."

Stearns worked for the small independent railroad on the Chehalis run for four years, slowly moving up from coal shoveler to breakman and finally in 1923, he became engineer. Then, in 1924, he went to work for Weyerhaeuser. "When times got hard, you know, the depression and all, I begun working for a big outfit hauling logs. I was running the engine then, too, I loved to run a locomotive, that's why I worked at it. . . . I tell you, I always loved my work; always enjoyed what I was doing."

As he spoke, his eyes reflected the memories and his hands, gathered together in his lap, formed tight fists of excitement.

Pulling himself forward with knees jutting outward, Stearns reached for several magazines and books at his feet. "These are pictures of locomotives when I was running," he said.

The pictures had well-worn edges and spots of oil darkened the edges. Large, ominous engines with steam rolling from their stacks sat heavily on wood-split ties. Men with rolled socks folded over their boots, suspenders and upturned shirt sleeves stood about the pictured engines.

Stearns pointed to each, recalling the names and faces with scant memories of a fading past. "Bill here, I worked with him for awhile, we had some good times, but I don't know where he is anymore. I used to know, but not anymore."

Folding the books and stacking them neatly at his side, Stearns recounted his early work on the railroad. "When I was a boy, I was in love with railroads. On the farm I could see the trains going by and hear the whistles; I thought it would be wonderful to be out there."

"Once, when one of the boys couldn't make the bell ring the way I liked it, I went on top of the engine to fix it myself. The thing is, I got electrified. One of the firemen turned the current on and 3,400 volts went through me." Stearns, as though uncertain of the story's validity himself, held his hands out as evidence of his misfortune. A set of deep scar lines, reddened and twisted ran lengthwise across his palms. He held them extended for a few moments, then rubbing them together, he curled them in his lap, winding them down between his legs for warmth.

"Another time," Stearns said, "an engine I was driving down a small incline began to tip. I thought it was going to tip over, so I jumped out of the locomotive and hit the ground running, staying there beside it until I knew everything was okay. Then, just before the locomotive went over the bridge (still on the track) I swung back on. Nobody got hurt, we were lucky."

Fingers of light worked their way across the living room rug, casting lazy shadows against the far wall. The afternoon sun was high, as high as it could get before its inevitable disappearance behind the evening's wall of darkness. Stearns' body, in accord with the day, seemed to sag like a meadow flower in late summer worn and weak from the heat. His reflections had swollen out of control, hungrily soaking up the minutes of his time, bearing him away into silence. His talking, like the days of his life with the railroad, had come to an end.
"Highland Hall is a zoo!"
Wrong. Just because some people
are afraid to be there after dark
doesn’t make Highland Hall a zoo.
Still, there’s something just plain
bonkers about the top floor of the
Shuksan wing in Lower Highland.
What is this “just plain bonkers?”
Could it have anything to do with the
shaving cream on the phone ear­
pieces? How about the Elmer’s glue in
the doorknobs? And shooting the
moon in broad daylight?
The bizarre “Highland plague”
translates into four people and a
white apparition. Without Chain­
saw, Mad Dog, The Big One, Perv
and the white apparition, Highland
Hall would not be the cultural mecca
of the campus.

It’s early evening. Ken “You can
call me Perv” (last name withheld)
sits in his room gargling suds. He’s
studied for about an hour so far and
has decided to call it quits.
He turns his stereo up. Gordon
Lightfoot pounds down through his
floor and disturbs the guy below. He
hears a hard knocking under his floor
— the guy below wants the volume
down.
“What!?" Perv screams through
an alcoholic fog. He grabs a chair
and bangs it down on his floor several
times.
Dean “Chainsaw” Morris doesn’t
feel he has to put up with all the
racket. He saunters over to Perv’s
room and silently motions him to cool
it.
Suddenly, an old Australian in a
room across the hall awakens from
his post-dinner nap and starts talking
to himself about Phillips-head screw­
drivers.
Bill “The Big One” Robinson, a
49-year-old tech major who looks
older than God, gets up and
stretches, barely awake.
He gets a sharp knock on his door.
Half-hypnotized, he opens the door.
He finds a half-bombed, grinning
Perv staring him in the face.
“Dammit, keep it down in there!
Can’t you see I’m trying to study?”
“Don’t give me that, Junior. I was
dozing.”
“Crap!? That’d be the best you’d
ever get Stick our your head in a
drain pipe, ruby lips!”
Unshaken, The Big One hobbles
down the hall and into the can where
he finds Chainsaw taking a shower.
“Is that all you have to say?” The
Big One asks.
The door to the can opens slowly to
reveal an ambassador from the Yukon.
Bob “Mad Dog” Williams, a tech
major from British Columbia, stands
in the doorway.
“Canaja, ay!?” he quips.
Perv shouts from down the hall.
“What a pair of headlights!”
“Right,” Mad Dog returns.
He enters the can, crosses to the
window and looks up into the sky.
There’s a full moon out. His face
turns ashen white. Will he make it
back to his room in time?
Mad Dog quickly sidesteps down to
his room and jumps inside, locking
the door behind him.
Nearly out of breath, the aged
verbal gymnast walks across his
room, pokes his head out his window
and surveys the empty courtyard
below. “Right.”
He then shuts the window, pulls
the shades and grins sardonically.
“Canaja, ay!?"
A reel-to-reel tape deck begins to
bellow an old Peter, Paul and Mary
tune.
Mad Dog lays down on his bed to
read a book. Turn a page — “Right.”
Light up a cigarette — “Right.” Shut
off the lamp — “Right.” Just before
nodding off, Mad Dog whispers
forlornly into the darkness. “Canaja,
ay!?” All is well.
Back in the can, Chainsaw steps
out of the shower, dresses and turns
to leave.
“You’re really outspoken tonight
aren’t you, my beauty?” The Big One
blurs.
Chainsaw walks back to his room
in mock fear and opens his door just
in time to answer his phone. He picks
it up and gets an earful of shaving
cream. Howling like an enraged
beast, Chainsaw thrashes about his
room in agony.
On his way back, The Big One
pounds on the door to room 19. “Say
good night, Pete!”
He staggers back to his room,
muttering something about “Tie me
kangaroos down, sport . . .”
Chainsaw, beaten into crushed
submission, falls asleep.
The Big One reenters his room and
thumps on the wall separating his
room from Chainsaw’s. “Say good­
night, Pete!” he shouts to no one in
particular.
Things quiet down. But Perv still
gargles his suds alone in his room and

by Pete Mackenzie
shouts out his window whenever a woman walks by outside. "Hey, hey, hey!!" he drools passionately.

Another knocking from below. "What??" Again he grabs a chair and pounds on his floor.

Exhausted, he sits back in an over-stuffed armchair and counts the bubbles in his beer as the hours tick away.

The hallway silently waits for more to come. Every night like clockwork, the white apparition walks the halls when both hands are on 12. The full moon drifts across the sky and Mad Dog occasionally mumbles in his sleep.

Chainsaw wakes up around midnight, goes out into the hall and whispers goodnight to his door. Before he can get back into his room and safely out of reach, Perv peeks out from behind his door, "Yeah! Same to you, buddy!!"

The Big One, wakened by the exchange, enters the hall. It's all over. He bellows, "Have you seen it yet? It's the most disgusting thing I've ever seen! When it comes out, I'm going to pinch it where it counts!"

A door opens, softly — guardedly. It's the apparition, carefully emerging from 19 and tip-toeing south.

Perv: "It's a wonder it can still stand! Look at the size of that thing!"

The Big One: "That's what she said."

Chainsaw: "Hear them buzzards out there? They're gunnin' fer ya!"

The apparition says nothing and, paralyzed with fear, stops in its tracks.

Mad Dog walks nonchalantly out into the hall. "Canaja, ay!?!"

Perv: "Who is this dork?"

Mad Dog: "Right."

Chainsaw: "Look!!!"

He points toward the apparition, which is now leaning in a menacing way. Its eyes have turned deep red, and it has begun to undulate spasmodically.

Chainsaw: "I'm going to pinch it so it won't forget."

Perv gasps. Chainsaw snickers and The Big One hobbles toward the grim specter.

The Big One: "Come to me, my beauty!"

Mad Dog: "Right."

Chainsaw: "Time to say goodnight. I've seen this before. It's disgusting."

Perv: "Sit on it!"

Chainsaw bows out, Perv looks bored and the apparition fights for its life as The Big One pinches it again and again.

Mad Dog: "Canaja, ay?!!"

The Big One: "Don't you wrap that around my neck! Get in there, Junior."

Mad Dog: "Right."

The apparition, crushed and defeated, limps into its hovel. It steps into a frothing puddle of shaving cream.

Livid with rage, the apparition storms back into a now-empty hall and roars in defiance:

"You animals are really degenerate! It's no wonder people are afraid to come up here at night!"

Mad Dog, in thoughtful repose, answers from caverns unknown: "Right."
Many bright-eyed-and-bushy-tailed freshmen newly arriving on the collegiate scene suffer the torments of the damned because they cannot handle themselves properly at the most important of all academic functions — the kegger.

You can blow your lunch in class. You can maintain a one-point grade average. You can even cut the cheese at an early-morning Christian sing-along in Red Square — nothing will be so damaging to your ego or scholastic career as an ignorance of proper Kegger Etiquette.

Though the rules to follow at one of these intellectual gatherings are many, the first step to becoming an up-and-coming brew swiller is to find the right type of party to suit you. Size, shape and patronization of keggers are varied, and the student should select one to suit his or her taste and needs.

For example, if you are a woman and not escorted by at least three blackbelts, avoid rugby team keggers at all costs. We know of one girl who found herself alone at a rugby kegger. The doctors say her pelvis is knitting nicely and she'll be off her crutches in a few months.

And nothing is more unnerving for a "straight" student than ending up at a kegger sponsored by a gay students' group.

So we suggest you check around — by asking your friends or by consulting the signs announcing keggers that flourish on campus nearly every Friday — and see what's offered. Then, consult an expert (there's usually one in every crowd) and see what location is the most promising for your needs.

So you've found the suitable kegger, you've paid your money and you have your cup. Now what?

The first thing to remember is DON'T panic. You may find your self emerged in a sea of human flesh all flowing in the same direction. You may experience that intense pain in your nether area associated with large amounts of liquid, and find no place to be alone. Or worst of all, the keg may run dry.

But there's a certain way to handle yourself in each of those predicaments that have been handed down from generations past. If you follow a few basic rules, you'll save the heartbreak of having all your classmates ignore you.

If you're lucky enough to find a crowded party, you will inevitably find yourself caught up in a rush for the keg. You might wind up with your braces locked to someone else's, or something more embarrassing. No matter what, never try to force yourself away from someone because this means you don't like him and he'll be hurt (and later, so will you). And anyway, there's probably no way out of the line. So even, if you're facing some one whose breath smells like he's been grazing in a well-used cow pasture, grin, as they say, and bear it.

If the crowd is very large, you'll have as much chance at the bathroom as a McDonald's franchise in Hanoi so you'd better check the alternatives out in advance.

When you first arrive at the party, check the surroundings. Ask yourself if there's a good place to hide and remember all that you see. But if there isn't a tree or bush to be seen, there's still a few things you can do to mask your activities.

You can always pretend you're checking the mail. Just stand in front of the mail box and peer inside while you are doing your duty. Or, if you're really into it, you can turn a hose up your pant leg. Of course you can join the rugby team and pee anywhere and on anyone you like.

Above all, never under any circumstances allow yourself to throw up. We know of several bright students who've been denied admission to graduate school merely because they barfed at a kegger in their younger days.

Finally, you may find the keg is empty before you're full. If this happens, tip it forward; there may be some left. If no one else wants to chip in for another you can find all the half-empty (or half-full) cups and drain them. Or you can start the whole cycle over again and look for another party.

Well, this is not even the half of it. There are rules for those who want to have their own keggers and rules for those more advanced in the art. All this article pretends to supply is the basics for the unininitiated few.

But with a little practice, anyone can find himself on the way to a degree or diploma in this, the wonderful world of college.

Dr. Krank von Biertrinken's Guide to Kegger Etiquette

by Dan Hanson

Following is a list of some of the more prominent kegger locations in Bellingham and vital information on the types of keggers held there in the past.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Average No. of kegs:</th>
<th>No.of people/type:</th>
<th>Etc.:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7500 Happy Ave.</td>
<td>3 per party</td>
<td>150/loose</td>
<td>Only one pregnancy in three years.*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>614 Mudshark St.</td>
<td>10 per party</td>
<td>110/rugby players and friends.</td>
<td>At least one damaged rib per party.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>117 Easy St.</td>
<td>½ per party</td>
<td>5/straight</td>
<td>No dope, gambling or women on premises.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18 Badlands Dr.</td>
<td>8 per party</td>
<td>1000/Indians</td>
<td>No taps for keg. The owner of the house opens the kegs with his teeth.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Tubular
KLIPSUN GALLERY
The temperature at Da Nang Air Base was 115 degrees the day Arreguin died. At three in the afternoon, the only shade to soften the sun's glare hid under the eaves of a tin-roofed hooch a few yards from the air strip, but there was no relief from the heat.

Five Marines stood in the shade. Occasionally one of them would check the time or play with the settings on his camera. They said little except for the pair squatting Vietnamese-style in the dirt, playing cribbage. Their jungle uniforms were clean and none carried a weapon. They were all going home the day Arreguin died.

The five had left the states with 1,500 others on a merchant ship more than 13 months before. The trip had taken 22 days and the temperature in Da Nang had been 137 degrees on the afternoon they hit the beach at the city park. Instead of war, they met two Marines with a truckload of box lunches. They had no weapons that day either. That was the afternoon they met Arreguin.

Arreguin was not a stereotypical Marine. He was loose, gangly in the way he loped rather than walked. He stood a few inches shorter than six feet and his hair shined as black as hair could be (though not nearly as short as the first sergeant wanted it). His broad forehead and features angled around his dark eyes to his smile. He smiled most of the time, though when he walked alone, he could sometimes be seen bent forward and frowning.

The day Arreguin met the five they were actually 10, but during the next year fate harvested half of them for taxes. Both of the cribbage players fell for Arreguin's easy ways almost immediately. Part of his restless, crazy spirit resided in each of them and they knew him for it.

His aimless chatter often degenerated to bullshit, but he rambled away that evening, sharing some of his stashed beer and the inside gossip about sergeants and rules to be circumvented. He had learned about Marine Corps justice the hard way during his 10 months in the country; busted from corporal to private in a series of three minor offenses. But he didn't seem to care much. He was a short-timer with only 60 days left to serve in the war zone.

Two months later he left Indochina, not for home, but for duty on Okinawa, three air hours away. He extended his overseas tour six months to be where the living was easier than stateside. Arreguin didn't want to go home to face a world that he wasn't going to understand and that would not understand him either.

Late in November, one of the cribbage players arrived at Kue Hospital on Okinawa to be treated as an outpatient for a severe hearing loss suffered during combat. A few days later he again met Arreguin, who helped him wrangle a position in "D" Company, which was living an easy life a few miles up the coast.
The following morning, the sergeant major told Arreguin he would throw him in the brig for 60 days, but Arreguin knew he hadn’t done enough to deserve that punishment nor the beating he had suffered. His black eyes and cuts could testify and so could he. He informed the sergeant major he would formally charge the men who had brutalized him.

Marine sergeants major cringe at bad publicity. This particular one’s persistent efforts to change Arreguin’s mind failed miserably. He, in fact, personally delivered Arreguin’s formal letter of complaint to the brigade commander who also disliked bad publicity. He was duty bound, however, to honor the complaint unless he could find a pseudo-honorable way around it. He found a way.

The general offered to drop any charges against Arreguin if he would drop his charges against the MPs and join the brigade which was about to embark for offshore duty in Vietnamese waters. Aided by the sergeant major’s fatherly advice, Arreguin accepted the bribe, extended his tour overseas for another six months and left with the brigade.

A week later, the cribbage player also returned to the combat zone, but to his old unit. He reestablished himself in a less dangerous position than he had been in before; able to play cards with his cribbage partner and squeeze in occasional hand of gin rummy with the chaplain.

Arreguin’s life, however, took a different turn. The war he returned to was completely different from the war he had left months before. Instead of occasional firefight with Viet Cong or harassment from booby traps, the Marines encountered a full-scale war. Landing under fire, battling artillery and the strength and stamina of the North Vietnamese Army, the brigade grew combat hardened scars.

And Arreguin’s fear surfaced.

The cribbage players knew it in March when they saw him for the first time since he had returned. He was dirty, as were most field Marines, but his head was bent lower, his eyes set deeper and his smile lingered back for a few moments before it could break free.

He even laughed when he talked about the green troops he was traveling with. Ninety per cent of them had not known combat until the series of landings they made that spring. Arreguin worked as a correspondent, whose duty it was to report the war from the Marine Corps’ point of view. However, he spent much of his time aiding mortar teams, helping carry ammunition and loading the wounded onto choppers. Tension and fear held sway over his movements and a passing phrase about being "in the shit" was all he could say about the new war. Arreguin might have wished he had gone home instead of bargaining with the old sergeant major. There was no one to relieve him, no one to hold him. Time was half a step behind him when he returned to his company at Con Thien, a few hundred meters south of the DMZ.

The cribbage players were also wrestling with time and fear. Each of them had lost over 40 pounds during their year in and out of combat; some of the weight lost to malnutrition, some to fear. They had entrenched their fear behind sandbags deep in their minds. They had helped each other through difficult, tearful nights until the shock mellowed. Arreguin emitted the same painful smell of fear. He, too, needed communion. But to admit his need, the cribbage players would have had to readmit their own. They could not have withstood the shock, so they remained bent for home.

The middle of May finally arrived and it was 115 degrees in the shade at Da Nang Air Base. Fully acclimated, none of the five were sweating from the heat. A dusty Marine photographer from Con Thien, anger twisting his face, brought them news from up north.

At eight o’clock that morning, Arreguin walked across his compound with a canteen cup full of fresh coffee. An enemy mortar round hit him directly on the shoulder and blew him away. There weren’t enough pieces to send home, wherever that was.

Their camaraderie relieved both of them, yet their conversations barely penetrated the fortifications they had built in the rice paddies and hills north of Da Nang. Instead, they talked of friends, played gin rummy, shot pool and often went into town, even when they had no money between them. The cribbage player had been promoted to corporal and fended overnight passes for both of them. Overnights were unavailable to Arreguin, still a private and usually in trouble with the first sergeant. Outside the chain fence and away from the trouble, the two friends found temporary solace in the warm arms of Okinawan whores in an Oriental hotel.

One of those nights, Arreguin drank too much tequila, as a lonely Chicano might, and was arrested and beaten by two white Marine MPs.
Her birthdate is April 21. That makes her a Taurus, on a cusp of Aries. In physical terms, neither category would describe her. She has not the brawn and muscle of the bull, nor the strength and agility of the ram. Rather, she is a slender, small package covered with soft, smooth wrinkles. Her smile is strong and eager, and I was impressed by her insistence I sit while she stood unaided throughout the interview. Asked the year she was born, the best advice she could give was to find the year that Washington became a state, for she was six then. Not having that information readily at hand, I straight away asked her age. Without a woman's usual unfounded reluctance to disclose this statistic, she readily answered 93.

From my previous experience in nursing homes, I honestly expected Mrs. Mahan to be a dribbly, shaky, stale-breathed creature whose craving for affection and attention would smother me before the sick-sweet smell of the surroundings did. To my pleasure, I realized how the tables had been turned when I found myself spellbound as she spoke. Her life is a refreshing contradiction to the parched image of old age. Her story is the history of Bellingham, seen through the occasionally foggy but often amazingly clear eyes of a humble, honest, long-lived woman.

When she and her family came here from Iowa in 1888, her name was Faye Sivots, the town's name was Whatcom, and the college did not exist. Old Whatcom was a logging town, and had several shingle mills. The picture she painted was reminiscent of an old Western, with saloons, dirt roads and horses. Life moved slow then. The mail only showed up once a week, if at all, and there were no cars, buses or trains. The only means of transportation were foot or horseback. The scenery was very woodsy, and she recalls seeing "trees all over the place." The settlers were mainly homesteaders, as was her family. Besides being new to the Northwest, a great majority were new even to the United States. "Most
people couldn’t talk English,” she remembers, “and many spoke Swedish or Norwegian.” Language barriers were no obstacle to the cooperation of these early pioneers, and, according to Mrs. Mahan, they were the area’s richest resource.

“People came here from back East because there were no cyclones or horrible weather,” she proudly remarked. And, according to Mrs. Mahan, the reason so many stayed was because of the genuine friendliness of the inhabitants. She smiles as she relates the close ties between the early residents of Bellingham. “The town was like a big family, and we were all the same.” After a pause she honestly added, “that’s because none of us had any money.”

Since Bellingham was the home for only about 100 folks, it was easy to gather the whole town together for picnics and outings. She recalls that every holiday was an occasion for a festival or celebration of some kind. Whether they were square dancing or playing softball, they “always had good times.”

The cordial atmosphere of the small, struggling community was reflected in its first major educational institution, Whatcom Normal School. Mrs. Mahan remembers the enrollment to have been very small, and the campus to be composed of only Old Main, and even it was still under construction. She attended classes until about 1901, and finished the equivalent of an eighth grade education. One of her clearest recollections is Dr. E.T. Mathes, who was the principal of the school at this time. The dedication of Mathes Dorm to his memory seems very fitting after hearing Mrs. Mahan speak of him. She cheerily described him as a very nice man whom everyone liked. With a certain amount of school-girl charm, she continued, “He would visit your home and meet your parents, and then kid you about it the next day at school... he was a wonderful man.”

She met her husband, Mr. J.E. Mahan in Deming, and for most of their married life they lived in this area. He was a barber, and she taught school for a good many years. She gave no in-depth details as to her courtship or wedding, and seemed content to leave the record so. Mrs. Mahan gave birth to nine children, her three sons died shortly after birth, and she was left with six daughters. I had to think a moment, and then questioned her as to what hospital she had the kids at. She gave me one of those “you-should-know-better” looks, and answered quite casually, “I had them all at home.” Ladies from the neighborhood would come over and assist. She said everything was very simple, and she totally trusted her friends. She thought for a moment and firmly stated that everyone helped everyone else. That is how they got by.

All through the interview Mrs. Mahan was never negative, critical or depressed. It puzzled me why someone who has seen so much pollution and crap replace the natural beauty of her surroundings could be so casual and complacent. Her eyes have seen Old Whatcom transformed into bulging Bellingham, complete with industry, commercialism and concrete freeways. She did not make one sad statement as to the position of mankind, or frown at the mention of today’s morals. Never did she give me a condescending look, or come across with the attitude that I was any more or less than her. It was as if she knew how things were, but we both know how they are. This lady is no authority on life, nor does she pretend to be by spouting off golden guides and proverbs. Mrs. Mahan does not insult your intelligence or intrude where she is not welcome.

As I stepped out of her room into the hall of the convalescent center, I looked at her friends and fellows as they grasped the railing which lines the wall. They all seemed to stare off into space and struggle slowly down the hall, not really knowing or caring where they are going. I do not think it was their physical appearance which repulsed me, but rather the disintegration of their joy, enthusiasm and spirit. They had become prisoners of decrepitude and old age, and accepted their sentence without contest. It seems they had no recourse but plead guilty with such an array of charges before them: their bodies, no longer strong or quick, had been through life and seen its grief and hard times, the world has become too impersonal and computerized, and there is no place for the old and crippled.

Throughout many trials, Mrs. Mahan has proved life is constantly what you make it and want it to be. Her existence is more than a retelling of Bellingham’s early days. It is an exercise in determination and discipline. This lovely lady is an inspiring model for anyone who can look forward to the future and face aging fearlessly.
Dave Geiszler is grinning wildly at me from behind his camera, enjoying my discomfort through his viewfinder. He is the photographer, and I am the minister for the wedding of our friends Dan and Robin. Neither of us will get paid for this, and though Dave is a good photographer, Robin's father is getting his money's worth from me.

I became a minister specifically to perform this wedding. I invested a $2 “free-will offering” and a letter to the Universal Life Church, Inc. of Modesto, California. The ULC sent me a copy of the church newspaper, “Universal Life,” a wallet-sized ordination card, blank and offered me my choice of a wall-sized minister's certificate or a wall-sized marriage certificate for another two bucks.

Unfortunately, they didn't tell me how to choreograph an outdoor wedding, and today I find that command of the whole show is falling to me. People ask where the guests will stand, how the wedding party will be arranged around the minister, when it's going to start and so on. I don't know what to tell them.

When I'd gotten to the scene two hours earlier, no one was there but Dan, and we took the opportunity to smoke a joint. Middle-aged parents, bemused by the sight, can't decide whether to get into the spirit of the occasion or whether to do something to show their coated, tied children that drugs are against the law, by God, and not to be condoned. The children are wishing their parents would drop dead so they could scurry over and get loaded like they've done every day since the fourth grade.

Some of these suburban architect/doctor/engineers, suffering a form of culture shock, seem like ducks whose buoying oils have been removed when they are put in water. They're in the right element, all right, but the conventional web-footed social strokes don't quite work. They've come to a wedding, which should be a pretty establishment-oriented. Who expected all these drug-dazed weirdos? And the minister — the Berrigans are liberal clergy, but their eyes aren't all red like that. De-oiled ducks get frantic, then founder and sink. These wedding guests get frantic, though quietly, and then fix their “I'm-going-to-be-gracious-even though-I'm-surrounded-by-lunatics” smiles like bayonets. They resign themselves to waiting for the reception, where the cases of champagne represent familiar turf.

Finally we get the guests rounded up into a semi-circular herd, and I think we're ready to begin. Miraculously, we're only running 15 minutes behind schedule. I feel like I am directing The Ten Commandments. Geiszler is playing cameraman to my director, peering out from the leaves of a tree or behind a bush to take pictures, exposing what must be miles of Robin's father's film.

Suddenly, already too self-conscious, I realize why a real minister works with an organ — to cue himself and the audience that something is about to begin. Unaccompanied, I only stand and wait, but soon the last murmurs die and all eyes focus on me. I am frozen with terror, afraid to begin for fear of blowing the ceremony in front of all those people, afraid of Dan's wrath if I run away screaming like I want to. I felt like this the first time I stood at the top of a high-diving board. As I open my mouth to begin, all I hear is the pounding of my heart and the snapping of Geiszler's shutter.

"We have come here today to share with Dan and Robin a most important moment in their lives..." We're off, I'm reciting the ceremony I first two days before when Dan and Robin lifted it wholesale from a Reader's Digest article. We chose to excise all religion from the ceremony, but still wound up with about four minutes of text. To restore some spiritual legitimacy, Robin spliced 20 lines from Gibran's The Prophet into the middle.

Like going off the high-dive, I find that momentum carries me along after I've taken the first scary step. I'm not having any trouble remembering my lines, so my biggest problem is deciding where to look while I recite. I don't want to look at my crib sheet, if I look at Dan we'll both burst out laughing, and looking at the crowd of staid relatives is out of the question. So I look at Robin who is radiant in her long dress and floppy hat. Like Dan, his brother the best man and her sister the bridesmaid, Robin is oblivious to the crowd staring past her back at me, and she is placidly content at the way her big day is progressing.

For a while last night, the smooth progress of her day had been threatened. Dan had always wanted to get married in blue levis, and Robin had agreed to that condition months ago, with the air of an indulgent mother letting a three-year-old sleep with his spurs on. Then, last night, when Dan brought home his
new levis to wear to the wedding. Robin reneged explosively. After a short intense battle, she prevailed, and now Dan stands before me in slacks and sweater. He'll change to his levis immediately after the wedding, so he can wear them to the reception at the Swedish Club — a nod to men's liberation.

I chickened out on attire, too. When the idea was first presented, I pictured myself in a white tie and tails, or a referee's outfit complete with whistle, or flowing magician's robes, with a wand and pointed hat covered with stars and moons. But I was unable to get any costume together, overcome by some kind of paralysis, so I'm wearing slacks, a dress shirt without a tie, and my only sports jacket, a leather coat once left in my living room by a passing party the way a glacier might leave a boulder. My mirrored sunglasses hide in my pocket, proof that I don't have enough guts to gross people out even a little bit. Oh well.

I'm now at the part of the ceremony where I have to recite from The Prophet. I am tempted suddenly to skip it when I can't find my place on the crib sheet, but finally, before I run out of momentum, I find my place. When I finish the passage, it's audience participation time: "We have heard Dan and Robin pledge their love for each other. Will you, family and friends, support and uphold this marriage with your love and concern?" Most of the crowd, taken aback, mutters embarrassedly. But I have providently primed a few skills for this moment and they sound off like roosters greeting the dawn.

"On behalf of all those present, I pronounce you husband and wife." A chaste kiss, and it's over. I am mildly disappointed that Dan doesn't give Robin's face a wet doglike lick. Oh well.

After a long uneasy silence, the crowd figures out that the ceremony is over and applauds — who? Dan and Robin? Me? I feel like a second-grader being applauded by the PTA for playing "Mary had a little lamb" badly on a song flute. As the guests file out of the glade to their cars, Geiszler is taking pictures of everyone's backs.

Enroute to the Swedish Club, across town, I smoke some more dope. When I arrive, I head for the champagne line, and manage to make six consecutive trips through it before I am spotted. I am cornered, grabbed and dragged over to face a jostling mob of relatives bearing Instamatics.

Fifty flashcubes later, the dope and champagne have ganged up to overpower the fading adrenalin in my blood, and I am staring into a big white dot, victim of second-degree retinal burns. Between all these diverse assaults on my senses. I don't notice Dan's father headed towards me until it is too late to escape. He and I have never gotten along, and now he puts his arm around my shoulders and tells me conspiratorially that when he had first heard about what we were planning, he was appalled. He had thought the whole idea of me being minister would not only be sacrilegious, but dumb. But, he said, exchanging a stranglehold on my bicep, it wasn't quite as bad as he had feared.

Soon I run into Dan. He tells me that I did all right as a minister considering that I was swaying from side to side like a metronome. I force him to promise that he will return the favor for me if I ever get married, and remind myself to get some of the ULC's blank ordination cards so that I can ordain him.

As Dan is dragged off to face the cameras again, I notice he is still drinking from a regulation champagne glass. I have switched to a large water tumbler so I don't have to spend so much time in the line. If I ever get married, and I am somewhat distressed to see the guests leave without hearing it. For those who ask, and those who don't, I explain that I would much rather have found a way to become a judge for $2. After all, I explain, that way, then I could go full circle and perform divorces too. Besides, I could supplement my income fixing traffic tickets. I think I am the life of the party, but it is increasingly difficult to tell.
Jerking syllables and sputtered words entangle her learning tongue’s efforts in confusing soliloquies; Rya’s enormous black eyes tell more. Her mouth serves better to feed a baby’s belly, which jerks when she runs, powered by churning stocky legs. At one-and-a-half, she must express herself in movement or objects.

Toys are excitement. She’ll grip your finger and drag you to the toy-box where she’ll thrust one toy after another into your hands, explaining how each works. You’re compelled to listen.

She’s there to share the moment with you, to laugh, to scream at the dolls, pick at your nose, roll on the floor, climb the furniture, unbutton shirts, bite fingers — people are excitement. But her most exciting companion is a dog. Rya and Oee scruff around like pups, corner the cat, and share dinner, though Oee gets the better part of that deal.

Independence is exciting, too, though not always easy. It takes her more than an hour to dress herself each morning. She struggles to pull the bottom drawer out to make a step ladder to the top drawer. Sitting in the drawer, she’ll put both legs into one pantleg, then the other. Success comes later.

Once dressed, she’ll run and romp ’til midday when exhaustion will overcome her breakfast energy.

Naptime — maybe with a hug and kiss to comfort a cranky whine.

“*I want, I want,*” a constant demand.

“*I am, I am,*” a constant excitement.