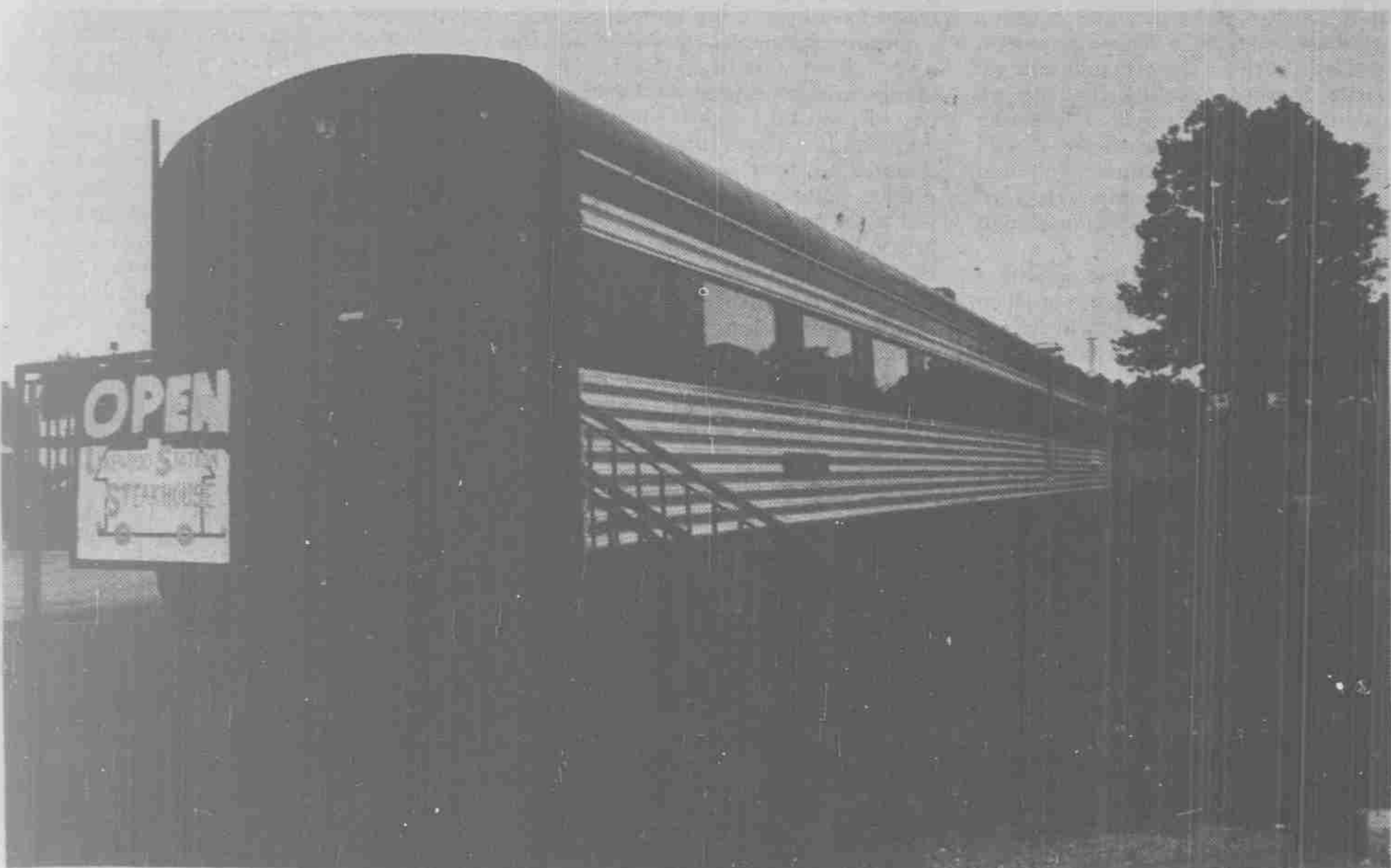


Wabash Cannonball rides—uh, serves again



by Jennifer Woods
Features Writer

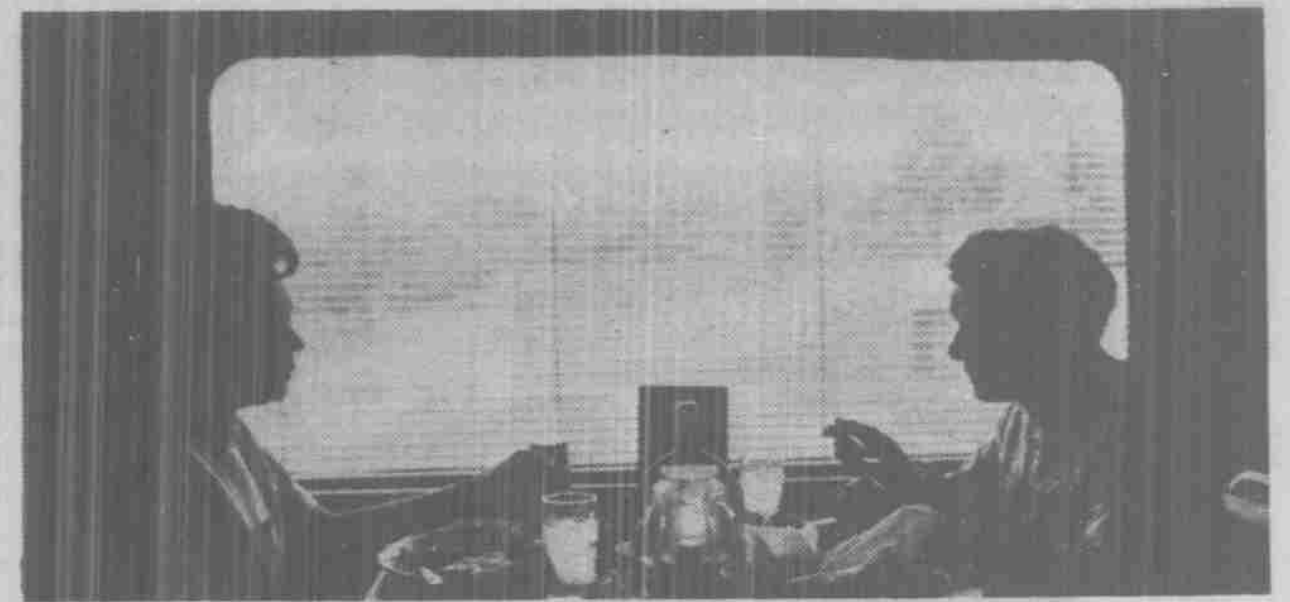
There's something sad about a dining car uncoupled from its train and carried many miles to be side-railed as a shopping center steakhouse.

Two cars of the original Wabash Cannonball were lifted off their tracks in Decatur, Illinois. Workmen removed the metal wheels and replaced them with rubber ones for the tow to Durham. Now the cars sit on a section of track in Lakewood Shopping Center and host kiddies and businessmen who will never know the sights and sounds of the original run.

You enter through the miniature "Lakewood Station" waiting room, and you're confronted with a barrage of red, white and blue choco-choco wallpaper. The hostess leads you through the foyer and up the platform into the dining car. Inside, she seats you at a table covered in green plastic rather than white linen.

In the interim between ordering dinner and receiving it, you excuse yourself to walk in the car. Spying the gold lame private dining room, you wonder whether it really looked like that when it served first-class passengers. You return to the table to discover the food is not yet ready, and you wonder how to further appease your hunger.

You notice the original light fixtures and window blinds, and you toy with them. They still work, although they're hardly needed with the florescent lighting.



The dinners come and you find it typical of steakhouses. As you eat you find yourself gazing out the window, perhaps too often. But that's what you're supposed to do on trains, and it can only be frustrating to see that beyond your table is, instead of thick forests, sparkling lakes and gentle mountains, a dry cleaners and auto parts stores.

Fortunately some change of scenery takes place—it begins to rain. Your subconscious desire for change is in part fulfilled.

During dinner you recall the days of traincar dining, that it was, in its time, one of the finest cuisine experiences. The specialty was service: only highly trained and dedicated men could provide the skill of

aply maneuvering food and passengers under moving conditions.

It seems that something of that past echoes as you eat. However, now there are no restrictions of movement or timetables. Perhaps most of all you yearn for the spirit of anticipation. To arrive in a new place. But only Durham awaits you upon completion of your meal.

Your waitress invites you to return as you leave. As you exit through the "Station" you think you probably won't come back again. People who have eaten on a moving train probably sense that trains should travel and if they can't do that they should, like their old conductors, be left alone with their memories.

"Tales of love that could be yours"—in color, 25¢

by Ellen Horowitz
Features Writer

American children weaned on love story comic books wind up as mature Americans reading confessional magazines and *The National Enquirer*.

They can't help it; it's in the socialization, which is to say that by now it's in the blood. Comic books now cost more than Coca Cola, and the publishers put out 50 new illustrated romances each month.

And the love stories are all the same. There's only one story worth telling in every girl's life, so each issue features girls with different-colored mini-skirts above their shiny white boots. And different names: Lorraine or June or Diana, but never Mary or Susan.

The comic books might be called *My Love* or *Career Girl Romance*, and the stories might be titled "Holiday of Heartbreak" or "Country Girl or Country Star." But the tale is always Sin, Suffer and Repent.

The emotional tones run through tears (blue-green closeups), angry defiance (orange and red, flashing eyes), more tears (green this time, from bitterness) and the final kiss, a pink flourish against a darkened sky.

Emotional scenes are always close-ups of the torture or rapture in people's eyes. Men's eyes are sketched in black and white; women's eyes are invariably deep blue.

There are millions of ways for a young girl to go wrong—she can leave home for the big city, spurn the boy next door for a sophisticated slicker, steal her sister's sweetheart, or worst of all, reject marriage for a career.

One girl joined "The Women's Lib Club," and paid the price. In the last frame, she rested her head on her desk in a dark empty office, crying the tears of the woman damned.

The woman damned is the one without a man. She has presumed above her station, and so she lives her days in misery.

Her misery is colored black and steel blue. Her tears glow white and splash when they fall.

Most stories involve a dream sequence, a male face hovering in the air above the woman's sleeping form. If the man is right for her, he floats on pastel clouds, usually purple. If he's a no-good creep, and she hasn't learned that yet, his cloud is jagged and his face half-shadowed. Reader has to be prepared.

June Wilson is a secretary. She calls herself the "no-talent typist who hasn't a chance."

June isn't happy with her station, an elementary romantic sin. She works for the well-known talent agent Bradley Grey, who has eyes only for glamorous writers and actresses. June wants Bradley.

She's going to get him, if she can just keep her cool and not pretend to a life in the limelight. That's certain death in the love story league.

But it looks grim there at the first. June is the "drab female in the background." She cries herself to sleep at night—"Why, why wasn't I born talented? Why can't I paint or act or write, or do any of those things that would mean something to Brad."

"If only I could, everything might be... so different." That night she dreams in purple and scarlet and pink. It's going to work out all right.

The victory kiss comes three pages later, after June drags through the days as Brad's infinitely loyal and patient assistant. "You are the most talented of all," he finally finds the nerve to say.

"You have the talent of knowing people—knowing how to make them happy! I want your talent. I want you... to make me happy forever!"

The kiss is deep violet, over a pink heart that should naturally read, "The End." Instead, it affirms in scroll-like lettering: "The Glorious Beginning."

Street poets deserve better

by Allie Bisbort
Features Writer

Street poets are not an uncommon phenomenon, but, as with most things these days, they are dealt with merely in fantasy. They have become vague generalities, but most people picture smelly, sloppy drinkers, very wild-eyed and footloose. To add to that, street poets are usually hustling money to get through another day, which does nothing to enhance their image in the eyes of an uncaring public.

Even the word "street poet" makes me cringe a little. Anyone can use it for their own advantage. But, a true street poet is one who lives within a non-academic world, maybe even a more real world. Street poets are rarely comfortable. Academic poets eat three square meals per day.

Academic poets are usually appreciated more by each other and later, as years go by, end up appreciated by more people because their names manage to stay in the intellectual limelight and maybe end up in a textbook or two.

Michael D. Rigsby, whose book of poetry *Spirit Happy* was recently published by Loom Press, is a Chapel Hill street poet. His life somehow demands that he write, and since he can never seem to stay in one place for long, he has taken on all the mystique of that one last bastion of truth in poetry—the street poet.

Kip Ward, one of Loom Press' leaders and head of Rainbow Soccer, said, "Rigsby came in off the street unannounced with his manuscript telling us that he had to get it published."

Loom Press is a small local publishing company run by soccer players and poets. Being a break-even operation according to Ward, the press is interested in the words of local talent. They were impressed by Rigsby's manuscript.

"He had enormous desire, so we almost had to publish it," Ward said. "Now, he sells his book door to door and to people on the street."

I can never expect readers to come any closer to *Spirit Happy* than they would for any other book they happen across. We are all cynics in our own ways. You can't force anyone into anything unless you promise them sex or food. And most people regard poetry, especially the very personal kind, with something less than open arms or even open minds. WE-DON'T-WANT-TO-READ-ABOUT-YOU-WE-WANT-TO-READ-ABOUT-US.

Well, try these lines from Rigsby on for size:

"We are stars
not any of this bullshit called human
beings
when we fall
it's forever
not into a dirt hole
try covering the universe
with six feet of earth"

The poetry in *Spirit Happy* has a freshness and a sense of freedom about it. The reader feels that, at last, here is a unique voice.

The community of Chapel Hill is a sad situation for talented local writers. Loom Press is the only press which consistently puts out the words by as yet unknown artists. But even then, they are handicapped by the necessity to print assorted orders to at least stay out of the red. *The Carolina Quarterly*, fine journal that it is, usually features the work of non-local talent.

Somebody in this community better get up off their artsy-craftsy asses and give more people like Rigsby a chance.



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