

# If You Think Things Are Bad...

Times like these seem to exemplify an oft-quoted remark of Will Rogers: "Last year people said, 'Things can't go on like this.' And they didn't. They got worse."

Such times are the season of joy for the cynic. Millions of optimists are converted, joining the hard-boiled core of super-cynics who, no matter how much good news there is, can always find a grey lining in a silver cloud.

The cynic lives his life confident that things can only go downhill. If his prediction in a particular case fails to become fact, he stands undaunted, insisting that the only reason it didn't happen is to get your hopes up and really dash them later on.

Cynics bring a refreshing

note of gloom into the rosy picture of life that is constantly forced upon us by rabid optimists. In the midst of all the jollity attendant upon last Christmas, for example, a national magazine ran, as its cover story, "The Last Christmas In America." George Meany, president of the AFL-CIO, is presently traveling about the country proclaiming with vigor the advent of a new Great Depression.

If ever there is established a Cynic's Hall of Fame (more than likely it would not on the theory that no one would come) the first member should be author-journalist Ambrose Bierce. Bierce, who wrote for the San Francisco Examiner from 1887 to 1896, is best known today as the

author of a number of ironic short stories. He also composed "The Devils' Dictionary," a cynical compendium of definitions, among which can be found the following:

Friendless: having no favors to bestow. Historian: a broad-gauge gossip. Hypocrite: one who enjoys the advantage of seeming to be what he despises. Love: temporary insanity, curable by marriage. Saint: a dead sinner revised and edited. Trichinosis: The pig's answer to pork chops. Bore: one who talks when you wish him to listen. Ambassador: A politician who, having failed to be elected to office, is given one on the condition he leave the country. Distance: the only thing the rich are willing

for the poor to call their own, and keep.

Bierce, incidentally, was last seen in Mexico in 1914 covering Pancho Villa's Wars.

Many requests have come across this desk lately for copies of Murphy's Laws. For those unacquainted with the Eight Commandments of Cynicism, Murphy's Laws explain the how things go wrong. They were devised by a person named Murphy who, in the spirit of the Laws themselves, is otherwise forgotten by history. They are reproduced here as a public service.

1. In any field of endeavor, anything that can go wrong will go wrong.

2. Left to themselves, things always go from bad to worse.

3. If there is a possibility of several things going wrong, the one that will go wrong is the one that will do the most damage.

4. Nature always sides with the hidden flaw.

5. Life is a bitch. (Whittington's Corollary)

6. If everything seems to be going well, you have obviously overlooked something.

7. If any two people are in agreement, they must be talking about different things. (Vaughan's Corollary)

8. Entropy is increasing. (Tyler Miller's Rule)

So folks, if you think things are bad now, just wait.

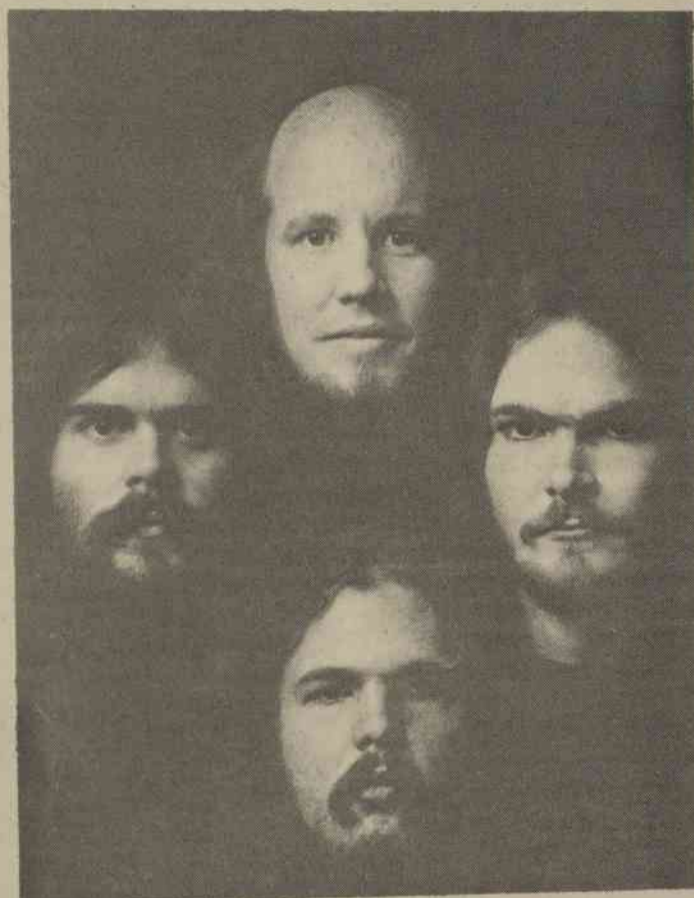
-Lin Thompson

## Common Experiences Announced

Whitney Jones, Chairman of the Common Experience at St. Andrews recently announced the Experience schedule for April and May.

Jones said that the highlight of the April occasions would be "The Return to the Body in the Church Today," a presentation by Anne Smith, as well as the Howard Hanger Trio. This will involve dance, music and multi-media performances, as well as lectures and discussions, Professor Jones indicated.

The main event of the May Common Experience is the appearance of novelist John Barth on May 8 and 9. Barth—a National Book Award Winner for fiction—teaches at the University of Buffalo and is presently guest professor at Johns Hopkins. "The New York Times" has called him "The best writer of fiction we have at present, and one of the best we've ever had."



THE HOWARD HANGER TRIO - (clockwise from top) Howard Hanger - piano; Rob Jackson - saxophone, guitar; Martin Parker - drums; A. D. - bass, guitar.

## Michigan Prof Reviews Bayes

Porpoise, by Ronald H. Bayes. Red Clay Reader, Vol. VIII, No. 2.

Porpoise is a very unusual book about VIOLENCE. It's violence on Okinawa in 1967 (13 young guys beating a s—farmer to death) or violence at Drumkeerin, Ireland (father hits teacher who has hit his son) or in Japan (39 year old white collar worker and 21 year old geisha-double suicide)...at first it seems as if Bayes is saying that violence stimulates violence, causes violence, but that certainly isn't all he's saying, in fact, quoting Henry Adams, Hobbes, Eliot, W.C. Williams, Kierkegaard, he seems to be saying that men are innately sons of b—and dolphins are the nice guys:

Bouy  
star  
and  
spar  
.my  
Dolphin.

The poem is repertorial, contains (like Paterson) chunks and bits of "real life," clippings, facts, quotes, almost no editorializing—which makes the reader draw his own conclusions. In fact the poem is almost like raw, unprocessed data, an anthology of related facts in which the relation isn't really pointed out.

This is "major" poetry, perhaps just a little too recognizable as part of the Pound-Olsen-Williams "major tradition", perhaps not. At any rate Bayes, 42 and still fuming, ought to be on anyone's list of poets to soak yourself in, for fun and edification. -Hugh Fox (Hugh Fox, who appeared on the St. Andrews campus last year, is professor of American Studies at Michigan State University and wrote this review for the latest issue of Small Press Review.)

the magazine, edited by Malcolm Doubles and Ron Bayes has received a considerable boost from the council."

## Review Awarded Grant

J. Bruce Frye, Business Manager for the ST. ANDREWS REVIEW announced this week that the North Carolina Arts Council has awarded THE REVIEW a \$2,000 grant to provide it with literary assistance in the

areas of production and awards to young writers.

Frye said that the announcement, coming from Jean Poston, Financial Coordinator for the Arts Council, was "truly good news. This is the fifth consecutive year that

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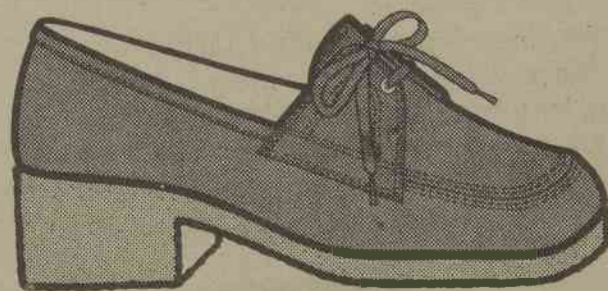


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