



The NEW BERN MIRROR

PUBLISHED WEEKLY
IN THE HEART OF
EASTERN NORTH
CAROLINA
5¢ Per Copy

NB Public Library
407 New St.

VOLUME 5

NEW BERN, N. C., FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 30, 1962

NUMBER 31

Readers who have been with us since The Mirror's first issue on April 4, 1958 know that this particular column has been devoted largely to nostalgia. We figured such material would appeal to oldsters, and assumed the younger generation would find it dull reading.

To our pleasant surprise, we discovered that New Bern's teenagers enjoy a look at the past too. It shouldn't have come as a revelation, since we well remember how as a boy the stories of bygone days held fascination for us and all the other fellows in the neighborhood.

Jack Dempsey, then the heavy-weight champion, was our sports hero, but coupled with our desire to emulate him was the realization that John L. Sullivan, according to all we had read and heard, had been a great prize-fighter too. Our favorite wrestler--also a world's champion--was Ed (Strangler) Lewis.

Every kid on the block wanted more than anything else to have bulging muscles. Whenever we got the chance, we would thumb through the pages of Physical Culture magazine until we found an advertisement showing Charles Atlas, the world's most perfect man.

As we recall, there were two pictures. The first one was of Atlas when he was a skinny weakling. The second picture displayed him with all of his magnificent muscles. The ad insisted that any of us could be another Atlas if we would only buy his course and follow directions.

The course and his exercise equipment carried a price tag comprising a lot more dollars than we had nickles. Since this was the sad state of affairs, nobody in our boyhood gang became a modern Goliath. Resigned to our fate, we accepted the fact that we would have to go through life as best we could without the strength of a bull to help us along.

Occasionally someone will ask this editor how "Through The Looking Glass" got its name. You'll recall that this is the real title of Alice in Wonderland. She found all sorts of unusual characters in Wonderland, including the March Hare and Mad Hatter, and we knew that New Bern had the same fertile setting.

Discussing the matter with his wife, when The Mirror was about to be born, the prospective editor said, almost condescendingly, "You know, we've got a lot of characters in our town." Fixing us with the cold stare that only an unimpressed wife can have, she replied, "You are so right, and you're one of them!"

Maybe the caustic remark should have deflated us, but it didn't. After all, it wouldn't be much fun living in a town where everybody is normal and commonplace. The dullest, most boring folks on the face of the earth are the ones who follow a beaten path and are quite devoid of peculiarities.

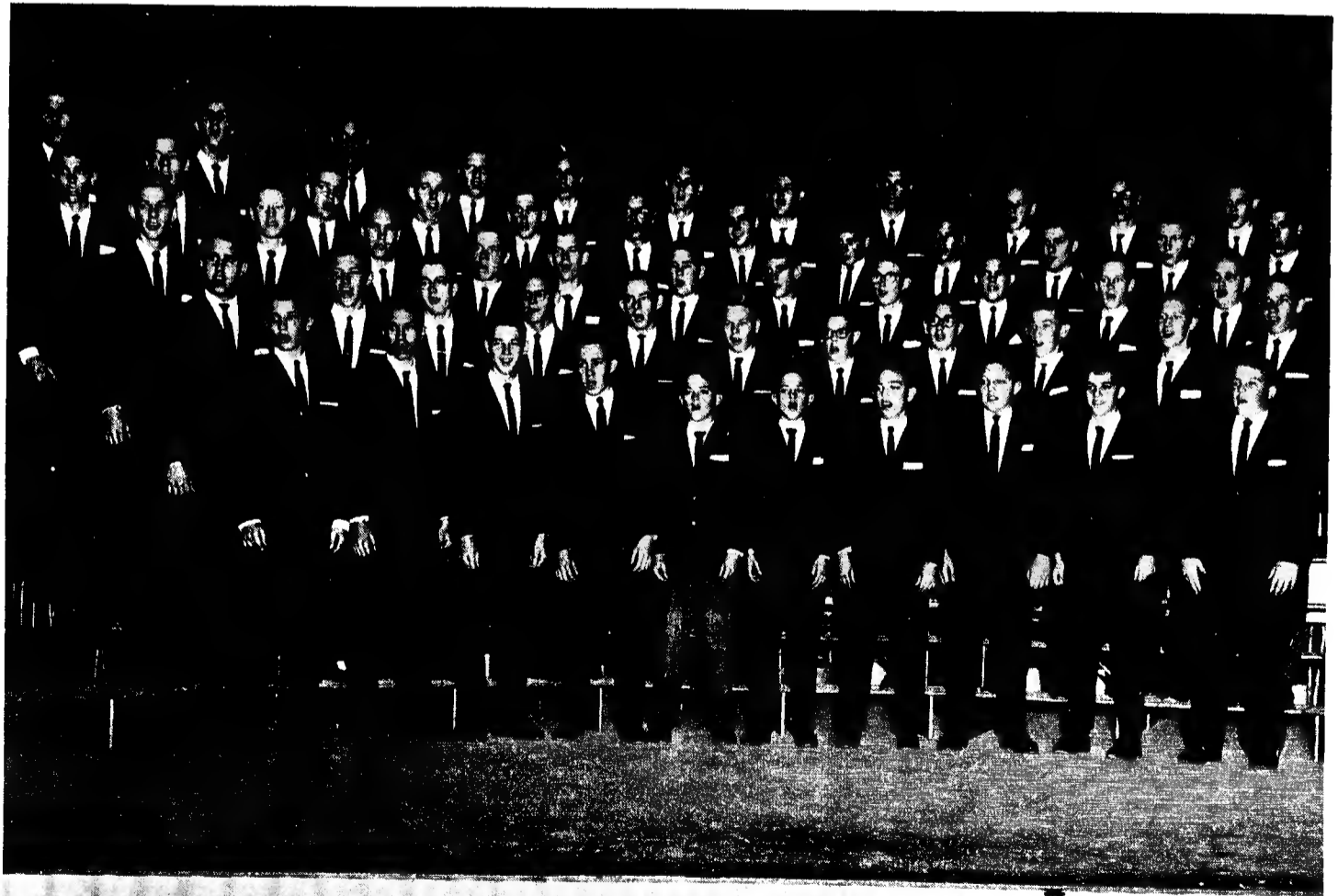
Characters, generally speaking, resist regimentation. In-

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AN IMPORTANT JOB—Singers are acutely aware that you can't count on a polished performance without a good accompanist. Karen Hancock, Jimmy Meredith and Louise Whitty will preside at the keyboard for the boys

glee club, the a capella choir and the girls glee club respectively, when the New Bern High school Christmas Concert is presented Thursday night at the school's auditorium.—Photo by John R. Baxter



LARGEST IN HISTORY—New Bern High school's widely recognized music director, Donald Smith, has seen many a young vocalist come and go here during the past 23 years. His boys glee club this year numbers 65 voices, and their portion of Thursday night's Christmas

Concert will be a highlight. As always, Smith has produced three fine groups. Incidentally, the a capella choir will sing an all-time favorite, "The Night Before Christmas."