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Yankees who visited Rikki's, a highly respected Atlantic City night spot, following the Miss America Pageant couldn't believe their ears. The place is plush and knee deep in atmosphere, but on this one evening (if you can call far past midnight evening) the atmosphere was strictly Southern.

A group of New Bernians, out on the town, saw to that. They were aided and abetted by Rose Gallo, the buxom but thoroughly delightful blonde pianist who tickles the ivories by the hour in the restaurant's softly-lit lounge.

Rosie, as the regular customers call her, reminds us more than vaguely of Jo Ann Castle, who presides so efficiently over her battered upright on the Lawrence Welk Show. Like the Castle gal, Rosie knows just about every song by heart that was ever written.

Not just the melody, mind you, but the lyrics. Naturally she knew "Carolina Moon" and "Carolina In The Morning." And just as naturally, these were the first two songs we asked her to play and sing along with us.

There's a bar in the lounge, and before you could have said General Robert E. Lee, the Yankee imbibers clustered there to get into the act. Some of them no doubt have never ventured below the Mason-Dixon line, but they agreed musically that "Nothing could be finer than to be in Carolina in the morning."

Honest injun, you almost got a whiff of magnolias blooming, and with very little imagination you could picture Rosie in the role of a Southern belle. Singing "Dixie" was Rosie's idea, and all assembled gave vent to it with much gusto. If you've never heard "Dixie" rendered with a Jersey twang, you've missed part of living.

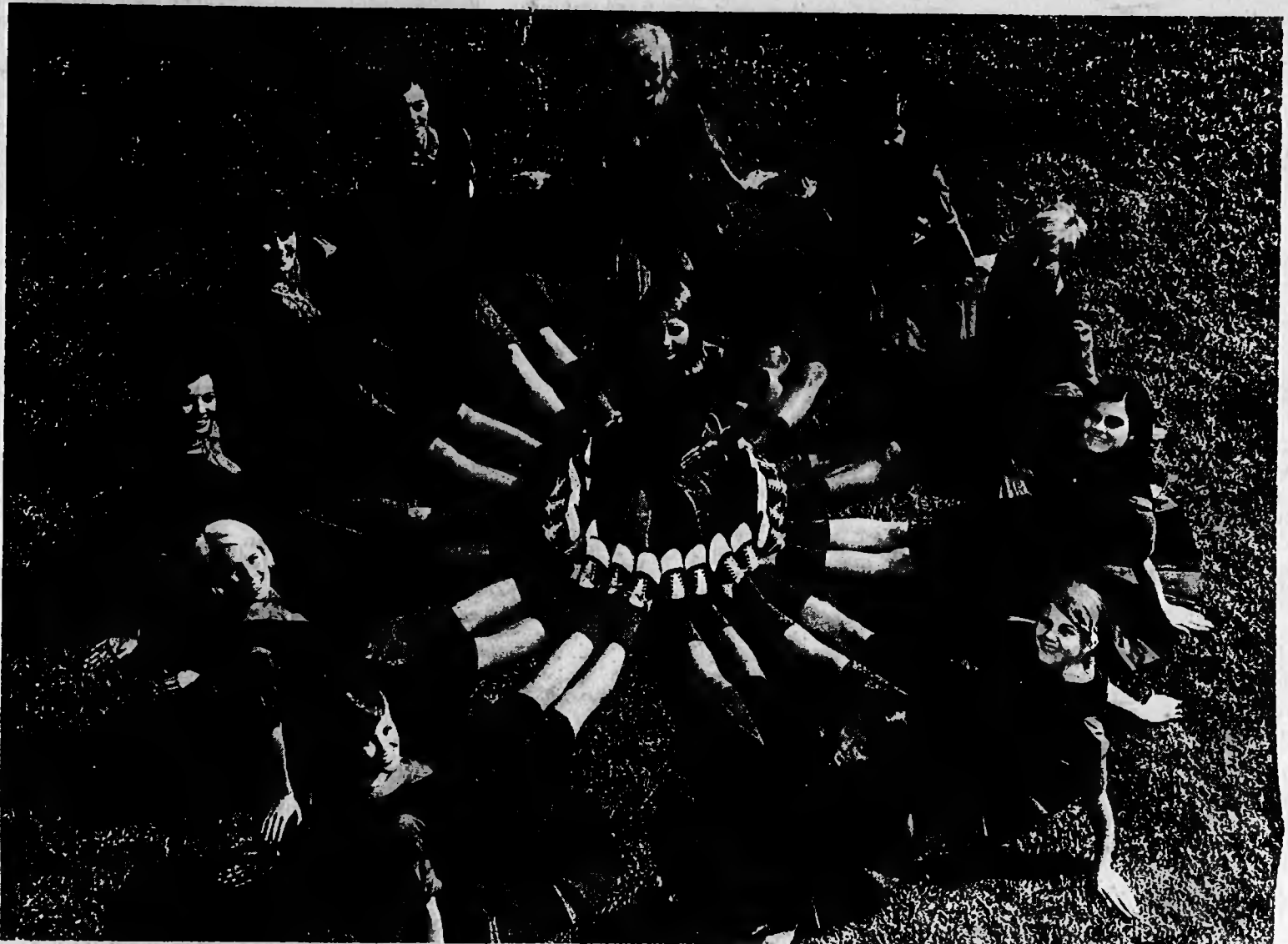
There's always somebody in every crowd who wants to be different. Someone, by no means a New Bernian, suggested a chorus of Yankee Doodle. He was promptly outvoted. "The South will rise again," an ebullient shouted, and everybody sang two more choruses of "Dixie".

Elsewhere in Atlantic City, even at this late hour, the hippies were proclaiming what is wrong with the world. There's, of course a great deal wrong with the world, but in Rikki's the North and the South were of one accord.

Rose Gallo is someone we'll remember, although life being what it is, we may never visit Rikki's again. Southerners are notoriously friendly, occasionally to the point of being a nuisance, but seldom does Dixie offer anyone more genuinely congenial than she proved to be.

Hundreds of miles from home, in a place predominately occupied by strangers, it occurred to us as it has many times before that people are pretty much the same everywhere. Folks like Rosie, we might add, find the latchstring hanging on the outside, no matter where they go.

Needless to say, the New Bernians in our party stayed at Rikki's until it closed. Saying goodbye to Rosie for the



LOUD AND LIVELY—No one works harder when the annual pigskin parade begins at New Bern High School than these varsity and junior varsity cheerleaders. On the gridiron, Coach Roger Thrift's hard-pressed, defending Northeastern Conference champions are a determined lot, but they don't take their chores any more seriously than the attractive and energetic girls seen here. Young as they are, they grow older and suffer anguish far beyond their years each time the Bears are thrown for a loss or yield a

touchdown. Sooner or later, in the realm of sports, heartbreak exacts its toll, but there are moments of joy and exultation to even things up, and a cheerleader yelling for the home team on a crisp autumn night wouldn't trade places with anyone else in the world. Like the band and majorettes, and those inevitable dogs that have to be coaxed or chased from the field, she is part of the game.—Photos by Chick Natella.

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