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Yesterday was when Mrs. Annie Rhem had a 42 year old parrot that stayed younger than springtime on a steady diet of sunflower seeds. Pedestrians on the north side of Broad, between Middle and Hancock, knew her well.

Polly, a loquacious and brilliant hued bird, was as flippant and gay as she was the day she headed south from a New York pet shop, four decades previously. She was hatched two years before that, in Panama.

The parrot was purchased in the Big City by Mrs. Rhem and her late husband, Dr. Joseph F. Rhem, who is remembered by thousands of North Carolina Shriners as the founder of Sudan Temple here.

Polly was a sound investment. In fact, she sounded off constantly from the moment she came to town. She liked an audience, but enjoyed talking to herself almost as much on the Rhem front porch.

She hated her cage, except when she was outside of it, perched on top. She had the run of the house, and the moment the telephone rang would say, "Hello, all right, goodbye." Blindfolded you would have sworn it was a human.

When someone opened the front door, Polly promptly called Mrs. Rhem, or Hattie, who at the time had been employed in the home for 30 years. The maid was very devoted to the parrot.

Polly was a real night owl, preferring to stay up until 10 p. m. and then sleep fairly late next morning. She never made a sound until Hattie took the cover from her cage, and greeted her.

The bird was quite a lady, grammatically speaking. Profanity played no part in her vocabulary, although there was a brief spell when she couldn't claim such purity.

A neighbor's parrot came to visit her, during her younger years, and brought along some cuss words that left little to the imagination. Polly was a foul mouthed fowl temporarily, until the pollution cleared up.

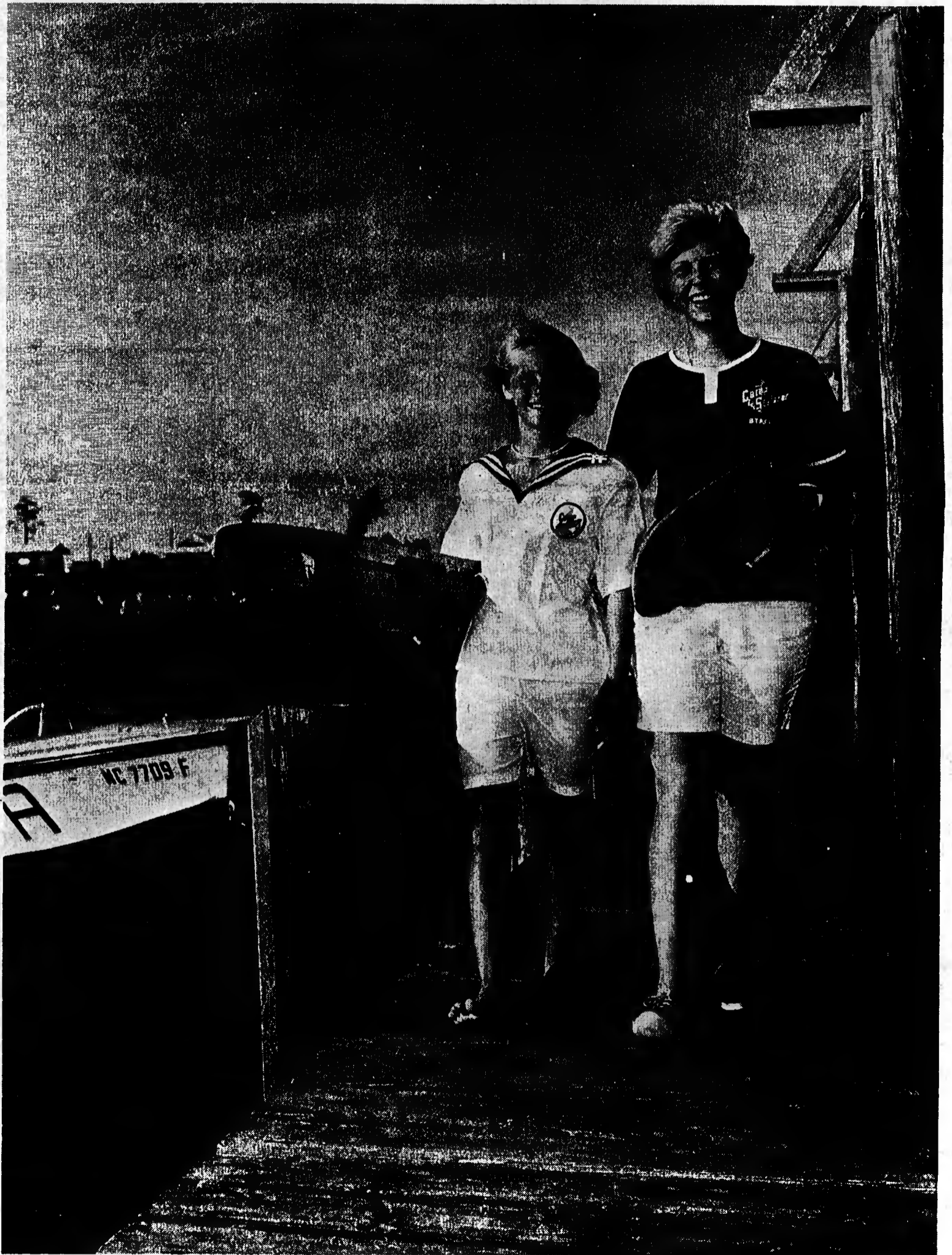
She had to be forgiven for innocently straying from the straight and narrow, since adding words to her vocabulary was her proudest accomplishment.

Unfortunately, the visiting parrot wasn't at all anxious to learn Polly's rendition of "Nearer My God to Thee" so there was nothing to commend or prolong their ill advised acquaintance.

Actually, the Rhem pet did very little singing, and didn't care for radio. Instead, she got a great kick out of sunning on the front porch, and exchanging salutations with dozens of New Bernians who passed by.

During the summer of 1953, when the town wilted under a prolonged heat wave, she got too much sunshine for the first time in her life. One day she was discovered on the verge of prostration, limp as a dish rag in her cage.

Mrs. Rhem took in roomers,



HEADING HOME FROM CAMP SEAFARER.