

Column Writing Loneliest Job, Claims Man Who Knows

By HAL BOYLE
NEW YORK. — (AP) — This is the sixth anniversary of my entrance into prison.

It is a housewifery of the mind—the business of writing a daily newspaper column. The high walls and iron bars of this mental penitentiary don't show. But they are there—in the convict's brain—growing higher and stronger with the years.

Writing a newspaper column is one of the oddest occupations in our screwball civilization. To become a lawyer, a doctor, or an undertaker you have to go to school. But there is no college for columnists anymore than there is for astrologers.

There is no test, no standard of qualification, no training for this bizarre business.

Careers Varied
Drew Pearson started as a diplomatic reporter. Walter Winchell began in vaudeville. Dewitt MacKenzie was a foreign correspondent. Westbrook Pegler and Bob Ruark were sports writers. Eleanor Roosevelt was a mother and magazine editor. Billy Rose a showman and song writer. Will Rogers, Bob Hope and Milton Berle turned to columning after successful careers as comedians. Margaret Chase Smith, a U. S. senator from Maine, now writes a column. So do a number of congressmen.

To be a columnist it isn't necessary to be able either to think or to write. You can hire ghosts to do those chores for you.

But if you do it yourself it is hard work, and the loneliest industry on earth. For brain children have only one parent—the frontal lobe.

No Glamor
Some people have the idea that writing a daily column is a glamorous career, and a leadpipe cinch. But those who have done it know better. The late Don Marquis called it "digging a daily grave." Asked if he found his task difficult, Red Smith, celebrated sports columnist of the New York Herald Tribune, said:

"No, you just sit down at your typewriter, open your veins—and bleed."

How do you get a job writing a column? Some people ask for it—and it just happens to others. It just happened to me.

In 1943 the Associated Press decided it wanted a warfront column about the troops. It asked one reporter to do it, and this wise man said, "No, thanks." Someone then happened to recall I was in Sicily. And a message came: "Boyle, start writing a column." I did. Although the war ended four years ago, no one thought to revoke the order. So I am still at it. That is a funny thing about columns and comic strips. They go on forever—like Tarzan of the apes.

Don't Take Self Seriously
The danger in columning is that it is likely to give a man the idea he is an expert on everything from cattle breeding to flagpole sitting. Its occupational hazards are chair sores and punditry. A little baby oil in the right spot will heal the chair sores, but there is no cure except death for the columnist who acquires the disease of taking himself too seriously.

Columnists, like presidents, get many letters and small gifts from the people. If they write that they like black cherries, someone is sure to send them a box. But if they mention they are fond of sea breezes, no one ever airmails them a yacht.

But it's the sentiment that counts. So, even though my hair is fast vanishing, I am grateful for the fellow who sent me a bottle of beer shampoo. It tasted fine, and my goddaughter thought it was cute the way I burped soap bubbles for three days. And right now I want to thank the reader who mailed me a glass eye recently.

It was just my color—reddish blue.

Marshal Tito Hurls Defiance At Russian Bear

By ALEX H. SINGLETON
BELGRADE, Yugoslavia, Sept. 13.—(AP)—Premier Marshal Tito flung new defiance into the teeth of the Russian Bear Monday.

Yugoslavia, he declared, "stealed by tremendous experiences" in World War II, is ready to overcome any present troubles as it did its past ones.

The premier, prime target of Moscow and Cominform as a heretic from Marxism, addressed a group of engineers and workers from a motor factory.

They came to Belgrade to show him three new types of tractors they developed in the country's industrialization campaign—the very campaign which so irks Moscow.

Tito has refused to bow to Moscow's orders to concentrate on an agrarian economy, just as he refused to heed Moscow's orders to step of collectivization of farms. His thus far successful rebellion against Moscow domination in these and other aspects now shows signs of being copied in other Communist countries.

In his brief talk, Tito told the group their efforts provided the best answer to foreign "inventions and lies" about socialist development in Yugoslavia. The account was carried by the communist newspaper Borba.

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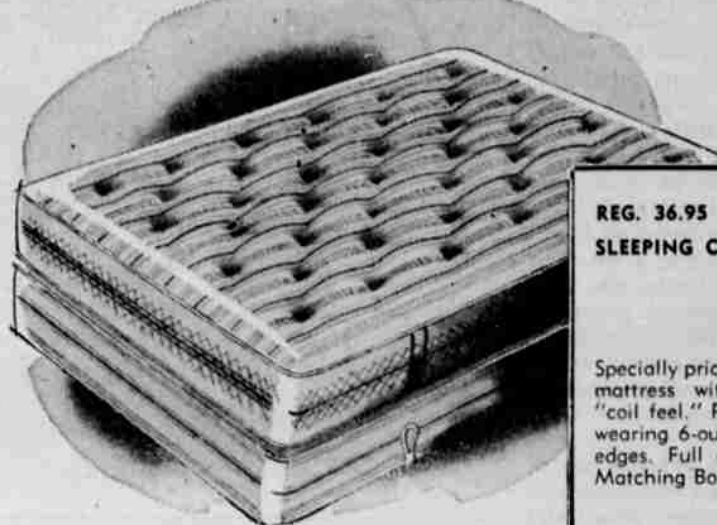


3.49 CARDIGAN BY CAROL BRENT, A SCHOOL-HIT

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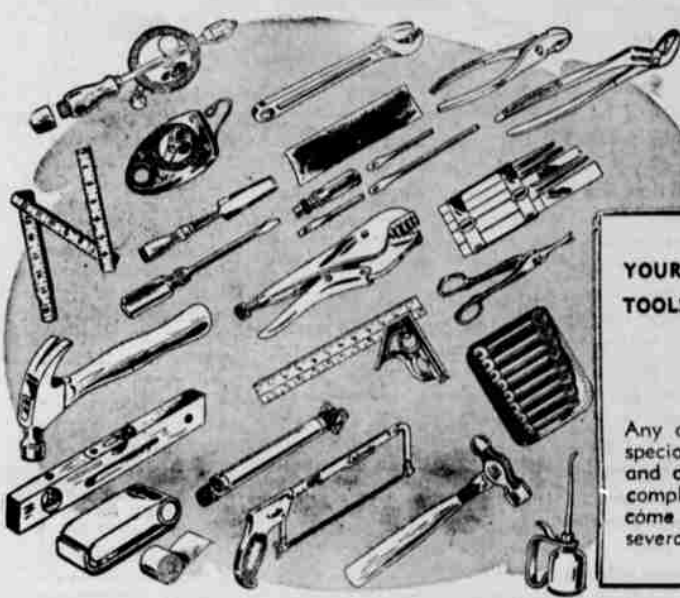
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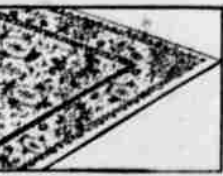


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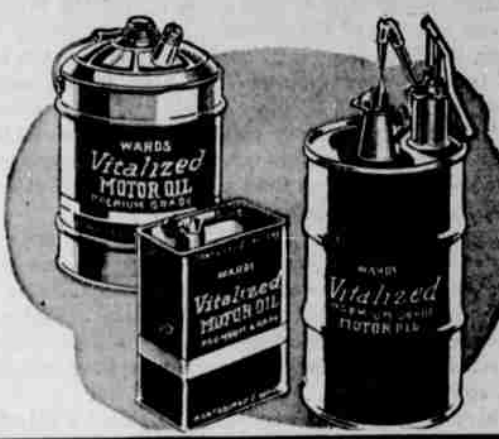
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