

BOB FUNK

Good-bye, My Turtle Dove

As of about now a well known University of Oregon institution is well nigh dead. Dead like a New Year's resolution or a tulip in January. We are speaking thus lightly of the United Students Association—USA.

USA is a fighting phrase. Its utterance brings a lot of campus political ghosts right up out of their graves, swinging. But there isn't a whole lot left to fight. Last week the four houses which represented the Greek faction in this Independent-Greek party (Alpha Xi Delta, Lambda Chi Alpha, Delta Upsilon, Sigma Alpha Mu) asked to return to AGS, respectability, and all-Greek harmony.

This means the practical end of Oregon's longest and most successful coalition party. The party began in the spring of 1948. It was the brain child of World War II veterans and other students who were not much impressed with Oregon's political sheep. They were also unimpressed by an old political booger-man, TNE.

TNE (for Theta Nu Epsilon) was alleged to be working behind the exterior of the University's most successful political party, Greek Bloc. TNE was said to meet in dark, cobwebby places and plan bloody deeds (well, almost bloody). TNE dealt out nominations like cards, and house votes were dutifully delivered to the candidates.

The opposition party, the Independent Students Association, entered candidates in elections with great regularity, and with great regularity lost. Things were somewhat feudal.

It was probably the influence of the veterans coupled with Enlightened Womanhood (women had been running things around here during the war) that gave rise to USA. Belligerent members of Greek Bloc houses held secret meetings out at Amazon. There were other meetings with campus independent leaders. And then one night seven fraternities and sororities bolted Greek Bloc, and the next day one more. They formed USA with independent students, and the spring election was a three-party affair, with USA taking the presidency.

Before it was done, USA had elected three presidents and a long string of other officers. It had injected some new thought and some new ideals into Oregon politics.

But USA didn't have a peaceful childhood. It was nurtured on sour grapes and only an occasional plum. Its right hand didn't know what its left was doing—the party contained both idealists and opportunists.

The political sheep played tag with USA. Some of the original houses jumped back over the fence, and some new ones came in. There were a lot of questions that the campus asked: did the fact that some houses deserted mean that USA was no good? Did the sudden appearance of new houses on the USA list mean new, dramatic idealism, or merely that the boys had a candidate who might fare better in USA than in Greek Bloc?

Some of us were hatchet boys. We pulled Greek houses out of USA for a hundred reasons long since forgotten. There was a lot of verbal rassing, and in the end the houses went back, one by one.

Today there isn't much left. Certainly not the sort of party that wins at the polls. USA seems to be dying, but in dying it has taken a lot of other things with it.

It has taken ISA, the old independent political party, which in the end bowed out to USA as its representative.

It has taken TNE (probably), which was gloriously exposed to public view in 1950.

It has taken Greek Bloc. Writhing in a new public consciousness, Greek Bloc has shed a couple of skins and a couple of names, has been renamed Affiliated Students Association which in turn was renamed Associated Greek Students.

These are important accomplishments. But the most important accomplishment is lacking: the split between Greeks and Independents politically still exists. At enlightened Oregon, how you vote still depends pretty much on where you live, which is pretty silly.

Farewell, my lady love, good-bye, my turtle dove, so long USA.

Julie Harris Praised For Performance In 'I Am a Camera'

By Michael Lundy

Having reviewed Christopher Isherwood's "Goodbye to Berlin" last fall, we thought it would be in order to give our impressions of John Van Druten's interpretation of the stories in "I Am a Camera," which appeared in Portland last weekend.

The play, which received the New York Drama Critics Award as the best play of the season in 1951, was more than anything else a vehicle for Julie Harris, who seems certain to become one of the company of great actresses along with Helen Hayes and Catherine Cornell. Her performance was a brilliant succession of shifting moods. She carried the play; in fact she carried the audience home in her hip pocket.

A "Mood Play"

Van Druten's play itself, as he readily admits, is a "mood play" which was lifted almost bodily from Isherwood's series of sketches about people in Germany during the disorganized days of the early 30's, pre-Hitler. Credit for the characters, the situations, and most of the drama, belongs to Isherwood. Van Druten acted as a catalyst in the transmutation of story to play. But he did a fine job of organizing the action so that the play's pace never lagged; our attention never drooped for as much as a minute.

We were disappointed by only one aspect of "I Am a Camera," and that was Charles Cooper, who plays Isherwood himself in the road show, the leading male. Whether due to his interpretation, the direction, or just the method of playing before traditionally disinterested Portland audiences, Cooper overplayed practically all the times. He showed none of the subtleties of the character, and he didn't put across the changes in thinking and understanding which were written into the part.

A Huge Child

He reminded us of a huge child lumbering around the stage, and it was impossible to imagine that all those other interesting and amazing people could have any interest in such an insensitive lug.

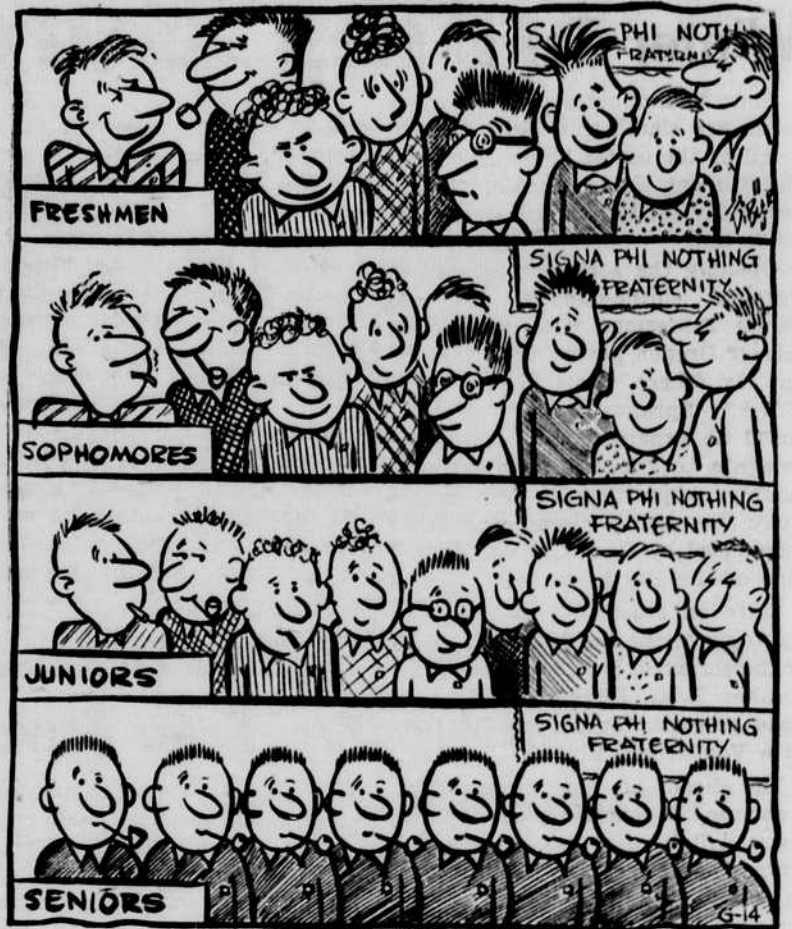
The play, as the title implies, is a series of impressions of Isherwood's life and friends, impersonally set down, without judgment, as a camera takes pictures "recording, not thinking."

Isherwood (Charles Cooper) is a young British writer who makes his precarious living giving English lessons to well-to-do Germans. His personal principles are high and courageous, and he does not try to impose them on the people he knows. As the play progresses, however, he is more and more drawn into the lives of his friends, and his consciousness of the problems of the world about him expands, until he is drawn into their world and loses his impersonality.

Her Talent—Men

Sally Bowles, played by Sally Harris, is another English expatriate, an actress who has escaped from her middle class British parents and who is living the life boheme in Berlin. Her profession is acting but her talent is men. She is a variegated, glittering strand of tinsel, high strung, unpredictable, and completely captivating.

The 'Shape-up'



Fraternity Handbook:

"A primary concern of the fraternity is to bring out the individuality of typical American boys from every walk of life."

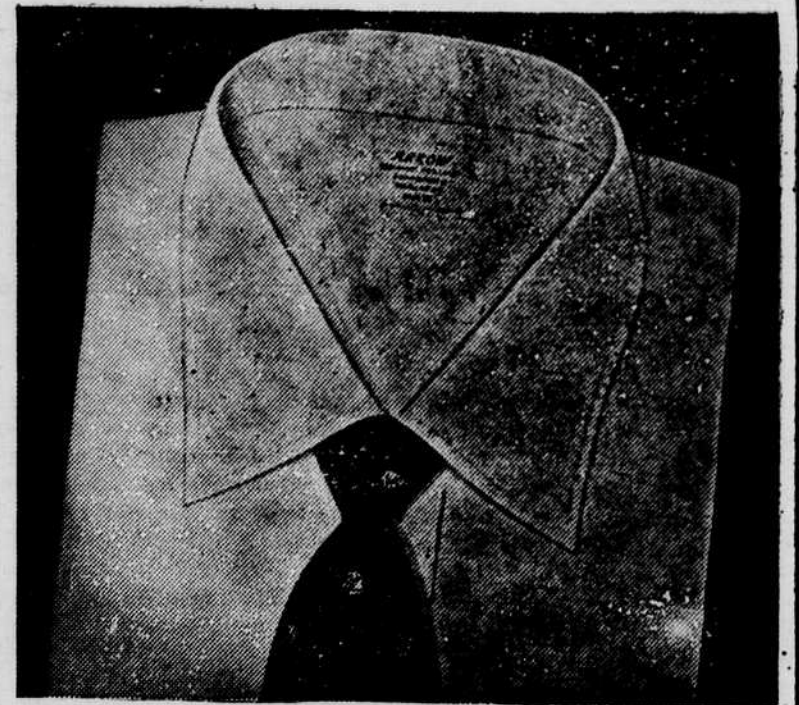
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