

Humor in the Union

Right: Bill Landers, 29, activities director of the Student Union, and friend



appears to be poking fun at an aspect of rushing activities. (Perhaps this issue of Old Oregon should be suppressed. At least the sales should be held to a minimum.)

The author uses the device of the literary letter to make his point. It is a letter from the rush chairman of a fraternity to an old alumnus explaining why the son of that alumnus had to be rejected for membership.

In the course of the letter, the rush chairman reminds the father that though the house in question did not accept the boy, at least the Upsilon Nu house did. "I tell you truthfully, Brother Harrison, there were some mighty long faces in the front room the night we dinged him," says the chairman. "Every one of the brothers know that the Upsilon Nu house got a really great kid when they picked your boy Al. The Ups (Remember our old song, 'Oops, There Goes Another Freshman Ker-Plopp?') have a great house here at Oregon and they will certainly benefit from the leadership qualities of your boy Al."

AN AP DISPATCH some time ago mentioned that Sen. Olin Johnston (D-SC) wanted President Eisenhower to take Soviet Premier Nikita Khrushchev to church while he was visiting in the United States. "It is never too late for a sinner to repent," Johnston was quoted as saying.

This inspired Bill Landers to write a short play, depicting the President and the Premier in church. An excerpt:

K: Who is that idiot who keeps turning around and leering at me?

Ike: Shhh. Senator Johnston of South Carolina.

K: That suit he's wearing is the most hideous color I've ever seen.

Ike: Shhhhh! For God's sake, don't let him hear you say "color." He's a bit sensitive there.

This man Landers has a flair for things scientific. In his as yet unpublished article called "The Passing of Gas," an article suggesting that the use of petroleum products in transportation is being ushered out by the Atomic Age, can be found as concise a description of the operating principle of the gasoline engine as you would want.

"The most important part of the American car," Landers writes, "is the tailpipe which protrudes from beneath the rear bumper. It is through this tunnel that air is sucked into the motor part and combines with the gas to produce fumes. It should also be mentioned here that before reaching the motor part the air must pass through a device called the 'muffler.' This gadget is designed to warm the air that might be

sucked in on cold days and bring it to compatible temperature with the gasoline. Fumes are now formed in the explosion chamber while an instrument called the 'piston' is depressed electrically (juice supplied from a storage battery) and compresses the fumes to such a degree that there is an explosion. Since the chamber where the explosion takes place is funnel-shaped, the greatest force is exerted on the large end, or front, of the funnel, and consequently the car moves forward."

BELIEVING THAT hi-fi and stereo demonstration records have overworked the sounds of freight trains and ping pong tournaments, Landers, in another essay, has come up with suggestions for "new and exciting sounds." Let me share with you his ideas on two of the bands of his ideal demonstration record.

"SIDE ONE, BAND ONE — Night sounds in a TB ward. This would show stereo to great advantage... By closing his eyes, the listener could hear the full range of really sincere coughing.

"SIDE ONE, BAND TWO — Fingernails scratching on a blackboard. Should be particularly effective for straight hi-fi. Whereas most demonstration records show up bass sounds, this would give the treble range chance for appreciation."

Perhaps you would have a suggestion as to what Landers could do with this manuscript. I mean in the way of selling it.

AND SO IT GOES. One after another (I believe that is the order), these articles and stories pour out of the Landers typewriter. There is quantity here, yes. But quality? I think we have him there. There are flaws in his writing, I feel sure. I know he has to look things up in the dictionary. And I can't help but feel that Landers does not really take himself seriously in his writing. And what about the ethical question involved here—a business manager's butting into the already overcrowded writing field?

So intent is this man on perpetuating the upstart Landers

Studentmanship

(Continued from page 3)

the instructor and yourself, you may chart your course with more certainty. There remain, however, those little bits of instruction that accompany each individual test. Nowhere on the collegiate scene, perhaps, is there more room for misunderstanding.

Some typical test instructions are given below, and their correct meanings follow in parenthesis. Master these and you're well on your way to getting a four-point.

Identify briefly. (This is an abbreviation for "Identify briefly and you'll get an F." Give every fact, relevant or irrelevant, about the subject.)

Give your opinion of. ("Give the instructor's opinion of.")

Be specific: ("Quote the textbook.")

Discuss. ("Tell everything you know about the subject.")

Compare and contrast. ("Tell everything the instructor knows about the subject.")

Write an essay about. ("Tell everything anyone in the world knows about the subject.")

Multiple choice: pick the correct answer. ("Multiple choice: pick the least ambiguous answer.")

IV. OPINIONSHIP AND MATURITYSHIP

This is the subtlest approach to not studying, and therefore the most dangerous. Its success rests upon one of the real weak spots of the humane teacher: he will not flunk a mature student who

obviously is in school to learn and to form opinions.

Opinionship should be employed only by students with heavy beards, although married coeds can also use it to advantage.

Express yourself. Disagree with the instructor occasionally, prefacing your remarks with a statement like, "I've found in my experience that..." Hint that you've traveled around the globe, at least, and perhaps have even written a few books.

Or says, "Don't you think, human nature being what it is, that maybe..."

If you are truly an older student, and your instructor is on the young side, you can under ideal situations risk a remark like, "You know, I used to feel the same way you do about it. The longer I kick around, though..."

And there is this added advantage: if your eyes reflect a hard glint of assurance, your instructor may actually be afraid to argue with you.

(I can't help adding here that Crenshaw once actually convinced his instructor that he—Crenshaw—had written the textbook under an assumed name. The instructor, who was fresh out of college, left the teaching profession within a few weeks.)

If you try this method it's a good idea to sprinkle your conversation with phrases like, "G.I. Bill... my first wife... before the war... the other day my kid said..."

literary legend that he is now encouraging his seven-year-old son Jeff to write stories. Here is "The Mountoun Climber," the latest in a series by young Landers (I believe it should be quoted in full): "Once there was this mountoun climber, his name was Dick. every time he tried to climb a mountoun, he tumbled down. the others laughed at him, and every time they laughed at him, he got angry, and chased them away, and that happed so on, and so on, and so on. every time he chased them, they Told the boss. Dick was, thinking of a way to get rid of them. then he got an idea. he put water on every mountoun

they know of. one day the men were climbing mountouns, and guess what happed? they siped, and tumbled down. this time they chased him. Dick ran to the Boss. the boss fired him. Dick went home with a mad look. the end."

What is the point of this story? I doubt that young Jeffrey could tell you. There is a vagueness here. A frustration. The story is depressing. And one can hardly help noticing the errors in punctuation, spelling, capitalization. I have nothing against this boy personally, but it's obvious he's not much more of a writer than his Old Man.



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