

Out of the Woods

By Jim Stevens

TV Time Is Timber Time . . .

The letter that was left in the bullet-riddled mailbox up the road from by boompond shack said that at last my big chance had come. "You've heard how the man who made a better mousetrap had a path beaten to his door in the woods," wrote Roaring Rob Mahaffey. "If you've made a better contraption of any kind, I haven't heard of it, but just the same the TV talent scouts have found you out."

The rest of it told me to roll up and stow my barrel-stave hammock, padlock the boompond shack and grab a bus for Seattle and NBC-TV headquarters there. So that's what I did, and the next thing I was up to my neck in the turmoil of a make-ready for an Arlene Francis "Home" show on NBC-TV. Ferry Ride . . .

We took a ferry from Seattle on the afternoon before the telecast itself, for a rehearsal. Next morning we had to hit the dock in time to make ready for a live program set for 7:00 A.M., PST — 11 a.m., Eastern Daylight Saving Time, that is. All hands had alarm clocks fixed for 3 a.m. This meant nothing to an old head who had grown up as a child laborer in the dairy business of long ago. But it was rough on the folks from the East. But the live show had to begin here to meet its Eastern and Midwestern Daylight Saving Time periods.

And, first of all, we had to ride in Ivar Haglund's cruiser, the Skylark, to Bainbridge Island, starting at 4 a.m. sharp. This was to reach the island in time to board the 5:25 ferry for Seattle. The telecast for folks in the East was made on the trip back to Bainbridge.

Few knew about Haglund's handsome boat before the start of the yawning cruise. Did I tell them?

Originally, I said, it was a tugboat, named Walrus, and it swept all prizes in its class at the Philadelphia Centennial Exposition in 1876. Its powerful steam engine was called the wonder of the age among the mariners of the day. The Pope and Talbot people bought the boat and brought it around the Horn to tow log rafts and lumber schooners in Hood Canal and Gamble Bay. It was converted into an oilburner but otherwise knew few changes until Ivar Haglund saved it from the junkyards.

Loving the rare old craft, Ivar spent more money to make a cabin cruiser out of the Walrus than the finest new craft would have cost him. His heaviest expense was in the conversion of the prize winning steam engine of 1876 into an internal combustion power plant. But at last it was well done—he says.

Cabin Fever Plus . . . I recited this fine, rare bit of pioneer marine history to Arlene Francis and her TV "Home" program associates from New York after our 4 a.m. start was made from the Seattle dock, and we were well out in the morning mists of Puget Sound. I pointed out how the old Walrus had been fortified with new Douglas fir timbers and beautified with Western red cedar planking, making it as staunch and pretty as a cabin cruiser might ever hope to be. Ivar Haglund had every reason to have faith in his Skylark, I assured one and all—that is, in everything outside its converted, reconverted, and many-times-welded old Walrus engine.

I could see the cabin fever rising in my listeners right away. "After all," I said, "it is night to its 80th year, except in its new parts. The poor old cracked-up engine does give out oftener than Ivar likes to admit. You know how some people are about their old grandmothers? That's how Haglund is about his old Walrus—this Skylark we're out on Puget Sound in new. Still and all, there's likely not very much chance that we'll find ourselves drifting around in circles, all wrapped in a thick fog at telecast time—is there Ivar? Hmm?"

It was the most poorly timed Paul Bunyan yarn I ever got off. For Haglund had his clamgun along. Were you ever conked with a clamgun? Brother, it takes! It cost me my TV chance of a lifetime. At 7 a.m. I was still out cold.

German Swimming Pool Successfully Attacked

Moenchen - Gladbach, Germany —(UPI)— Aircraft taking part in air atomic war games here "attacked" the swimming pool at 2nd ATAF headquarters today, a straight-faced communique said.

"Four enemy aircraft attacked the main headquarters at Moenchen-Gladbach," the communique said. "The attack was poorly carried out but succeeded in flattening a number of people in the swimming pool."



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