

Try and Stop Me

By BENNETT CERF

IN SAN ANTONIO a group of retired Army officers organized a recreational center they call "The Henpecked Club." Into its quarters stormed an irate, 200-pound wife one evening, swept the poker chips onto the floor and pulled an ex-general out by the ear, screaming, "How dare you join a club with a revolting name like this? You're not henpecked!"

At the Chez Paree in Chicago, an opulent guest at a ringside table offered Joe E. Lewis a bunch of imported grapes. "No, siree," said Lewis haughtily. "You don't catch me taking my wine in pills!"

There's a snobbish apartment house in St. Louis where dogs are allowed—but no children! Whenever tenants have a new baby, the first thing they have to do is to teach it to bark.

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The Family Council

Editor's note: The Family Council consists of a judge, a psychiatrist, three clergymen, a newspaper editor, a women's editor and two writers. Each article is a summary of an actual report. The Family Council does not give advice; it merely reports on problems that have been dealt with by responsible agencies and counselors.

Mrs. R. M. — Our daughter wants to keep her illegitimate baby.

Barbara M. — I want this baby — I'm not ashamed!

Mrs. R. M. — My 21-year-old daughter got into a lot of trouble and now she is just making things worse for herself.

Barbara was going with a man and was planning marriage. She learned, too late, that he had a wife in another state. When he discovered she was pregnant, he ran out on her. That's bad enough—but here's the worst. Barbara refuses to give the baby out for adoption! She says she wants to keep her child and that she plans to bring the baby up as her own. My husband and I have cried and begged and pleaded, but it

doesn't help. She is such a stubborn girl. She is too young to understand what she is doing to her life. Her married sister is willing to take the baby and bring him up as her own, but Barbara refuses to give in even this much.

Barbara M. — I refuse to be shamed or bullied into anything. My parents say I'll never be able to get married with an illegitimate baby, but I don't want any man I'd have to lie to. He takes me as I am, or not at all. I want this baby. I was very much in love and I'm not ashamed of anything. I'm willing to tell the world this is my baby. My parents cry, "Shame!" but plenty of people think I have courage.

It is very generous of my sister to be willing to take the baby, but I want to be able to call him my own. I couldn't stand to hear my child call my sister "Mother" and to look at me almost like a stranger.

The whole family is ashamed of me, but they don't have to worry. I'll go away where I won't disgrace them. And I won't lie and say my baby's father is dead either.

The Council: The R. M.'s are putting the emphasis in the wrong place when they stress the shame of Barbara's position and their worry that she won't be able to marry. Barbara has someone other than herself to consider at this time.

If Barbara talks her problems over with a clergyman or with a social worker attached to a family agency, she will come to see that she must consider the future of her child, above all else. "Plenty of people" may think she has courage, but in bearing this child she is not putting on a performance for the benefit of the public.

This admiring crowd will not be able to help her when she faces the inevitable problems—how to care for her child and at the same time support both him and herself, what to tell her child when he asks about his father, what to tell him when other children say things that might shame him, how to make up to him emotionally for the lack of a father.

Barbara is right that giving the baby to her sister would not work. It would be the worst possible arrangement. But Barbara must be aware that keeping her child will take more than courage. It will take work and great patience and intelligence.

She should realize that she cannot change her mind after the first few months without risking emotional damage to her child—and the chances of arranging a satisfactory legal adoption for an older child are slim.

Barbara must recognize that this is not an occasion for making grand gestures, but for deep, serious consideration and firm, mature judgment.

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Forest Grove Girl

Named Top Journalist

Spokane—Maxine Moore, a high school senior from Forest Grove, Ore., was named top journalist at the ninth annual Northwest High School Press Conference which concluded at Gonzaga university here Saturday.

Miss Moore attends St. Mary's of the Valley Academy at Beaverton. As winner of the top award she received a full tuition one-year scholarship to Gonzaga.

Sydney, Australia—James McGirr, 66, former Labor Party premier of New South Wales, died suddenly here Sunday. McGirr, 66, former Labor Party was responsible for introducing legislation bringing the 40-hour work week to Australia in 1947.

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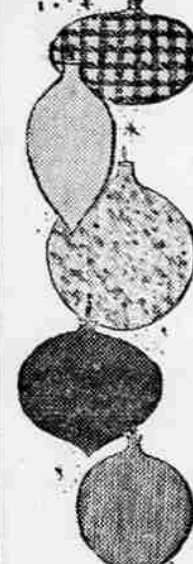
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