

# Family Council

Editors note: The Family Council consists of a judge, a psychiatrist, three clergymen, three editors and a women's editor. Each article is a summary of a family disagreement presented to the Council. The Council deals with problems, major and minor, encountered by guidance counselors and social workers. Edited by Mrs. Alma Denny. (Copyright by General Features Corp.)

**Margery B.** — I'm embarrassed at the way my mother dresses.

**Mrs. J. B.** — I must appear in extreme and interesting costumes.

**Margery B.** — I'm 15 and it embarrasses me to have my mother borrow my dresses and insist that we share each other's outfits. My friends' mothers look like mothers. At least they dress their age. But mine looks like an over-age teenager, with her skirts above her knees and tons of junk jewelry all over her.

It's all right while she's on a job. But when she's just out for a walk with me, why must she wear all that eye shadow and green mascara and purple lipstick? I almost died last week when she met me after school. She was wearing a wacky baseball hat.

She's my mother and I love her. But believe me, I don't like to be seen with her.

**Mrs. J. B.** — Even though I'm 35 and mother of a 15-year-old daughter, I take a size 3 dress and I model for fashion photographers and magazine illustrators. I have teen dimensions, but because I'm tall I'm in demand for certain extreme assignments, too. As a divorcee, I'm fortunate to be able to command a comfortable income from this employment. In a few years I know I'll have to get into some humdrum job, but now I must present the impression of youth which brings me — and Margery, too, despite her criticism — many luxuries we couldn't afford from her father's support money.

**Margery** is a squeamish, prudish youngster and her big joy in life seems to be in finding fault with me. It probably stems from ideas put into her head by relatives she stayed with who still have it "in" for me.

The Council: Something in this mother-daughter relationship cries "Help!" because each is making life hard for the other. With all the unpleasantness which has entered their lives in the past, leading to divorce and Margery's sojourn among carping relations, we'd expect these two to be models of consideration toward one another. But Mother wears flashy theatrical outfits in public, and Daughter sees no reason for same save to embarrass her.

Each can ameliorate the situation via an unselfish look at the other's position. Mrs. B., in addition, might take a cold hard look at herself in a three-way mirror. Would a sensitive teen-ager say, "That is my Mother" with pride — or despair and apology?

For Margery's part she might try to see the dutiful, loyal mother beneath the facade of cosmetic mask and attention-getting styles. She might balance her cries of disapproval with as many soft kind expressions of appreciation as she can frame. She can muster some real admiration for the effort and ambitiousness of this parent who is going-it-alone emotionally and almost-alone (when it comes to extras) financially.

But Mrs. B. must compartmentalize her life more strictly, not only in response to Margery's troubled feelings, but also in the interests of reality for herself. Why can't she bend every effort to separate her professional from her private life? Why, when this becomes impossible, can she not mouth a word of regret and explanation for Margery who longs for a conformist-type mother?

Also Mrs. B. must realize that no matter how "spring-time" she thinks she looks, she's a woman, not a teen, and, as the statistics go, possibly a grandmother in five years. So the studied effort to look half her age may well be making her look, to the average eye, twice her age — what with the heavy-handed bedecking of self. We've a word to the wise (we hope that's Mrs. B.) from a famous Hollywood fashion consultant: "When a woman dresses her age, she usually looks 10 years younger."

A little more attention to the other's problems, and this interesting family can become a happier one.

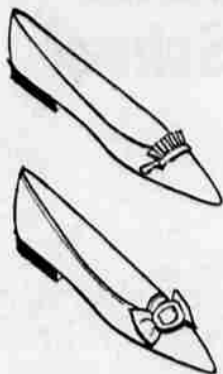
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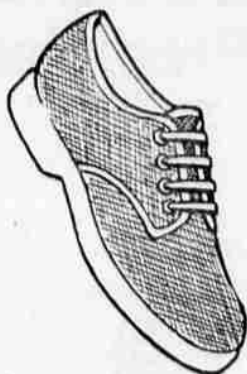
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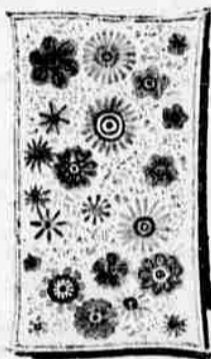
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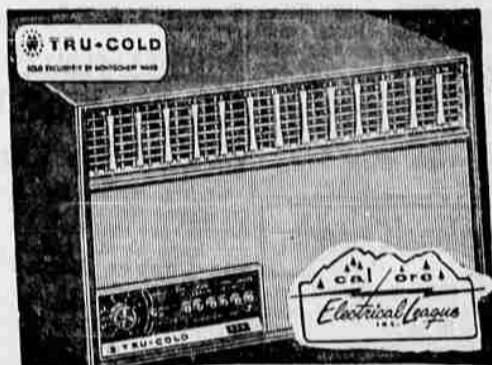
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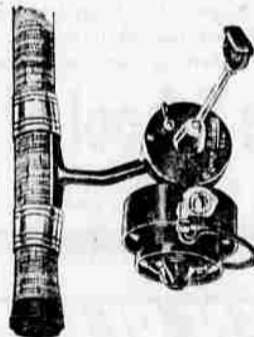
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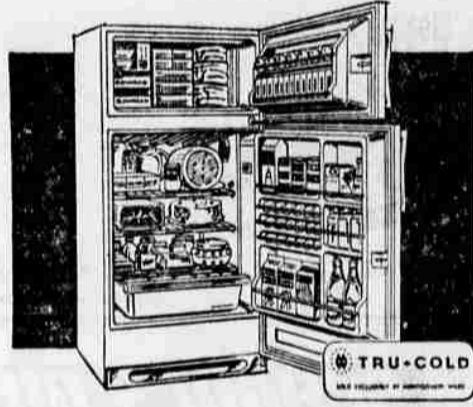
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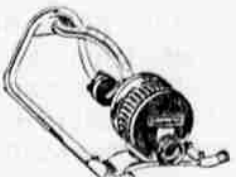
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