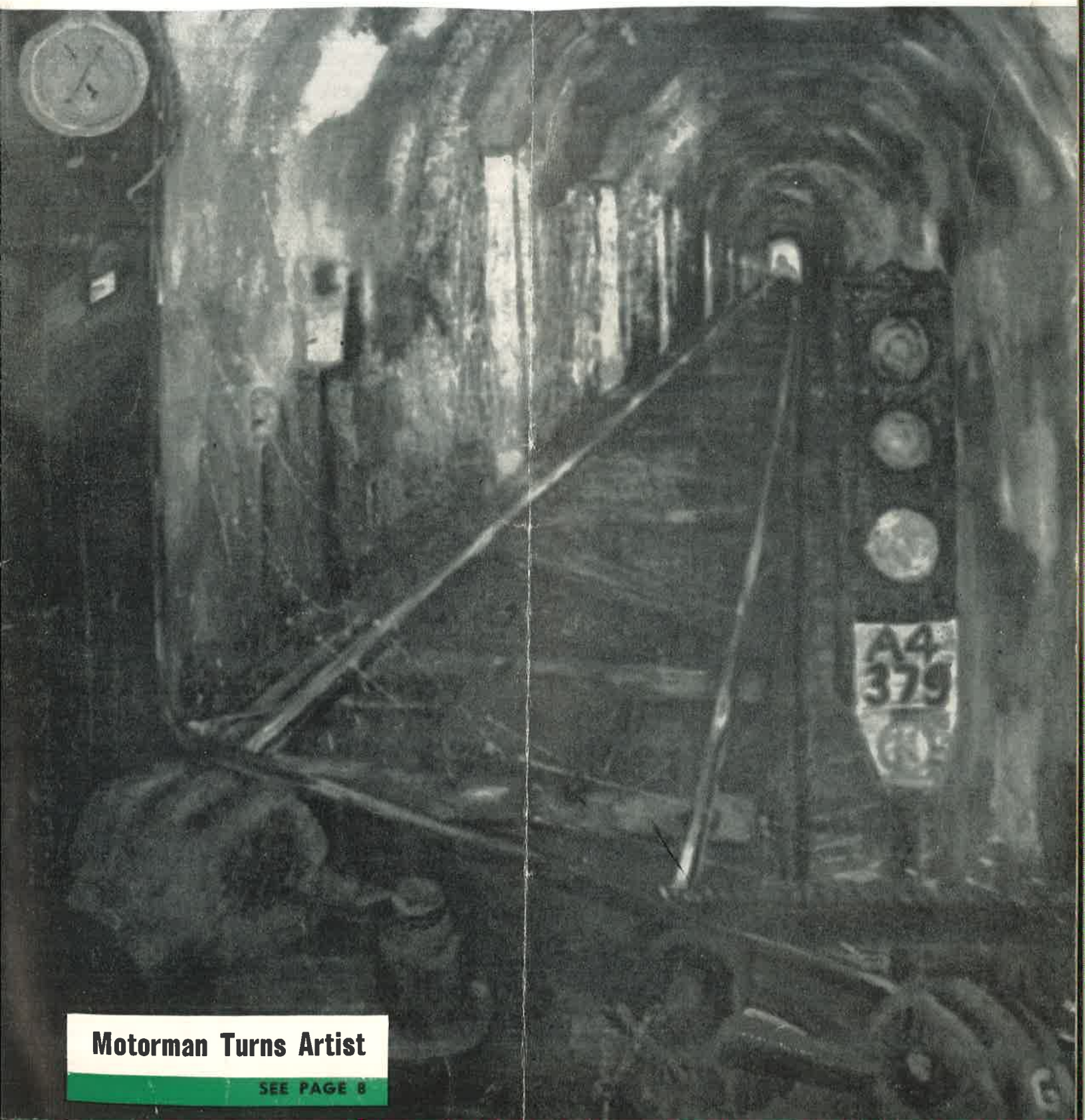
Transit

NEW YORK • NOVEMBER 1956



Motorman Turns Artist

SEE PAGE 8

Transit

A MONTHLY MAGAZINE FOR THE MEN AND WOMEN OF THE NEW YORK CITY TRANSIT AUTHORITY

LEO CASEY
EDITOR

VOLUME 3, NO. 1

November 1956

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Address all mail to:
The Editors
TRANSIT
370 Jay Street
Brooklyn 1, N. Y.



From The Editor's Desk

ONE might ask what photographs of a beauty queen, the head of the World Fashion Center committee and a department store window are doing on the editorial page of TRANSIT, our employe magazine. We're using them because they illustrate the story of how the Authority, municipal agencies and private enterprise are working together.

Picture at top shows Grover Whalen, chairman of the Mayor's Committee for World Fashion Center, with pretty Lee Meriwether, queen of the New York Summer Festival, looking over Subway Suns which plug their work. Picture below shows mannequins as subway riders modeling latest fashions in B. Altman's window.

The more successful Mr. Whalen is, the more subway and bus riders. The more customers for John S. Burke, President of B. Altman, the more riders for TA. The more people attracted to New York by Thomas W. MacLeod, Sr., and his Summer Festival, the greater the use of the transit system. Mr. MacLeod, president of Stern Bros., is also president of the New York Convention and Visitors Bureau which stages the festival.

The TA is proud of these businessmen and civic leaders and will continue to support them. They, too, are doing a great job supporting us. The success of all of us working together means better jobs for all—employes of TA, municipal agencies and private enterprise.



AS OTHERS   SEE US



Christmas Club for TA People?

Recently I have been speaking to a lot of employes in all titles and I want to suggest a Christmas Club, a Thrift Club or any other name you would choose.

The money would be taken from our salary weekly as the banks do, and operated on the same basis as the bank.

MARY C. JASPER
Railroad Clerk, IND



Our Gifted Laryxnes

At DeKalb Avenue, the passengers are so well pleased by the announcer on the PA System that some have asked me whether it was true that "Red" Barber was announcing the trains for the TA. I told them it was a conductor of the BMT who was on the mike. They said that the Transit Authority should be congratulated for selecting men with such fine voice and diction, such as Frank Duffy, who is the conductor at DeKalb Avenue tower giving the directions to the public.

MIKE CROWE, 21-469
Conductor

Long Ago Portia

In regards to Mrs. Helen R. Cassidy being the first woman attorney in transit—not to take anything away from her fine record—but about 25 years ago, one of our BMT attorney's daughter was a lawyer for us.

My family and I look forward to getting TRANSIT magazine.

But do print names of pensioners. I am on the job over 30 years, but out of touch with folks I worked with all those years, due to being on permanent light duty.

LEO J. CYR, 2-7749
Railroad Clerk

Calling All Musicians

Why not start a Transit workers trading post. Just a small section for us who have items of interest that we would like to sell or buy.

I, for one, have an electric guitar, clarinet and photo enlarger that I would like to sell.

I've talked to many workers and find that there is a need for it.

J. CILLO
Railroad Clerk

Softball Winners

The T.A. National League found itself in a tie for the first place at the end of the season, causing a playoff game before the World Series could start. In 15 innings the smoke cleared and 207th Street Truck Shop had beaten 147th Street shop by a 7-5 score.

Final Standings

American League

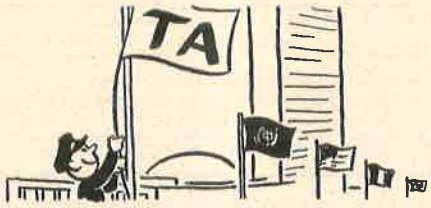
Livorian Ave. "Whirlwinds"	10-2
Brooklyn "Rockets"	8-4
Jay St. "Bombers"	7-5
Kent Ave. "Power Plant"	3-9
Transit "Police"	2-10

National League

207th St. "Truck Shop"	11-2
147th "Lenox Ave."	10-3
125th "Clowns"	4-8
74th St. "Powerhouse"	3-9
207th St. "Elect. Shop"	3-9

The "Whirlwinds" of the American League swept the 207th St. Truck Shop in a best of three series. Larry won both games for the winners with A. Castovinci the hitting star for the losers.

D. ENGLAND
League Pres.



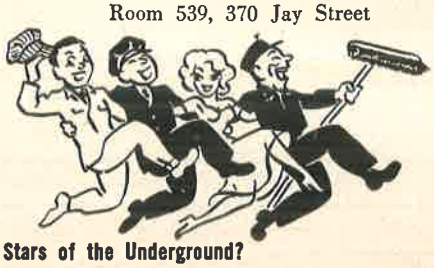
More Laurels for Chessmen

On August 14th at the United Nations Building, the New York City Transit Authority Chess Team added another victim to its list, by an impressive victory over the United Nations Chess Team. The individual scores follow:

N. Y. C. Transit Authority		United Nations	
Hirschhorn	1	Babsek	0
Houchen	1	Wolberg	0
Moglen	0	Arloff	1
Henderson	1	Marino	0
Ruy	0	Florenstein	1
Gernert	0	Braun	1
Samstag	1	Doorkin	0
Norinsky	1	Lopez-Noguerol	0
Brown	0	Grejoric	1
Farrell	1	Hecht	0
Jones	1	Portes	0
Brotman	1	Cabello	0
Total	8	Total	4

The Chess Club meets every Tuesday at 370 Jay Street, Room 1027, at 6:00 P.M. Employes interested please contact:

IRVING D. MOGLEN, Club Sec'y.
Room 539, 370 Jay Street



Stars of the Underground?

There is so much talent to be found amongst employes of the Transit Authority that I feel and believe a musical revue could be easily produced, and produced successfully, not only with talent but also with box-office appeal.

Back in 1948 "Pins and Needles" was produced with a small group of employes from the garment industry, in an off-Broadway theatre. It was so successful that it was carried to a Broadway theatre and ran for two years.

The show I have in mind to produce can repeat the success of "Pins and Needles."

If an interest could be stirred amongst the female and male employes with the sanction of the Transit Authority, I'll set a date for auditions.

The monies received from this project could be turned over for some charitable cause.

JOSEPH A. SPATRISANO



TA Found What Thief Muffed

Railroad Porter Carmine Ucci, while rummaging through a waste can at Classon Avenue Station—GG Line, at about 11 a.m. on May 22, 1956, found a wallet. The regular bill compartment was empty but upon further examination Porter Ucci discovered $180 in cash in a secret compartment.

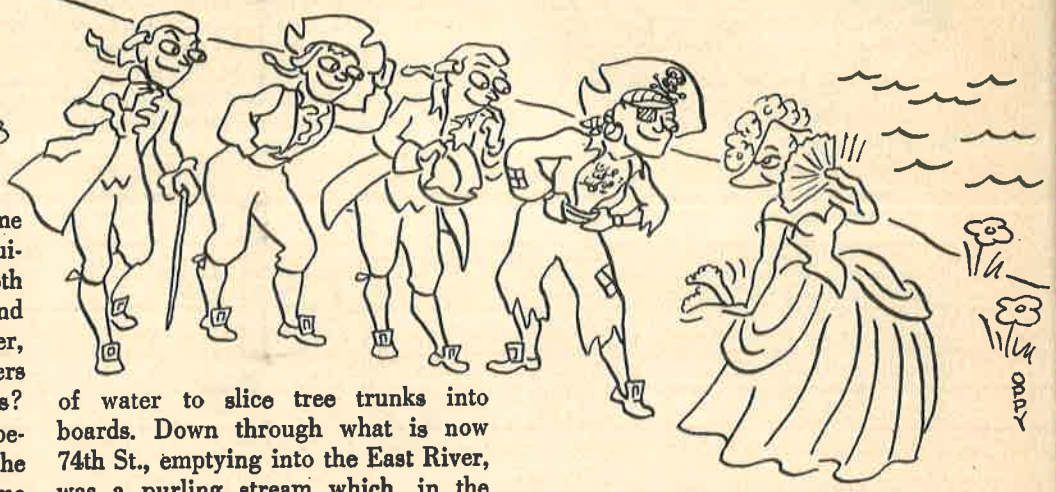
The name Leonarda Alfano at 201 Johnson Avenue, Brooklyn, was in the wallet. She appeared at the Lost Property office the same day and was given a check to her order for $180. Mrs. Alfano stated that she boarded a Lorimer Street bus at Lorimer St. and Johnson Ave. and alighted at Franklin and DeKalb Aves., where she boarded a DeKalb Avenue bus. A female passenger called her attention to the fact that her pocketbook was open and upon examination she found that her wallet was missing.

DANIEL J. DUFFY
Lost & Found

The Indians







Did you ever hear about the time wild Indians were a confounded nuisance, prowling around TA's East 74th St. power plant? And raccoons and possums, and even an occasional deer, came down to sip the limpid waters which turned the wheels in those days?

This, of course, was some time before the State Legislature created the Transit Authority. In fact, it was some time before New York came into being. Colonel Thomas Crimmins, one of the contractors in the modernization of the plant, a student of old New York, got to poking around the history of the site and was charmed to discover that he was rooting around what is certainly the oldest power site in these parts, and possibly the oldest in the New World.

Seems that soon after Peter Minuit consumated his well-known real estate deal, the first Dutch settlers cast about for boards with which to build houses. Contrary to a common belief, the first settlers along the eastern seaboard didn't go in for log cabins—the first of these were much later vintage. The Dutchmen brought with them power saws, which needed only a brisk run of water to slice tree trunks into boards. Down through what is now 74th St., emptying into the East River, was a purling stream which, in the 1630's, became known as Saw River—or Saw Kill—because the Dutch West India Company harnessed its water, brought in a gang of slaves and set up a lumbering camp. The finished boards were water-borne to the new settlement on the southern tip of the island. Thus the power generated at this site was the first to serve the city. It is a remarkable coincidence that three and a quarter centuries later the site is being used for the same purpose.

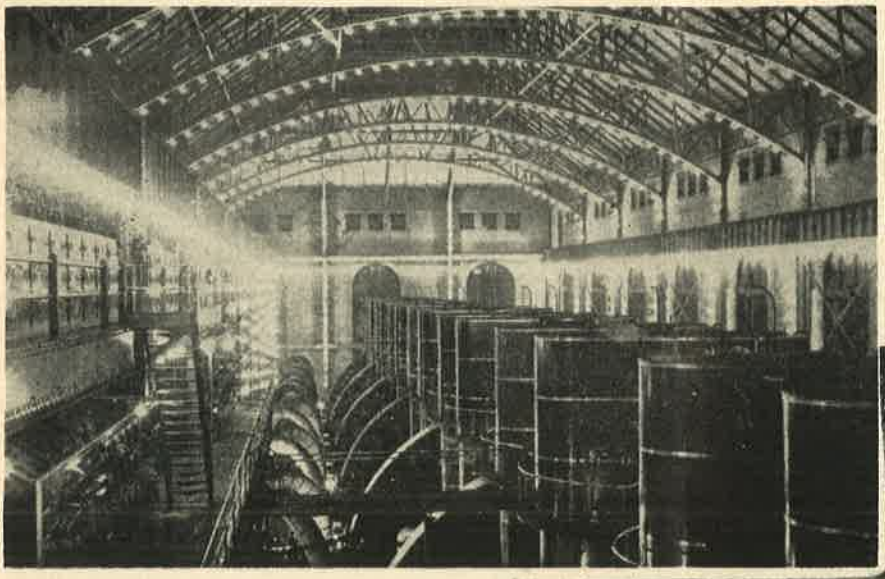
The use for power was not, of course, continuous. Writings of 1640's mention "ye run of water *formerly* called ye saw mill creek." Presumably, by that time, the first growth timber handy to the mill had been used up, and the mill abandoned. But in 1677, two partners, George Elphinstone and Abraham Shotwell, looking for a source of power to operate a leather mill, acquired the land and used the power of Saw Creek again.

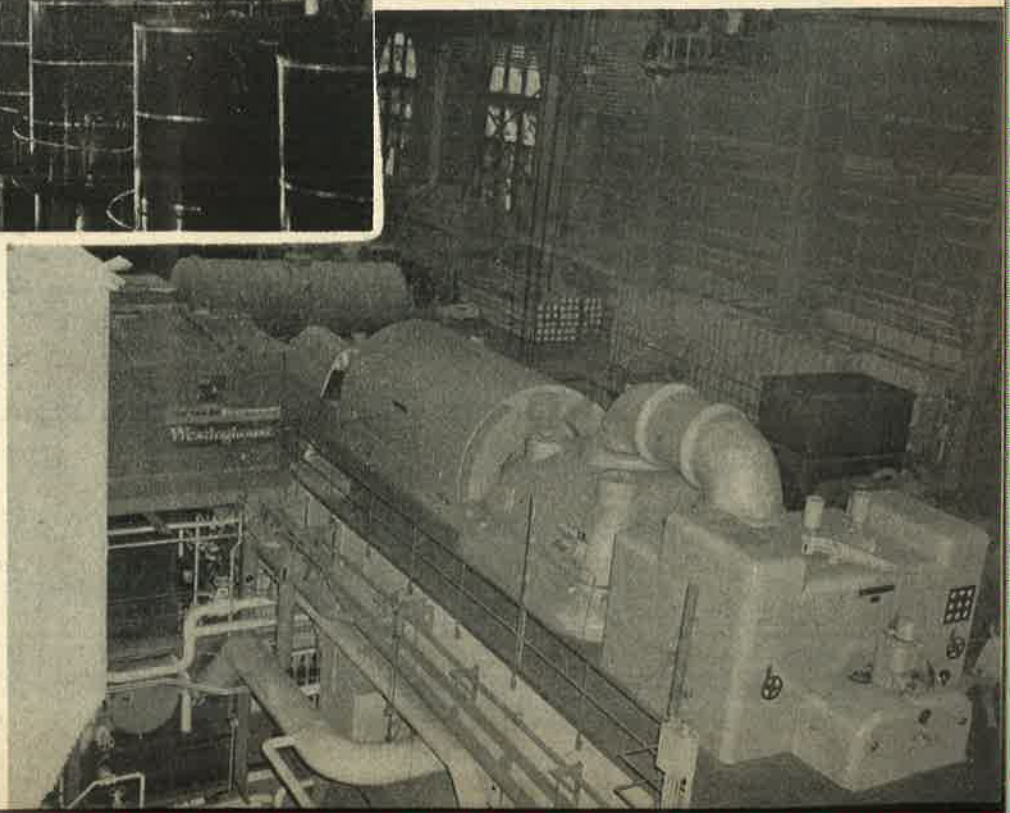
An alderman named William Cox next appears as the owner of the property. He died in 1683 and the property thus went to his widow, Sarah Bradley Cox, a lady who, in a relatively few years went through, for the times, a remarkable number of husbands.

Her third husband was the then highly respected Captain William Kidd, close friend of Governor Bellomonte, who helped him get a commission from King William to sail out and do battle with the pirates. Undoubtedly Captain Kidd spent some time at his wife's place in the country, but most of the time, while in New York, he preferred

Wouldn't Know It Now!



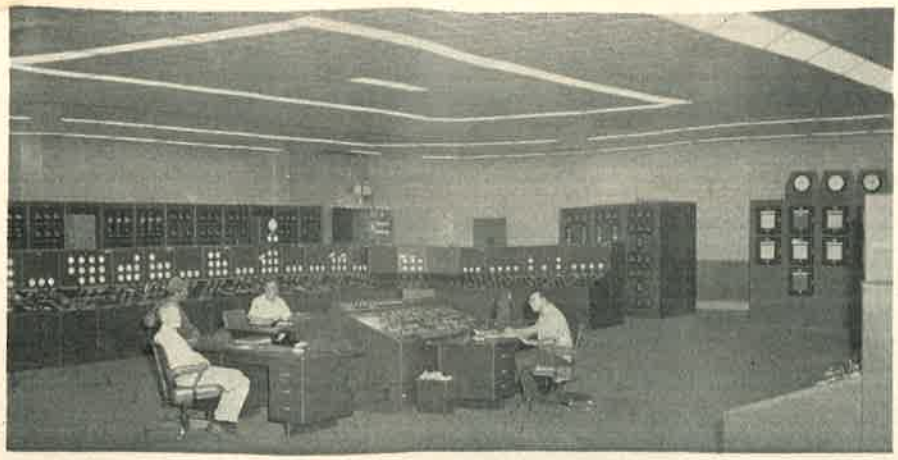




TA's 74th St. power site has produced power for over 300 years. Old sketches at top, from Museum of City of New York, show (left) the farmhouse when Capt. Kidd slept there and the brook which turned the first wheels. Next the reciprocating steam engines, pride of 1904, and, at right, giant new turbines replacing the old engines, now sought after by museum.

the comfortable surburban home of his own on Pearl St. But, because he did stay there once in a while, in the heat of the summers, tales of pots of old coins being found while excavating for the modernized powerhouse have sprung up. The contractors deny that they carefully nurtured these yarns so that workmen will dig with greater zest. But they admit, sadly, that there is nothing to the yarns.

For that matter, the portrait of Captain Kidd as a fiendish pirate, doesn't stand up too well. The line separating wicked pirating from gallant privateering then was often invisible to the naked eye. And there was more than a suggestion that Governor Bellomonte wasn't so much irritated by the Captain's extra-curricular activities at sea as he was by the scanty return which Kidd brought back from the coast of Malabar. He sent Kidd back to England, to be hanged in 1701, and the judges there had a rough time of it making the hanging all legal and proper. The charge of piracy couldn't be made to stick, but his accusers had



From a simple, water-driven wheel the powerhouse has grown so complex that four men crew the nerve center, the control room. L to R, W. J. McGloin, Raymond Shea, Henry Schaney, Charles Branchcomb.

thoughtfully provided a charge of murder—in the killing of one of the ship's gunners—as well as piracy, and it was on this pretext that the most famous owner of the site got the rope.

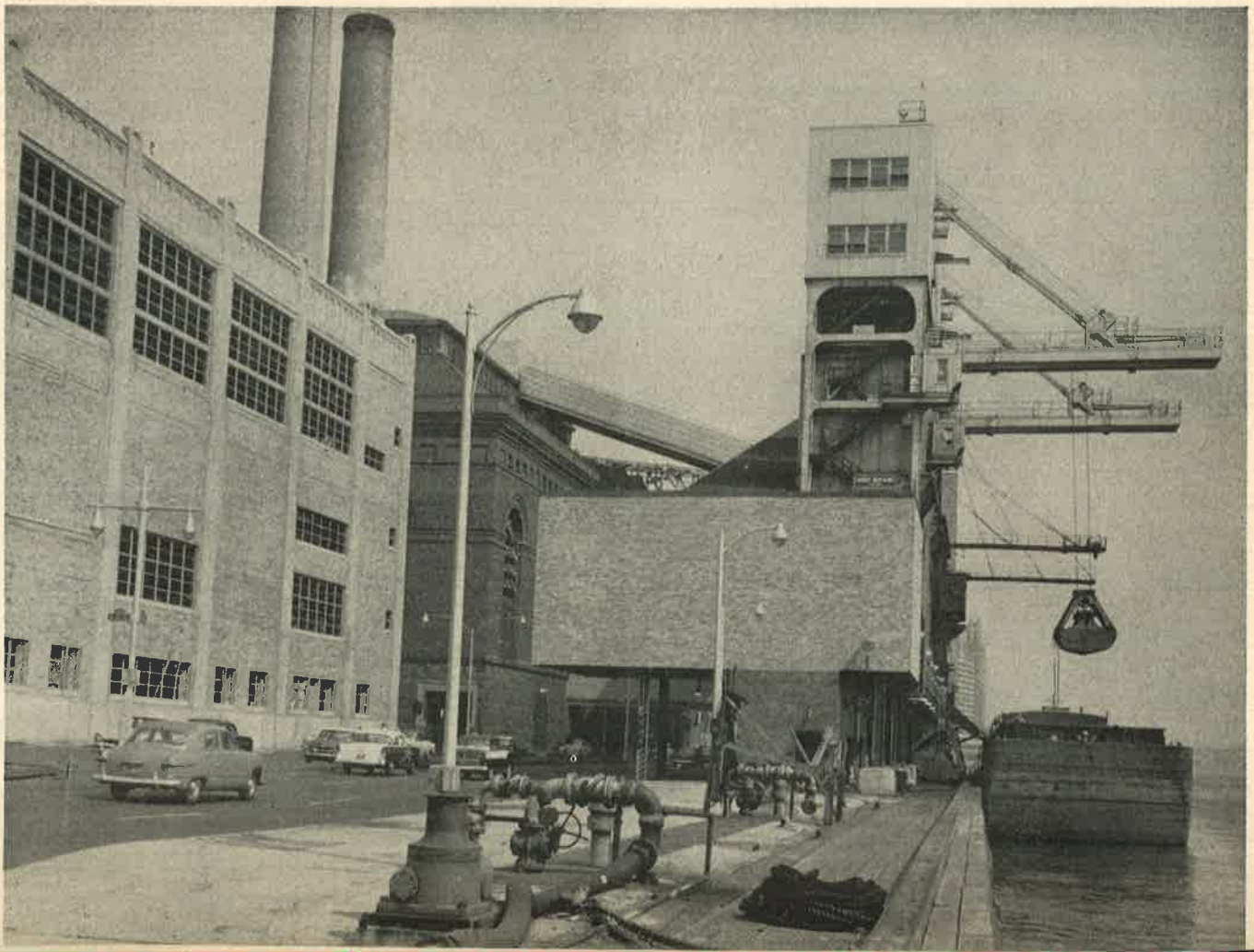
After a decent period, Sarah married a fourth time, and, with her new husband and Kidd's young daughter, went to live on Saw-kill Farm. About 1811 John and Patience Lawrence bought the house where Kidd slept and Richard and Hennet Riker acquired the southern half of the property. The Saw-kill still purled down from the middle of the island, but the Rikers, to make a broad sweep of lawn, roofed it over with masonry. Thereafter the site became known as Arch Brook, and in 1869 Eliza Greatorex, the artist, found "the beautiful little landscape called Arch Brook . . . one of the loveliest situations on Manhattan Island." Because she found it so she recorded the oldest known picture of the site in black and white pictures which eventually found their way into the Museum of the City of New York.

As the nineteenth century drew to a close, the Manhattan Elevated Railroad Company, which hadn't thought much of this new-fangled electricity in the first place, was reluctantly forced to the conclusion that it was a coming thing. Casting around for a site for a power house, they hit upon precisely the same spot as the first Dutchmen.

In 1903, the great reciprocating steam engines, largest ever built, were installed, and were considered—not only then, but now—the highest form of engine developed by James Watt. Now, being dismantled to make way for the smaller, much more efficient and powerful steam turbines, they are sought by, among others, the Smithsonian Institute.

Saw Creek, which turned the wheel, is dried up and forgotten. New power comes from coal—and what an appetite the plant has!

Each of these towers, constructed by the Mead-Morrison Division of the McKernan-Terry Corp., can guzzle 450 long tons per hour.





Conductor Richard Hartnett puts in his eight hours on the IRT Pelham Bay run, but he can hardly wait to get home and get at his beloved bagpipes. As one of the famous Corkpipers on, say, St. Patrick's Day, in a parade, he's a far more imposing figure than in a subway train.



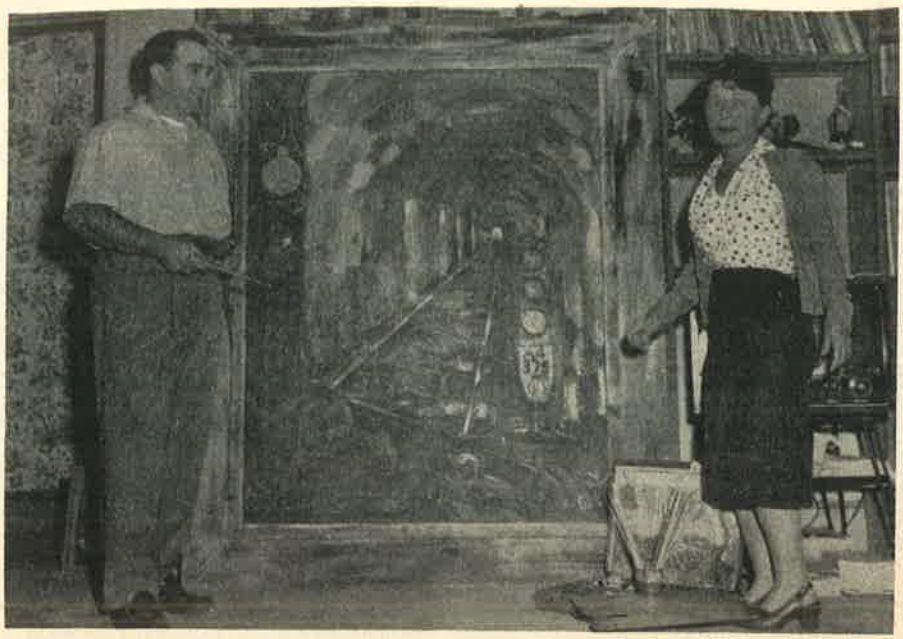
DOUBLE LIVES

The Reverend Hayward Jamison is really a triple threat man—railroad clerk, undertaker and minister. At right he cheerily dispenses tokens for fast rides, and see you again tomorrow, sir. Below, regretfully, he sends a parishioner on wholly different sort of ride, a trip of no return.





A Motorman With Paints



Most artists see subway tunnels as murky, forbidding tubes. Not Gilbert Reiter, who painted the front cover of this magazine. He saw it in brave reds and yellows, and some of his best friends tell him his painting doesn't look like a subway at all, and, as a BMT motorman, he should have known better. Reduced to black and white for reproduction, the violent colors are gone—but not the controversy. The boss Editor screamed that he'd never allow such a blurry smudge on Page One; a stenographer said it shouldn't be used because it gave her a queasy feeling—as though she was actually in the cab of a subway train and couldn't handle the controls; an ex-motorman glanced at it, walked away and came back to study it for three minutes, and say, "Gee—that's good, he's really got it."

Curious to find out how a motorman came to mix art with piloting a subway, we looked up Mr. Reiter, and promptly discovered that combination didn't begin to tell the story. He is also an inventor in a prodigious way, an engineering student at New York University, he had dreams once of being a Frozen Custard King, he's made the list for Mechanical Engineering Draftsman—in fact, he expects an appointment any day now—and we aren't the first who thought his art was good. He has won two scholarships in the Brooklyn Museum of Art and is co-organizer of the Coney Island Artists Workshop. The headquarters from which he leads a frenzied existence of studying, painting, inventing, motoring is his home in Seagate, with his wife and two sons, Alan and Peter. He's also got to find time for a great deal of boy-scouting since the boys, 15 and 12 years old, are keen Scouts.

He attributes his drive to his wife, Lillie, whom he met when he was seventeen and earning a living "carrying buttonholes." He was surprised we never heard of this, and said it was commonplace in the garment district. A boy who carries unfinished garments to places where they put in buttonholes, it developed, is a button-hole carrier. Anyway, he was introduced to Lillie by a neighbor while sitting on a bench. He never quite got over the fact that when he stood up, he looked around and found her gone, vanished. Turned out to be just an optical illusion, though. Mr. Reiter, who now, at 39, is a scant five foot six, had grown accustomed then to rather looking up to girls. He found this one presently a little below his left shoulder. They were married four years later.

Meanwhile, he went after an education, taking up Art and Machine Shop, at Brooklyn Tech, and seeing nothing extraordinary in the combination. He graduated from carrying buttonholes to selling frozen custard at Coney Island. He became manager, then owner. He acquired the beginning of a chain by establishing a frozen custard place at Rockaway. But the depression was still on, and not many people had the money to buy the frosty fluff. And, in 1941, he got a job as trolley operator. He became a motorman in 1945.

He'd always dabbled in invention and when the war started he went in for it in a big way. He produced more than two hundred contrivances, such as "A Device for Transmitting Rotary Motion through a Moisture-proof Barrier," "A Non-Skid Shoe Sole," an airfoil for airplanes, "The Reiter Wheel," "A Device for Extinguishing Tank Fires," "A Device for Protection from Flame Throwers," "A Device for the Protection of Pursuit Planes from Rear Attack." You may never have heard of some of these, because the Government turned them all down.

"But one," he said, "they kept and tested for eight months before saying no. That was a Device to Assist Traction in Sand." Ordinarily the Government took only ten or eleven days to turn down his stuff.

But his invention was not without reward. The TA paid him ten dollars for his "Hydraulic Jack for Turning the Adjustments on the Elliptical Springs of Trucks."

"Of course," he said, almost apologetically, "my horizons have broadened a great deal since I took up engineering."

"The Miracle of Astor Place..."

One of the evening newspapers called it that when the first express train headed south from Grand Central at 12:02 a. m. on the morning of July 20—five days and twelve minutes after the undermined roadbed of the Lexington Avenue line crumpled gently beneath a train, undermined by 50,000,000 gallons of water pumped on the Wanamaker fire.

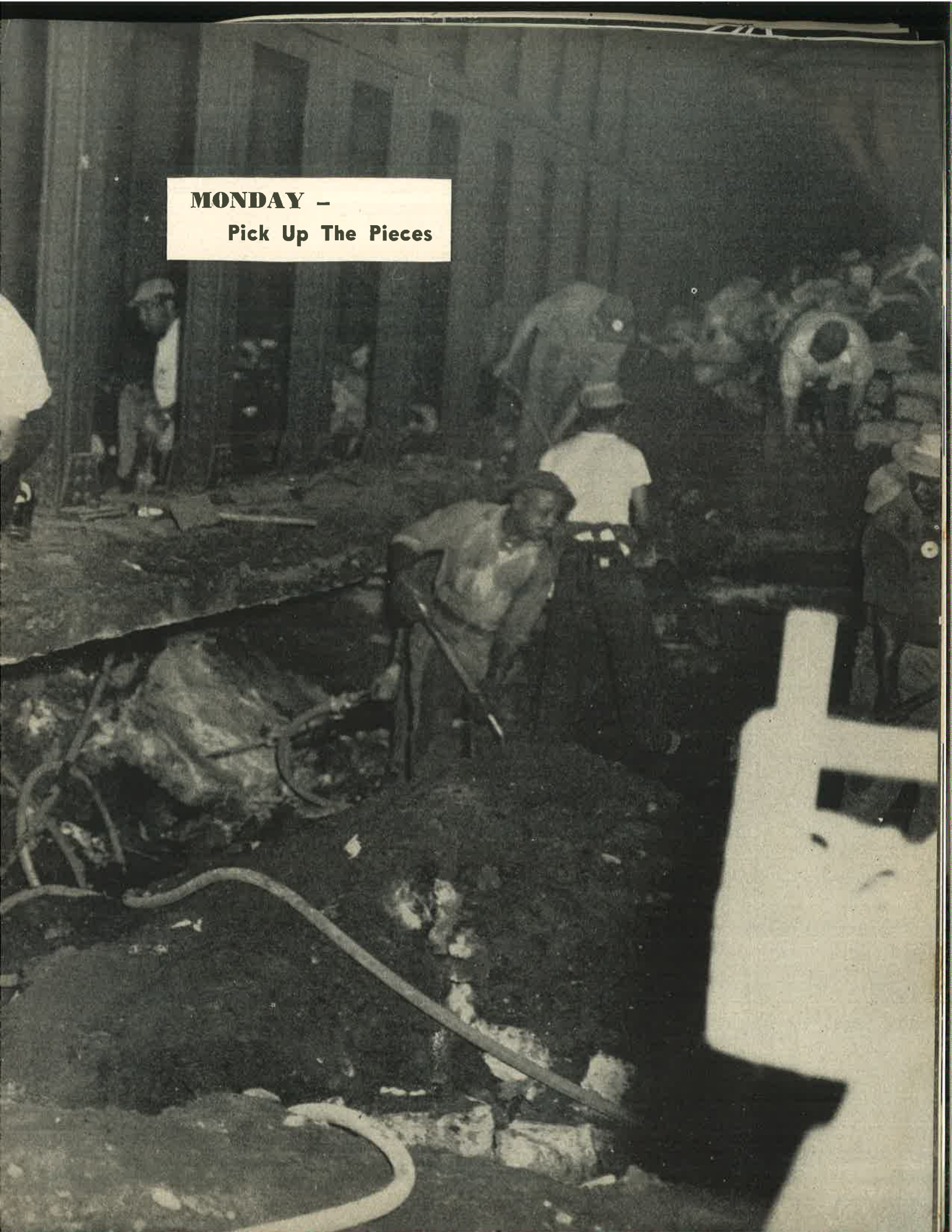
It wasn't that. For miracles are performed without lamed backs, labored days and sleepless nights, engineering knowhow, and scientific short-cuts. But it was a disaster TA could point to with pride. As one workman put it:

"About the time an ordinary railroad would be deciding when to call a conference to decide what to do about it—about that time, we had it done."

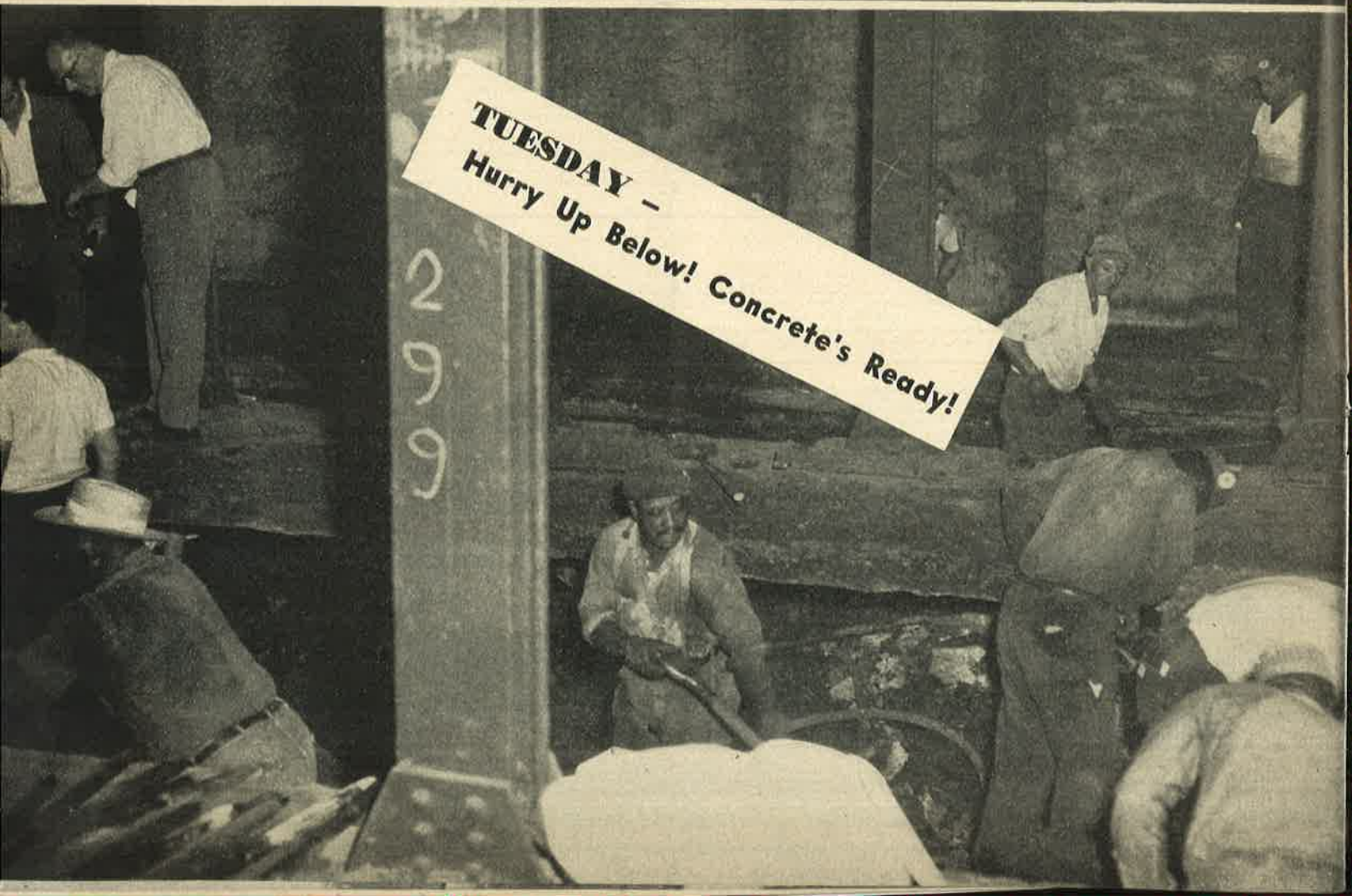
On these five pages are presented a brief pictorial history of what TA did on Astor Place in five days and twelve minutes.



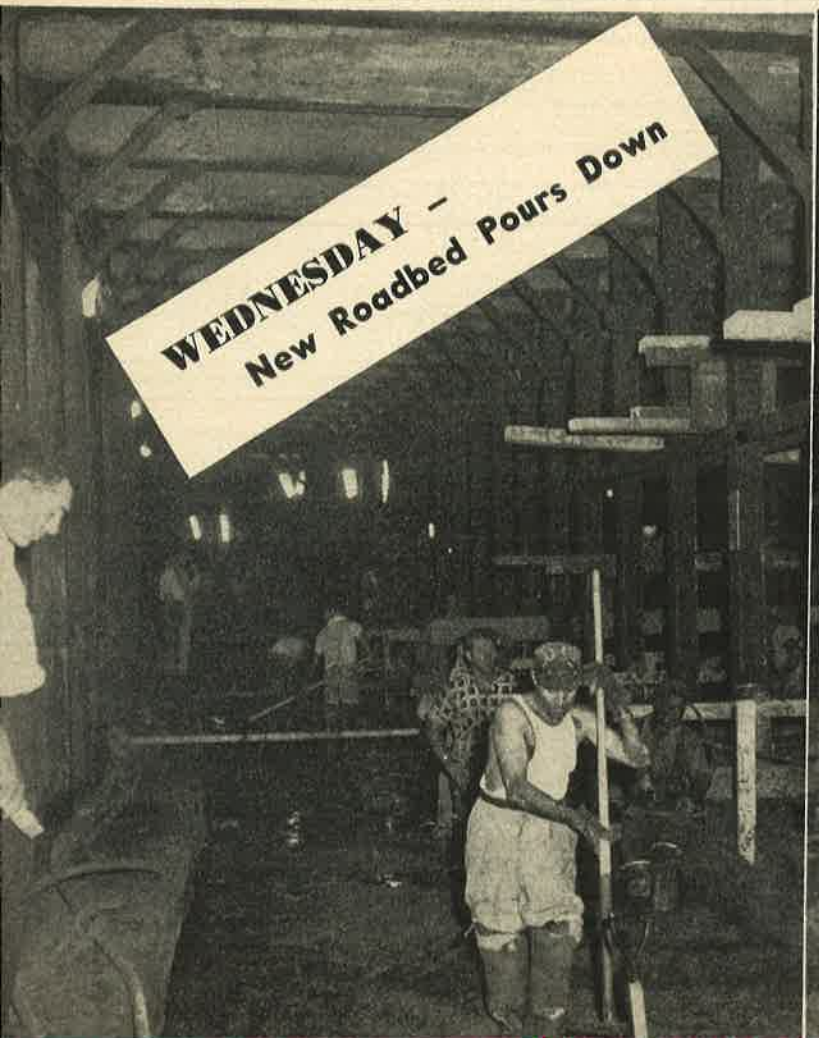



MONDAY –
Pick Up The Pieces




TUESDAY –
Hurry Up Below! Concrete's Ready!
299


GENERALISSIMO TRUJILLO
DOMINICAN REPUBLIC
International Peace and Progress
FAIR
CIUDAD TRUJILLO


WEDNESDAY –
New Roadbed Pours Down




THURSDAY –
New Tracks on New Roadbed . . .


6
LEX-PELHAM
BROOKLYN
BRIDGE
6643
FRIDAY –
First Train Through!

Busman's Holiday

On his return from a two-week vacation in Daytona Beach, all expenses paid and his picture taken surrounded by choice specimens of Florida beach fauna, Mr. William Edelson stopped by to tell us about it in case we had missed the TV show which brought it all about. By an odd coincidence we *had* missed the show, and were, naturally, all ears. It developed that Mr. Edelson, a bus operator working out of the Fifth Avenue Depot, had achieved this prize by having a dispute with his wife on a show called *Stand Up and Be Counted*. As a result of a thorough check, we are able to report that Mr. Edelson is the only TA man who ever enjoyed a two-week vacation in Florida, all expenses paid and his picture taken surrounded by choice specimens of Florida beach fauna, by having an argument with his wife. Mrs. Edelson shared all the benefits except that her picture was not taken surrounded by the aforementioned fauna.

A Problem of Value

We were intrigued by the possibilities in this situation, but Mr. Edelson dashed our hopes by advising that not everybody can have a two-week vacation in Florida simply by disagreeing with the missus in a TV studio. He was lucky. He had a *problem*, which, it seemed, is absolutely necessary to get on this show. His problem was: Should he retire, or shouldn't he? Mr. Edelson—at that time—was fiercely opposed to retiring; his wife was strongly in favor of it.

Mr. Edelson stressed that this was no low family squabble. Quite the contrary. "It was beautiful, just beautiful," he said. It was really, as he described it, a spirited debate, conducted on a high, intellectual plane. His wife, Rose, stated her reasons why he should retire—all of which he had heard before—and they didn't, at the time, impress him any more when delivered before cameras than they did when he heard them home at 279 South Fifth Street, Brooklyn. And, in his powerful, clear, convincing voice, Mr. Edelson—who sings bass when not driving a bus—recounted his argument against retirement, which — at that time—sounded extremely persuasive to him.

But now a curious thing happened. Letters swamped Mr. Edelson. Or, as he put it, "The response was tremendous." In all he got 1,500 letters. A good many of the writers agreed with him that it was silly for a man of 55 to retire. But the weight of the letters ran on his wife's side. Mr. Edelson swayed, he said, and finally decided to retire. "Yes, I changed my mind," he said.

Indeed, when he was down in Daytona Beach, he looked around for a retirement place. The Chamber of Commerce there said they'd help him out. He drove around there in a private car for the first time in his life, looking the place over. A peculiar thing—he'd driven trolleys for ten years and buses for fifteen, but he'd never touched the steering wheel of a private car before. He found it wasn't half bad. Thinks he might get one some day.

Mr. Edelson felt rather strongly that we should put in his argument against retirement. We didn't think so, but Mr. Edelson launched forth anyway, in his powerful, convincing voice. As he went on and on, sonorously, a glazed look came into his eyes. His arguments took shape, developed forcefully. We tried to break in on him several times, and finally succeeded in getting through to him.

"Just when are you going to retire?" we inquired.

"Retire?" demanded Mr. Edelson, staring blankly at us. "Why should I retire? Look, when I'm behind that wheel, I'm somebody. I'm important. Im performing a valuable service. If I retire, I'm nobody.

"Why should I retire? I'm only fifty-five. I feel fine. I like my job. I got seniority. I can pretty well pick my job. Why should I retire? Tell me that!"

He Convinced Himself

He glared at us belligerently, while we muttered weakly that we hadn't been trying to persuade him to retire.

"Retire!" snorted Mr. Edelson, "That's a serious step. Nobody's going to rush me into it. I'll think it over for six months or a year."

He promised to let us now when he did make up his mind, shook hands and departed, leaving us to muse over the fact that a couple of hundred thousand people had weighed Mr. Edelson's problem, fifteen hundred had felt strongly enough to sit down and write him, helpfully, and Mr. Edelson's problem, after the wonderful work that television had done on it, was still a problem.





A NEW UMPIRE

Both unions recognized by TA accepted a new arbitrator in Theodore W. Kheel, top-flight expert. Above the Amalgamated group beams approval. L to R, Commissioners Curtayne and O'Grady, Arbitrator Kheel and the union leaders, John G. Doran, James Gormley, William E. Mangus, Victor Iskowitz. Below, the TWU officials meet the new arbitrator. Standing, L to R, Patrick Mahedy, Daniel Gilmartin, Frank Sheehan and Ellis F. Van Riper. Seated, same order, are Matthew Guinan, president of Local 100, Transport Workers Union, Charles L. Patterson, chairman of the Transit Authority, and Arbitrator Kheel.



THE BIG GAME

You'd never know it from the facial expressions, but the group to the left of the banner was beaten in the last lap for the championship of TA's Softball League. They're the 207th St. "Truckers," and they're not just smiling through tears, either. On the right, with grins just a wee bit wider, are the victors, the Livonia Ave. "Whirlwinds," who are now both American League and World Series Champions.



TA NEWS IN PICTURES



At grandstand as the TA contingent passed were, L to R, Fortune Pope, publisher of Il Progresso, Commissioner O'Grady, Mayor Wagner and General Manager T. J. McLernon.



TRANSIT GOES ON PARADE

TA's float, a replica of the Santa Maria, was on of most colorful in parade honoring America's discovery. L to R, the girls are Michele Belsky, daughter of Jack Belsky, surface superintendent, Patricia McKeever, Barbara Depuy. Less photogenic specimens in rear are Edward McKeever, Patricia's dad; Joseph A. Begley, Thomas J. McLernon, Harold C. Peterson, William H. Connolly, Charles A. Landon, Harold McLaughlin and Nathan D. Brodkin. Below, vanguard of TA contingent passes St. Patrick's. Note Tom Magnotta and Harry Molese, president and vice-president, respectively, of Columbia Association, flanking Commissioner O'Grady and General Manager.



TA PEOPLE HONOR A TRANSPORTATION FEAT 464 YEARS OLD

Heirloom Recipes

Transit Will Pay $5 for Each Recipe Published



If you're the sort who likes a truly hearty soup, the kind which makes a thoroughly satisfying meal, merely with the addition of a crusty loaf and butter, then this one is for you. Definitely it isn't the sort just for an appetizing cupful before the main dish. Mrs. Marion Licata sends it from 69 Princeton Ave., New Dorp, S. I.

ITALIAN CHICKEN SOUP

- 3½ lb. roasting chicken
- ½ lb. chopped chuck
- 1 package chopped frozen spinach
- 1½ tablespoons grated Italian cheese
- 1 egg
- soup greens
- 1 medium onion

Have chicken cut up. Shape chuck into tiny meat balls. Put these in kettle with water to cover, soup greens—tied together—and onions. Bring to a boil, reduce heat and simmer for one and a half hours.

Now beat egg and combine with grated cheese. Put these ingredients and the defrosted spinach into the soup and cook for fifteen minutes longer. Remove soup greens and serve.

There never was a pound cake addict who didn't swear that her recipe produced the *creme de la creme* of cakes, and no other was worth the eating. If you haven't already found a favorite, try this one from Mrs. Louise Barkey of the Medical Clinic.

LOUISE'S POUND CAKE

- ½ lb. butter
- 1½ cups sugar
- 5 eggs
- 2¼ cups sifted flour
- 2 teaspoons baking powder
- ¼ cup milk
- 1 teaspoon vanilla
- 1 teaspoon lemon extract



Cream butter and sugar together. Add the egg yokes, flour, baking powder, milk and flavorings. Thoroughly beat the egg whites and add them last. Pour into a well-greased and floured deep baking pan. Bake in 350 degree oven for one hour.

From Mrs. Frances G. Falzetta, 157 Franklyn Ave., Brooklyn, comes this dessert, which is at its peak of goodness when served warm, with whipped cream.

SPICED PINEAPPLE UPSIDE-DOWN CAKE

- 4 canned pineapple slices (drained)
- ½ cup butter
- 1⅔ cups (packed) brown sugar
- 10 maraschino cherries
- 2 cups sifted flour
- 2 teaspoons baking powder
- 1 teaspoon cinamon
- 1 teaspoon nutmeg
- 2 eggs, beaten
- ⅔ cup milk

Melt half the butter and add ⅔ cup brown sugar, stirring until dissolved. Spread this in a design, using the pineapple and cherries in an eight by eight inch pan, about two inches deep. Mix and sift dry ingredients. Beat eggs with remaining brown sugar, to which the remaining melted butter and the milk are now added. Stir this into the dry ingredients. Pour batter over the pineapple and cherries and bake for 50 minutes in a 350 degree oven.



Problem Drinkers

SOME EIGHT MONTHS AGO we established a Central Information Center for problem drinkers. That is what it is called, aptly, because no one can cure alcoholism. Except the drinker himself. And even there Alcoholics Anonymous, which today is the brightest hope in the picture, feels that a "cure"—in the commonly accepted sense—is impossible. The alcoholic, even after five, ten or fifteen years of total abstinence, is still an alcoholic. But total abstinence is possible. And, with total abstinence, the alcoholic is no longer a problem. In fact, he can rise and fly, in many cases higher than the average citizen. The old concept that the alcoholic is strictly a bum, and doomed to remain so, is gone, shattered by the fact that so many important figures in the arts, sciences and business, are alcoholics. Talking to one, a brilliant engineer who'd been off the stuff for eleven years, we absently referred to him as an ex-alcoholic.

The Man Who Never Was

He interrupted: "But you're wrong there. I'm just as much an alcoholic now as I ever was. One drink now—and in a matter of hours I'd be right back in the gutter. Ex-alcoholic?—No such thing!"

It is precisely because there are so many able citizens among the alcoholics that we embarked on this program. We are deeply interested in the personal welfare of our people. In addition, a man with years of experience represents an investment to TA, very often a very heavy investment. He may be of an age when he should begin paying large dividends to the Authority instead of which he is a constant drain, financially and otherwise. If we can reverse the process, we stand to benefit quite as much as the drinker himself. Many large corporations in private industry have the same setup, for the same motives.

In these first eight months, some 99 TA people have tried out the Central Information Service. Their individual files are secret, even from us. But the overall results are not. And there are some interesting findings.

In the first place, alcoholism isn't concentrated in any particular branch of the service. The 99 cases came from supervision down to the lowest wage echelons, in pretty much the same proportion as the number of employes in each category. In the second place, everyone thought his problem was different and entirely personal. In a sense, that was true. But every case followed a broad path of sameness. Every individual record had certain symptoms duplicated in the card ahead and behind it—absenteeism after pay days and after regular days off, lost passes, etc.

Since the TA started its Central Information Service, a number of persons have lost their jobs because of excessive drinking. We don't know, and we never will know, if any of the 99 who were in touch with the Central Information Service and could not stop drinking were among those dismissed. Probably some of them were—a grim warning that the road of the alcoholic isn't as rosy as it sometimes appears.

But at least 65 of the 99 have, for months, completely overcome their weakness—a bright sign, which leads us to believe that the self-rehabilitation of many more TA people may be achieved.

Nobody knows how much alcoholism presently costs TA. It might be possible to arrive at a figure, fairly precise, of the number of days lost because of the habit and the amounts of sick benefits paid out for that.

But such figures would mean nothing, because they wouldn't take into account time wasted in clock-watching by the alcoholic whose thoughts are centered on figuring how long, how long, before he can get out and down a few. The figures wouldn't take into account the morning hours spent at the desk, or the bench, fighting hangovers and trying to appear busy at the job, but actually doing nothing but fighting the aftermath of last night's drinking.

But the waste is there. It affects two to six per cent of workers in industry generally. And the amount of loss, in an organization the size of TA, must be tremendous.

The Man Who Should Be More

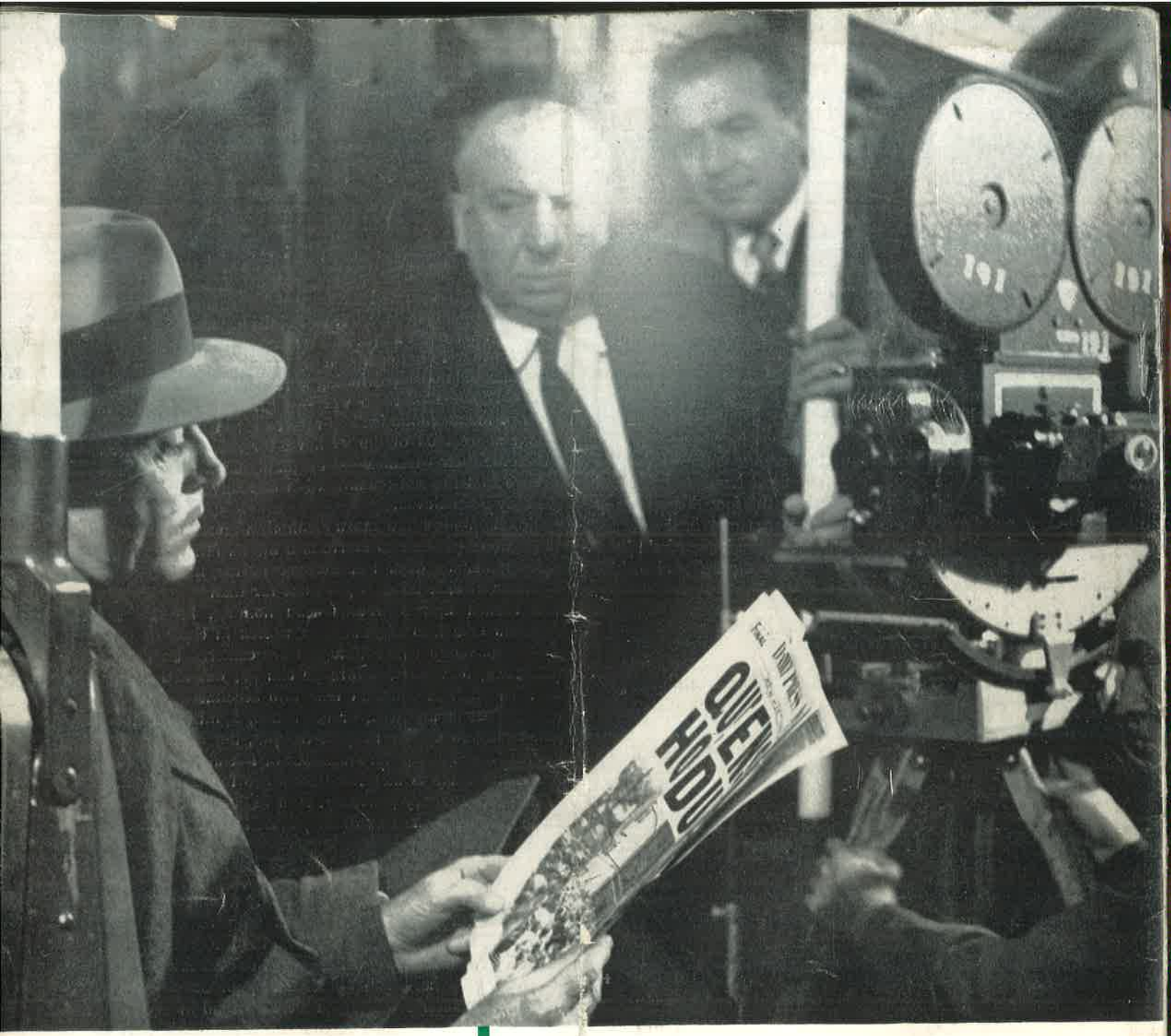
So we know the habit can be licked; we know there are techniques for doing it. We also know problem drinkers need to know these techniques. With the information available they can do a much better job of self-rehabilitation.

If you need help, call up for an appointment—ULster 2-5000, Extension 4788. If you have a friend in TA whose habit is secret from all but you and his intimates, try to get him interested.

There'll be no preaching—the worst stuff in the world to pass out to an alcoholic. The man at the other end of the telephone has the experience found absolutely essential for his job—thirty-odd years in barrooms, hospitals and hangovers, followed by a dozen years of total abstinence.

Problem drinkers can trust this man. He never will disclose your name to anyone. Your secret is his secret. His only purpose is to help you help yourself.

Charles L. Patterson Vincent Pentagna Joseph E. O'Grady



HOLLYWOOD GOES UNDERGROUND

Alfred Hitchcock, that indefatigable seeker of authenticity for movie sets, hired an IND train for his latest melodrama. Here, practically aglow in the blaze of movie lights, the master of suspense directs Henry Fonda. The train is supposed to be rattling through the tunnel. Actually, it is standing quite still in Fifth Ave. station of IND.

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