

december 1979

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The Creative Magazine of Middle Tennessee State University

cloaked in a sheet of fleece,  
you become new,  
cleansed in a balm  
of gentle white—

— J.G.



# CONTENTS

FOCUS

Empire The First For

The Great Discoverer

Discovery

Discovery

30

Discovery

Discovery

Discovery

Discovery

Discovery

Discovery

Discovery

Discovery

Discovery

Discovery

Discovery

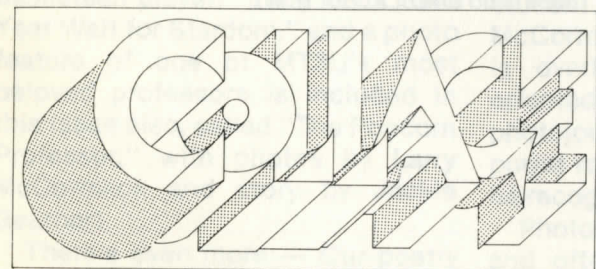
Discovery

Discovery

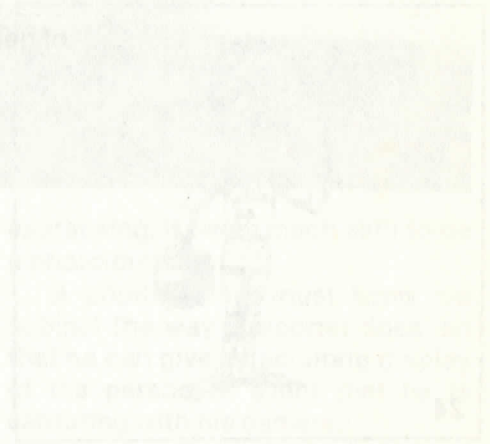
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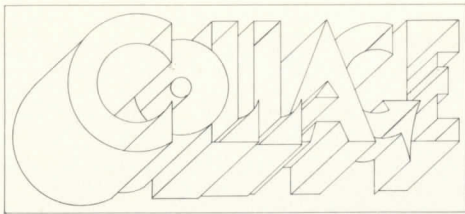
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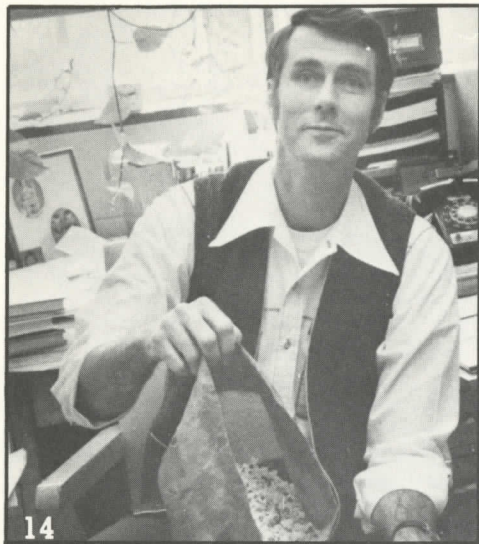


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# CONTENTS



## FOCUS

3

### Pushing The Red Pen

4

... Somebody else on campus worries about, sweats over and frequently doesn't understand grades besides students ...

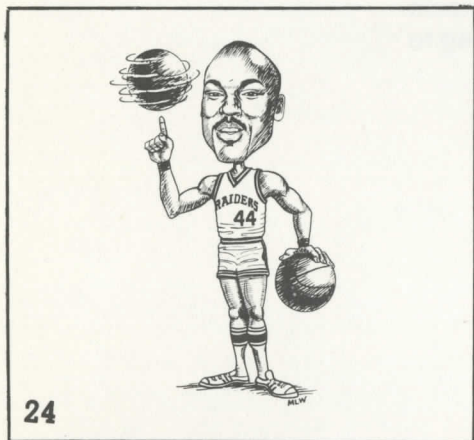
## GALLERY

8

### The Popcorn Professor

14

... Ralph Hillman believes that his task as a professor is not simply "to teach," but to "help students learn." ...



### "entity"

17

... He looked at the word in his hand and bounced it up and down in space, lightly though, so as not to lose grasp of it ...

### Discovery

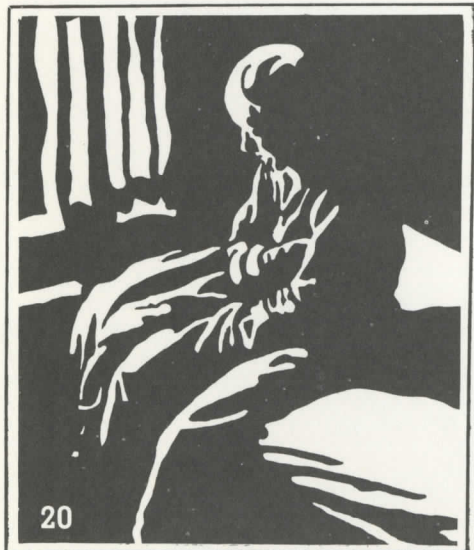
20

... He sat in the lobby of the dressing room, an old man dressed in faded vest, frayed out shirt, and loose, limp trousers.

### Foreign Relationships: A Question of Customs

22

... Learning a new language isn't all it takes to communicate with people in a foreign country ...



### Jerry Beck: Two Year Wait For Stardom

24

... "Jerry Beck has definitely got as much raw talent as anyone I have ever seen, there is no doubt about that."

Cover Photo by Lynch Orr  
Page 3 photo, Latent Desire, by  
Charlie Hunt





# FOCUS

This issue of *Collage*, our second of the year, focuses on the most important ingredients of a university — the student, and the teacher.

Our feature articles this issue include Patricia Bates' "Pushing the Red Pen," an insight into how teachers really feel about grading, and Lisa Human's "Foreign Relationships: A Question of Customs," a look at the dating customs of foreign students.

Another feature, by Scott Adams, is a profile of a talked-about basketball player, "Jerry Beck: Two Year Wait for Stardom," and a photo feature of one of MTSU's most beloved professors is included in this issue also, called "The Popcorn Professor," with photos by Larry McCormack and story by Jackie Gearhart.

There's even more — Our poetry includes a whole section by a prolific political science professor,

along with other outstanding student work.

Two short stories are included in this issue, one, "Discovery", by Joanna Ormiston, is about a man who discovers what growing old really means, and another story, "entity", by Jackie Gearhart, which takes a humorous look at a typical classroom situation.

In "Gallery," as usual, we feel we have work from some of the best student photographers on campus.

Our photo feature is the work of a student of photojournalism, Larry McCormack. Often photojournalism is overlooked for the more art-oriented photography, but the photojournalist plays a very important role in the media that should be recognized.

Photos can tell stories as well as, and often better than words can. They can capture a person or action in a way that words are incapable of

expressing. It takes much skill to be a photojournalist.

A photographer must know his subject the way a reporter does, so that he can give an accurate display of the person or event that he is capturing with his camera.

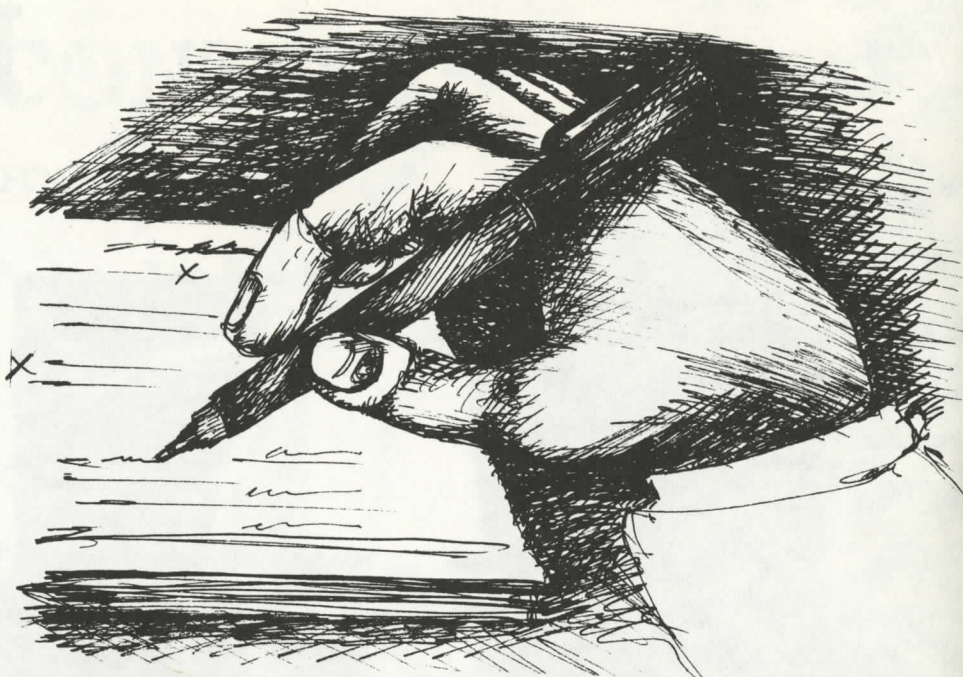
The photojournalist does not simply stand in the background snapping his shutter; he gets in the action and communicates with his subject. Larry McCormack is a dedicated student of photojournalism. We hope that you appreciate and enjoy his work as much as we do.

Remember, the creative magazine of MTSU is a collage of all of the things around us, and that includes you. Without your submissions, *Collage* is a book with empty pages. Send your comments, criticisms, compliments and ideas to *Collage*, box 61. We look forward to hearing from you.



# Pushing the Red Pen

by Patricia Bates



Somebody else on campus worries about, sweats over and frequently doesn't understand grades besides students. Teachers do.

While the student struggles over *making* the grade, it's the instructor who labors over *marking* it. When the approximate 42,000 individual grades are printed out by computer at MTSU each semester, neither sector can feel genuine, abiding relief after anxiety. *After all, what do grades show anyway?*

When in question, ask a teacher.

"Grades are used as a shorthand," observes Dr. Marlyne Kilbey, chairman of the psychology department. "They express some ideas as to the attainment of the goals of a course. Essentially a grade summarizes data about that student."

Dr. June McCash, a professor and director of the honors program, believes "grades are a method of evaluating a student for that student's future."

Department head Dr. Nathan Adams of accounting and information systems describes grades as "reflecting a measure of a degree of what you have learned in a

course." He adds, "I would hope that a student who makes an 85 knows more accounting than a student who makes a 75."

"Grades are indicative of whether or not learning has taken place," explains Dr. J. Eldred Wiser, chairman of the department of chemistry and physics. "Grades show quite a bit. They tell me whether or not a student can get into med school or dental school."

Art department chairman Dr. Leon Nuell theorizes, "If grades actually reflect what a student knows, *then* they are a measure of learning."

And from the administration and MTSU President Sam Ingram comes this definition: "Grades show to an extent how well a student in a particular course has mastered the content." Ideally, he says there are two major elements involved in assigning grades. "The first is what the student has learned. The second is what he should have attained."

What should he have attained? Presently we have no university-wide grading scale, only an A-F chart.

For the 10,880 students this fall, with a medium of 15 or 16 hours, the difference in class grading can be

painfully confusing. Whatever is the numerical equivalent of an A and under for one course taught by a particular professor is not necessarily the same figure for another instructor class even in the major sequences. Because of this, President Ingram admits, "I'm not absolutely certain we shouldn't have a university-wide grading scale."

President Ingram notes that some teachers feel the average grade at MTSU should be a "B," while others prefer that average to be set a "C." McCash notices the same philosophy is often held by students, "when in most grading systems C is average."

Some instructors believe grades can't be as "cut and dried" as the MTSU A-F guidelines. "If we must grade, I would rather have pluses and minuses and numerical figures alongside letter grades on grade reports," Nuell acknowledges. "It's not really fair for a C-plus or C-minus student to receive a C." He emphasizes that learning itself isn't as neatly structured as the A-F grading scale tries to present.

Regardless of the marking system used, President Ingram says "a



teacher or faculty member can determine by and large what his students are going to make in his class by his selection of material for tests." Nuell echoes by stating "a test is only as good as the person who makes up the questions."

Some instructors choose to administer multiple choice, true-false type tests, while others pass out problem and essay exams. "Because of class size, I think teachers are getting to more objective type tests," Adams mentions.

"A typical test in accounting and information systems takes me 15-30 minutes to grade," He said, "I'm forced to go to more machine graded tests because I have so many papers to grade. It's not fair to me and it's not fair to the student. Problem and essay exams are much better."

Kilbey agrees. "Computer testing is a poor way of testing. The student in most cases doesn't know what he's missed or hasn't missed." Those who support objective type tests, though, believe that they are more fair in grading than subjective exams, in which answers are interpreted by the instructor.

Testing and grading invariably brings up controversial issues such "curving" grades, and what to do about borderline grades, both of which can lead to grade inflation--or less education for better grades.

Some of the faculty like McCash and Adams don't curve grades, believing you shouldn't set and then lower standards. Some instructors like Kilbey curve only in certain classes. "I curve grades for my larger classes after taking a representative sampling," she notes. "I usually don't curve in honors courses and upper division courses."

Concerning borderline grades,

McCash mentions, "I don't usually give the student a higher grade. Generally speaking, I give the student the grade he has earned and deserves." Solomon handles it differently.

"I have a tendency to go toward the higher grade," he reveals. "I figure my error of measurement may be involved. But then there's a question, too, of 'how far do you go on borderline grades, too?' One point or two points higher?"

"I would prefer a system where a student can take a test over or re-do a paper," Nuell confesses. "Grades are too often given as final, there's usually nothing a student can do to change them. That's anti-thetical to what education is all about, using grades as a continuation of learning."

The reason instructors can greatly differ in their treatment of grades has to do with the campus-type first amendment on "academic freedom." From the *MTSU Policies Manual* comes the statement: "Academic freedom in teaching is fundamental for the protection of the rights of the faculty member in teaching and of the student to freedom in learning." The section of Policies and Procedures for Promotion and Tenure continues to say "academic freedom and academic responsibility are interdependent."

There is an inconsistency of grades between departments, with grades ranging from 1.825 in quantitative methods to a 3.933 in the university honors program.

"Ninety percent of the work in some majors is done at the freshman and sophomore level," according to President Ingram, "and their grades are considerably lower than the majors where 90 percent of the work is done at the junior-senior level."

"Some subject matter areas are perceived by people to be more difficult," Ingram adds.

"There are differences in the overall philosophy of departments on campus. And some departments may be experimenting with contracts with the student, where the student does more work for a higher grade."

Adams notes that accounting and information systems has to not only gear to personal and departmental standards, but to the national academic community, too.

"Our students usually go on and take the national standardized tests. They can't slide by and pass those CPA and CDP exams," he explains. "We also have employers that come on campus and ask for the accounting department to *not* send them anyone with a GPA below 3.0."

Whatever the major, President Ingram says, "There ought to be enough consistency in grading among various departments in the university that we are reasonably certain that an MTSU student has mastered general education courses and is competent in his field."

But grades have been an area of dialogue forever, especially among instructors.

"In the final analysis, we're all subjective," notes A. H. Soloman, chairman of the HPERs department. "The moment you start interpreting, you become subjective. We have to strive for objectivity."

"I hate grades. I hate the concept of grades," admits Nuell. "I would prefer for people to work for just knowledge."

"Grades are an inefficient and uncertain method of measuring learning," concludes Adams, "but it's the best we have."

*Patricia Bates is a senior print journalism major from Mount Juliet*





And though the hands  
were bleeding  
They found time  
to reach  
for me.

— Kim Spence

Drawing by Rick Rowe

*Kim Spence is a sophomore from Nashville  
whose major is undeclared.*



"Like a piece of ice on a hot stove the poem must ride on its own melting. A poem may be worked over once it is in being, but may not be worried into being. Its most precious quality will remain its having run itself and

carried the poet with it. Read it a hundred times; it will forever keep its freshness as a metal keeps its fragrance. It can never lose its sense of a meaning that once unfolded by surprise as it went."

— Robert Frost

## Untitled

The rain intrudes upon my sleep  
Grey monotony  
Reminding me

Incessantly

That you are gone.

Did you have to love the rain?  
— cold oppressor  
unrestrained

indifferent  
to the pain  
of a longing...

— Carol Preston

## Cleansing (to J. K.)

A caterpillar ecks its way along the dust  
As the youth is led to the shining pool.  
His dark silhouette leaves a perfect image  
In the pool that glows pure white.

The youth and his reflection merge,  
Little by little, more and more, dark with light.

As the pure one dripping leaves the pool  
His brightness reflects in the watery darkness.  
From the pool so black, he is a perfect image,  
And the butterfly freely, happily soars —  
Away.

— Fred Osborne

*Fred Osborne is a junior information systems major from Chattanooga.*

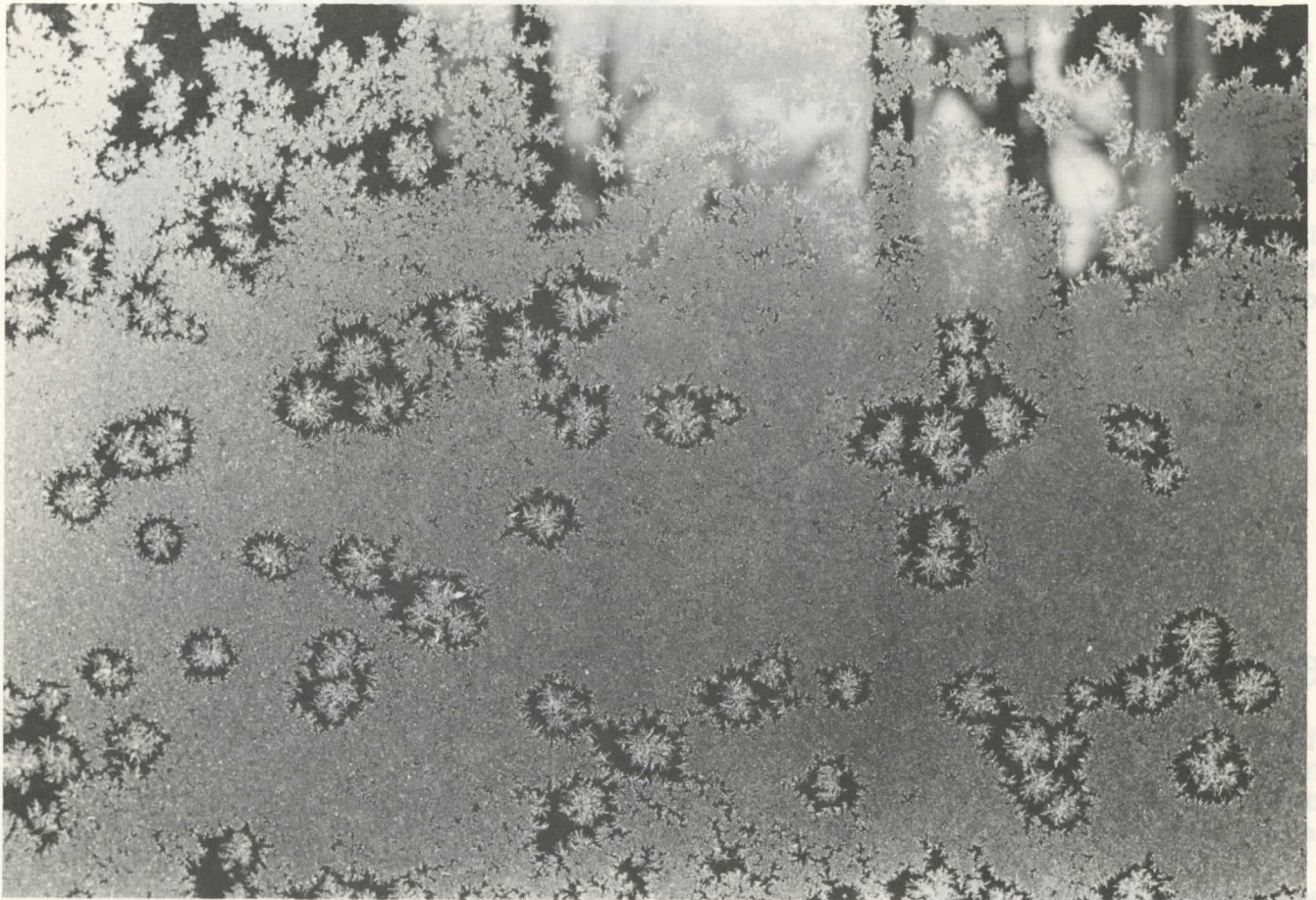
## alis volat propiis

she soars  
untethered  
amid the clouds and dreams  
of those who watch  
earthbound  
envious  
of her fluid motions.  
she seeks a protector  
not a prison  
a haven from those  
who do not understand  
vainly  
men have endeavored  
to cage her;  
her carefree spirit  
cannot be tamed.  
those who love her  
must learn  
to enjoy her unrestricted flight.  
she flies with her own wings.

— Carol Tate

*Carol Tate is a junior advertising major from Chattanooga and Murfreesboro.*

# GALLERY

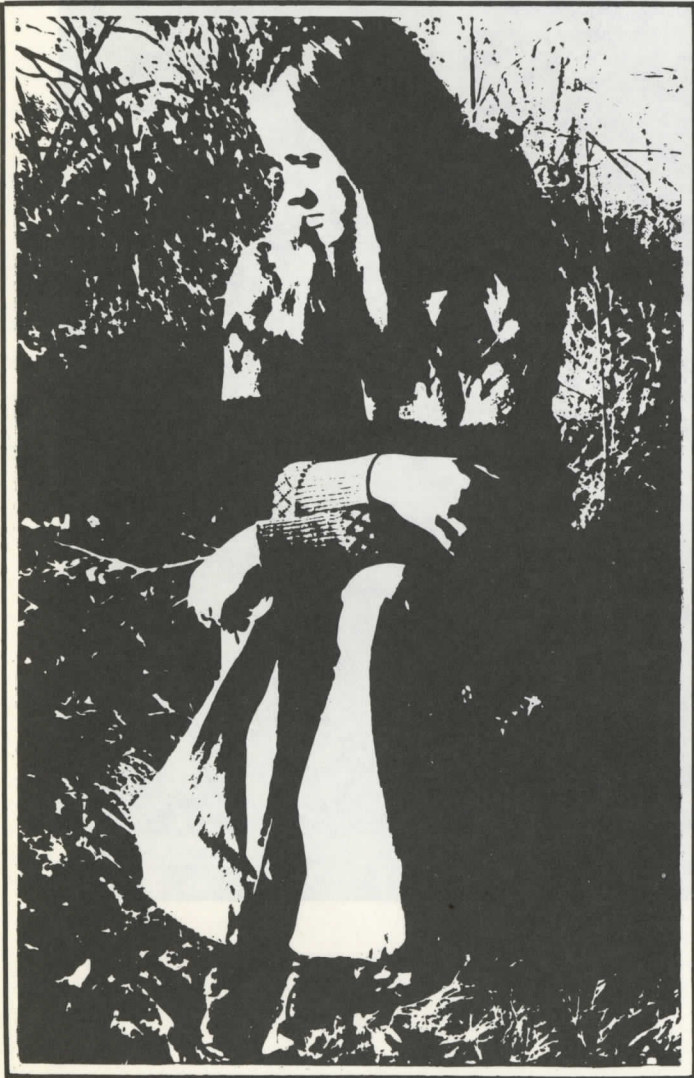
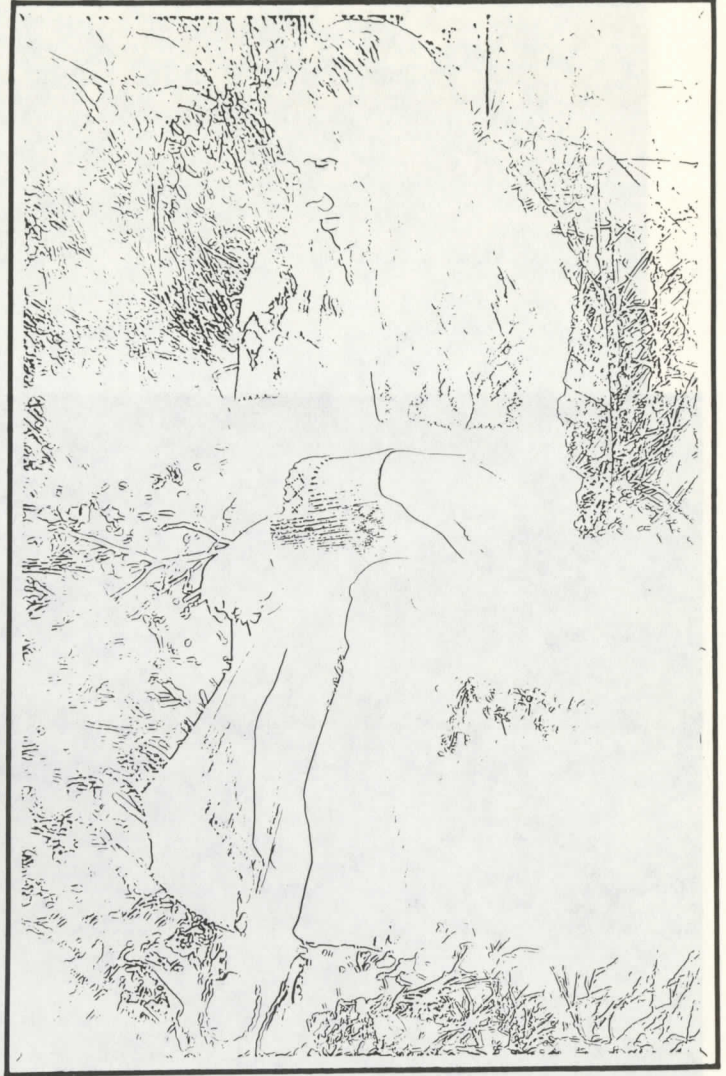


Pat Pender

*Pat Pender is a graduate student of psychology from Birmingham, Alabama.*

A Winter Storm





**Philo Jennings**

*Philo Jennings is a senior math major.*

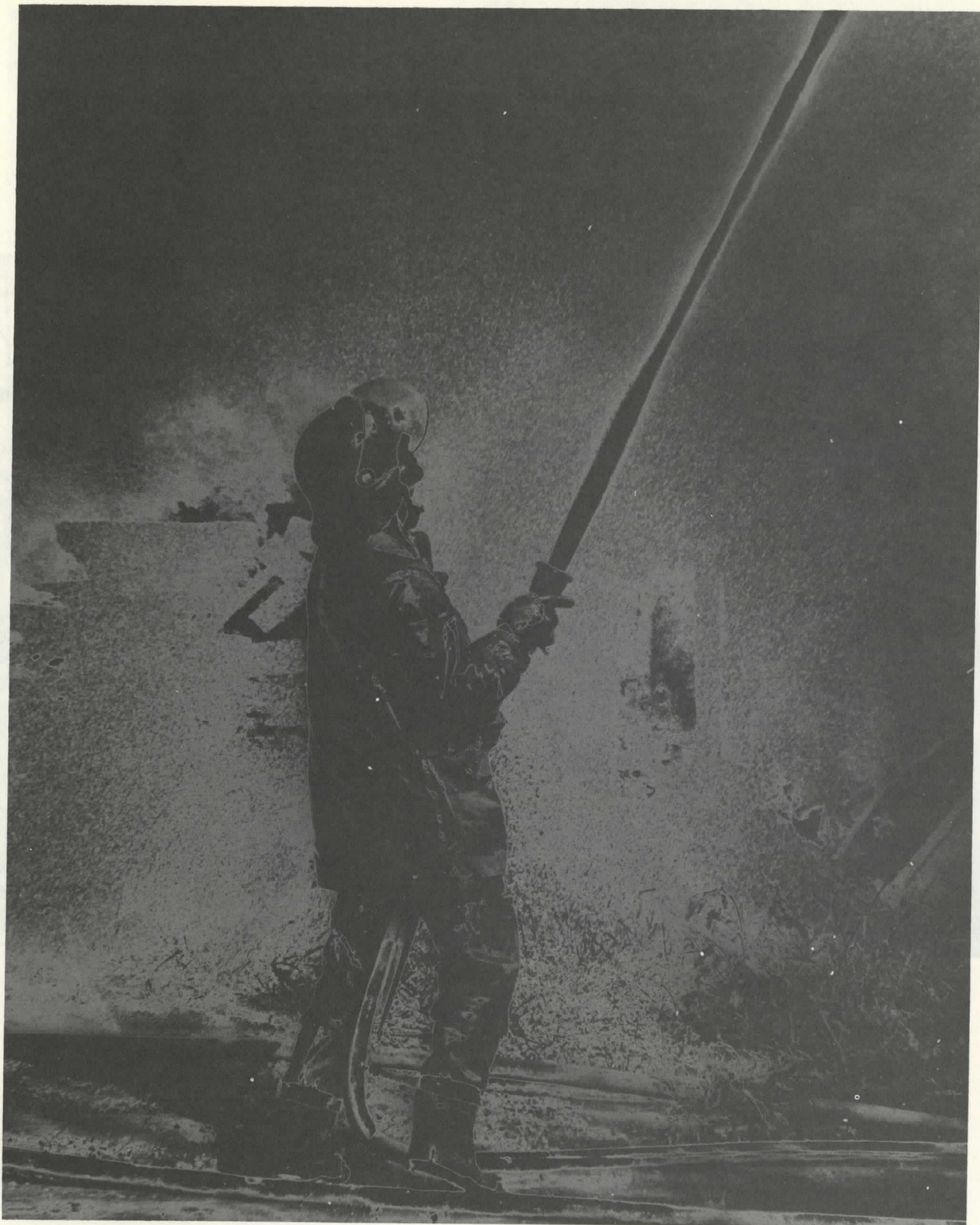
GALLERY



Fred Schwoebel

*Fred Schwoebel is a 1979 graduate from Murfreesboro.*





**Charlie Hunt**

*Charlie Hunt is a junior mass communications major from Nashville.*





Pat Pender

Pennsylvania Fog





Impressions I

Lynch Orr

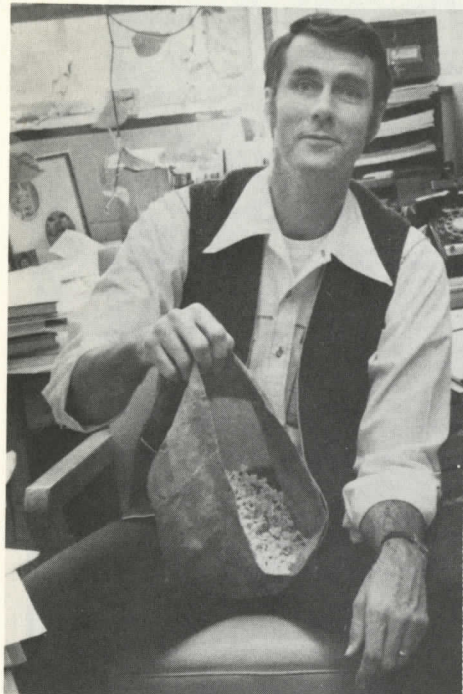
*Lynch Orr is a sophomore photography major from Jackson Mississippi.*



# The Popcorn Professor

story by Jackie Gearhart

photos by Larry McCormack



Ralph Hillman believes that his task as a professor is not simply "to teach," but "to help students learn." The difference between these two principles is what sets Hillman apart from many teachers.

This isn't to say that standing in front of a class throwing forth ideas and facts is not effective; but it places a great value on the act of helping the student *catch* those ideas and facts that have been thrown at him.

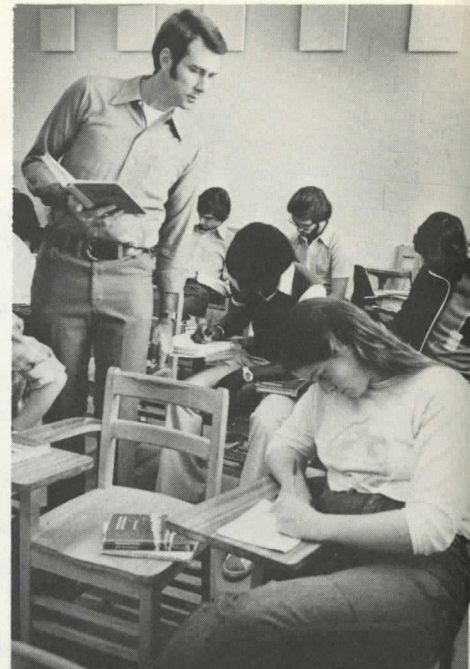
Hillman, an assistant professor of speech communication at MTSU, is known as "Ralph" by most of his students, who often drop by casually to seek advice or discuss a problem, and end up eating popcorn with him and "rapping."

The famous Hillman popcorn is a motivational device that has two "secret" ingredients: A popper that has never been washed, and a brown bag that has continually been used as a server for who-knows-how-long.

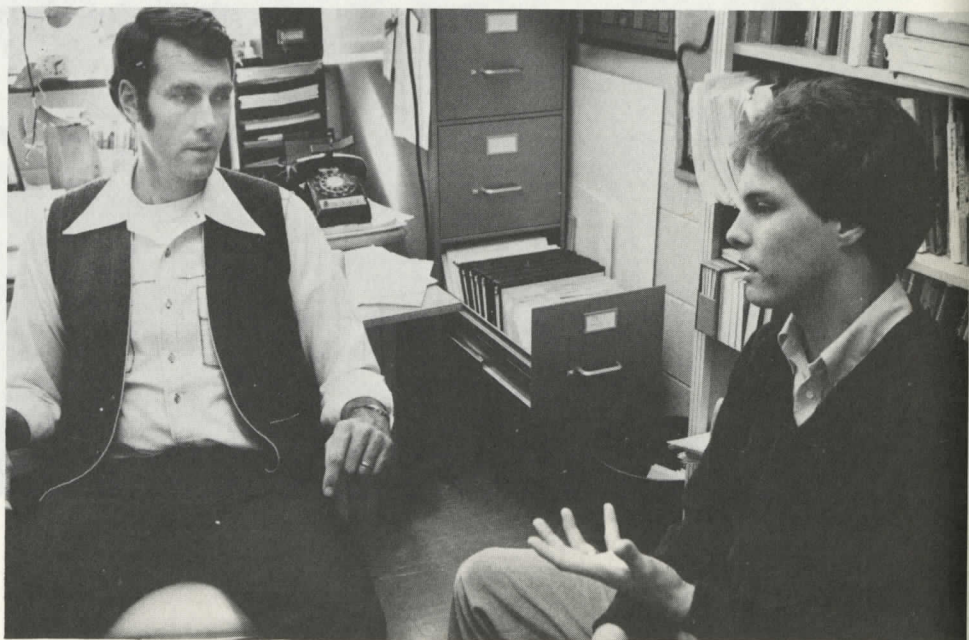
Both enhance the flavor of the popcorn, which is tastier every batch.

How is popcorn a motivational device? It is a friendly gesture that breaks barriers between the cowardly student and the ivory-tower teacher. It says, "Come in, sit down, let's talk." From that point on, the student realizes that he is not just another face in a row of desks. To Ralph, every student is special and has special needs. He feels that if he can help that student in one way or another, then he is doing his job.

But you don't have to eat popcorn with Ralph to gain from him. His classes are unique learning experiences. He possesses a vitality that can be felt the moment he enters the room. It's not hard to tell that he loves what he's teaching, and he wants you to love it too.

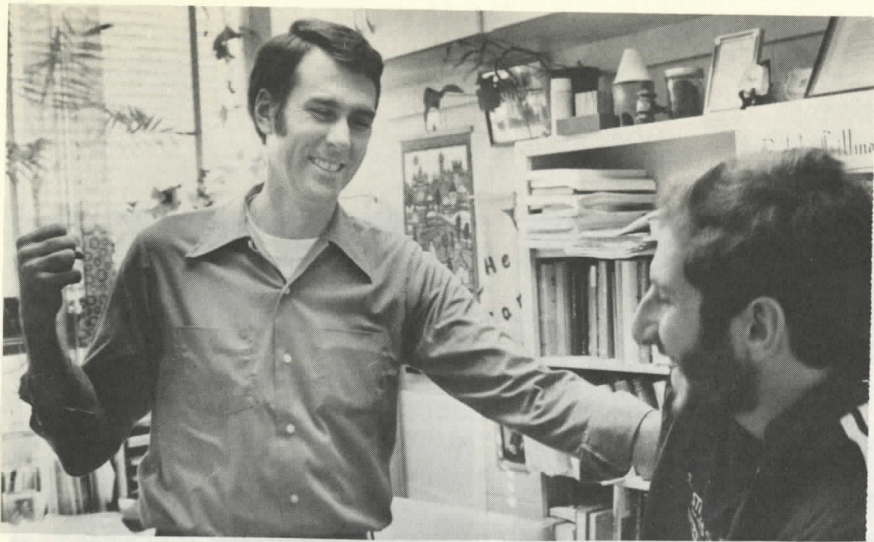


"I said the word was *escape!*"

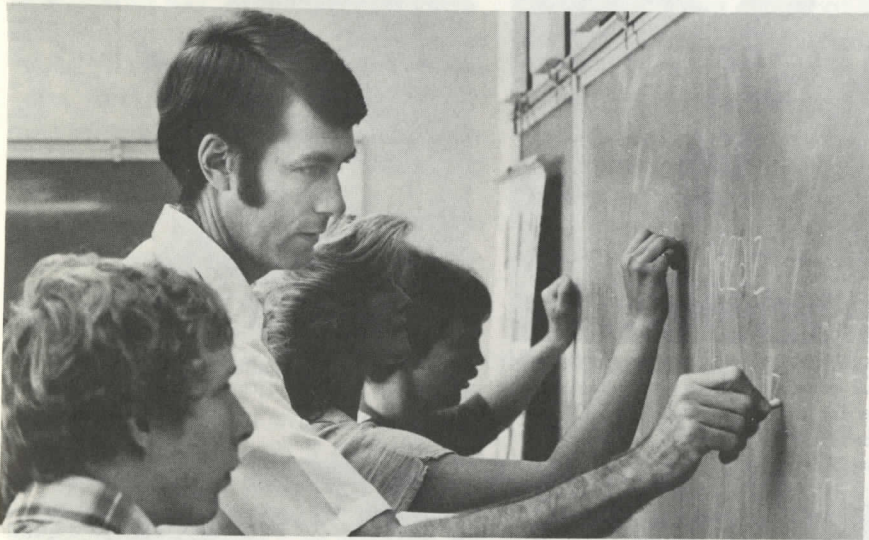


"I *know* how to give a speech, just give me a topic."

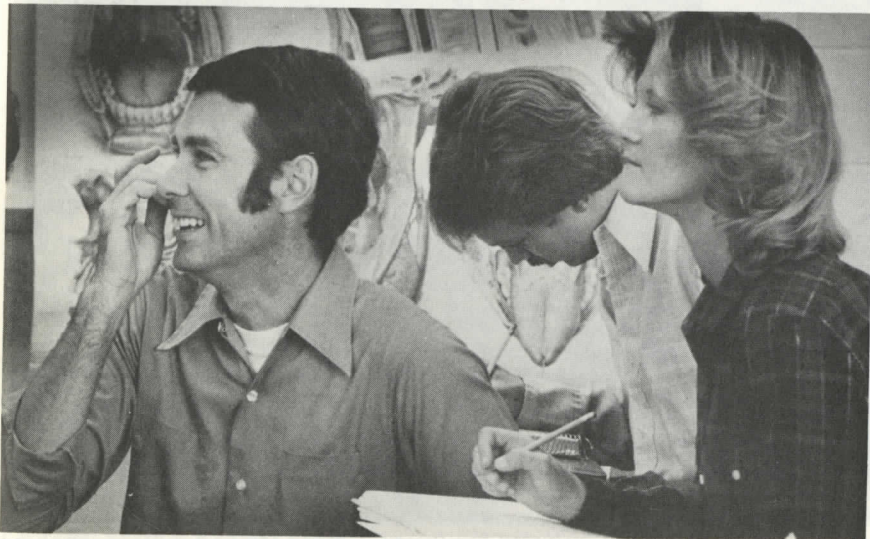




You turkey, did you just get off the bus



"Look at it, say it, write it again."



"Get that turkey away from the blackboard if he doesn't know how to spell **Kat** by now!"

The majority of his time is not spent in the designated space three feet in front of the blackboard and five feet from the first row of desks. Instead, he is right there with the students, kneeling beside their desks, looking over their shoulders, or *pounding* information into their heads: "What's the matter with you, did you just get off the bus?"

"I always look forward to going to Ralph's class. It's like a circus," one student said, "But we learn a lot, and we enjoy learning, because Ralph makes it such a treat."

"He's just like another one of the students. He's a big kid," said one student. Everyone knows that Ralph Hillman will never grow old, and he agrees. "My body might go, but not me. Actually I think I'm experiencing senility early, and skipping everything in between."

One of Ralph's hobbies is being a freelance clown. "It gives me a chance to be someone totally different for a while, and do some of the things I've always wanted to do," but most people feel that he doesn't need to put on a clown suit to do that.

Ralph's classes aren't exactly performances, but he is the center of attention to all of his students. *His* center of attention, though, is on each individual student.

Sometimes he breaks his classes into groups and works with those who need help in certain areas, while the others work diligently on their own. That scene is not seen very often in typical classroom situations.

"Every student learns differently," Ralph says, "and it's up to the teacher to gauge his teaching toward the student. If you really want him to learn, then you have to find out what his learning preferences are, or else all you're doing is teaching him with your style, which may not be consistent with his learning preferences."

One of Ralph's most important



## popcorn

instructional tools is called a "cognitive map." Each of his students is assigned to answer a set of computer-programmed questions that will "determine how a person derives meaning from the world around him," according to Ralph.

The result of this evaluation helps define whether a particular student learns best by himself, with faculty guidance, or through group participation, etc.

Once Ralph finds these things out, he then gauges his talent, skills and energy to the learning preferences of each student.

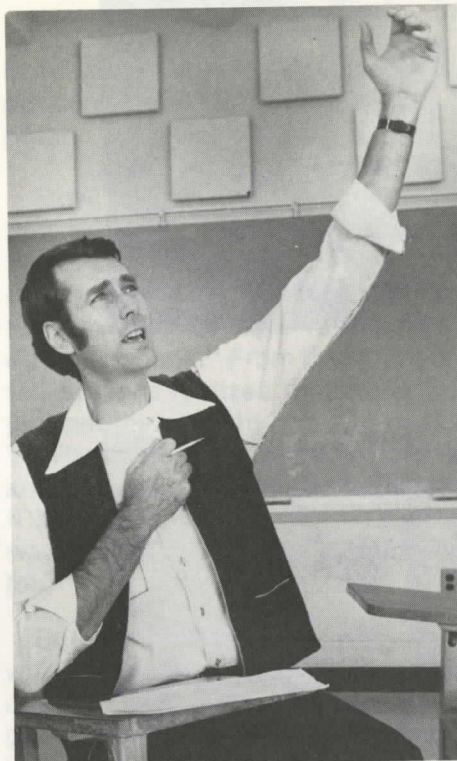
Some of the most "exciting" experiences Ralph has with his students are times when "I am able to set up a situation for a student, without his being aware that I had anything to do with it, and watch him discover something all by himself. That is so exciting!" he says through jubilant gritting teeth

Another thing that gives Ralph "a warm feeling inside" is being able to witness the growth of a student: "when they change from being high school students, and begin to make some decisions about who they are going to be — being a part of that is so *exhilarating*," he said.

"Friendships that never end develop with people like that," Ralph says, "See, all these cards on the wall are from former students from way back," he points to myriad messages taped over his desk, "Most of them just say, 'Thinking about you,' He throws his arms in the air with delight, "Love it."

Ralph's feelings about teaching are simple: "I can't believe I actually get paid for having this much fun." he said, but the gift that Ralph Hillman gives to his students is priceless.

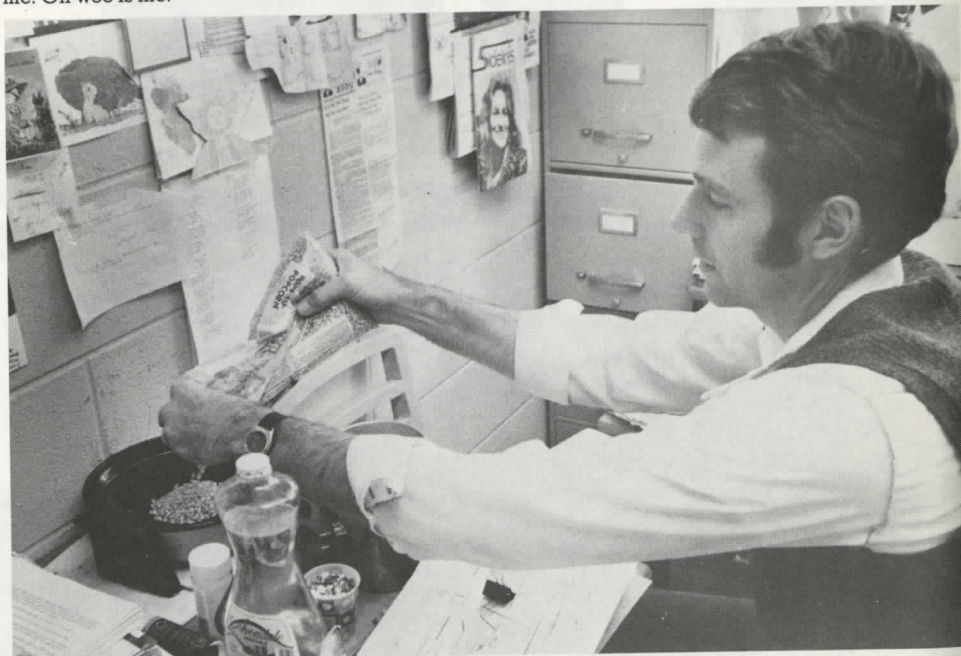
Larry McCormack is a senior mass communications major from Hermitage.



Wednesday afternoon oral reader session: "My money's all gone, and there's rent to pay. The cow's gone dry, and the hen won't lay. Oh woe is me! Oh woe is me!"



Dedication



Ralph prepares for another rap session



# "entity"

by Jackie Gearhart

My name is John. John McMahan. Not that that's important. I just like to start introductions with a name. Well, I don't really *like* to. It's just that I've always done it that way. There's always something in a name that will spark a conversation. "McMahan. That's Irish, isn't it?" Now, you might base a very accurate conclusion about me depending on how I answer that question. I might say, "No, it's Scotch, which reminds me, I think I'll have another drink." Or I could say, "I really don't know, I've never traced my roots, have you?" On the other hand, I might say, as I usually do, "Yes. Yes it is," which would let you know immediately that you're in for a boring conversation.

Anyway, back to where I left off (which was only my name, which isn't very important). I was sitting in class not long ago. See, I have this English professor who should be teaching philosophy. Anytime someone asks him what a particular word means, or even if he gets the slightest inkling that we might not understand a particular word, he

stops whatever he's lecturing about and ponders the word. What I mean by *ponder* is that he investigates it, with the class, that is. I mean, he dissects it, like it was some really important word that may change the destiny of the whole world.

Well, the other day, the word-of-the-day was *entity*. "Entity," he said, his foot propped on an empty desk on the front row, and his hand extending outward in front of his eyes, as if it held the word "entity" in its God-like fingers. He looked at the word in his hand and bounced it up and down in space, lightly though, so as not to lose grasp of it. "EN-tity," he said, as if the first syllable held some great significance. "Now, what exactly does that word mean?" (A familiar question to all of us regular class-goers) "Think about it." The class sat in their usual head-resting-on-hand positions and stared dumbly at the professor as *he* thought about it.

He took very deliberate steps to Webster's Big One — the kind that needs a table all to itself. I noticed then that whenever he made that

eventful walk to the dictionary, it was as if he were a magician about to reveal his beautiful assistant, all in one piece after the saw-in-half routine.

"Entity," he began to read. "a thing that has real and individual existence, in reality or in the mind, anything real in itself."

"Hmm," I thought to myself, "This could really be a deep one."

"In other words," said the girl on the front row, "What the author means is . . ."

"Let's not discuss what the author means right at this moment, Miss. Let's simply discuss this word as an entity."

"Oh, you mean the word as it exists only unto itself," "Miss" replied, her pencil hanging on the edge of her mouth as she hung on the professor's every word.

"That's exactly it," he said.

"What's exactly it?" I thought. "Excuse me, sir," I said as I raised my hand, "But what does it mean by 'in reality or in the mind'?"

"What *does* it mean?" he said, casually placing his hand in its appropriate position in front of his mouth, as if to catch whatever knowledge might be coughed up in his words.

I put my most puzzled face on and said, "Well, what I mean is, if this book wasn't tangible, but it existed in my mind, could it be an entity?"

"I think you're getting a little off the track, Mr. er,uh . . ."

"McMahan"

"Mr. McMahan, yes . . ."

"I mean, well, take for instance that fly, sir, on your nose."

The professor looked cross-eyed at his nose and started to swat at it when his hand stopped in mid air and he looked at me.

"Just kidding, sir," I said.



Michael Smith is a senior photography major from Dechard.

Michael L. Smith

Jackie Gearhart is a junior English major from Marietta, Georgia.

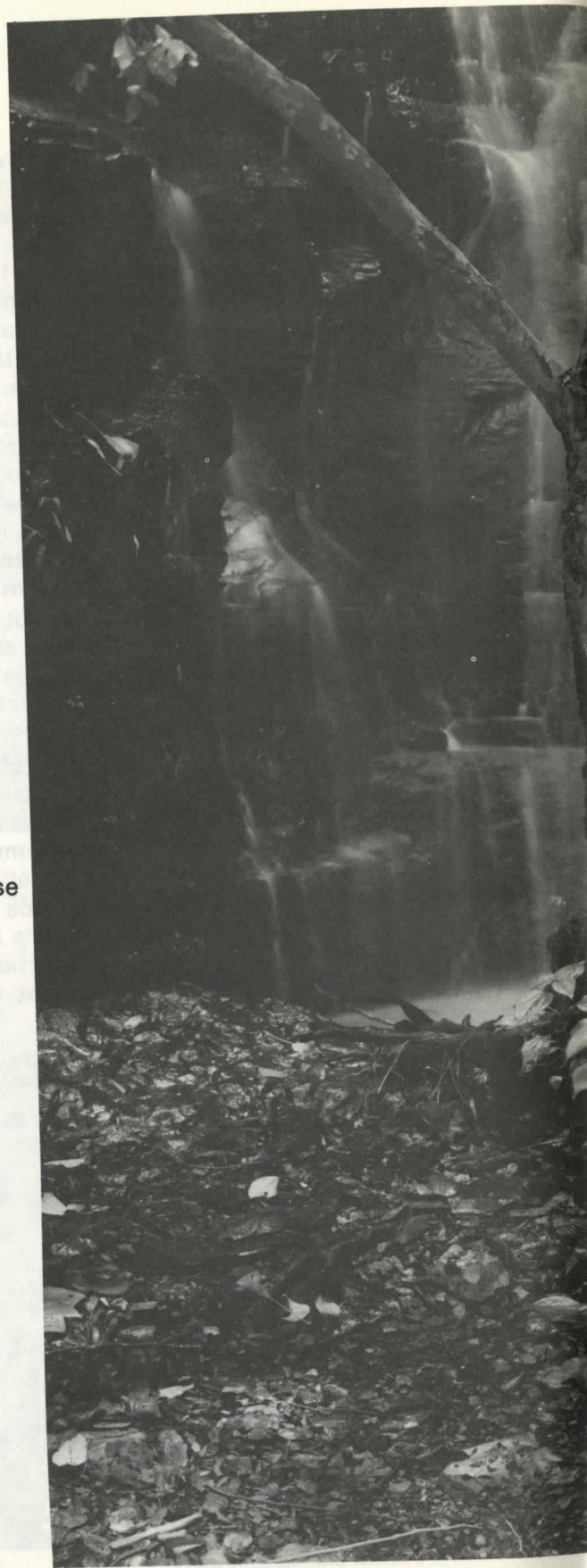


*Not all writers were born with a pen in their hands. Some receive a spark of inspiration with no preconceived notion that they are destined to be a "painter of the soul." Dr. Esther Willon Seeman, a professor of political science at MTSU, took a trip to Vancouver, British Columbia this past summer. She had never written a poem before that time. Since that trip, she has produced some two hundred poems. The poems on this page are nature poems.*

Half poet — half merchant  
You spend your days adrift  
Not knowing which port  
Will provide a haven for your spirit

Joyous young woman  
At one with trees sky grass,  
Blends her body, her spirit  
In orgiastic exuberance  
Paying homage to the universe

First one arm then the other  
Cutting the cool clear water,  
Gurgling, quietly lapping.  
Floating weightless body.  
If a fish were to swim by  
I would wave my fins







The moon is full.  
Magnetic forces pull  
Waves far from shore,  
Reveal broad expanses  
of ruffled sand,  
Pristine in virginal simplicity

Rhythmic lapping waves  
Never-ending vastness  
Insistent pounding surf  
Reduce weighty grievances  
To petty nothingness

The icy water locks my body  
Into a frigid embrace,  
Surrounds my edges.  
Head numbed, toes tingled,  
I make my way  
Through waves of precisioned clarity.

Cool water flows over my body  
Gurgling softness seduces me  
To some distant past.  
Womb-like comfort envelopes me.  
I have trouble coming back.

Esther Millon Seeman



He sat in the lobby of the nursing home — an old man dressed in a faded vest, frayed-out shirt, and loose limp trousers. With his walking-stick leaning against his knee, he sat gazing through the glass doors at the stores across the street. For years, his daily occupation had been to watch the shoppers going to the mall.

Oren Turner had once been a professor of literature in a small college; after his wife died and he'd retired, he had lived with his daughter. But Rose, who had been named after something in an e.e. cummings poem he could no longer remember, had grown old too. He supposed that she'd had to put him in this place called home, for he'd given her a time of it.

When Rose used to take him shopping, he would wander off somewhere, and she'd say that he was harder to keep track of than her two boys. The old man thought of how the amber lights in the mall gleamed golden, and he wished that he could see them again. The lobby here was dim, shaded by evergreens; how often he told the owner to prune them, but no one listened to him anymore. Not since he'd recited poetry to his students had anyone listened. He caressed the smooth handle of his walking-stick, carved for him by one of his students long ago. Oren wondered what had happened to the boy, and whether he'd learned that for some people life ends in a place called home.

A nurse brought him his pills, greeting him with a cheerful *good morning grandpa*. He told her that he was not her grandpa, as he always did, but he smiled back at her. Nurses were paid to be cheerful. They were better at it than Rose, who tried too hard.

Dutifully, Rose visited him every Sunday. Her eyes filled with guilt

and dismay as she watched him going ungentle into the night. He grumbled and asked why Julie never came, and Rose would look even more uncomfortable and remind him of what had happened to his Julie. But he remembered nothing of it, he'd told her, even when he did.

He swallowed the pills and the nurse told him he was a good boy. Oren began to tap the floor with his stick, keeping time to her footsteps as she walked away. As he had once tapped out the meter of a poem for his students. A line about an old man with a stick flickered through his mind; he wanted to remember it almost as much as he wanted to go to the mall again.

"A tattered rag on a stick," Oren muttered, but he knew that he didn't have it right. He recalled neither the poem nor the poet — and once he had recited the entire *Intimations* ode without using his notes. "Our birth is but a sleep and a forgetting," he began, then stopped. He wondered whether death could be awakening and remembering.

Two boys were running through the parking-lot, tossing a ball back and forth. He'd taught Rose's boys to play catch. He had invented a game for them to play while they waited for Rose to finish shopping. He called it a game of discovery: he would hide a coin in the return-slot of a public telephone, then watch the boys search through each one to find it. They had been little, then, and a dime was something wonderful to find. Even after they grew up, Oren would save his coins for the shopping-trips. Hours went faster when he waited for some small boy to discover the dime he'd hidden; he could forget how tiresome it was to sit on the cold marble bench and wait.

Oren looked down at his swollen ankles and reminded himself to walk awhile. But there should be a

# Disc

by Joann





# covery

a Ormiston



S.C.

place to walk to — not simply up and down halls. He thought that he might walk across the street to the mall, and he wondered where he could find a dime. As he hobbled toward the door, he began to search his pockets. At this very moment, he thought, some small boy may be searching through the telephones. He walked faster, his finger digging into the pocket of his vest. Tobacco crumbs, crumpled papers, lint — if only he could find a dime!

And against his finger-tip he felt the hard, ridged edge of a coin stuck in the lining. He pushed through the door, stepped gingerly across the springy grass, and with the dime held tight between thumb and forefinger, waited on the curb.

Cars swished past him. With each rush of air, he wavered, his flimsy trousers flapping against his legs. His heart pounded. But he thought about the boy who would discover his dime: to seek and to find, he thought — to discover some unexpected and wonderful thing! He wished that he could discover the reason for growing old.

There was a lull in the traffic, and Oren hurried across the street as fast as feet and walking-stick could take him. He glanced back once, to see how small the home and the evergreens had become, then turned his back on them.

The mall was as bright as he'd remembered it. At the center stood a fountain glittering with colored lights; it was surrounded by green and glistening plants; across the hall stood a row of phone booths. Oren held the dime firmly. He didn't want to forget why he had come.

Far down the corridor he saw a boy darting from one shop to another. Oren hurried to a phone-booth, slid the dime into the coin-return box, then sat on a bench nearby.

He hadn't felt this well in years! He sniffed at the air, full of the smell

of peanuts and popcorn; he could hear soft music and the lilt of women's voices in conversation. The marble bench felt smooth under his finger-tips; light and color sparked against his faded eyes. Now even thought took on clarity and order, and he understood why Julie never came; he felt certain that there was a reason why she died young. His Julie had never been meant to grow old; she had not needed decrepitude to make her wise.

And suddenly the line of poetry came back to him. He began to say it aloud — and this time he had it right! "An aged man is but a paltry thing, a tattered coat upon a stick, unless — unless —"

Again memory was failing him. With an exasperated tap-tap of the stick, Oren prodded the words back into being. "— unless Soul clap its hands and sing," he shouted triumphantly, jumping up so that the stick clattered on the floor. "And louder sing for every tatter in its mortal dress!"

Shoppers turned to stare. A guard was hurrying toward him. But across the lobby, Oren could see the boy running to the phone-booths and rattling each coin-return box. He found the dime in the last one, and with a satisfied grin, pocketed it and sauntered on down the hall.

Oren smiled with satisfaction, too. For now he was remembering an aged poet who had discovered that being old was part of the striving toward perfection. The hand on Oren's shoulder was gentle, and the guard spoke kindly to him, as though he'd lost his wits. But it didn't matter, it didn't matter at all, thought Oren as he allowed himself to be led away.

*Joanna Ormiston Long is a junior from Nashville whose major is undeclared.*



# Foreign Relationships: A Question of Customs

by Lisa Human

Learning a new language isn't all it takes to communicate with people in a strange country, and foreign students at MTSU can attest to that.

Foreign students find themselves immersed in an entirely new culture and sometimes adjusting to society can be difficult.

"When I got to America I had to adjust to society like every foreign student does," Joao Ribeiro, a male student from Brazil said, adding that dating in America was difficult at first because in Brazil he was used to women playing a more conservative role than they do in America.

"Here girls come up to me and ask me out, and that is normal," Ribeiro said. "In Brazil it is not like that."

"Also, people here are in a way, more free in sex," Ribeiro said. "Of what I've seen here you could go out with a girl and end up in bed the same night. In Brazil that would never happen," he exclaimed.

Ribeiro said he realized that would not happen with all American girls; it depended on who you went out with. Still, it would be unheard of in Brazil according to Ribeiro, who added that although they have prostitution in Brazil because of the large class of poor people, he was referring to dates and not prostitution.

Nevertheless, many American girls say that they are wary of going out with foreign students. "I had a

Persian guy proposition me in the library. He couldn't understand why I wouldn't have sex with him," said one American student. "They must think we're all loose women," said another.

Nigerian social customs are quite different from American customs, according to Felix Ojielo, a Nigerian student who has been in America for only three months.

"Men and women in Nigeria are quite different from Americans in that they have more respect for elders in Nigeria."

Ojielo explained that in his country the girls' parents must receive a dowry before the couple can marry and if a couple elopes without the permission of the girls' parents, their marriage is considered illegal.

Chances are those customs wouldn't set too well with Americans, and neither would the Japanese custom of "arranged marriages."

Over 50 percent of the girls in Japan have "arranged marriages," where parents or close friends of the girl pick out a husband for her.

"At least this way you are assured of a marriage," Asaji Komatsu, a freshman student from Japan said, adding that the couple had about two weeks to talk about whether or not to go through with the "arranged wedding."

As far as dating goes, German customs seem to be more con-

servative, according to Wera Howard, an German MTSU foreign language instructor who dated and married an American.

Howard said the main difference she sees between the two cultures is that in Germany, dating is not as wide spread as it is in America.

"Dating is not done as regularly or as early in Germany as it is here," Howard said, attributing this to the fact that students are often so busy with school work they have little time for dating.

She also said she feels many American parents push children to start dating at an early age for popularity reasons, but in Germany this is usually not the case.

When Howard married, she stuck to some of the traditional German customs. "I got married here, but I did it the German way," she said.

For example, in Germany the wedding is celebrated by the man giving the woman a wedding ring, which she wears on her left hand until the ceremony. At the ceremony she takes the ring off the left hand and places it on the right.

Language, then, isn't the only barrier to developing relationships with foreigners. Both parties need to be open with one another so that there are no misunderstandings about social customs. Breaking these barriers is only the first step in "foreign relationships."

*Lisa Human is a junior print journalism major from Hermitage.*



# The Drama

The work ethic is a respectable directive.  
I'll be the first to promote duty and enterprise.  
But, aren't leisure and liberty our goals?  
What free person is convinced of the drama of  
drudgery?

— Joel Rutledge

*Joel Rutledge is a sophomore earth science  
major from Tioga, North Dakota.*

## (intermission)

Ah, if but the curtain could fall  
And the play could halt long enough  
For me to catch up with myself.

— Franklin Farmer

*Franklin Farmer is a Nashville graduate  
student of education.*



# JERRY BECK

## Two Year Wait for Stardom

by Scott Adams

MTSU basketball player Jerry Beck won't laugh in an opponent's face after scoring on him or point in his face after a slam, but don't let that lead you to believe that he doesn't enjoy playing.

Jerry is a 6-7 transfer from Lafayette Junior College in Danville, Va. and although he has only played four minutes while here at MTSU, he is one of the most talked about players on the team. Beck went down with a severely sprained ankle in the Raiders game with McNeese State last season and ended up missing the rest of the season. Which made the second season in a row he had to sit out of.

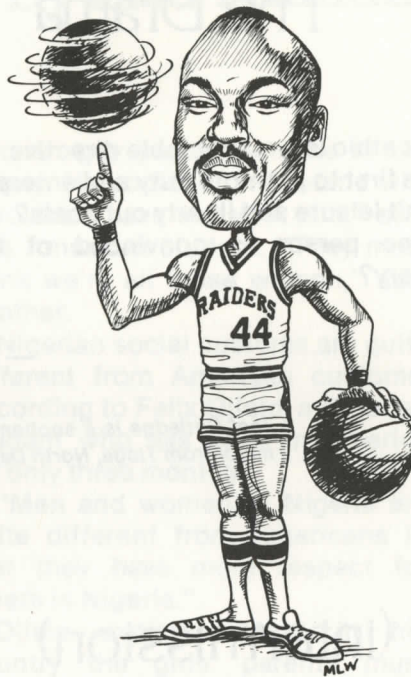
"In the long run it might help me because I know I want to play more now than ever before," Beck said. "I just hope I can stay well."

First year head coach Stanley "Ramrod" Simpson echoed that statement adamantly saying that if Jerry could stay well he could be one of the best to ever play here.

"Jerry has definitely got as much raw talent as anyone I've ever seen, there is no doubt about that. The thing that worries me the most about Jerry is that he has been out of competition for two years and it's really easy to lose that competitive edge," Simpson said.

The coming of Jerry Beck was a much publicized event last season, and according to Beck, all that publicity was a little embarrassing at first.

"I thought it was a little unusual in the beginning because I hadn't even played a minute here yet. But after awhile I got kind of used to it and concentrated on getting ready to play," Beck added.



In pre-season talk thus far, the name of Jerry Beck hasn't come up any more than the name of any of the other players and that can be attributed mainly to Simpson. He has stressed what he calls the "team concept" in pre-season practice for according to him, one main reason.

"We don't want to build up any one player more than another because that always ends up putting unneeded pressure on somebody," Simpson related. "Besides to be quite honest, we (the coaching staff) feel like Jerry has to prove himself. And knowing Jerry, he would rather it be that way too."

For anyone that has taken a pre-season peek at the 1979-80 edition of the Blue Raider basketball team, Jerry is probably the first player that

is noticed. The main reason for this being that he can turn the simplest of drills into a circus of flying dunks that brings even the calmest of fans out of their seats.

When asked about his practice of the fine art of slam-dunkery, Beck replied simply, "When I'm on the court . . . slammin' is always on my mind. When I think about how I can contribute the most that's what I think of. Mostly it picks up the team emotionally."

To the weekend players and anyone who follows basketball, the dunk would have to be classified as one of the most exciting plays in the game. But don't think that dunking will be the only way Jerry will be scoring because he is deadly from anywhere within a 15 feet radius.

"I feel like I'm going to have to score a lot for us to do well. Someone is going to have to take some of load off of Leroy (Coleman) and Chris (Harris) and I want to do my share," Beck said.

The status of Beck's ankle is a big question on the minds of Raider coaches and fans, and Jerry himself has admitted that at times it really gets sore. "I try not to let it bother me and I honestly believe that it hasn't really slowed me down. I've worked hard in the off-season to get it stronger so I think it will be okay," Beck stated.

When speaking of Jerry Beck, perhaps Simpson said it best when he said "if I had to draw a picture of a model player on the blackboard, he would look like Jerry Beck."

*Scott Adams is a junior broadcast journalism major from Winchester.*



## The Cat

Discreetly from the corner,  
A low profile, motionless-  
save the frantic tail,  
Unexpectedly black lightning attacks,  
Tumbles, claws, side-stepping,  
scrambling for cover.  
A lifeless shoe lace.

## Frank

It took three trips.  
His four rods,  
The chicken livers, the tackle,  
The seven small strung catfish.  
The tabby licked, looked, licked.  
In the back with a slow hose  
He skinned, gutted, washed,  
Tossed remains for the cat.  
She walked to him, hands apron wrung.  
Frank come lookin' for you Granddaddy.  
Found me at the lake.  
What'd you say, she asked.  
She skinned, he gutted, he washed.  
Mr. Mac, Frank say, says he,  
We gotta settle on the blue tick. I hates  
That hard feelin's is keepin' on.  
What'd you say, she asked.  
He gutted, the cat ate.  
My boy, Frank says, says he,  
Feels powerful sorry on shootin' the blue,  
But Mr. Mac, Frank says, says he,  
The blue was akillin' his FFA project hens.  
What'll it take to make it right by ya?  
What did you say, she asked  
I says, says I, that there warn't  
nothin' could make right a dead dog.  
He carried in the pliers and knives.  
She followed with the pan of fish.  
The cat ate and licked.

## Sarah

Mr. Mac hugged  
with his awkward hold  
Making her fight for balance.  
He sat in his chair,  
She sat on the hassock.  
Are you still in school?  
Gonna be a teacher?  
I'm not going to teach.  
How old are you now?  
Twenty four.  
Got a feller yet?  
No one special.  
Don't worry, you still got time.  
He pondered the revelation.  
She shifted to stare at the lanolium.  
Is Grandmother around, I need to be going.  
You don't need to rush off.  
They both looked at the clock.  
She's in the garden.  
He hugged her lovingly.  
She barely won.

Merry Clifton

*Merry Clifton is a senior English major from Manchester.*



# JERRY BECK

## Two Year Wait for Stardom

The Gate  
by Scott Rodger

**Beneath the dim stadium lights,  
a Little-Leaguer stumbles  
into a head first dive —  
twenty feet short of first base.  
His expression begs  
for another chance to run.**

— Henry Fennell

*Henry Fennell is a senior secondary  
education major from Ripley.*

**I'm beginning to feel the coldness  
of the breeze coming through my window.  
It fills my room with naked emotions  
that I struggle to trap in a box  
and put out with the morning trash.**

— J.G.





## Nighttime

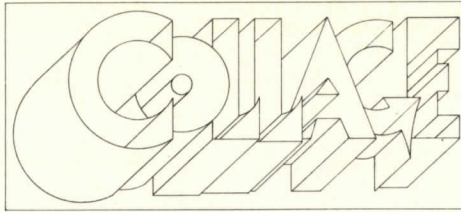
a mystery...  
wining at my door  
like a neglected puppy.  
Will you be happy if I  
turn off the light?  
(click)  
...and listen...  
and touch your plethoric emptiness,  
sweep you into my brain  
and clasp it around you...  
hearing you  
whining at my door,  
whining,  
winding,  
zzzzz.

— J.G.

**Diane Fox**

*Diane Fox is a senior commercial arts major  
from Lebanon.*





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— your white wrapping  
envelopes you,  
molds you  
into a renaissance.  
I never saw you until now.

— J.G.



