

HARRY GOLDEN

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instructed janitors in a prescribed set of duties. What they might have been however, I cannot tell. As the janitor interpreted those instructions, it seemed they consisted of a set of instructions that the tenants were never to disturb him.

He chased the kids who played stoopball. He chastized the housewives for their untidiness. He thundered against anyone brave enough to ask for plumbing repairs. And when a new tenant was rash enough to move a piano into the tenement, the janitor went on a four-week sulk, like Mahatma Gandhi used to when the British tried disciplining him.

Eventually, we tenants accommodated ourselves to him. We learned to live with him and keep peace. But then came the agonizing day when he was finally replaced. Maybe there was a burying ground for janitors like there supposedly is for elephants. At any rate, they used to disappear every decade or so and a new janitor moved in. He used to promise us a new five-year plan now that he has deposed our nemesis. The ahhs were going to be cleaner because every family was going to pitch in. There was going to be less noise because he could instruct mothers in the disciplining of errant children. Rent collections would be prompt because our new janitor swore he would make but one trip a month up the tenant stairs. We tried to grasp the change that came over our lives much like modern Russians, except we didn't have big parades to help accustom us to the change. Ah, if we only had the parades!

**O WINDS
IF WINTER COMES**

One of the continuing events that fill an editor's life is the recurrent change of seasons. An editorial writer in New York can discuss the chirping of the birds in Central Park and presto, he's completed a day's work. A newspaperman in San Diego can point out the marlin are running again off the coast and this is the harbinger of Spring. Presto, he's done a day's work.

But the syndicated columnist has to live in a vacuum. When he writes about the birds chirping in one area of the country, he little wots but that in another the real blizzards are on their way and the cows have to be brought into the very house itself. When the marlin are running off San Diego, the rainy season may have arrived and the town will be vacant of tourists for the next month and no one there is particularly interested in his thoughts on the spring.

When the dogwood blooms in Charlotte, N.C., Hartford, Conn., is still paying overtime to the snow plowers. GI's in Miami have long since changed to sun tans as the

uniform of the day while sailors are shivering aboard rusty destroyers up north.

What I am getting at is that the change in seasons in no way helps the columnist who has 30 or 50 or 100 outlets. He has to stick to his Bible lessons or his letters from anguished teen-agers or his jokes with nary a break for celebrating nature in any of her myriad roles.

Personally, I am an indoor man. I believe fresh air does more damage to a man's stomach than all the cigarettes he's ever smoked put together. I don't like my windows open at night. If someone wants to call me Mr. Central Heating, I shall accept title with honor, gratitude and sincerity. I just worry whether this is fair to my readers, some of whom will be reading this in the glare of the sun against the beach, while some may peruse this material huddled in their igloo.

When I go out on lecture trips I am invariably met by decent, well-meaning people who can only be called town boosters. They want to show me the azaleas or the snow fences or the waterfalls, to which efforts I reply I am a student of ideas. By ideas, of course, I refer to a comfortable hotel room with ice, bourbon, water and a chicken salad sandwich to reinforce me for my forthcoming appearance.

**BARBECUE AND
EGG CREAM**

Up in New York City the big drink is the egg cream. The egg cream is a combination of chocolate syrup, milk and seltzer; in reality it is a "for 2¢ plain" with the difference that instead of a little on the top, it has a little on the top and a little on the bottom. The true secret of the frothy egg cream is freezing cold milk.

I have never had an egg cream in the South. Since many parts of the South have yet to catch up with rye bread that is not surprising. The big drink down South is the shake. The shake consists of milk, ice cream, a powder of some kind, all blended together into a creamy thickness that is with some difficulty sipped through a big colored straw.

It is such differences that add spice and variety to our American way of life, particularly our politics. Although the hamburger is fast displacing the barbecue, every Southern politician sticks with barbecue. Perhaps this is because the friendly political get-together goes by the name of say, Dan K. Moore's Barbecue or Zeno K. Ponder's Barbecue. Invariably these conventions open with an invocation, since any astute Southern politician can spy a minister or two milling around with paper plates.

Afterwards the candidate addresses himself to the major issues of the campaign

which is the plight of the tobacco growers or the plight of the outer banks fishermen, depending of course, in which part of the state he is staging his Barbecue.

Everyone then joins in a couple of choruses of "What a Friend We Have in Jesus," looking straight at the candidate and then off the tables groaning with barbecue which is chopped pork highly seasoned. Along with the barbecue the folks help themselves to hush puppies (corn bread) and right smart slaw.

The Tammany appeals of my youth were conducted in quite a different manner. In the first place, most of the Tammany men never heard of barbecue, hush puppies, and slaw. They had beer and clams. Sometimes they had raw clams and sometimes they had clam fritters.

Whatever their expenses, they were one-half those of the Southerner. Everyone eats the barbecue but the Tammany men knew the Jews who came to the get-together didn't eat the clams. At one of these Beer and Clam conventions the speech of Congressman "Big Tim" Campbell, representing the Bowery district, is preserved for posterity. Campbell's opponent was named Rinaldo. As some of his colleagues rolled in the beer barrels, Big Tim made this address to the assemblage:

"There is two bills before the country: the Mills bill and the McKinley bill. The Mills bill is for free trade with everything free; the McKinley bill is for protection with nothing free. Do you want everything free or do you want to pay for everything?"

"Having thus disposed of the national issue I will now devote myself to the local issue which is the Dago Rinaldo. He is from Italy. I am from Ireland. Are you in favor of Italy or Ireland? Having thus disposed of the local issue and thanking you for your attention, I will now retire."

Big Tim Sullivan was the man famous for having told the President of the United States who objected to one of his measures on the grounds that it was unconstitutional. "What's the Constitution between friends?" On another occasion when one of the New York papers accused him of having \$1 million in his bank account at a time when his salary was \$4,400 a year, Big Tim answered this canard by saying, "The New York papers are against a man saving his money."

But the Big Tims have disappeared from the New York scene as well as the free beer and clams. Neither has been replaced by the egg cream get-together probably because an egg cream is so hard to make.

THE KEY WORDS

According to advertising executive Jack Tinker, \$1 billion has been spent by Madison Avenue glorifying five words on television. The five words are: white, power, mild, refreshing, and relief.

Some years ago, the English critic William Empson conceived a technique for finding the key word in the long poem. Finding the key word was an attempt to find the poetic meaning of verse in contrast to its narrative meaning, or something like that.

For example, in Shakespeare's Richard III, the key word is "cloud."

The play opens with the hunch-backed Richard declaring: "Now is the winter of our discontent/Made glorious summer by this sun of York;/And all the clouds that lour'd about our house/In the deep bosom of the ocean buried."

At another time, Richard says to his subjects, "You cloudy princes and heart-sorrowing peers." The word "cloud" appears more often in this play than any other and Shakespeare's central imagery is that of the sun obscured by clouds. The sun, of course, is the throne of England and Richard, who commits murder to become king, is the cloud that has obscured legitimate succession to the throne. Richard, who is a cripple, wants to remake the world in his own image.

Several scholars have parodied Mr. Empson's technique, one of them going so far as to write an article he called, "How to find the Key Letter in the Long Word." Basically, however, Mr. Empson has something and I think we can apply his technique in our study of television advertising.

Television has proved that if they keep talking enough about soap, cars, cigarettes, and headaches, you can covertly discuss the emotional passions that guide all of history and motivate all of life, purity, and chastity, authority and responsibility, health and happiness. You can describe any prosaic object in terms of deep-rooted emotional symbols.

I have never been one to complain unduly about television advertising for one basic reason: I once spent

a week in England looking at the BBC which allows no advertising whatsoever and I went via the tube to a picnic on the Isle of Man and watched a cricket match and I couldn't wait to get back to America to watch a show backed by some sponsor who wanted us to worry about pedic perspiration or some such dreaded social inconvenience.

But when the audience has

to watch an advertisement for ketchup accompanied by Sir Edward Elgar's Pomp and Circumstance march (more often referred to as "Land of Hope and Glory"), one feels things are getting out of hand. No one is a hero because he can smear ketchup on a hamburger, just as no woman is chaste and noble simply because she can get her clothes "whiter than white."

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