

# the village Voice

a weekly newspaper designed to be read  
PUBLISHED WEEKLY (WEDNESDAYS) BY THE VILLAGE VOICE, INC.  
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22 GREENWICH AVENUE, NEW YORK 11, N. Y.  
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Subscription price \$3 a year in the United States and its possessions, foreign \$4.  
Application for second-class mail privileges is pending at New York, N. Y.

## letters to the editor

### Happy New Year

Dear Sir:

Please extend my own subscription for a year, as a Christmas gift to myself.

—Raymond Steinberg  
East 14th Street

### More Village Authors

Dear Sir:

Here are some Village authors to add to your list of last week. They're all members of the Mystery Writers of America, and unless otherwise noted their books are mystery and suspense.

**David Alexander:** "The Murder of Whistler's Brother."

**Dorothy Gardiner:** "What Crime Is It?"

**James Reach:** "Sunset Strip" (novel).

**Helen Reilly:** "The Canvas Dagger."

**Howard Rigsby:** "Lucinda."

**Kelley Ross:** "The Blonde Died Dancing" and (play) "Speaking of Murder."

**Cathleen Schurr:** "Dark Encounter."

**Lewis Thompson and Charles Boswell:** "Surrender to Love" (true crime).

**Charles Spain Verral:** "The Wonderful World" series (juve-

nile) and "The Great Locomotive Chase" (from the film).

Thank you, and thank you for including me last week.

—Joan Shepherd  
West 4th Street

### \$1, With Thanks

Last March our journalism class from New Lincoln High School took a field trip to The Village Voice. We each received a sample copy of the paper. I was so impressed with it that I took out a 20-issue subscription for \$1.

I have just realized, with a shock, that I received my 32nd issue yesterday. It was by no means an unpleasant shock, for I have really been enjoying The Voice.

### Best in New York

Your movie and theatre reviews are in my opinion the best of any paper in New York. The "Sick, Sick, Sick" series by Jules Feiffer is sheer genius. And though I live far from the Village, I thoroughly enjoy the news items, interviews, the Village Square, and especially the classifieds, which have been helpful to me on many occasions.

Many thanks for my "extended" subscription, and I am enclosing \$1 to complete the full year's price. I hope I can take advantage of the present Christmas offer under these circumstances, but if not, please let me know and I will gladly pay the extra dollar.

—Judy Stein  
West 118th Street

## The Night People

by JEAN SHEPHERD

### Merry Christmas from Little Brother

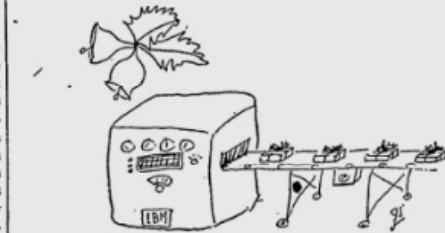
IMAGINE the day, and it isn't too far off, when all a person will have to do to take care of his Christmas-card list is to send along his IBM Special Xmas Address Tape to a department store, and the whole thing will be done. Postage and all will be included in the package price, which also pays for cards, printing, and handling.

Perhaps he won't even have to go to the trouble of sending the tape, for the thing could be kept on file at the store with the cards going out automatically, completely untouched by human hands. He might be called upon to make an occasional deletion or addition to the list, but this too could be done automatically at any time of the year by simply telephoning in to the store's Friendship Department, where the changes would be piped directly into the Christmas Card Circuit, without any possibility of a mistake.

### His Complete Profile

Even the selection of the card would be automatic, since the customer would have on IBM file in the Taste Department his complete aesthetic profile—carefully geared to grade everyone from Complete Slob to Arid Aesthete—which would electronically select the one card most suited to the customer's scientifically determined taste. The only thing left for the customer to do would be to shell out the dough. There would probably be some method to make this automatic too, but I refuse to think in that area.

Already one automation firm has put on the market a genuine



AN ORIGINAL SHEPHERD

blight called an "Organization Coordinator" which is an Orwellian dream. It is a smooth-crackle-finished cabinet that comes in numerous decorator colors to match any decor and designed to be a thing of beauty in itself. All it does is watch. It uses no batteries, wires, ink, or lead, and is completely silent in operation, 24 hours a day.

### In Black and White

The function of this monster is to record on a chart the comings and goings of anyone who wanders into its field of electronic vision. Placed on a man's desk, it will put down in black and white the information that the inhabitant went to the john for 16 minutes, 22 seconds, beginning at 3.07 p. m., and then got up for a coffee break 11 minutes later.

Little Brother. I can just see the thing set up next to the Coke machine in order to silently eye the gang as they gather for The Pause That Refreshes. A real Aid to Better Living.

This stuff may sound almost too incredible to be true, but the little horror really is on the market and sells for a measly \$59.75, with a six-month money-back guarantee. Oddly enough, the advertising brochure makes the remarkable

statement that it is a morale-booster around the office. So it really isn't too far off for the Christmas-card thing, after all.

### Packaged Everything

And think of the advantages. There is a sign in Bloomingdale's that reads "Personalized Greeting Cards," which when translated means cards that have the sender's name mechanically printed upon them. Apparently it never occurs to the sender that by this device he has actually depersonalized his card, in the very act of deleting his hand-written signature. Thus the word "personalize" has really come to mean exactly the opposite. Just another step in the direction of Packaged Everything, which seems to be our current definition of progress.

There is a store in Chicago which for a sum geared to the customer's budget—as it is always put—will take care of all his Christmas shopping in a lump package that includes wrapping, gay greeting notes, and delivery to the giftee. The giver doesn't see a single gift or wrap a package during the entire merry holiday season. Ring the welkin! The store took out an ad stressing the theme of "Make this a convenient Christmas," apparently referring to the old inconvenient Christmases that entailed all that old-fashioned loving care that used to be lavished upon giving. The very thing that made the gift valuable is thereby progressed out of existence, and the only thing that remains is the antiseptic exchange of department-store merchandise in carload lots.

### Whose Home?

In a way, it reminds me of the sign in the window of a nationwide string of candy stores: "Give Home-Made Fudge This Year." Whose home did they use for the fudgemaking, and I wonder if they messed up the kitchen? You know how fudgemaking is, especially when the kitchen table is all covered with holiday wrapping stuff. Have a Merry One on Old Gaunt Rockwell here, and be sure to keep your marble bag closed.

Jean Shepherd may be heard from 9 p. m. to 1 a. m. every Sunday evening over WOR. An article of his appears in the December edition of Town and Country, and in the January issue of Saga there is an excellent piece about Shepherd's book, "I, Libertine," and its repercussions radiowise.

## Sick, Sick, Sick . . . . . by Jules Feiffer

