

THE PROMETHEAN

Symposium for Liberal Religious Youth

March 1967



Creativity in LRY

TooL^E

CREATIVITY - LRY

Table of ContentsPage

1	Introduction and Credits	
2	Poem	Carla Rippey
4	Excerpts from "Well You 'Bug' Me Sometimes Too!"	Peter Baldwin
6	Drawing	Francesca Walton
7	Two Poems	Aeric Stratton
8	Mountains and Wanderings	Ken Friedman
16	I entered the animal garden...	Geoff Oelsner
17	Collage	Jan Ratcliffe and John Oughton
18	Creativity in LRY	John Oughton
22	Shrimp-Boat	Fran Barkan
23	The Promethean Quest	Blair Dean
24	Editorial: The Promethean Question	John Oughton

(Cover Design -- Martha Toole)

The ideas and opinions expressed by contributors to THE PROMETHEAN do not necessarily represent the position of every LRYer nor of Continental LRY. This is a symposium which welcomes diversity of opinion and invites letters to the editor from youth and adults. Commentary, negative or positive, on the contents, setup and intellectual material in this issue are equally invited.

The suggested topic for the next issue of THE PROMETHEAN is "Social Protest". This is not an absolute requirement but just a suggested theme for your contributions. Submissions on any other matters involving or pertinent to LRY are always needed, as are reactions to this current issue. Send contributions to

Liberal Religious Youth
25 Beacon Street
Boston, Massachusetts 02108

Single copies are 25¢ each.

Introduction and Credits

Creativity was Prometheus' gift to man. Man is mirrored in what he makes, so the contents of this issue were chosen to comment upon as many different aspects of creativity as possible. The poems and artwork were chosen because, in the editor's view, they are truly creative works. The only possible definition of poetry is a good poem; similarly, any survey of LRY creativity must include suitable samples. The contents of this issue are by no means a comprehensive listing of what LRYers have done or a final statement of what they can do. Rather, the aim is to encourage you to take your own creative efforts more seriously, and to appreciate those of your friends and favorite "performers" more, as well as to find new favorites.

The cover is the work of Martha Toole, an occasional LRYer and continual artist from Guelph, Ontario.

Carla Rippey, from Omaha, Nebraska, is the president of Missouri Valley Federation and a nominee for the Continental LRY Executive Committee.

The Rev. Peter A. Baldwin, Ph.D., is a former Executive Director of LRY. He is the author of "Well You 'Bug' Me Sometimes Too!" and is now teaching at Crane Theological School.

Aeric Stratton, of Torrance, California, is the president of Pacific Southwest LRY, and a frequent contributor to the PSLRY Literary Review.

The drawing appearing next to Aeric's poems is by Miss Francesca Walton and originally was for the cover of LRY Structure and Organization. Fran was formerly in the Western Canadian Federation and is now living in Montreal.

Ken Friedman is the president of Junior Fellowship Youth and, at present, residing in San Francisco's artistic community. Ken was last year's PSLRY Literary Review editor and Continental Conference Newsletter editor.

Illustrations for this issue were done by Edie Moore. Edie is a student at Boston University.

Geoff Oelsner, another of Missouri Valley's executives, is MVF's West Wind editor. He lives, believe it or not, in Shawnee Mission, Kansas.

Fran Barkan comes from the land of Lyndon,--Houston to be exact. She is Southwest Federation's Sou'Wester editor.

The collage confronting "Creativity in LRY" is the fault of the editor and Jan Ratcliffe--a "clip job" to be sure.

Blair Dean was THE PROMETHEAN's first editor.

I am particularly indebted to all those people who sent me contributions or passed those of others on to me. Although not all of them could be used, some of them may still appear in future issues.

Before moses, before his bearded light
 all memories came twice into an ark
 and over the whipped water with the spelled letters of life
 she rocked.
 yet not with peace, for there were shadows
 even on the face of the moon--
 nor yet with wisdom, for wisdom is carved
 only upon the rafters of the sky.

Over the waters of many tongues and voices
 came the words for the spinning eye
 spieling off firecrackers and opening chandeliers of light.

Let us play at words, they whisper, we can carve mountains
 into paragraphs; we can chalk the sky in neon letterings
 and let us reach back to the roots of our story--

In these hills swathed with rain
 the lowering skies are swallowed into slopes
 and down their gullied backs, raked with grasses
 the waters scour the earth and wash lower.
 drain the hills to feed our river-stranded poseidon!

The missouri burrows into ravined country;
 the narrow earth beside alive with trees and brambles
 heavy with crescent berries.
 the missouri worries her banked heels;
 born of thunderclouds, crouching buffalo blot
 the low-slung sun.
 Carver of the skeleton rocks;
 born of the heart of eve's country
 born of the parchment of earth
 and stuff of the cottonwood sky--
 the river is restless in its clay.

The waves ricochet off the rockboned bottom, and tales
 skim the surface of the water;

Yea; tales are strung in nets along the riverside
 riverweed women drape the chalk-soldered caves
 layered with sea-animals, when all the world was sea.
 these women shoaled in mist and damp as early morning--
 woman who have rippled the waters with the drowning
 of a warm-faced girl, pulled underneath
 to learn the rituals of cloudburst and torrent
 to wear waterweeds and stroke raw fish alive.

And when our fires are coal-eyed deep in night,
 the creased and white missourians speak under the rasp
 of the grasshopper
 of how the mute hostage rose off the water with the morning
 and dried like dew upon the prairie grass.

The coals flake to ashes, and we hear tales
 of missouri cattle--hides shimmering,
 lumbering from their riverbed into the liquid sky;
 horns of rust, hooves mudshod--
 erasing the riverbowl and crowding the hills
 trees flocked with water animals
 tree-saints stilted above the flood.
 and when night brings the creatures to fold,
 we shall trail our hands in the river
 and touch the circle of rebirth.

The wheel spins faster, enveloping the trailing hand
 and spinning eye--element slapped upon element--
 trees spiral away from their root-pools
 and our bent heads merge into the grasses' tapestry.

The circle embraces all; gathering the shelved lives
 bringing back the jigsaw pieces--pieced of many rivers
 many stories

We walk into the ark, into the river
 and the doors close; the water meets above us.

carla rippey/missouri valley federation

The following excerpts are reprinted, with the kind permission of Dr. Peter Baldwin, from his recent pamphlet "Well You 'Bug' Me Sometimes Too!". These passages appeared in a section referring to LRYers entitled "And Their Sadness".

AND THEIR SADNESS

Something which bothers me, though not in the exasperating sense, is a sadness I see in many of our young people.

Have you noted the preoccupation many of our young people have with mournful folk songs and blues? Joan Baez has made a fabulous hit with them and, although I too admire her, I don't know of one funny or purely joyous song that she sings. Hers are for the most part about silver daggers, lovers' quarrels and lost souls. The sadder the folk song, the happier, albeit a "miserable happier," our young people appear to be! Peruse sometime the poetry they write for their newsletters and magazines...

In one of our churches in which the LRY was responsible for the Christmas Eve midnight service, the high point in the service involved a boy, whose mother had committed suicide the previous year, wondering out loud how it feels just before you die. As you may imagine, this focus evoked sadness among all the participants at a moment when they might have preferred gladness and celebration for the meaning of a new life, especially that of the baby Jesus.

One day when there were several LRYers in my office, I asked them where they saw most sadness among LRYers. Their common answer was that the goodbyes at the end of LRY conferences were always very sad. I have to agree. They stand outside the busses or lean out of bus windows and sob. Friends lift each other up for the last hug and kiss. It's truly extraordinary the way they carry on, and they mean it. The sadness is real but somewhat disturbing because I have the uneasy feeling that more is involved than sad farewells. It's as if this was a socially accepted time for sadness into which much sadness over other things is introduced.

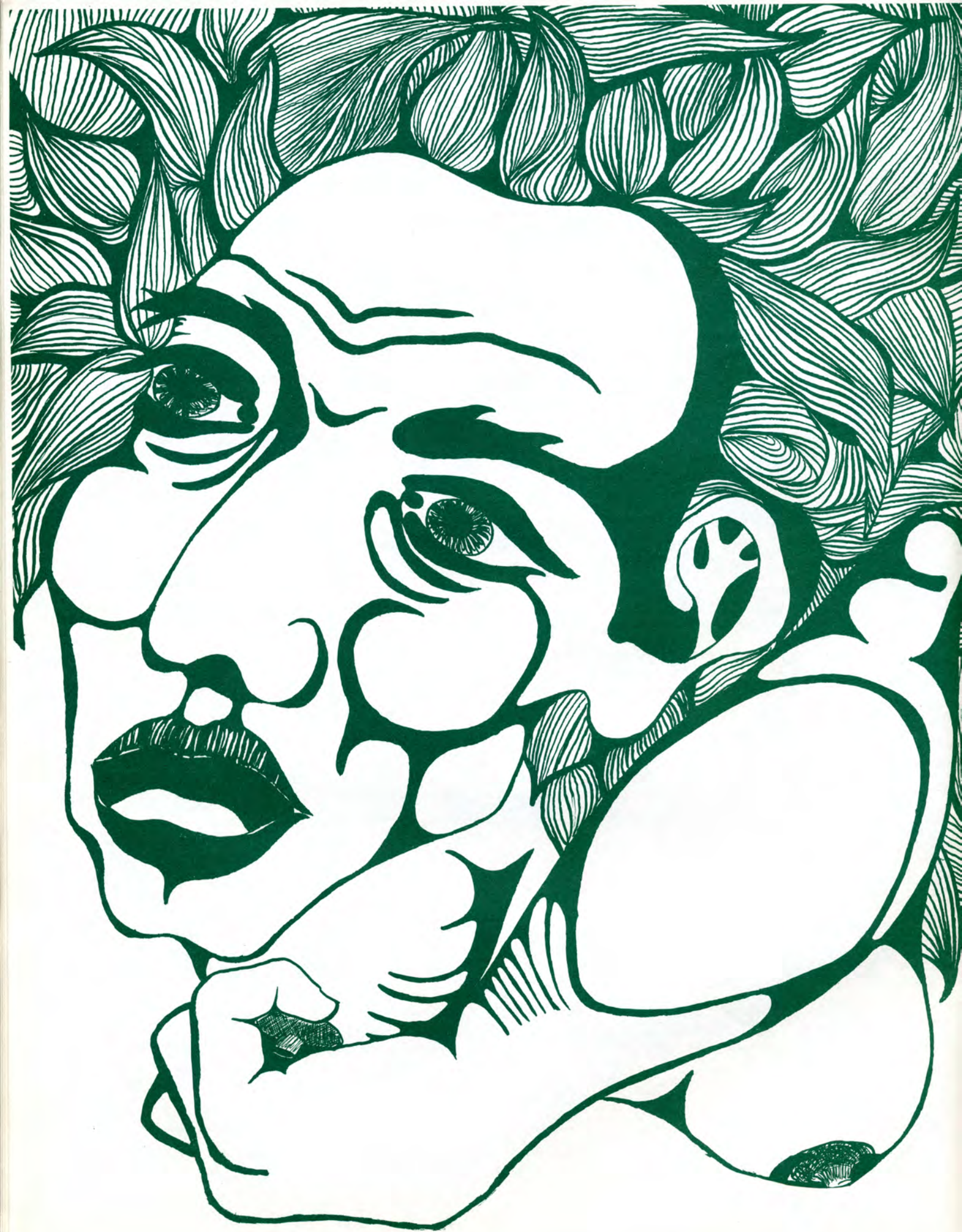
This business of displaced grief is not uncommon, and here I have arrived at my central point. I have the decided impression that there are too few opportunities for our young people to express grief, so they find substitute expressions through dance, song, poetry, and farewells. This transferral

The drawing appearing on the next page is by Miss Francesca Walton and originally was for the cover of LRV Structure and Organization.

of grief from one situation to another is not an unusual human thing to do. I recall vividly two or three occasions in which I suffered loss and wept and grieved way out of proportion to the actual extent of the loss at hand. Several years ago our black cat Schizophrenia "went off for a long walk" and failed to return by dark. Now isn't that ridiculous--to worry over a cat out after dark. But we had only had Schizie with us for a few months and up until the week before we had always kept him indoors. Since that time--you see he did return--he is sometimes gone for two days at a time and though these absences worry us we are not prone to the same degree of alarm. But on that first occasion I wept for an hour. I knew in the midst of this weeping, and commented to my wife to the effect, that I was clearly grieving out of proportion to the magnitude of the feared loss of our cat. Numerous possibilities came to mind such as the fact that I had failed a German examination recently but had allowed myself no time for "weeping over spilt milk," and there were other more personal griefs which we need not go into here!

As I have said, I think that Unitarians and Universalists have a genius for discouraging emotion. We are also chronic deniers of grief. Meadville's Carl Wennerstrom, in a thesis uncompleted before his untimely death, observed that Unitarians are intrigued with the social sciences but retreat from the unconscious. He added that Unitarians have always entertained a hero notion of man and, tragically, that the hero is male. Since men are to a large degree considered in our culture as self-sufficient creatures, this leaves us with the impression that if we are to have any self respect we must achieve self-mastery. In order to maintain self respect we should not need such feminine luxuries as gentle comforting, permission to weep, or loving shelter from threat.

Too few of our young people have learned that there can be dignity in grief; too few have discovered that deeper vision which can come out of mourning given full dignity. Thus, too many become fatalistic and even nihilistic. "Blessed are they who mourn, for they shall be comforted."



Two Poems by Aeric Stratton

Scattered hallucinations
revised emotions falling hopelessly away
 coming forward, drifting back
 (as waves climax and recede)
tumbling with soft hills
silken sadness
 to the brisk light stroke of spring love
wake up, luv.

SANITY

I'VE SIFTED THRU THE CORRIDORS
OF MY BARBED-WIRE MIND
TILL ONLY ONE
UNCLAIMED PIECE OF FALLING FLESH
REMAINS ALOOF FROM THE
BLACK, ELECTRIC-SPACE PLACE
OF HIDEOUS MIMICKING BEASTS...

MOUNTAINS AND WANDERINGS

by Ken Friedman

Three mountains,
 Steep path
 rising
 falling
 Where I go,
 I cling to the path.
 I will not fall.

--Sebastopol James
 (unpublished)



When men see Han-shan
 They all say he's crazy
 And not much to look at --
 Dressed in rags and hides.
 They don't get what I say
 & I don't talk their language.
 All I can say to those I meet:
 "Try and make it to Cold Mountain."

-- Gary Snyder
 (RIPRAP & COLD MOUNTAIN POEM'S,
Han-shan's 24th Poem)

1.

A short while ago, the wonderful writer of happenings, and founder of Something Else Press, Dick Higgins, wrote me a letter in which he spoke of the need for unity between art and life. Art & Life. The import of his message was that art becomes ART when the distinction between art/ethics, art/religion, art/philosophy, art/life is no longer distinct; that art becomes ART when the creative process flows in a unified and organic course.

2.

Prometheus brought the fire of the Gods to Man, and thus brought upon himself eternal suffering. The artist is in the same boat. When asked to write on "Creativity in LRY" what became manifest to me was this: the need to present ART, to show where the creative lies, to bring the Godly fire--or what my poor eyes can see of it--to you in these pages.

3.

Alright, then: What is Creativity? What is Art? Where can we find it, and how are we going to bind it to us?

In the Declaration of 27 January, 1927 The first Surrealist Research Bureau said this:

" ... Surrealism is not a new means of expression, or an easier one, nor even a metaphysics of poetry.

It is a means of total liberation of the mind and of all that resembles it."

Perhaps that is the goal of all art, all creativity, all life-forms. Van Gogh and his broad-stroke brush, Rembrandt and his game of light and shadow, Browning and his verses, the Baal Shem Tov and the Dancing Joyous Hasidim, all and more were brothers in this cause. Our contemporaries, too, are part of this Holy Crusade -- from the quiet thinkers and scholars that few hear of, such as Franklin Weingarten and Zalmon Schacter, to the men who work within their communities and groups such as Allen Cohen, Travis Rivers, Shlomo Carlebach and the President of your federation, to the prominent ones who are setting the temperament and direction of the New Age, such as Allen Ginsberg, Alan Watts, Tim Leary, Lawrence Ferlinghetti. They are all part and parcel of one movement for the liberation of Man.

Perhaps the most important fact, though, is that the work of no one person is more important than the work of another. It is given, by whatever powers of Fate there be, that some men shall be more prominently in the public eye than others--but all who strive to do what is right, all who cleave to the proper way have a path to take, and it is necessary that they all exist and work for our new Renaissance to come about.



LIBERATION

Our age is slowly but surely changing from the last end of the Feudal ages--an age personified by powerful central leaders and figures--to the beginning of the Democratic ages, time that will be personified by viable and flexible leadership patterns. The time will come when we all share the power of our community to that degree which we can contribute. Because I can construct a good theoretical model, I will lead for a while, and because you can build and mold a wonderful practicing reality from that model, you will lead for a while. And to the same degree, there will be those who will lead when something is necessary for continuity of the society, or the organism, and those who lead when new situations arise demanding new skills and talents.

4.

LRY is a very funny and beautiful thing. We are showing mankind " ... a new community." LRY is preparing people for roles in the guidance and development of the New Age.



DEMOCRACY

As I stand now on the last edge of my life in LRY, I look forward into the world around me, seeing things that I first saw in LRY. But I see them happening in an actual sense at the community and regional level.

Right now there are communities where the "town meeting" is being revived. Where new channels of communication such as newspapers and radio stations are being created because the older systems are not serving the community. Where impromptu tribes of people are coming into existence to share and pool skills and knowledge. All this and more.

New schools, such as San Francisco State College Experimental College, are being created within established institutions to bring about change in education and life. These are recognized institutions, and students can acquire credit towards their degrees and credentials through them.

Men are realizing their aggregate worthiness and unity, their unity, their right to be represented, and thus it is that many groups--teachers, students, hippies, sandal-makers, theologians, artists and others--are forming to demand the right of representation in the government of the people. And they are beginning to acquire this legal and governmental representation, giving breadth and meaning to the wise and democratic ideals of our Founding Fathers. The day will come when all can once again wholeheartedly repeat the Pledge of Allegiance with no guilt at the hypocrisy and sham which now prevents many from repeating those words.

5.

What has all this to do with Creativity and LRY? It is of the first essence, in that we strive to create the society which utilizes, permits, aids and abets creativity.

In LRY we create and work with models for the democratic society, the life of creative work and worship. To a great part, these pages are devoted to the discussion and presentation of those models.

6.

Alan Watts once showed me his kitchen-God, a Hindu deity carved of wood. It has one central and large face surrounded by smaller similar faces. He laughed, and slapping me on the shoulder, cried out, "Many faces, one face. One face, many faces. All in one and one in all."

So it comes about that all things are part of the Greater Path. It disturbs people to read letters like this, where the language changes from that of the poet to that of the physicist to that of the social scientist. But there is a greater path, and at one metaphysical point, all theories, all models are equally validated and--to the one who speaks any of the separate "languages" of sciences, arts or theologies--equally useful in presentation and demonstration.



7.

Before going on, let me offer an apology and an explanation. I am writing this for LRY. LRY is a very personal and immediate thing to me. I am discussing inner feelings and thoughts, also very personal to me. Thus it is, that while all of my languages and skills come into play, this just cannot be a paper or an essay, or even a poem. It must be a letter - written personally to you, and written of many parts, just as any other letter I write.

8.

There are some charms and protections available to us in our lives and work. These can enable us to bring about greater creativity, greater joyousness within ourselves and others.

Here, then, are some good techniques:

1. Smile frequently.
2. Commune often with the wind and the sky.
3. Sing often. (= dance often, = love often, = your personal joy-method.)
4. When in great need or great joy, turn to those teachers and people who are your personal holy ones and prophets. (I find Santayana, the Hasidic legends, and visionary poets of all generations helpful. They dilute my sorrows, and strengthen my glories.)

CREATIVITY IN LRY

That which we sing is often more moving and significant than that which we say. Creativity is the quality in man's spirit which allows him to form objects and concepts of beauty from the elements of his experience. Man the creator is always man the inventor, because any creative thing has a special novelty, a separate identity, that gives that thing its value as an esthetic expression of an idea or feeling. Although the final result of any creative process is a novelty, the components cannot be, as they are drawn from the artist's previous experience and peculiar background. Although a work of art may appear to be totally without precedent or recognizable similarities to other works, it can only be a "re-assembling" of parts previously present in a different context. Each creative act, then, is important information about the creator, as it expresses simultaneously his roots and the direction in which he is growing.

An appreciation of LRY creativity is essential to an understanding of LRY-- where it came from, and where it is on the path towards "becoming a creative and realistic contributor to the achievement of a just, peaceful, and united world community." This is LRY's stated goal and vision. LRY strives along a path toward that goal and that vision. And LRY clings to that path. But LRY is also called upon to find new ways to reach the goal. Leaving traditional paths is an important part of the LRY endeavor. This article can only comment briefly on the forms and directions LRY creativity has adopted so far.

As Paul Goodman noted in "Growing Up Absurd", all men are creative but few are artists. Goodman points out that children are especially creative and imaginative but tend to lose these qualities as they age in a stifling and conformist society. The Beat movement is an example to Goodman of a society where the mental and social blocks to universal production and appreciation of creative things have been overcome successfully. LRY'ers form a similar subgroup. I have yet to meet a person in LRY who does not write, sing, dance, sketch, photograph, play a few guitar chords or at least the kazoo (the new symbol of the musically deprived!). The special personal and leader-group relationships that develop in LRY are examples of how creativity is manifested in the more abstract sense. So, LRY'ers are creative and sensitive people, generally; how is this spirit expressed, what do preoccupations of form and theme show, and what is the esthetic worth of the output?

The most popular LRY medium is the word, especially as part of a poem. Poetry and attempts at poetry form the staple diet of LRY newsletters throughout the continent. Fiction, drama, humor and more prosaic forms are generally neglected in the headlong rush to lay sacrificial syllables at the feet of the Muse of Verse. Naturally some LRY poetry--hopefully the examples in this issue are illustrations--is very well-written and moving. But our literary ancestors, and our preoccupations, are sometimes painfully evident in the less successful attempts.

5. Give grace to all. It will return ten-fold.
6. Return gentleness for anger whenever possible. This is most important. We cannot allow ourselves to be sucked into seething anger and negative modes. The negative energy created by such things is vast and powerful, able to destroy the creative self. If you cannot bear someone or something, take right action by leaving. Only in cases of grave injustices must you take action or speak in a way that will hurt or damage another person. My rule is this: if the course of bad events merely involve me, I leave. If the lives, dignity, or happiness of others are at stake, I remain to do what I can. If nothing can be done, I leave anyhow--there are enough positive things to be done that might not be done anyhow.
7. Be particularly forgiving when someone trespasses against you. To forgive is a silent and quiet process. In the face of sincere apology, one does not say, "Thank you." (subliminal thought: You owe me that apology!) but, "It's all right. No sweat." One offers an expression that does not show acceptance of a wrong deed, but acceptance and love of a right person. I've never met a person who was really bad, and everyone makes mistakes as stupid as the many I've made.

8. When you have something, share it. It may be food, or a blanket, or a moment of joy. There is something to the idea of The Compassionate Buddha, in that none of us can be truly enlightened until all are enlightened. The secret is, that when we have something good--give it away freely and with love. Do not force it, merely offer it.

It is the I-Thou relationship. "If I am I because You are You, and You are You because I am I, then I am I and You are You. This is a false relationship, which collapses with the removal of one factor. Rather: "If I am I and You are You...We can talk." It is the equal and proper affirmation of the self that exists simply because it exists. It is the free and equal sharing.

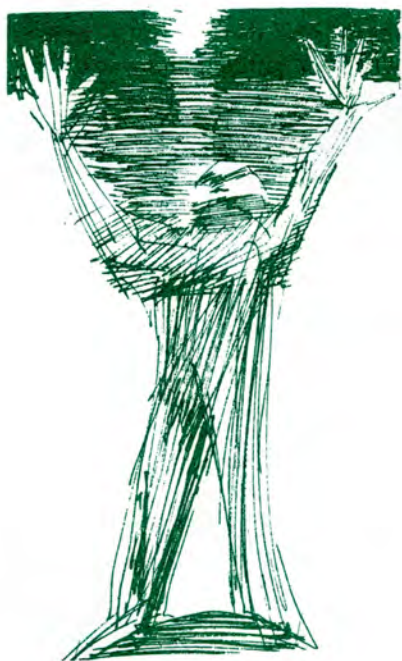
Note that one is not expected to give away necessary things. I couldn't think of giving away my typewriter or my tape-recorder when I need them to work. But there is always a place at my house for guests--be they friends, or often, hungry strangers. If need be, we all eat a little less, but we eat it joyously.

9.

Now, some things about creativity and art. The messages here are simple, for when the life is filled with goodness and proper conduct, the art--whatever art and creativity--must come naturally.

Whatever your art is, do it. It may be singing, writing, talking, or simply living well. As your creative powers increase, you can tackle more arts and more things successfully. One only needs three things to master any art:

1. The healthy, living, and creative brain.
2. The skills and techniques necessary to carry out the concepts of your work well (this is where practice and perseverance come in.)
3. The physical materials connected with your work.



VISION

Perhaps the prime function of any art is the liberation of the mind. The creation of new analogies, models and symbols to show newer courses of choice and action available to men.

But there should be something guiding your work, your vision. What it is is up to you. When dealing with the many powers available to us--and there are powers inside the human brain that can actually turn the physical fabric of space upon itself through vaguely explored areas of telepathic strength--we must guide those powers, using them, rather than letting them use us.

It is not enough to be wise, smart, or even clever. One must be good, one must follow right paths of action.

10.

Some general suggestions for the liberation of the creative powers.

1. When you get an idea, write it down and work on it. Try it in as many possible ways, with as many possible techniques as you can use.
2. Try what the surrealists call "automatic writing" ...starting to write, and letting whatever comes out of you come.
3. Try working in disciplined media as well. You will learn skill and control in your field of work by using older forms--if you are a poet, for example, turn to the sonnet and the ode, to verse and meter.

Eliot, Cummings, Ginsberg, Ferlinghetti, Kerouac, Dylan and anonymous Japanese Haikuists are still alive; not in Argentina, but rather in the paper figures we trace after them. "What or who am I?" and "Where am I going?" or, alternatively, "How can I hide these problems by synthetic surrealism" are distressingly frequent themes. Cries of alienation, pain, rejection or self-denigration also appear often in poem form. I do not mean to imply that these emotions are in themselves trivial or meaningless. Adolescence is the period of rapid mental growth, and changing assessments of one's own personality and social role are very much a part of growth. When these feelings appear in poem form, however, the result may have dubious literary worth unless care is taken to ensure that the language and imagery are on the same level as the intensity of inspiration.

Death and the future are other frequent subjects. Death is seldom seen by LRY'ers as a peaceful, long-desired end to turbulent life. It is expressed as the negation of existence, not the culmination. Many LRY creations end with the words "death" or "I die", with these evidences of mortality forming the conclusion — to the negative experience of failure, self-hate, tragedy or alienation that the main part of the poem concerns. Death is bitter, brutal, despicable, and irrational; yet it has a powerful fascination for LRY writers, as it probably has for all young people discovering the value of life.

The world can only go two ways, according to LRY literary forecasting. "Some say the world will end in fire; others say in ice," as Robert Frost commented. The first possibility is global war, and the resultant radioactive vacuum. Mankind then would either have vanished through his own folly, or have survived symbolically as a few ideal people, the Adam and Eve of Unitarianism, who might repopulate the earth with better beings. The alternative is the sort of impersonal society of antihuman efficiency outlined in the modern classics 1984 and Brave New World. Like Huxley and Orwell, LRY writers have to resort to the device of expressing their ideas through a character who belongs to the future society yet still retains some traditional human ethics. The above two prophecies are the most dramatic as well as the most pessimistic. It seems that the world's probable course of continued muddling along somewhere between the two extremes does not have as much "news value".

One tendency of recent LRY writing which is very true to the contemporary world is its changing emphasis from socio-political matters to more personal concerns. The expansion and sublimation of consciousness is taking intellectual precedence over civil rights and socialism, at least in the great American middle class. With the exception of the topic of the Vietnamese war, LRY conference and discussion themes seem increasingly to be centered on the self: its nature, possibilities and relationship on a personal basis to other selves. Similarly, social commentary and protest is not as evident in LRY writing as was the case a few years ago. Although self-examination is a necessity, we must also keep an eye on society and its tendency to curb one's right of self-celebration and expression. Although LRY writers are truly contemporary, they may be failing in their role of commenting upon what is happening to people in the mass, whether that mass is our movement, our country, or our world.

It will teach you to do little and say much, not to waste. If you write or think, turn to the essay in order to learn how to marshal thoughts and ideas, using analysis and high-level thought processes.

After working on these, you will find your natural attempts much clearer and more meaningful. Be sure to remember: communication is all-important in some respects: without communication, we cannot present the ideas we want to get across.

4. Invoke the powers available to you. They are called "inspiration" but they are sources of sheer energy. Music. The ocean. The woods. Nature. The works of others, both ancient and contemporary.
5. When you do something, do it with fierce devotion, with all your heart and soul. When you work, work. When you play, play. When you make love, make love.

This requires great perceptiveness and thought. It means that you have to know what you really want to be doing. You have to know when something really has value for you.

6. Guard your spirit with a gentle jealousy. Allow no-one to divert you from your course, or bring you to anger or hatred. Be willing to consider all possibilities, but move with deliberate and carefully-weighed actions. When you have learned this well-enough, it will come naturally.
7. Remember that these are all, and only, suggestions. I have found them useful. I ascribe none of these virtues to myself, but merely know that to whatever extent I have used and applied them, they have benefited me immensely. The words are mine, but the ideas come from others far greater and more skilled than myself.

11.

The day of Dawning is nearly upon us. We must work and strive towards the creative use and liberation of all powers, the flowering of all men and all arts.

To work and contribute towards that coming day is the purpose of this letter. That is what I believe creativity in LRY to be all about. That is what creativity everywhere is all about--in science, in government, in art, in theology, in letters. Creativity tempered by the skillful application of knowledge and technique to produce correct and worthy results.

Shortly, in a month or so, in fact, I will be leaving LRY. This is my message.....

Seek those things which are good, and make them yours. We dare not wait, in these perilous times, for the Second Coming. We must be the Resurrection, we must breath the vital life-force into whatever civilization that we want to leave behind us.

Santayana speaks of leaving our children "...fairer gods...and a freer bosom!" It is not enough to want. We must harness will to action in order to bring these things about.

The first place to look if you seek the dawn is yourself. The seeds of the divine and glorious World-tree are planted within you.

We seek a community akin to the vision of the World-tree. With its roots in the firmament below, with its leaves in heaven above. And yet the concept is one of Einsteinian unity--for the roots are heavenly, and we mortals are the leaves.

When wind shakes one leaf, all leaves must shake with compassion. When rain gives life to one, all share the life-giving waters.

Mountains and Wanderings

I walk among the mountains--dangerous pathway!
seeking out the quiet hidden valley.

There is an orchard high in secret places;
When my time is spent, I will rest there.

Dancing with the fauns, the nymphs and satyrs,
Surrounded, joyous, singing with my brethern.

Steve and Lou, Alan, George and Kathy,
Loving, holy, whole beneath the heavens.

Ken Friedman



Illustrations by Edie Moore

Much of LRY's literary output is good--it is modern, uninhibited, fluent, profound and entertaining. My main criticisms are that LRY'ers tend to be too imitative and limited in the forms and subject-matter that they choose. Experimentation, particularly with forms of expression, invariably pays long-term dividends for both the artist and his audience. If only LRY'ers would try all the different forms of literary expression and find the ones most natural to them, a lot more of genuine worth would be produced.

The significance of trends in non-verbal types of LRY art is not as easy to discern, at least from my viewpoint. Probably this is because the 'language' is more figurative than that of literature, and fewer LRY'ers practice these other forms, so it is harder to note valid generalizations.

Music--of all types and forms--is extremely popular. Some of the hoariest LRY traditions involve the rendition of old favorites such as "Plastic Jesus" or "In the Halls of LRY". Few indeed are the worship services without appropriate accompaniment, usually of the flute and guitar school. A conference just isn't complete without a few guitar strummers and a dance. And the dancing--every LRY prom provides a good example of mass creativity in motion; the performers are generally very uninhibited and inventive. Individual musical tastes range from purest Beethoven to crassest Stones, and combinations thereof. Generally, LRY'ers are more knowledgeable and enthusiastic about music--particularly the folk and blues schools--than their peers "outside".

Among those who play, the favorite instruments are the guitar, flute or recorder, harmonica, drums and piano, roughly in that order. Guitars, cases and capos litter the location of any LRY gathering; strumming and picking provides the background. Folk and pop tunes are the usual standards, and Bob Dylan the most universal favorite. Some LRY'ers, the fortunate few, are close to professional level; the rest, like amateurs everywhere, make up in enthusiasm what they lack in technique.

Mournful songs are perhaps not as popular as when "Well You Bug Me Sometimes Too!" was written. Taste seems to be turning more towards the abstract imagists such as Dylan, Donovan and Simon & Garfunkle, and the joyously irreverent and and irrelevant, represented by dignitaries like Jim Kweskin's Jug Band or the Fugs. The hit parade has recently been growing more melodious and esoteric under the impact of the English groups, folk-rock and psychedelics, so LRY preferences and those of the general public are getting slightly closer. Popular music has two main attractions for the adolescent; its constant estrangement from adult standards of "good music" (with some exceptions) provides a method of rebellion and independence, and it has important social functions in providing common experiences and preliminary contact in romantic relationships.

The majority of contact that we have with other LRY members is in a conference situation, and this is probably why the artists among us are less evident than the musicians and the poets. It is more convenient and accepted to sing or read than it is to show your paintings, and the appreciation of art is less a group experience than listening to songs and poetry. A great number of LRY'ers are doodlers and scribblers, judging from the creative use of surplus paper during business and rules meetings. Genuine artists among us are somewhat rarer, but examples of their work do occasionally appear in literary reviews and newsletters. The LRY artists that I am aware of are very good indeed--hopefully they comprise a representative sample. Group murals, collages and junk sculptures are sometimes planned conference activities and are always entertaining, if not up to Picasso standards.

I entered the animal garden...

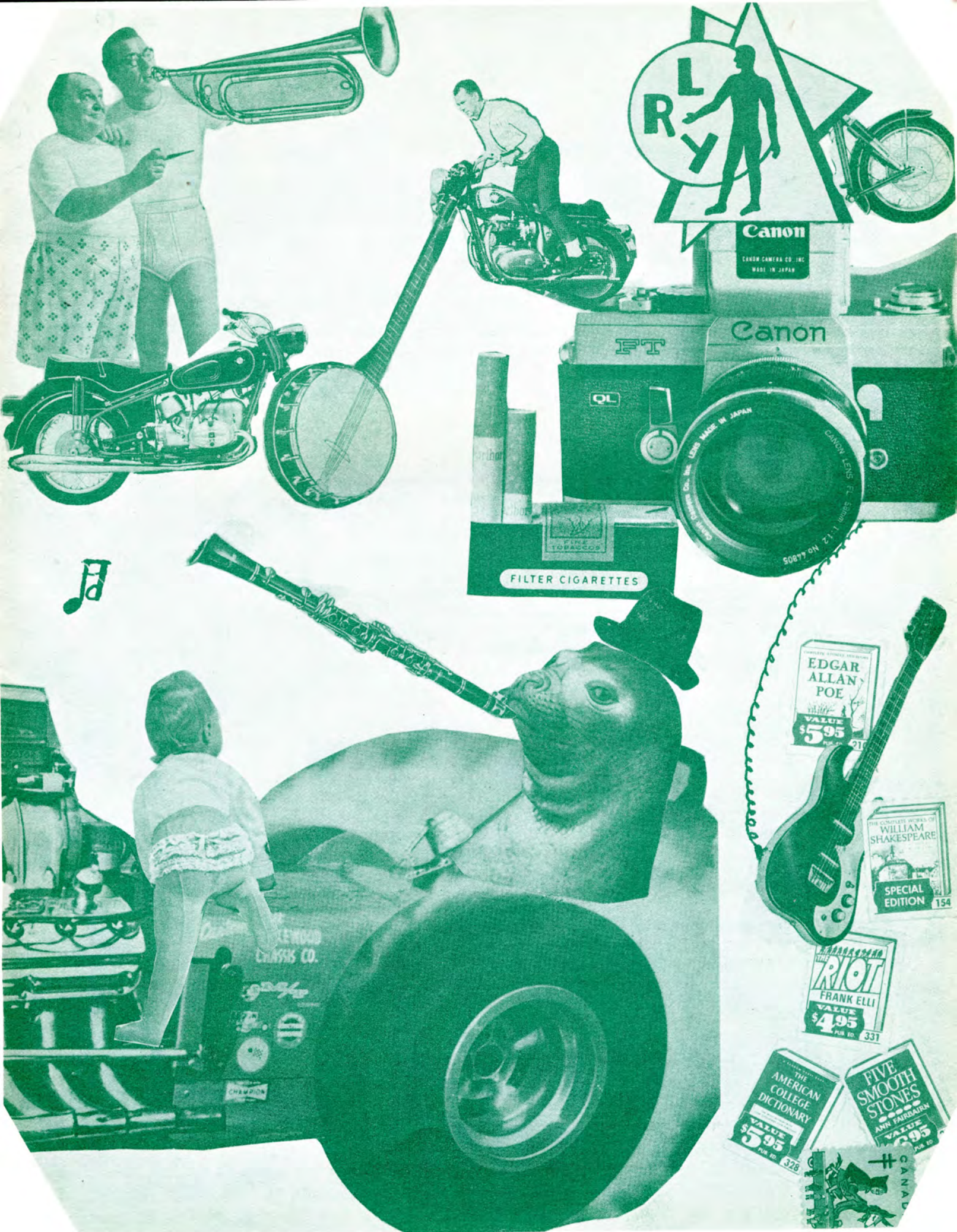
I entered the animal garden,
 following the guardian through many doors.
 There was a room of pastures,
 one of dying stars,
 a courtyard of stone
 where water flowed in the living rock.

We emerged in a ruined temple
 to the moon of this planet,
 a place forgotten on the torn mountainside.
 Making my way down an arduous slope,
 I stumbled and fell
 perhaps a thousand feet
 before the eyes of an ancient goddess.

And when I awoke,
 tears of light were falling
 and a voice said "Thank you. Thank you."
 It was she in all her glory,
 giving thanks to me who had so worshipped her
 all my days.

Only because I have emerged and fallen,
 leaving the desire of rooms
 and desiring life without walls,
 however surrounded by the leaves
 and tides of change.





The remaining art practiced by a significant number of LRY members is acting. My Continental Nominating Committee taught me that many LRY'ers belong to Thespians Forensics, whatever that worthy organization is. Good dramatic qualities are exhibited just as often in ordinary situations as they are in planned plays. Comic improvisation and mimicry are LRY talents, and without them a lot of enjoyment would disappear from our gatherings. Drama appears occasionally as a worship service but in few other ways. It is unfortunate that more conferences and workshops are not devoted to theatrics, in the limited sense of the word.

Sculpture, dance photography and mixed media are not used frequently by creative LRY'ers. Perhaps the problem is that the training and material for these arts are harder to come by. Perhaps, also, I am misjudging and it is more true to say that such forms are harder to display in a conference situation. My comments on literature are equally applicable to these areas; it would be wonderful if we could all experiment in the different fields, and exchange the products of our search. This is an impossible demand to make--that all LRY'ers try all modes of creative expression. I would not make it if I did not feel that LRY is a creative community, and we have the enthusiasm and potential to aim for such a mark.

My concluding comments are concerned with perhaps the most important form of creativity, working with people. There are so many beautiful people in LRY, people who have warmth, generosity, and greatness of heart. These are the people who give willingly of themselves, in both personal and executive ways, and through this giving, bring to your own qualities of good. I have seen so many people helped by LRY a great deal in a surprisingly short time; everyone says, "I have received more than I ever gave." when they leave LRY. I have seen whole groups of LRY'ers selflessly concerned with the problems of one of their number, and I have heard so many say, at the end of a conference or camp, "If you ever come my way, my home is yours." Creativity with human beings is essential for the leaders of a just and united community of any size. Let us all work, together and as individuals, to cast aside our self-reserve and masks of "cool" in order that we might aid the establishment of a world community where the creation and enjoyment of esthetic things is an inalienable human right.

John Oughton

SHRIMP-BOAT

Shrimp-boat pulling down the canal at dawn
nets hung ghostly
on her spars
gray mist shrouding her in half-light
making her a ghost ship
Out to sea
pushing her stubby bow against the waves
rolling in the swells
creaking as her joints unbend
in the cold dawn
Shrimp-boat out to sea
pulling in the day's catch
Live slippery shrimp on her decks
leaving bits and pieces behind
Clouds scudding across the horizon wetly
like dirty gray soapsuds
Finally fleeing home before the blast of storm-wind
into the protection of the canal
nets hanging dripping
ghostly again
as rain closes around her.

Fran Barkan.

THE PROMETHEAN QUEST

During each successive chapter in the story of civilization's development, men have sought the answers to the basic questions regarding their existence and purpose as a race. Often, their solutions have found expression in the symbolic language of a mythology. The present generation, as intellectually restless as its predecessors, must create a synthesis of the spiritual resources of the past and the aspirations of the future in order to formulate a value system adaptable to its current needs.

LRY, in trying to maintain the intellectual and spiritual ferment that nourishes this process, must remain in a state of constant flux--organizationally and programmatically. To characterize the basic premise upon which LRY is founded--an un-remitting quest for principles attuned to the demands of life in modern society--its organ for artistic and ideological expression has been entitled The Promethean, after Prometheus, a figure in the Greek myths of creation.

Prometheus, whose very name means "forethought," is a symbol of defiance against a recognized, arbitrary authority--an idealist in conflict with the malevolent will of Zeus for the benefit of mankind. After man had been equipped by his creator with an inferior set of physical tools, in order to subjugate him beneath the yoke of divine bidding, Prometheus stole fire from the sun and gave it to man. In addition, he taught the usage of light and heat in cultural endeavors, liberating the creativity then still dormant in mankind. Zeus, too late in discovering the theft and its subsequent results, vengefully punished Prometheus for his insurrectionist activities by chaining him to a rocky gorge. . . . Thus, the legendary founder of idealism was martyred, but his efforts were regarded by the aspiration toward light and reason within the spirit of humanity.

As heirs to this tradition of unremitting search, the new generation, of which LRY is an integral part, must seek to refurbish the fuel for the "perpetual light." Rather than accepting the suppositions of previous cultures, it must challenge the premises for an ordered civilization. However, it must also substantiate its challenges with a coherent basis for improvements, reaffirm, after minute examination, those values which relate to present needs, and strike accord between these systems, to create a foundation upon which to build an applicable blueprint for the future.

--Blair Dean

EDITORIAL: THE PROMETHEAN QUESTION

This issue marks the fourth anniversary of THE PROMETHEAN. The preceding editorial, by the first editor of the magazine, expresses the purposes of both LRY and THE PROMETHEAN in light of our mythical background. The need for constant examination and modification of LRY's structure and outgrowth is just as great as was the case in 1964. In this editorial I will deal specifically with this magazine, and how it could be improved.

The *raison d'être* of THE PROMETHEAN is "A symposium for Liberal Religious Youth". A symposium, according to the gospel of Webster, is a gathering for the purposes of convivial entertainment and intellectual exchange. State and provincial laws being what they are, we shall have to concentrate on the latter function. Any worthwhile forum, since not everyone participates, needs both performers or debators, and an audience. To be truly a symposium for LRY, this magazine should be written and read by LRY'ers--with interested outsiders not excluded from the exchange. With all-LRY material, the absolute literary and graphic standards may not be attained, but THE PROMETHEAN will be most useful to LRY as a reflector and commentator.

Those with something to say should be heard; thus, THE PROMETHEAN should have a much wider readership than it presently enjoys. But one cannot just ask people to read the magazine; its format and content must stimulate them so that they want to examine it. I had hoped to have all sorts of creative work embellishing this issue: photography, drawings, drama, satire, poetic fiction, essays and poetry. Due to the miniscule flow of contributions, this issue is not only several months late but also not as radical as I had hoped. My aim was to maintain the high literary standards of former years while employing many different media to make the general aspect more attractive and modern. The quality of any publication is dependent on two variables: the worth and number of contributions, and the ability of the editor. I hope you will excuse my faults as an editor; I cannot excuse the fault of the vast majority of LRY'ers who failed to contribute.

It is a truism to say that this is your magazine. It can be just as good as you are willing to make it. But, until everyone in LRY takes an interest, it cannot completely fulfill its potentialities as a medium for exchange and stimulation within LRY. It may be that THE PROMETHEAN is still unknown to most LRY'ers, or that they consider it too good or too amateurish for their efforts. If so, it shall be my PROMETHEAN quest to rectify these failings. Let yours be to express whatever you consider most truthful and profound after searching within yourself--and, please, share your treasures with the rest of us, in the name of LRY.

John Oughton

ARE YOU LOOKING FOR:

Ideas for interesting group discussion. . .

LRY poetry for use in worship services and Youth Sunday. . .

Themes galore for workshops and conferences. . .

Past issues of The Promethean are available for your use so why not secure your full set while they are still in stock?

Each issue deals in depth with one particular theme, thus providing an abundance of material for any group to work with. And of course, they are nice even if you only read them! Order your choice of back issues before they are gone.

ORDER FORM

Unitarian Universalist Association Distribution Center
25 Beacon Street, Boston, Massachusetts 02108

Please send:

_____ copies of the 5/64 Promethean: "Liberal Tradition -- Ethos versus Mythos"
at 5¢ per copy.
_____ copies of the 11/64 Promethean: "The Search for New Meanings in Traditional
Religious Symbols" at 15¢ per copy.
_____ copies of the 4/65 Promethean: "High School Education" at 15¢ per copy.
_____ copies of the 12/65 Promethean: "The Adolescent Mystique" at 25¢ per copy.
_____ copies of the 3/66 Promethean: "LRY and Viet Nam" at 25¢ per copy.
_____ copies of the 5/66 Promethean: "Youth Autonomy -- Adolescence and LRY"
at 25¢ per copy.
_____ copies of the 3/67 Promethean: "Creativity in LRY" at 25¢ per copy.

Total Amount _____

UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST ASSOCIATION

Distribution Center

25 Beacon Street, Boston, Massachusetts 02108

Check payable to UUA is enclosed for \$ _____
Include payment for orders of individuals or for amounts under
\$2. UUA pays delivery cost.

— OR —

If your order is at least \$2 we will bill your organization.
Delivery charge extra.

Material ordered by _____
or purchase order no. _____

SEND BILL TO (Please print)

Organization _____

Address _____

SHIP TO

POSTMASTER:

CONTENTS — Merchandise — This parcel may be opened for
postal inspection if necessary — Return postage guaranteed