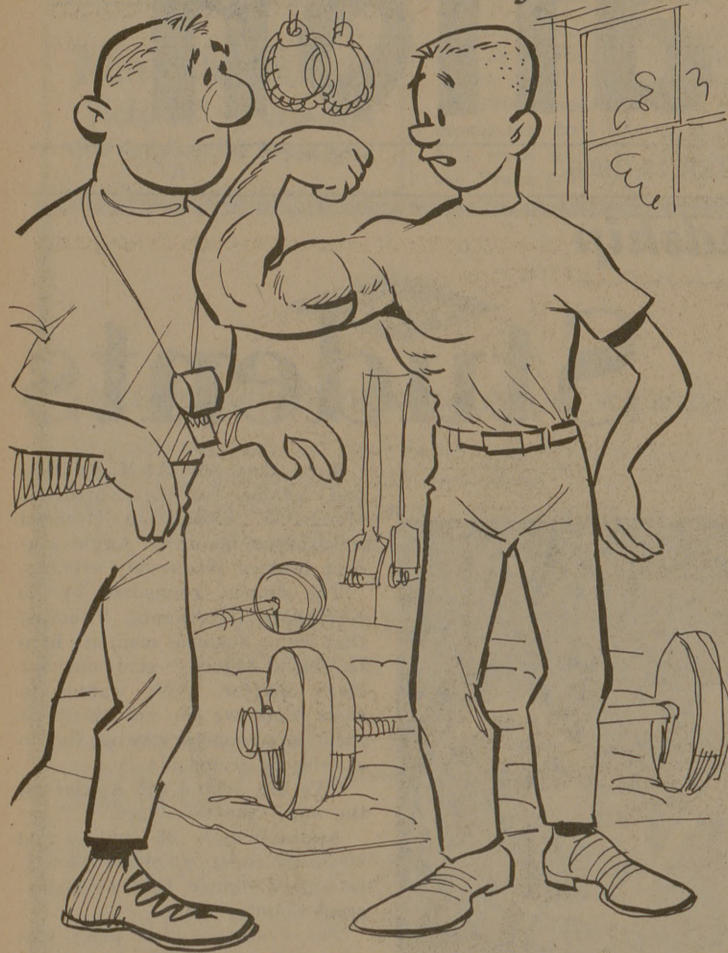


CADET SLOUCH

by Jim Earle



EARLE OCT 66

"It developed since school started you see, I carry my books with this arm and you oughta see that physics book . . ."

Fuller's Follies

by John Fuller

About the time that you realize being an upperclassman in the Corps isn't a free ticket to Cloud Nine, and when you sense all those legends about the first semester sophomore courses might actually be true, a third seemingly-insurmountable obstacle manifests itself.

This is known, in the vernacular of the column writer — which is to say, I made this up myself — as the Great Mail Extinction. This is not to say that the mail was previously great, or that there's anything great about extinction; it just sounds impressive.

Enough has been said about the spider webs in the mailbox. Most of the printable comments have even made their way into these pages from time to time. My pet peeve is the shiny bottoms of the slots, and it's a problem that seems to offer no hope of solution because it's so hard to explain in the first place.

It's like this: you walk into the post office, secure in the knowledge that, regardless of what weird turn of events has kept a certain person from writing for the past twelve days, today is the Big Day. Today, if there is any justice in the universe, if the United States Mail can be trusted even in the slightest, if human nature represents any potential for greatness, that glare off the bottom of your mailbox will be broken by a letter.

You even go so far as to hum a little tune. The world is really a great place, and things are never as bad as they seem. And then you look in that window, and the light glints off the bottom.

Scientists tell us we could not exist without light; it provides the energy for all those processes you learned about in Biology 115, and it's also essential to the transmission of, say, "Batman." But that light that glints off the bottom of your mailbox is a full-fledged Foe of Mankind. It can ruin a whole day in a split second, in much the same way as a glance at a math quiz as it's dropped unceremoniously on your desk. It has been known to produce uncontrollable screaming and stamping, which almost always brings Mr. Stark running.

What can be done about this? Well, we could distribute a petition, asking that the mailboxes be painted flat-black or covered on the inside with velvet. But campus construction products are already holding up transportation to a certain extent, and any further delays along those general lines might be poorly timed right now.

Let's face it — there's no solution. All I can do is gripe about my situation, and take my problems to an unfeeling world. And that's where my original point comes in: the newness of writing to The Kid Away at School has apparently worn off, and so it looks like I'm doomed to see that glinting light even more often than last year. That's the Great Mail Extinction.

Let's not be hypocritical; I'm interested in anything that falls in Box 7008, including Box Rent Due slips, ransom notes, and letters beginning "Dear College Student: As one of tomorrow's leaders, you . . ." Even junk mail diffuses that glint. But this year I'm not getting my share of that, either, and it's about to drive me crazy.

Part of the problem may be that new number. Last year, I was given 5921, and I used to tell people they could remember it as \$12.95 backwards, reasoning that that represents a nice, round, average price tag. (Predictably, I once got a long-overdue letter which had been post-marked the week before and had caused somebody no end of frustration before it was delivered to the right address. It was addressed to Box 1295.) In contrast, 7008 is neither fish nor fowl; it's

not quite 007, or even 007 reversed, or 7007. It even lacks the numerical order of 7008. It's a loser, and so am I. (Box 5921, by the way, is full pretty often. I know; I've checked.)

And so the light glints, the Great Mail Extinction goes inexorably on, and another column bites the dust.

THE BATTALION

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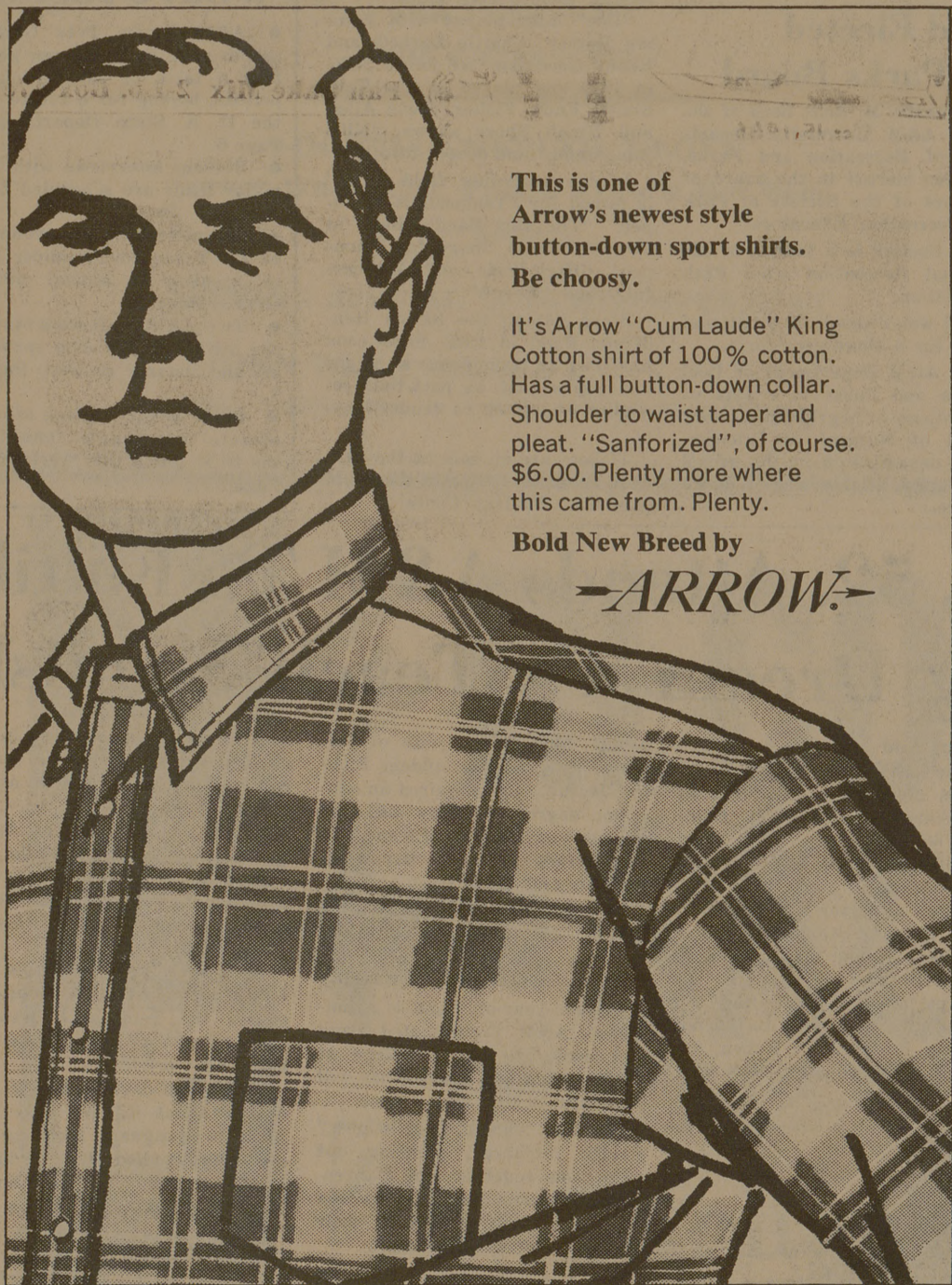
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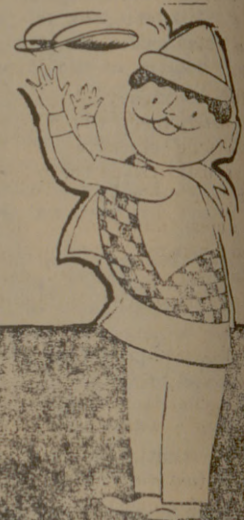
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