

RUMMAGE TALES



Church of Saint Mark
2001 Dayton Avenue
St. Paul, Minnesota

RUMMAGE SALES have been a semiannual production of the St. Mark's Council of Catholic Women (even when it was known as the St. Mark's Altar & Rosary Society) since time immemorial. Nobody knows exactly when they started; everybody hopes they will never end.

This booklet is dedicated to all the hardworking, fun loving members of St. Mark's Church who have helped make these sales successful.

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*Our Lady of Good Counsel
Patroness of the
Council of Catholic Women*

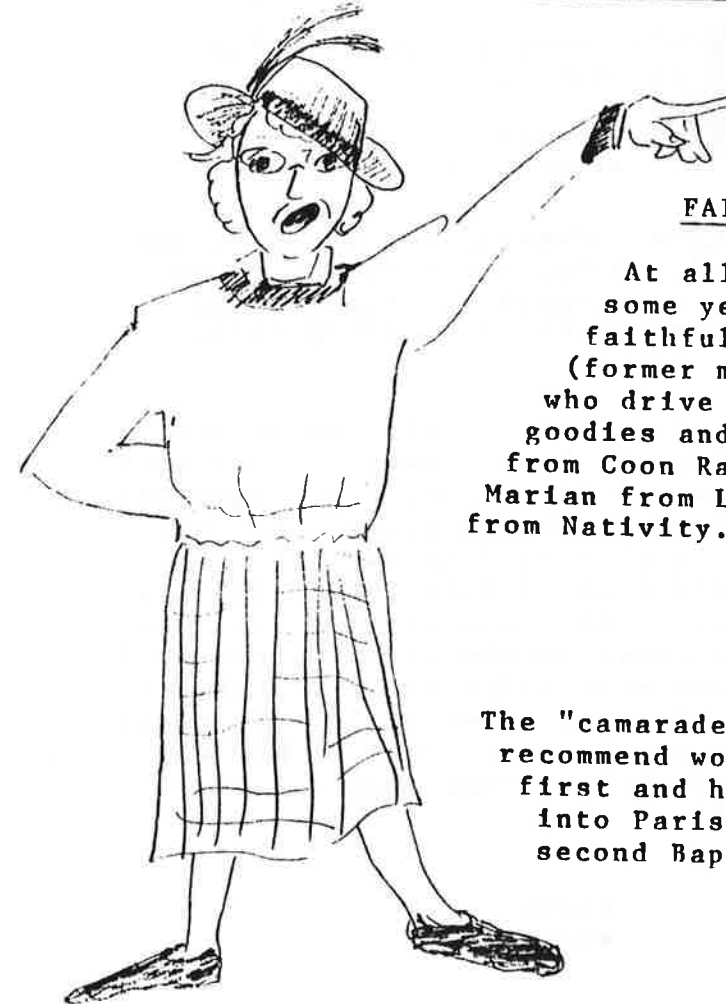
"GET SET!!"

At nine o'clock sharp on the morning of the sale, in her clear, loud, ringing voice the Boss yells, "Man your stations, everyone!! Get set!! Go!!" And in the door of the Old Gym come all those wonderful customers of ours, each of them darting to the particular section each is interested in, each so happy to be back once again at the best old rummage sale in the City of St. Paul.

FAITHFUL COMMUTER WORKERS

At all our rummage sales, for some years past, we have our faithful commuter workers (former members of St. Mark's) who drive in every day laden with goodies and eager to work: Dee from Coon Rapids; Pat from Woodbury; Marian from Lake Elmo; and even Irene from Nativity.

The "camaraderie" is so great, we all recommend working with us as your first and happiest indoctrination into Parish Life - almost like a second Baptism!



THE FIRST ONE

The good Monsignor was aghast at our first sale, as he hadn't visualized the things that were being brought into the new cafeteria - beds, furniture, TVs, plant stands, bicycles - you name it. He kept repeating, "Don't touch the walls - don't touch the walls!"

Well, we didn't touch the walls - but we did have to touch the floor.

The large, new cafeteria was the location of our first rummage sale, where we had to be very careful "not to scratch the floor." We had a lot of furniture that time so we tread rather carefully.

That particular sale is well-remembered because of the "picture frame" event. They were very much in demand at that time, and a parishioner brought in all his Mother's frames from her attic. It was a "hot" item, and we sold them immediately, to the tune of some \$300. But, lo and behold, the young man came dashing over later to regain what he never should have relinquished. By then, the frames were all gone. It's almost certain that the happy customer was not in tears, but the gentleman was in tears, his Mother was in tears - and just to help things along, some of us shed a few tears!!



THE METAMORPHOSIS

Each year we begin the collection of items for the sale with enthusiasm and energy, but at the end of the sale we limp, we groan, and we swear we are all finished - never another rummage sale.

Here I
Am
Girls!

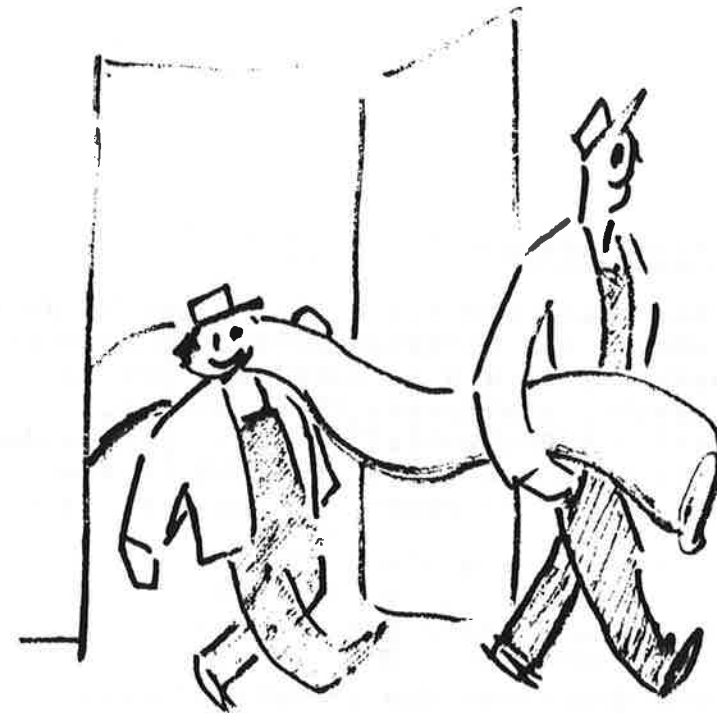
And then - six months later, we are raring to go, and just like the moth, we go through the metamorphosis. We come in refreshed, say, "Here I am," and off we go once again.

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REFRESHMENTS

Once things have kind of settled down, we do have refreshments - not too often - maybe at 30 minute intervals. And that's when we exchange recipes, settle all world and domestic problems, and indulge in theories really profound!

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AN ODE TO THE RUMMAGE SALE

If you need a plastic pail,
Come to St. Mark's Rummage Sale!
If you want a boat and sail,
Come to St. Mark's Rummage Sale!

If you want
Most anything,
A toy, a boat,
A swinging swing,
A deck of cards,
A cribbage board,
A pair of shoes,
A harpsichord?
A plant or two,
A book to read,
Almost anything
You need.
You will get them - never fail,
Come to St. Mark's Rummage Sale!

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DEDICATION PAYS OFF

You must be a dedicated rummager to join us. And you must admit we do do the work - (in order to take in \$5,000 a year in nickels, dimes, and quarters!!

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VINCE, THE FIXER-UPPER

And then there was Vince, our super handy-man. He grumbled and he groaned, and he muttered and he moaned, but he did an excellent job restoring furniture, appliances, TVs, radios, record players - you name it!! And if it couldn't be fixed right then and there, he took it home, fixed it up, and had it ready for the next sale.

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FRAYED NERVES FROM DITTO WIRES

Over the years, we had a few electrical shocks from frayed wires, but, again, we survived the shocks, put on our socks, and went on and on through 30 or more sales.

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HASTINGS, HERE WE COME!!

Our luggage may not take you to Bermuda, but Hastings, we guarantee!!

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NEED A COSTUME?

If you're looking for a costume for almost any occasion, rummage around in almost any department, and you'll find enough stuff to turn you into a princess or a prime minister very easily.

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ON HANDS AND KNEES, WE AIM TO PLEASE

Our customers are really the BEST, and we do enjoy welcoming them each Spring and Fall. They come from the East Side, West Side, and "all around the town." However, occasionally we all pitch in to make certain they're satisfied.

There was the time that this woman was furiously (and we do mean furiously) digging through the quilt pieces and patterns. All of a sudden, she screamed, "Someone stole my purse!! With my medication in it!! I need my medication!! I need it!!" Well, now, inasmuch as we do pride ourselves on running a halfway respectable sale - and we didn't want this on our record - we first tried to calm her, and then we all got down on our hands and knees to help her search for her purse - not knowing if at any moment we should call the paramedics or the police. However, the episode ended well when the dear lady said (not meekly, but boldly and loudly), "NOW I remember. I left my purse at home with my false teeth!!" Well - there was nothing left for us to do but to get up off our tired knees and continue on with our sale.

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TASTE O' HONEY

We do pride ourselves at some of our sales when we sell delicious, fresh honey that arrives daily from Olson's honey bee farm in Frazee. Honey, you can't get it any fresher!!

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QUILT? QUILT? WHO BOUGHT THE QUILT?

It was a beautiful pieced quilt, and three of us promised to hold it for three different people. And guess what. They all returned at the same time to claim it. And while they were in the process of threatening to sue the church and each of us individually, one of the workers suddenly felt ill, and went home. What a copout!!

YOUR SLIP IS SHOWING

At one of our sales one gal purchased what she thought was a dress, and we all agreed with her. However, she wore it to a party, and the donor said, "Ye gawds, Sara, that's my slip you're wearing!!"

Sometimes it's difficult for us to figure out just what certain things really are. If in doubt - wear it, and someone will clue you in!! Many times we ask our donors what it is, and even they aren't certain. So we make our own decision. Sometimes we're right, and sometimes not. But that's what makes the rummage sales interesting.

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WE AIN'T NO LEVITZ, BUT...

We furnish college apartments with desks, rugs, chairs, draperies, and lamps so our student neighbors may enjoy their stay in a "home away from home."

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COMPLETE SATISFACTION IS OUR AIM

If you happen to buy a toaster that doesn't "pop up" or a waffle iron that doesn't "waffle," we will do our best to find a replacement for you.

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DOES IT WORK??

There was the story about the meat grinder being sold in housewares. The customer asked, "Does it really grind?" The salesman said, "For 25 cents you want it to grind?"

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WE SELL ANYTHING

There was the new jacket from Wards, and the new and inexperienced rummage worker hung it on a chair. It was sold for \$5.00, but, luckily, that one was traced and recovered.

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EVEN BABY BUGGIES

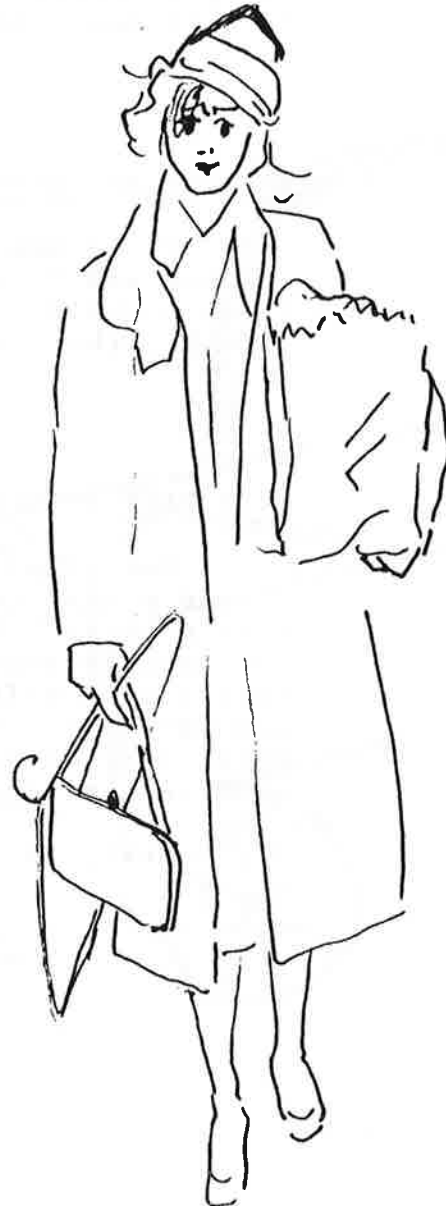
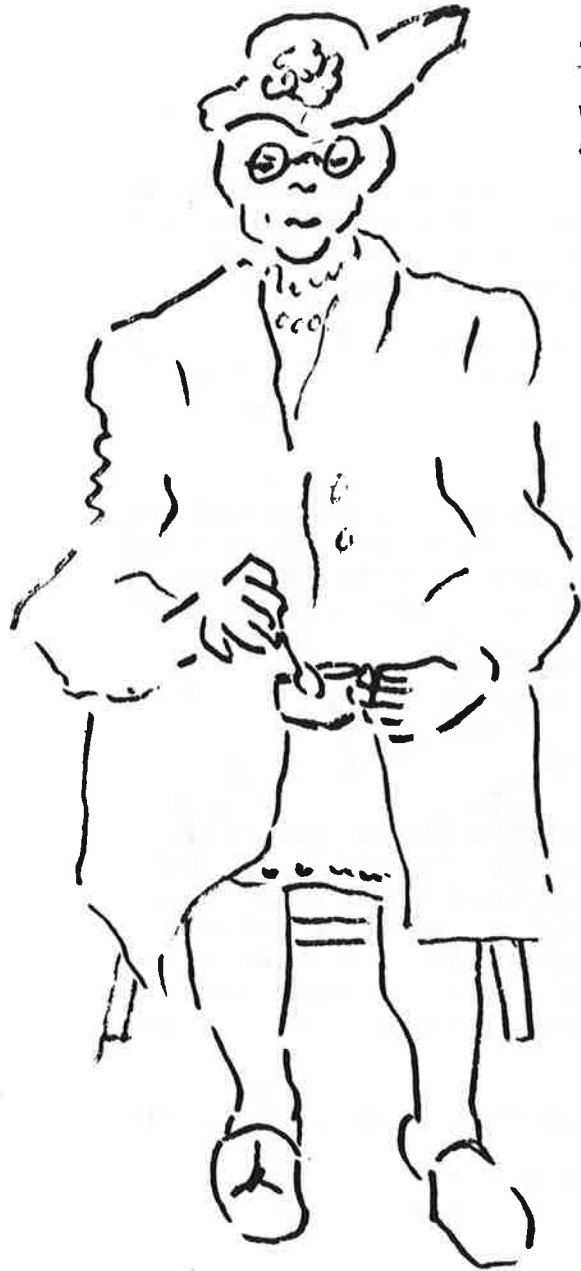
One other tale with a happy ending involved a baby carriage and the blankets that went with it. Well, we sent the blankets to the infants department, and we were getting really good offers on the carriage when - lo and behold - a harried, young couple and baby returned from another department - and there went our sale!!

Well, at least we didn't sell any babies!

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TO OUR CUSTOMERS...

Whether you come for coffee and
a doughnut...



Whether you're looking for a dress...
Join our happy lookers...
Share our happiness!!

We have plants and books and dishes.
We have almost everything.
Jewelry for the queenies,
And a ruler for the king!!

We have sweaters by the dozen.
We have pants for short and tall.
We have bikes for boys and
girls.
We have suits along the wall!!

We have all these things
assembled,
We hope to sell to you.
We hope you'll all be
happy
When the rummage sale is
through!!

* * * * *

We like to see you com-
ing.
You make it all worth-
while.
And we want to say....
WE THANK YOU!!
With a great big, friendly
SMILE!!

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Come back to see us next time.
We're here in spring and fall,
WITH THE BESTEST, BIGGEST RUMMAGE SALE
IN THE CITY OF ST. PAUL!!

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THE TALE OF THE WEED RAKE

At one sale we had this rake, and we told the man who wanted to buy it that it was to rake the weeds from his lake. (One of the workers knew he had a lake place). We sold the rake and after the sale, the man said that the hardware stores were so stupid as they had never heard of a rake like that.

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FOR WANT OF A GARTER

We also have our talented Shirley, who handled the shoe section with great efficiency. Her daughter got married the night before one of our sales was to begin. The entourage arrived at the church in all their finery, and everything was OK - with the exception of the blue garter. Where was the blue garter? Quick-witted Shirley dashed to our sale location, a quick search was made, and a brand new garter (it was still in its original cellophane wrapping) was given to her. So - we saved a wedding, and may they live happily ever after!!

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THE TRICKY COUCH

And then there was the couch that looked perfectly harmless, but was really tricky - and when the second person sat down, the first one flew up in the air.

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THE POTS AND PANS WENT BANG!

At our rummage sales we learn well - but not too quickly. Two years in a row the pots and pans were carefully stacked on a table that would collapse with a bang!! However, we are rather smart people who learn from experience. So - drawing upon past experience and deducing that what we needed was a stronger table, we did use a stronger table. And you know what? All went well!

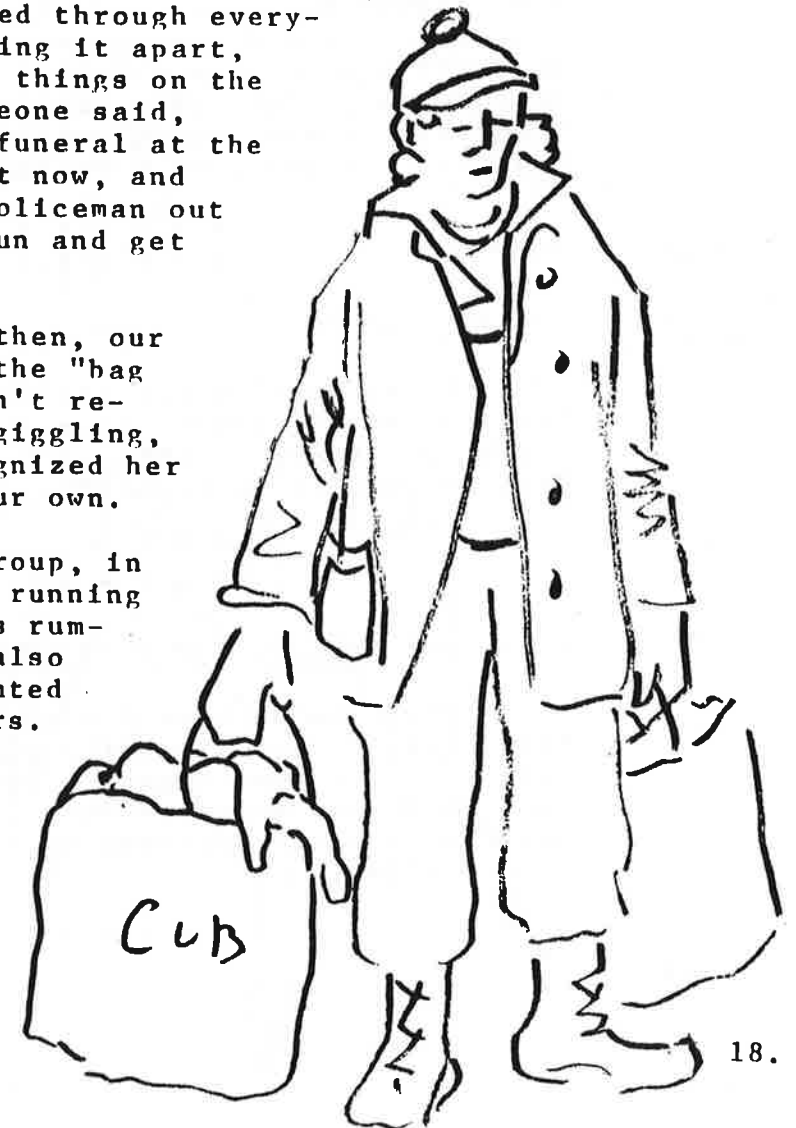


THE INFAMOUS BAG LADY

One day we were in the kitchen having lunch (just for a change), and we heard this commotion in the dress department. We all stood aghast as this unidentified Bag Lady rummaged through everything, ripping it apart, and tossing things on the floor. Someone said, "There's a funeral at the church right now, and there's a policeman out there, so run and get him!"

Just then, our co-worker, the "bag lady" couldn't refrain from giggling, and we recognized her as one of our own.

Our group, in addition to running a high-class rummage sale, also claims talented impersonators.



90 INCHES LONG AND 10 INCHES SHORT

Draperies were purchased for an apartment, and the people buying them wanted them 90 inches long. The worker was trying to be helpful, and evidently (inadvertently) she measured 10 inches from the top, so she came out with 90. Back they came within the hour, and after a rather heated discussion, the worker convinced them they were at fault too because they had helped in the measurement. Then they decided to let the hems down which would give them the desired 90 inches - and that one ended on a rather friendly basis.

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"AS IS" LADDERS

We do most of our selling "as is", and ladders are not always as strong as they look - which we discovered when we had to send two hurting workers to the chiropractor!

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REST, RELAXATION, AND NOURISHMENT

When you're loaded with bargains and your feet hurt, we have just the place for rest, relaxation, and nourishment. Hot coffee, doughnuts, and home made cupcakes will be served - and then you may continue on your search for more goodies.

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THE MAN WHO SOLD THE DRESSES

At one of our first rummage sales, one of our workers named Fritz (rest his soul!) got rather uptight because the ladies dresses weren't selling at what he thought was a high price of \$1.00 each. So

he got himself some little slips of paper and marked each one 25 cents and pinned them on the dresses.

They were selling fantastically fast, and we were having a ball - until the head lady returned from lunch. And then there was a real explosion!!

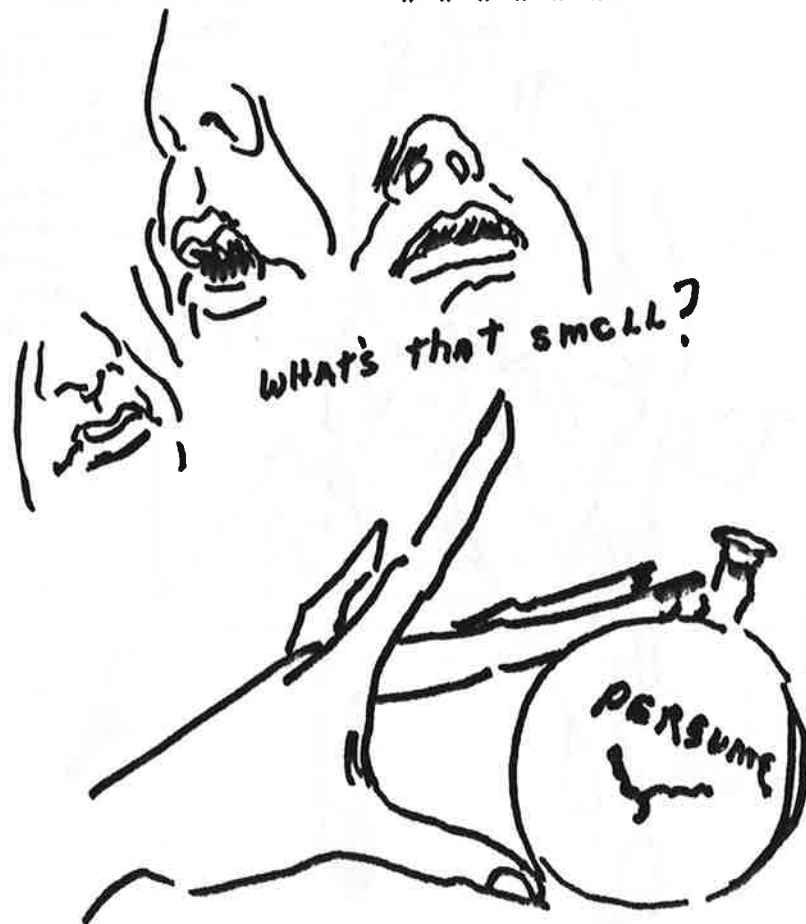


WHAT'S THAT SMELL??

The bottle of perfume came in, and we decided to spray it around for a little atmosphere.

It was the ickiest odor you ever did smell - it was rancid - it was foul. But we all survived the choking and coughing miraculously. And after a little breath of fresh air, the customers came back in also.

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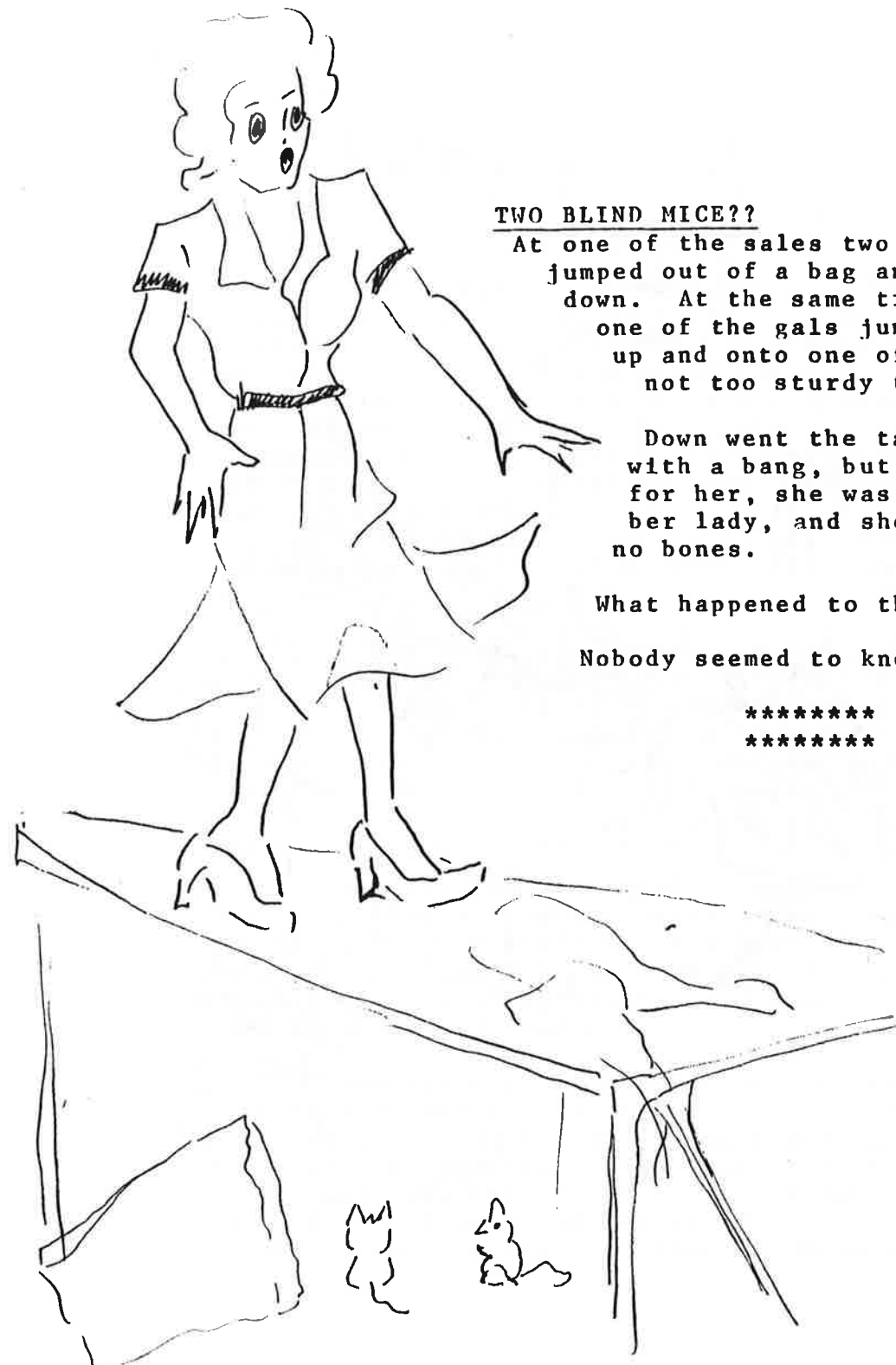
TWO BLIND MICE??

At one of the sales two mice jumped out of a bag and down. At the same time, one of the gals jumped up and onto one of our not too sturdy tables.

Down went the table with a bang, but, lucky for her, she was a limber lady, and she broke no bones.

What happened to the mice?

Nobody seemed to know!!





THE PLANT MAN

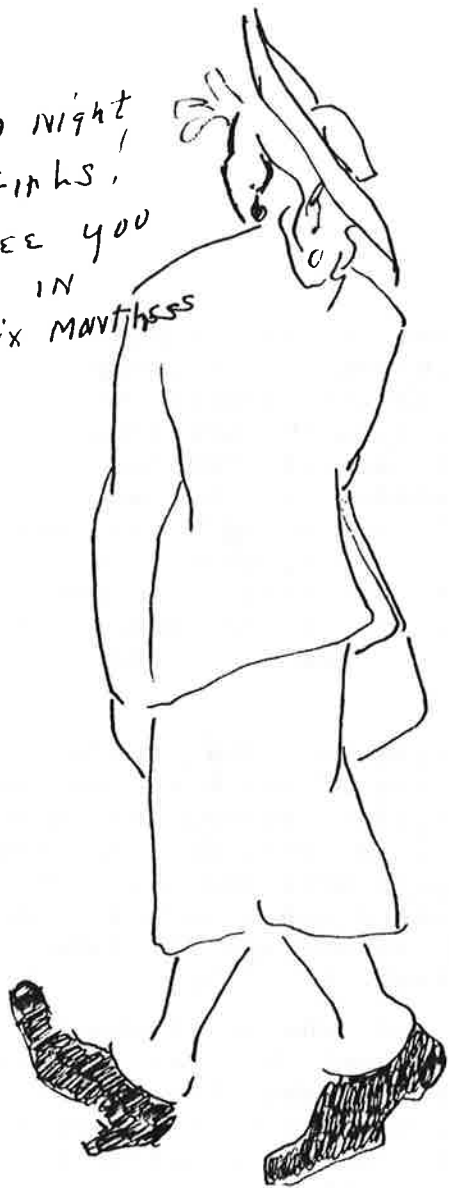
And then there was the flower and plant stand, with its sumptuous showing of sightly horticultural products to satisfy almost the most discriminating taste, from the low growing creeping Charlie to the stately looking jade. There were funny looking plants that we thought we'd never sell, but along would come the kids with their pleading eyes, wanting to buy a plant for mom or dad, and with an abrupt drop in price to satisfy their meager budget, we had made some more sales to bring happiness into some more hearts.

For three or four years in a row, there was the lady who would be one of the first to bust through the door at nine o'clock sharp, head directly for the plant stand, and who, for the next five minutes, would be saying over and over, "I want this one - and this one - and this one - and this one..." The result? An average \$20 sale to start the day off with a bang.

There was the older lady who lived about four long blocks from the school, who rarely asked for help, but who would get her beautiful plants into her wagon or her wire carrier cart and bring those plants into the plant man - a magnificent work of charity in and of itself.

There was the guy who not only worked himself to a dither fixing up the "rubbish" items in housewares, but would also go home the night before the sale and dig up his lillies or hydrangea shoots and haul them in the next morning. They would lie there in the cardboard box, completely unnoticed for a while, but then somebody would dis-

GOOD NIGHT
GIRLS,
SEE YOU
IN
SIX MONTHS



cover them, and inside of a short while, they were all gone. And then what would this man do? He'd go home over the noon hour, dig up some more, and bring them back for sale.

There was the lady who grew the most beautiful African violets. The leaves were low-growing, the flowers stood out in a posy-like posture, and the plant man was reluctant to put them out too early, because a lot of them would be snapped up before the sale would even start. Another lady was a steady supplier of the showy Moses in the Bulrushes, and each year she would march in with her half-dozen beauties.

There were others who weren't even members of the parish, who would give of their abundance to make the rummage sale a success. The good nun at the College of St. Catherine, the man in Highland Park who had his basement full of grow lights, the greenhouse man at the College of St.

Thomas - all were most generous in their giving. A great big THANK YOU should go to all those who supplied and bought plants at the plant stand and especially should thanks go to those who warmed the plant man's heart when they would say, "You remember that plant you sold me last year? You should see it now. It's just bee-voo-ti-ful!!"

CLEAN UP CREW

THE FORGOTTEN ONE

At the end of one of our sales, the gal who was locked in the room down the hall, counting money, was forgotten - completely forgotten for two hours - as we all left for home. Finally, a janitor came to her rescue. So he left her out with her bags of money, and when she got outside, she remembered she didn't have the car, and had to walk home in the dark. What a way to end a sale!!

THANKS!! THANKS!! THANKS!!

To John..the Boy Scouts..the janitors..the entire cleanup gang..those who donate articles...all the workers..all the customers who, incidentally, are the best in the world..we say..

THANKS...
for the Memories!!

