

BAY AREA *Thunderbird* OWNERS CLUB WHAT'S NEW IN BIRDLAND

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THE Election

Congratulations! Joe White, who has proven himself a true T-Birder in the past, takes over as President in '61, assisted by a very capable man as Vice-President, Elton Wolfe. The latter automatically heads the Membership Committee and what better enthusiast could we choose? Darling Donna Sell continues her duties as Treasurer and keeper of the bucks. Fabulous Fran Larsen takes over as Recording Secretary and I am positive will be outstanding. Then last, but not least, our "Teach", Tracy Roney, will handle our correspondence.

This is your Board for the coming year. You have chosen well and have enthusiastic members who will strive hard for the betterment of the Club. They won't have an easy row to hoe, so work with them and abide with them.

Joe White has already secured the services of Ray DeCosta as Activities Chairman. Look forward, folks, to the work of a master, a "pro" wanted by every car club. Thanks, Ray, for your acceptance. And, members, when an event is scheduled, show your interest and appreciation by attending!
— Art Horsfall



Installation Dinner

Our final event of 1960 is the Installation Dinner and Christmas Party at Veneto's in San Francisco (Mason & Bay) on Dec. 10th. Dinner time is 8 p.m. sharp, but those desiring pre-dinner cocktails should arrive around 7 or 7:30, according to the number of cocktails required.



THE MENU

Fried Chicken	\$3.50
Prime Ribs of Beef	4.95
Veal Scaloppine	4.75
New York Steak	5.95

Each gal should bring a present for a gal and each fellow one for a man. Please gift-wrap and mark "For Her" or "For Him" on the outside. Do not specify anyone in particular, as "Santa Claus" will disburse them indiscriminately. Do not spend more

than \$2 on the gift.

Single gals, here's your chance to bring along that shy boyfriend. We promise he won't be bored by this BATOC meeting, for there isn't going to be any formal meeting as such. Have him bring a present, however; otherwise he won't be eligible to receive one.

We have 40 dinners ordered, so let's have a tremendous turnout. Show the new Board that we're behind them to the hilt.

Added Feature: Don Brooks (remember him?) has promised to be there to present the gavel to the Hon. Joseph White, the new President.



Halloween

by Fran Larsen

The Hallowe'en Party on October 29th at the "Talk of the Town" can only be described as a real blast! (Ed. — How about describing it as "The Talk of the Town"?)

The decorating committee, comprised of Joe Koonce, Bill Houston, Joe White, Jean and Elton Wolfe, really knocked themselves out. Everything was appropriately done in orange and black with bats hanging from every conceivable place.

Taking tickets at the door were MaraLee Houston and Donna Sell, aided by Louise Koonce. Bill Houston and Joe Koonce took over the duties of tending bar while Art Horsfall and Elton Wolfe kept the hi-fi going and Andy Larsen acted as master-of-ceremonies.

Everything from a caveman dragging his mate along by her hair, beatniks, ghouls, an enceinte male (not from Denmark, either), to pirates, black cats and rabbits were to be found. Art Horsfall was without doubt the most gruesome sight imaginable; one look at him in mask and Vampire would have fled in terror. How

our Editor, who is such a connoisseur of feminine loveliness, always manages to be absent when he could indulge himself in his favorite avocation, is beyond our comprehension. Donna Sell as a ravishing, blonde flapper of the '20s in a dress covered from top to bottom with fringe that shimmied and shook with every move, created a minor riot among the male patrons in the bar when one spied her pink garter fetchingly worn below the knee. Rose De Costa as a bunny rabbit, and Jean Wolfe as a black cat (the gals with the gorgeous gams), were breathtaking. One of BATOC's most appreciative males spent so much time dancing with these three beauties that he ended up in the doctor's office the following Monday with a hip so painful he could hardly walk.

Unfortunately, one of the highlights of the party was missed by the majority when, late in the evening, Joe White and Rose De Costa did a beautifully executed Spanish dance. Frankly, we were impressed.

The diehards of the party didn't get home until daybreak. Sunday found Rose De Costa, Joe Koonce, Lew Edwards, Bill Houston, Joe White and the indefatigable Wolfes cleaning up after the evening's festivities. For this they should receive medals.

As is the custom with all remiss reporters, this one left the list of costume and door prize winners lying on the bar — my most humble apologies. Both my conscience and my editor meted out the prescribed 40 lashes with the whip — fitting punishment for such a heinous crime.

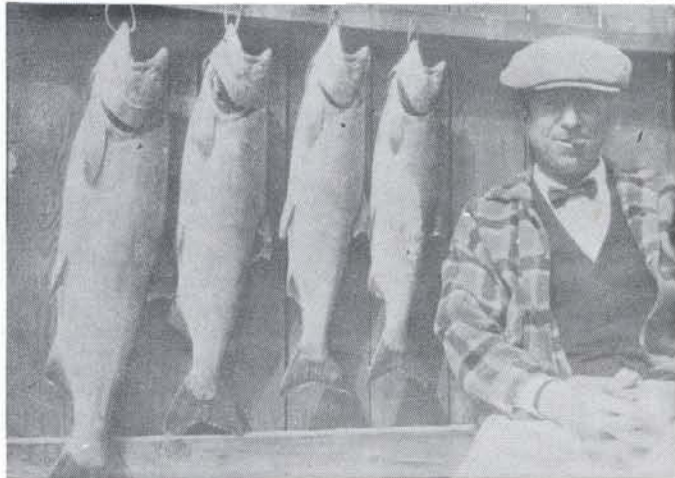
(Ed. — Let's give credit to Art Horsfall who refused to allow the Hallowe'en Party to dis-a-borning when the rest of his Board turned thumbs down to it. The Party resulted in a tidy profit of \$93.13 — even better than last year! Thanks, too, to Joe's daughter, Mary Lou White, for selling 16 tickets, and to the Wolfes (there's that name again) who sold all ten of theirs!)

MISCELLANY — Space limitations compel us to carry Dr. Ficker's column over to next month — sorry, Frank . . . Ten members bade farewell to The Driftwood on Nov. 12. Next year, it is rumored, we'll be meeting in the homes of various members . . . The El Rancho trip was cancelled at the last moment because of apathy — only five cars were going. What's happened to our enthusiasm? . . . The Membership Drive was a fizzle. Only three new members were gained while we were losing ten during the same 9-month period. Inasmuch as three members tied with a recruit apiece, it was decided to award 8 months free dues to Bill Houston, Bob and Joe White, who brought in the Spickelmires, Art Bellasano and the Wolfes.

my untold story... PART 3

If you've read the first two instalments of my biography, I'm certain you must know by now that I don't intend to give you my life in precise chronological order. If you're the kind of person who wants someone's life in chronological order, you had just better go get another biography. It's about time you began reading a higher class of literature anyway.

In 1920 my parents bought a grocery store. It meant a new phase* in the lives of the Neisses, another school for me, and assurance that no matter what else happened, we wouldn't go hungry. My father had always been an ardent hunter and fisherman. Now that he no longer had to punch someone's time clock, it meant he could indulge his whim whenever he wished, as Mom could always be cajoled into taking over in the store. Moreover, now when he returned with more venison, black bass, salmon or wild duck than we could eat, it meant he could sell it in the store legitimately — or so he believed. If you ask me, he could have left the whole stinking deer, including the sweetbreads, to the coyotes, and I still own a crick in my mandibles from chomping confidently on the wing of a mallard permeated with buckshot.



Posing behind the store with a typical catch of salmon is my father, circa 1925.

Mom, a pretty little woman (five feet, two — that's pretty little), was a marvelous German cook. A close friend of mine, whose name slips my mind for the nonce†, used to say that she was the spitting image of me without the mustache. (I didn't sport a mustache until later.) But to get back to Mom . . . my genetrix was vain to a fault, and enjoyed nothing better than to let other folks know what a tremendous catch Hunter Neiss had made in a connubial way. So, in those early days of minding store, she used to bake out-of-this-world cakes and pies in her oven at home to sell in the grocery. Pa had me letter a sign for the front door which read, "HOME BAKING". But they had to discontinue the whole shebang* when it developed that some of the customers were so ignorant they thought it meant the store was closed.

I was in the fourth grade in 1920, and it didn't take Pa any time at all to conceive the idea that his ectomorph son was old enough to help out in the grocery store after school, thereby eliminating many of the pitfalls besetting a young lad. He was right, of course, as pitfalls — even crimson paths, for that matter — are very scarce in grocery

stores to this day. Pa's coup d'etat not only circumvented the pitfalls, it also put a crimp into my plans to develop into a major league outfielder — no time to practice.

My first assignment was to learn to de-sprout and wash potatoes, packing them artfully in 25-lb bags for display. I washed so many tubers that I didn't need to go into World War II, and to this day cannot look a spud in the eye unless it's mashed! When I am faced, through the expediency of dining out, with this bete noire by a beaming hostess who deposits a baked potato before me, I always position it so that its eyes are diverted to other diners. Unless I am sadly mistaken, psychiatrists would say that this phobia is due to my early environment and not to inherent stubbornness or that I am hard to do business with. All right, I'm sadly mistaken.

Another chore assigned me was the breaking up of constantly accumulating wooden boxes for firewood. Pa countenanced no indiscriminate flailing of the hammer, either. I had to disassemble them *carefully*, just in case he might want to use some of the wood one day for shelving or other carpentering, at which he was quite adept. I wouldn't have been surprised had he attempted the construction of a

During the Twenties no customer would deign to lift a finger to wait on herself, and the fact that ours took sadistic pleasure in demanding items necessitating that I dart from one end of the store to the other ad infinitum would have been obvious to a child of five. Several urchins of five, in fact, who used to stand around filching candy and wiping their noses on my apron when they thought I wasn't looking, stated their belief to me in just those words.

After a few more years, Pa drafted my brother, two years younger, to earn some keep also. Orman (for that was his name, silly as it may seem), was ever the apple of his father's eye, and I strongly suspect Mom went to bat for me here, sore afraid I would become old before my time in father's employ. Upon the termination of an invidious situation, I now had every second day free and probably should have reset my sights on a baseball career but Fate in the shape of a blind date from Openfly, Oregon intervened. The temptress was a 32-year-old divorcee with long golden hair reaching down to her coccyx. The hair began, unfortunately, beneath her arms. The enormity of this episode requires that it remain untold.

Saturday, then as today, was the most hectic day of the week for grocers, and the presence of all four of us might be de rigueur during the peak hours from 3 to 5 p.m., with one boy having all



Mom and Pop during their early days as grocers.

32-foot launch out of boxwood had he felt so inclined. Moreover, I had to salvage all the nails, his Teutonic frugality dictating that even the bent ones be straightened. Eventually we had so many box nails saved that I daresay my father, now in his 80th year, still has several hundred thousand around to keep him company in his dotage.

After a year or so Pa conceived another "wonderful" idea. (At first glance, one might think he did all the conceiving around our house, but Mom ad-libbed a couple of siblings herself — with his help, to be sure.) "Roger should learn to wait on the customers — he's old enough to earn his keep", he told my mother categorically. I blushed a deep purple at all this sudden attention (plagiarized some years later for a song title). Actually, I was only ten years old and *keeping* anybody was the farthest thing from my mind, but you didn't expostulate with father, whose demeanor habitually radiated the warmth of a cluster of stalagmites. So I subscribed to "Good Store-keeping", sister publication of a well-known magazine, and resigned hope of playing AA baseball as well. Donning one of his full-length white aprons, which encircled me two and a half times, I doughtily started waiting on customers, while he subscribed to "Police Gazette" and began taking a fervid interest in world affairs such as Peaches and Daddy Browning's.

day duty, of course. We were even open half a day on Sundays, so the plight of the Neiss boys should have moved a heart of stone, which my father certainly had.

You may be asking yourself how much moo-lah we got for these yeoman services. Having anticipated the question, I was going to tell you here anyway. Father's largesse will warm the cockles of your heart*. For our travail, we were allowed to take our salary out in trade each day, a lagniappe of one five-cent delicacy, such as R. Porter, a candy bar, an Esquimo Pie, etc. Coca Cola was "off limits", for it was reputed to contain "dope". Licorice was likewise verboten, as my parents had it on good authority (from their parents) that Ethiopians in the factory partially masticated the entire licorice output to make it sufficiently pliable for shaping into twists, buttons, and divers† other shapes. (If any of my readers has corroborative evidence to the contrary, I wish he would communicate with my father, who otherwise will go into the Great Beyond believing this canard.)

* Note: If your cockles get too warm, rub them with dry ice.

† But not Helen Crlenkovich's!

(Next month: The Neisses Get Wheels)

*No association with "The Phase on the Bar Room Floor".

†Now I remember! It's Joe! Joe Nonce!

*Bet you never heard of shebang flour, did you?