

# Fin, Fur and Feather

By William J. Robbins Jr.



In checking back through my calendar of activities for the past two years, I find that my vegetable garden program is just fifteen days ahead of schedule.

To date I find growing in said patch, 1 row of leaf lettuce, 1 row red radishes, 1 row icicle radishes, 1 row carrots, 1 row beets, 1 row purple top turnips, 1 row onions, 2 rows peas, 1 row early cabbage, Corn planted over the weekend consists of three varieties 56 day golden bantam, 70 day marcross, and 88 day golden cross.

A serious mistake made in previous years shall be eliminated this season. Tomatoes, pencil pod wax beans, mangoes, egg plant, and cauliflower will be installed on June 1st, after all danger of frost. To play nurse-maid to vegetable plants is definitely out. The tasks of planting and cultivation are laborious enough without running out each chilly night with covers for the above mentioned.

The rock and other flower gardens on the plot are also due for a general clean-up. Years have slipped by with out too much attention being given to these. Perhaps the trips I have made down to the Moss home on Carverton road has caused this incentive to build up inside me.

Several years ago when Gertrude and Bill Moss moved into their present home, little did we of the neighborhood think that in a short time their efforts would convert the site into such a show-place. The first change noted was house remodeling, and this I felt sure would terminate their efforts. Not so, for the following year a truck started hauling top soil into the yard. This was the crux. No, not so, for after the soil was leveled off I saw gardens begin to form and painted jugs in brilliant colors sprout up all over the place. An addition to the garage might be classified as an open air living room.

Flowers galore, Tulips, daffodils, primula veris, and many new types. Some that have only been on the market a few years. All kinds of hardy flowering shrubs. Borders not of allysum, but hardy everbearing strawberries.

If one desires to visit these most gracious people there is a hand of welcome extended. A word of warning is, that you won't find them all spruced up in fine toggery. Gert

no doubt will be in blue jeans, down on her knees, cultivating, while Bill might be wearing a pair of old trousers so stiff with paint, they would stand alone, but very busy mixing top soil, peat moss, lime, 5-10-5, bone meal, and sheep manure for the garden, and if you don't know him, you might mistake him for the hired man, (which they don't have).

The welcome sign has also been hung out for the birds, for the usual array of coops can be found about the place. I might add here, that I am just a little envious for they have nesting in one coop a pair of tree swallows. Last year when these beauties came to my home I vowed to build a coop that would be attractive to them. This did not materialize, but I am glad they found security in the Moss yard.

Although Gert has the usual amount of house work, and Bill spends eight to fourteen hours a day in his office at the Sherwin-Williams paint store in Wilkes-Barre, they still find time to keep their miniature estate in spick and span shape. You might see them in the yard at six in the morning, and now that we have D.S.T. at nine in the evening.

We who love flowers and Nature are glad of neighbors like these for they are just what we need to keep up interest in things beautiful. As for me personally, I make the public admission, that it took two gracious, middle-aged people to awaken me to exerting my every effort to nurture that which I have, and replace that which I lost during my dormant state.

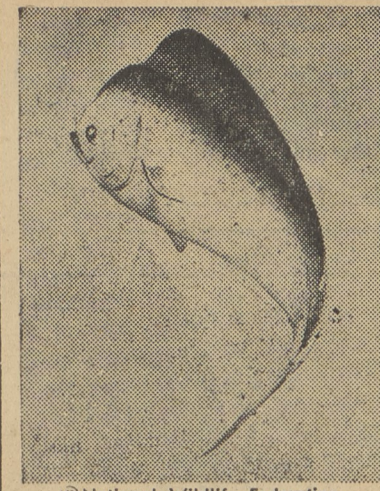
To Gert and Bill, — THANKS.

## Jack Richardson Heads Penna. Dodge Dealers

At a recent meeting of the Dodge Dealers' Association of Pennsylvania held at the Hazleton Country Club, Jack Richardson, local Dodge dealer, was elected president. Jack, who has been a Dodge dealer since 1938, has served as secretary and treasurer of the Association for the past two years.

Leon Uhl of General Auto Company, Wilkes-Barre, was chosen new secretary-treasurer and Irving Todd of Todd Motors, Hazleton, delegate to the New York Regional Conference.

## The Dolphin



©National Wildlife Federation  
Dolphin

It is a thrilling sight, on a deep-sea fishing trip, to watch a Dolphin in a three-way race with a flying fish and a giant marlin. At the start, the flying fish is in the lead, gracefully leaping through the air. Holding second place is the swift Dolphin, and not far behind the marlin cuts through the water.

All three are fast swimmers, so the outcome is in doubt. But there is a good chance that the Dolphin will win a double victory. His first triumph comes when he catches and eats the flying fish. His second victory is won when he speeds away from the jaws of the hungry marlin.

When chasing his favorite food, the Dolphin clings close to the water, burrowing through the waves. At other times, he hurdles through the air in short leaps.

From these quick glimpses, it can be seen that the Dolphin is a fish of changing colors. The National Wildlife Federation says that the main ones are green, yellow, and blue.

There are times when the yellow and green form a background for patches of blue, purple, and green spots. At other moments, the Dolphin appears to be dark blue with silvery splashes. The many changes in color make it one of the most beautiful of all fish.

The Dolphin's shape is attractive, too. Its head is high, and its body tapers toward the tail. Just back of its head is the beginning of a long fin that starts out tall and slopes to a narrow point near the tail. Underneath its body is another fin which is about the same shape and length.

The average Dolphin weighs 25 pounds, and the largest one ever caught on light tackle tipped the scales at 67½ pounds. So among game fish of the ocean, it ranks as a small variety.

The National Wildlife Federation reports that Dolphins are found in

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the Atlantic Ocean from New England to Brazil and in the Gulf of Mexico. On the Pacific side, they range from Oregon to Peru and around the Hawaiian Islands.

Interesting information on other wildlife species can be obtained by writing to the National Wildlife Federation, Washington 10, D. C.

## SAFETY VALVE

### IMPRESSIONS OF BELGIUM

Dear Friends:

After seven pleasant months in Belgium, I would like to put my impressions together and give you a picture of the country as I have seen it. You can find out all about its history and geography in books; let me tell you that it is a nation about the size of the state of Maryland which administers with vision, sympathy and a sense of responsibility a colony eighty times as large as itself. Located in a strategic spot between Germany and France, it has suffered invasion and occupation twice in the last generation. The quality which has impressed me the most in the Belgians' reaction to disaster is their quiet attitude of "business as usual" or as they say in Flemish, "Winkel is open". Only seven years ago it was raining V2 bombs in Antwerp, but "Winkel was open" all the time as usual. Today you will search in vain for spectacular bomb ruins, but the evidence is here: in America a raw new facade is not an unusual sight, but in Belgium a building does not burn, crumble, nor fall down—for the first few centuries at least—and a person does not renovate the front of his house just because he is tired of its looks. No, those shiny modern structures you see in downtown Antwerp among the oh-so-fondly respectable stone or brick fronts mean that there have been high explosives at work.

But come with me on an average day and see Antwerp for yourself. Hop on the back of my good Belgian bicycle, but hang on tight, for these brick-shaped paving stones are a little rough until we reach the bike path. It is nine o'clock and the world is wide awake. The friendly "facteur" has been by with the morning mail an hour ago. The milkman is coming around, pedalling his three-wheeled bike which carries a triangular load of bottled "Melkery melk." There may be a farmer farther on with a can and a dipper—this type of milk is boiled and used in cooking. Then there is the baker boy with his bicycle and tray full of unwrapped, hard-crusted loaves; this bread is good, believe me: firm, tasty, full of natural vitamins, even if it is touched by human hands and you slice it yourself.

There are all kinds of two-wheeled carts: a carpenter or mason pulling one containing his tools and materials; a woman collecting rags and bones, singing out her signal in a strident tone; the fish man tooting his horn. Antwerp is flat, in Brussels, where the streets are often hilly, a dog is harnessed beneath the carts to help the owner pull.

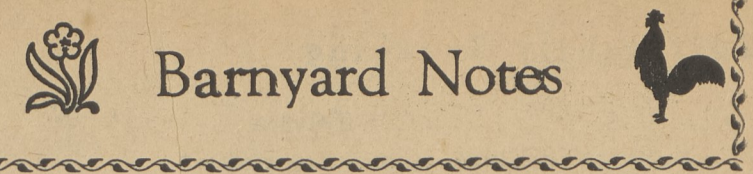
The bicyclists are numerous and experienced: there goes a delivery boy with a big pane of glass under his arm, we just passed a dignified elderly gentleman in an impeccably neat black hat and overcoat; some of the working men are pedalling in wooden shoes or in the felt slippers they will wear in their wooden shoes when they get to work: their labor no doubt involves puddling around in damp ditches or sand and gravel—wooden shoes are wonderful for that. A physical handicap doesn't slow down a Belgian much: hand-operated invalid chairs are often seen in the midst of the traffic, and there's a man who rests his leg in a cup on one side of his bike and pedals with the good leg. But don't think Belgium is all carts and wooden shoes by any means. Cars and trucks well out-number the bikes: the majority are American makes, but there are also many small European models such as Citroen, Renault and Opel.

Let's notice the people who aren't in or on vehicles. The housewives are emerging for their morning shopping. No, that woman didn't forget her shoes: bedroom slippers are a favorite footwear, even for going to town in the tram (trolley or streetcar to you). Other women are busy opening up their shops and washing down the sidewalk. I don't mean half-heartedly tossing a bucket of water out the door either. When a Belgian woman washes a sidewalk, she puts on wooden shoes or rubber galoshes and attacks with a big brush.

You will notice right away that small specialized businesses abound. You go one place for meat, another for vegetables, another for medicines (no soda fountain!) Chain stores are few and far between. It's usually the wife who runs the little store while her husband goes to work somewhere else. She emerges from her home at the back of the store and greets you with a smile; you hasten to say "Bonjour" to establish which language you are using. Don't be surprised if she answers you in English! Whatever she speaks, she will be very friendly and make remarks about the weather and ask where you're from and how you like Belgium. It's quite a process to get out the door again. "Merci, Mademoiselle," "Merci, Madame", "Au revoir Mademoiselle."—Some-day I must count how many exchanges of politeness you can run it up to before you are outside! Downtown you can buy anything you want in "Au Bon Marches", "Innovation"—if it weren't for the labels, you would think you were in

(Continued on Page Seven)

## Barnyard Notes



Nothing much has happened since the last rite! Sunday morning the dreadnaught and I load the barrel of bolts with a long handled shovel, a pick, some miscellaneous garden instruments and a couple of bushel baskets and head over the hills and down the river for Briggsville where her sturdy ancestors sleep unmolested in the quiet cemetery beside the union church.

Something stirs within the dreadnaught—like the day before the opening of bass season—and a spring morning or an autumn afternoon we must head for that spot high above the rolling farmland where she spent some of her happiest childhood days.

I ain't one that terrifies long in graveyards, specially after dusk, but if there is one where I could sit alone and watch a sunset give way to darkness it is at Briggsville.

There the soft breeze on the hottest summer day stirs through the pious arbor vitae, and there blue birds nest in the hollow maples, while a score of other songsters trill from the thickets where unkempt graves of another generation sink below the creeping myrtle or are hidden by a blanket of iris.

Until last year when a high wind swept across the hill top and uprooted most of the trees in the older section, Briggsville was separated into two burial grounds.

That surrounding the brick church where thrifty lot owners had established perpetual care and orderly tombstones stood in neat rows on a carpet of closely cropped grass, and that, where released from the touch of civilization, sumacs, second growth birches and maples, untended tiger lilies and iris concealed the marble and granite markers of those whose sons and daughters have long since passed on.

Now I have no crow to pick with those who would like to hear the click of a lawnmower above their last resting place, but as for me I'd take the song of a woodthrush in the tangled thickets above the creeping myrtle, the iris and tiger lilies, and let the world remember me for a thought I'd left in the mind of a friend or child, rather than by a pretentious monument surrounded by perpetual care.

And so it is Sunday while the dreadnaught is stirring up the earth around the rhododendron and young dogwood and filling the bushel baskets with the broken twigs of winter, that I flush a blue bird from her sunny nest in a maple whose top was blown off by last summer's wind—and I wonder maybe—if some of her ancestors didn't hear the flutter of those wings better'n the click of a busy lawnmower.

I wish some of you folks could a been along. Maybe you'd have liked it, too.

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