

hits the off-duty sign, stashes the car outside a bank of phone booths, and calls Dial A Shoulder.

Dial A Shoulder? Well, actually its name is Help Line. Dial A Shoulder is a pseudonym thought up by a Doyle, Dane, Bernbach copywriter who felt that the outfit needed a more "eye-catching" title to put in ads and in the phone book. In New York City one reaches it by dialing 686-3061. At any time, night or day, Dial A Shoulder will bring you a voice that is . . . understanding; a man or a woman who . . . knows or can refer you to someone who does. And you can talk about *anything*, from how to get to City Hall to why you should step back from the ledge and go on living. More than 1,000 people do just that every week in New York. And there are forty similar services around the country, all Christian church-related, all part of a network called Contact Teleministry, Inc.

"We consider ourselves primarily a crisis-intervention service," says Rev. H. Leslie Christie, executive director of New York Help Line, which occupies two floors of the parish house at Marble Collegiate Church on the corner of Twenty-ninth and Madison. Started by Marble's Dr. Norman Vincent Peale in 1970, New York Help Line keeps four people on the phones twenty-four hours a day. The answering teams are drawn from a group of some 200 volunteers, who, before starting in on the job, undergo a sixty-five-hour training program, plus an interview with a psychiatrist.

The Help Line office is a clutch of superclean, glass-partitioned cubicles on the second floor. There are no scraps of paper or memos taped to the glass and no coffee rings on the desks. Each cubicle is marked with stick-on, formica library plaques, reading Interviewer Station No. 3, Control Station, or Counselor. There is a Mail It cubicle, from which pamphlets are sent out, and a Cheer Ring cubicle, from which, on request, Help Line people will call every week or so to ask how you are.

On the third floor Rev. Christie, a tall man in his early fifties, sits behind a huge, bare desk. On the desk are an eighteen-button functional phone and an old, nonfunctional, decorative one. An old-line minister, one who still sounds fatherly and calm, Christie repeatedly stresses the power of the phone: "People say to themselves, 'I can dial with one finger, and there's always somebody there.' A person will express himself *much* more freely by telephone. And there's instant availability."

When I ask Christie whether he looks forward to the widespread use of

videophones, his face lights up like a switchboard at midnight. "The videophone could be a *great* help to us," he says.

According to Christie, the persons who call Help Line defy classification. One day the switchboard may be glutted with calls from alcoholics, the next with calls from drug addicts, and so on. "Every time I think we've got a pattern," says Christie, "it soon contradicts itself." Of course, lonely people tend to call after midnight and stay on the phone *forever*—or, at any rate, well over Help Line's fifteen-to-twenty-minute goal. Calls are down Sunday mornings, Rev. Christie claims, but, of course, he has a stake in *that* time slot. There are no identifiable seasonal patterns, but suicides are up after holidays. Suicides are Help Line's glamour issue.

"There was one woman who was standing on a ledge outside a hotel room, ready to jump," Christie tells me. "The police couldn't convince her to come down, so they brought her a phone, gave it to her on the ledge, and we talked her down. We work very closely with the city's emergency services."

According to Christie, the list of most frequent problems goes:

- Emotional crises, including suicides—"People with disrupted relationships or who are just uptight and need to call somebody. Emotionally disturbed people."
- Family problems
- Loneliness
- Employment problems
- Drugs—"This is slightly down recently, due to the emergence of a number of specialized 'hot lines' dealing with drug problems."
- Sex and moral problems
- Shelter

"What happens," I ask, "if somebody needs more help than Help Line can give?"

Christie replies that the caller is then referred to one of Help Line's paid staff of psychologists or to some other agency. "We're a link between persons who need help and the many agencies who help people."

As I get up to go, Christie's functional phone rings. Soon he is ho-hoing with an old friend who has just returned his call. "Listen," says Christie, "I have a man who's looking for a job, and I thought you might help get him something in the post office. He worked in export-import for a number of years, and . . ."

Christie looks up, covers the phone. "I do hope we can find the man something. He was *so* depressed when he called." □



The Harlem Boys of Summer

BY BARRY TARSHIS

NEW YORK, N.Y.—Holding the basketball high above his head, the reedy, charcoal-skinned teen-ager threw a head feint, then dribbled directly toward what seemed an impenetrable tangle of defenders. But somehow he emerged

Barry Tarshis is a freelance writer living in Irvington, New York.

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from this tumult of bodies, a rising black helix, with the ball resting on his outstretched palm. At the apex of his leap he let the ball go, and it bounced gently against the back of the rim of the basket, fell through, and came to earth the same moment as the young man himself. As he loped back past mid-court in four or five graceful strides, I winced in admiration.

It was a warm, hazy summer afternoon, and I was sitting on a bench outside the concrete basketball court at the corner of 145th Street and Lenox Avenue in Harlem.

"That kid is very good," I said impulsively to a husky, goateed black man in his mid-twenties who was sitting next to me. He wore gym shorts and a sleeveless gray sweat shirt, and earlier he had told me that he was an off-duty policeman who'd grown up near the court, where he had been playing basketball since he was eight. "I'd go crazy on my days off," he said, "if I couldn't come down here and just run for two hours."

Now, however, he looked as if he couldn't decide whether to be angry at, or sympathetic to, my reaction to the kid. Finally, he admitted that the boy had some "sweet moves," but then he said, "When you start using words like 'very good,' I mean, you're talking about some very heavy company. You're talking about cats like Wilt or Kareem or Oscar. Now those dudes—they're very good."

In Harlem, as much as in most black communities in America, basketball is more religious rite than sport. Kids are at the playground as long as ten hours a day, actually playing as many as six. Seventeen- and eighteen-year-olds already have rheumatoid knees from the constant pounding of their feet on the asphalt. They play in the heat of the afternoon with not much more to fuel them than a can of soda and a store-bought pastry, and they play at night in the dim illumination of nearby street lights and flashing neon. In a single summer typical ghetto ball-players will wear out four or five pairs of sneakers. They play even in the dead of winter, bundled in jackets and sweaters and belching up little puffs of steam as they bang away at the netless rims.

Basketball today is dominated by blacks, and some people predict that in ten to fifteen years the professional game may be entirely black. Yet there is growing concern as to whether such accomplishments have been of any long-term value to the black cause. Last March, for example, as I stood in the back of a crowded auditorium at Queens College, listening to a "Symposium on Sport and Society," a moun-

tain of a black man named Harry Edwards thunderously ridiculed the idea that black achievements in sports could, in any way, be equated with black social progress. Edwards, the University of California sociologist who was the chief architect of the blacks' boycott of the 1968 Olympics, said that he was urging the young blacks he knew to get out of sports since they were competing mainly against themselves. Later at a party at the home of the college president he stated that, if he had his way, he'd tear up all the basketball courts in all the black neighborhoods in this country.

My policeman acquaintance had never heard of Harry Edwards, but he was quick to explain that he didn't read much, not even newspapers. He said it was his opinion that, if you wanted to learn about something, you were better

"Let's face it, sports is a business, and a lot of owners are worried that, if you get too many blacks on a team, the white folks who buy the tickets may not be all that anxious to support it. And most black folks don't have the money to go to ball games."

off doing it than reading about it. As for Edwards's views on sports and their emphasis in the black community, the policeman said, if the playgrounds in Harlem were ever torn up, the whole place would be burned down the next day.

A few moments later the kid we'd been talking about came off the court. The policeman called him over and introduced us, referring to me as a "magazine dude." The boy's name was Michael. He was two or three inches over six feet ("and still growing," he said) and had been playing basketball since he was five, when he used a trash

basket on the sidewalk as a target.

Did he want to play pro ball someday? I asked him. "Yeah," he said, but without conviction. "If I'm good enough." What about college—a scholarship, maybe? Yes, he said, he was thinking about it but didn't have any real plans yet.

I asked him whether he played high school basketball and was surprised to hear that he didn't. The problem, he said, was that his mother didn't like the idea of his going to school with his friends and so she was sending him to a high school downtown. He said he didn't really like going to school there but his mother was probably right since most of the kids he'd grown up with were either in jail or on drugs. "One of my friends died last week," he remarked. "He OD'd right up there on that roof."

When I commented that drugs must be a big problem in the neighborhood, he nodded his head. "The thing is," he said, "everybody know who the pushers are, but they probably be junkies, too. Or maybe they be one of your friends, or something like that. Or maybe they have a family to support."

I asked him whether he thought that playing ball had helped to keep him off drugs, and he said yes, but he knew a lot of junkies who played basketball at the playground regularly. What helped him, he added, was the community center team he played for in the winter. "It's nice, because we go to tournaments in different cities. Like we go to Washington, or Philadelphia, or Denver. And one year we went to Switzerland."

"Switzerland," I said. "How was it?"

"Bad, man. We lost."

On the court another game was about to begin, and somebody hollered over to Michael to ask did he want to play. He said no; he had to get home. Another teen-ager who'd been sitting on the next bench, sipping a can of Dr. Pepper, stood up and announced that he'd be willing to play. There was a moment or two of indecision on the court, but finally one of the older players nodded his head. The teen-ager broke into a wide grin and trotted coolly through the entry gate.

About twenty minutes later it began to rain, and the playground quickly emptied. Several of the kids took shelter in a chicken take-out restaurant across the street, where the conversation was mostly about sports—particularly Wilt Chamberlain and the \$1-million house that he had just built. Chamberlain, more than anyone else, seemed to be the local hero.

Eventually I made my way a block west to Appleton Sporting Goods. One of the store's owners is Fred Crawford,

a neighborhood product who was an outstanding high school player and later spent five years in the NBA—with five different teams. Crawford is a good-looking, self-assured, likable man of thirty who still believes he's good enough to play for any team in either of the pro leagues; he simply got weary of moving around. "Five teams in five years, man. That's like starting all over every time. You're always struggling just to fit in, to get to know how the other dudes play, and you can't ever get your own game together."

Stereo speakers throughout Appleton Sporting Goods bark out the thumping sounds of a local soul-music station, and posters of Malcolm X and Angela Davis hang side by side with posters of Oscar Robertson and Kareem Jabbar. The store is divided into sections, one for men's and boys' clothing, the other for athletic gear. In the sporting goods section, which at this time of year is stacked with large cartons of sneakers, there is a large red coffin—a warning against the dangers of heroin.

"I don't want to make it seem like I'm on the other side of guys like Harry Edwards," said Crawford. "True, I'm in the business, but a lot of what he says is very true—particularly when he talks about a double standard in professional sports: one for the black ballplayer and one for the white. For a black dude to make it in professional sports, he has to be better in every way than the white athlete. Let's face it, sports is a business, and a lot of owners are worried that, if you get too many blacks on a team, the white folks who buy the tickets may not be all that anxious to support it. And most black folks don't have the money to go to ball games.

"Still, I don't think getting rid of sports is the answer. What we have to do is create *new* areas of opportunity, not destroy those that we already have. I don't think we've *used* sports enough in the black community, and what I mean by 'used' is to develop programs around it. Which is sort of what we try to do here in the store.

"A couple of weeks ago we set up a program at one of the schools, with different dudes from different occupations talking to the kids. We made a mistake and had me talk first. Well, as soon as I finished, a lot of kids wanted to leave. You can't really blame them. Sports is the only thing that means anything in their lives. I was the same way as a kid."

As I was leaving, a heavy-set black woman and a boy about seven years old were standing in front of a counter. "He need another pair of tennis shoes," the woman was saying to the clerk. □

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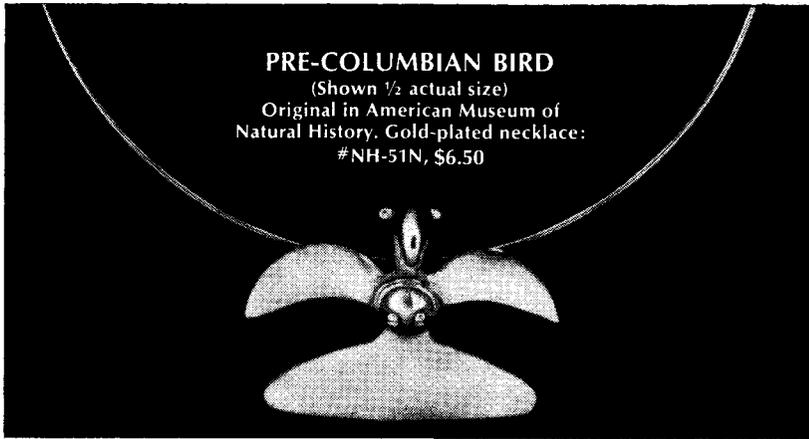
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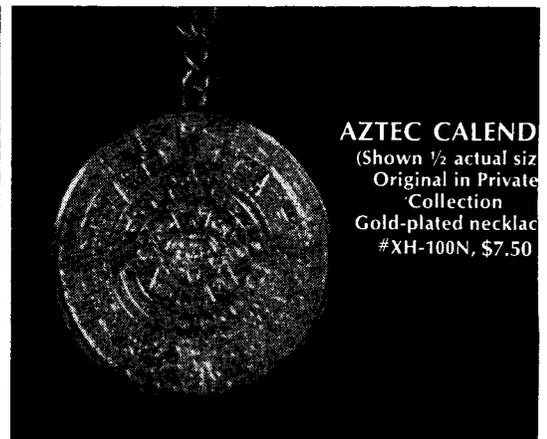
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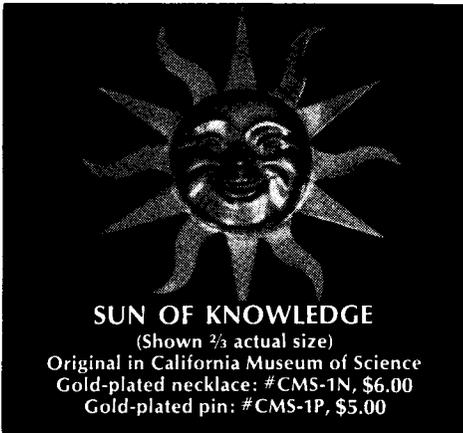
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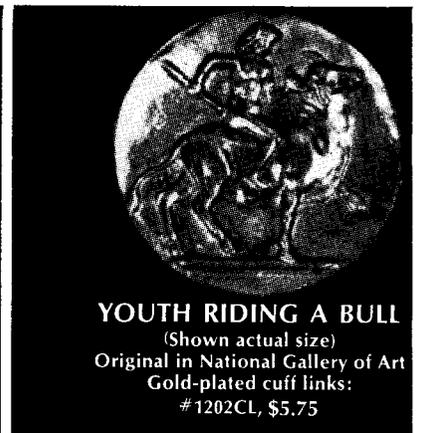
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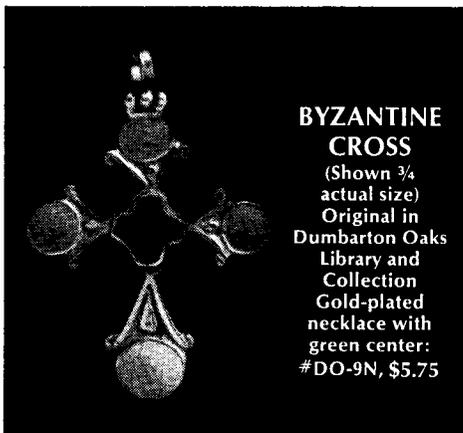
AKUA'BA (AFRICAN DOLL)
(Shown 2/3 actual size)
Original in American Museum of Natural History
Gold-plated pin:
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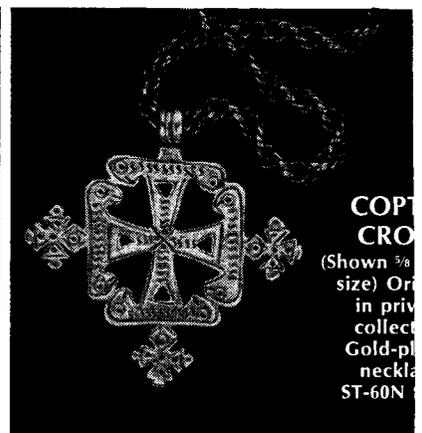
YOUTH RIDING A BULL
(Shown actual size)
Original in National Gallery of Art
Gold-plated cuff links:
#1202CL, \$5.75



SWORD GUARD WITH FLOWERS
(Shown 1/2 actual size)
Original in Philadelphia Museum of Art
Gold-plated necklace:
#PH-2N, \$7.50



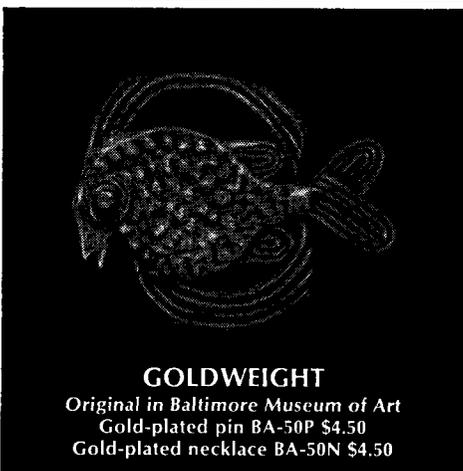
BYZANTINE CROSS
(Shown 3/4 actual size)
Original in Dumbarton Oaks Library and Collection
Gold-plated necklace with green center:
#DO-9N, \$5.75



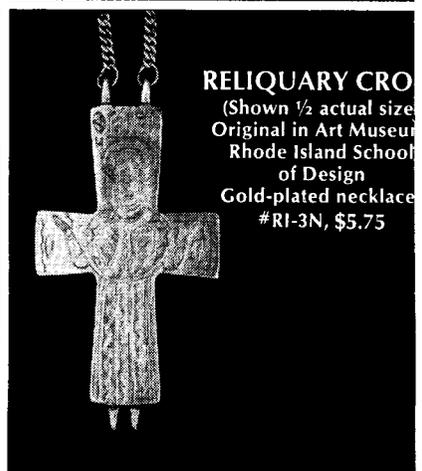
COPTIC CROSS
(Shown 3/8 actual size)
Original in private collection
Gold-plated necklace:
#ST-60N



SWORDGUARD (MENUKI)
(Shown 2/3 actual size)
Original in Philadelphia Museum of Art
Gold-plated pin: #PH-5P, \$6.00
Gold-plated necklace: #PH-5N, \$7.00

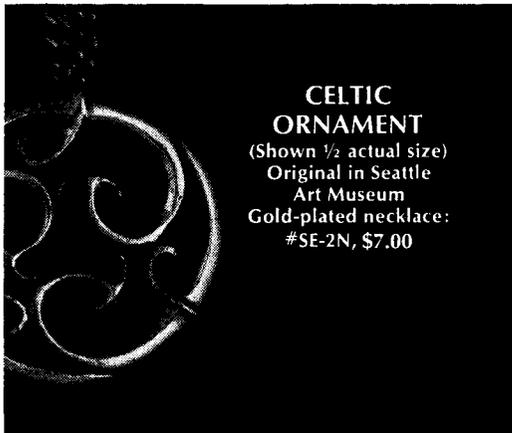


GOLDWEIGHT
Original in Baltimore Museum of Art
Gold-plated pin BA-50P \$4.50
Gold-plated necklace BA-50N \$4.50

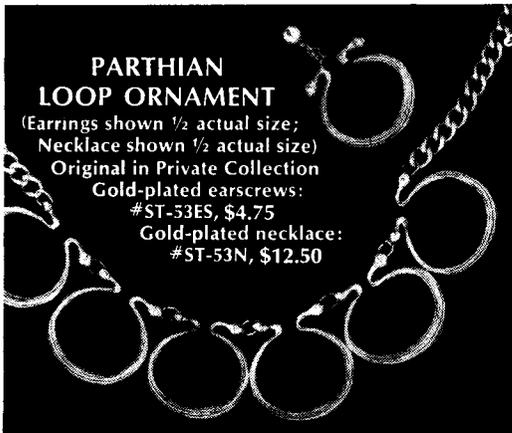


RELIQUARY CROSS
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Original in Art Museum of Design Rhode Island School of Design
Gold-plated necklace:
#RI-3N, \$5.75

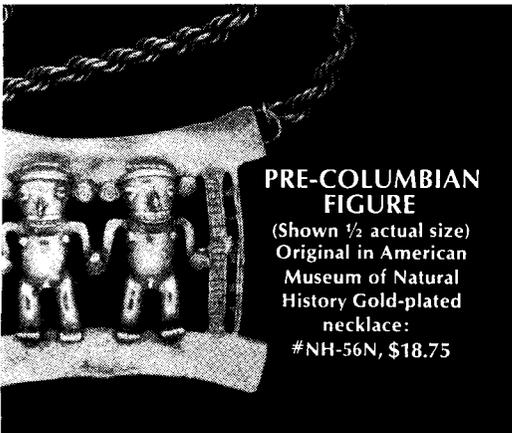
masterpiece



CELTIC ORNAMENT
 (Shown 1/2 actual size)
 Original in Seattle Art Museum
 Gold-plated necklace:
 #SE-2N, \$7.00



PARTHIAN LOOP ORNAMENT
 (Earrings shown 1/2 actual size;
 Necklace shown 1/2 actual size)
 Original in Private Collection
 Gold-plated earscrews:
 #ST-53ES, \$4.75
 Gold-plated necklace:
 #ST-53N, \$12.50



PRE-COLUMBIAN FIGURE
 (Shown 1/2 actual size)
 Original in American Museum of Natural History
 Gold-plated necklace:
 #NH-56N, \$18.75



SCARAB
 Original in City Art Museum of St. Louis
 Gold-plated pin LOU-9P \$6.00
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Letters

Nobel Efforts

William K. Stuckey's article "The Prize" [SR, Sept. 2] reminded me of the Nobel Prize in Medicine and Physiology that was awarded in 1923 to Banting and Macleod for the discovery of insulin. The discovery had been made in 1921 by Banting and Best, but the latter was cheated out of his portion of the prize.

What was Macleod's contribution? He loaned Banting and Best his laboratory and some experimental animals.

Charles Best is alive and well in Toronto, and it would be a marvelous thing if his equal role in the discovery of insulin were recognized.

Marshall H. Kuhn
San Francisco, Calif.

In his book *In Mathematical Circles* Howard Eves offers another (unverified) explanation for the absence of a Nobel Prize in mathematics. The eminent Swedish mathematician G. M. Mittag-Leffler (1846-1927) apparently greatly antagonized Nobel by accumulating a vast personal fortune. When he set up the prizes, Nobel asked his advisers whether Mittag-Leffler might win the Mathematics Prize. When informed that it was a possibility, Nobel eliminated mathematics as a field for consideration.

Michael A. Grajek
Iowa City, Ia.

Goodbye, Big Apple

Ronald Kriss's editorial "Leaving New York" [SR, Sept. 2] was a welcome relief. Finally, a major publication got up enough nerve to hop in the saddle and get the hell out of New York City. Unfortunately, the East produces "inbreeding" not only among journalists but among other professions as well. It seems that social acceptance begins in the prep schools and is completed at an Ivy League institution, preferably Harvard.

This country is not just the Boston-New York-Washington, D.C., corridor. This is a big country, and many people live their lives without the eastern seaboard to light the way.

Preston Taylor
Bala-Cynwyd, Pa.

Ho Jo Ho Ho

After reading William Hedgepeth's article "Pilgrimage to the Heart of Ho Jo's" [SR, Sept. 2], I can't help but wonder whether he is the promising

youth who skipped town after being voted "Busboy Most Likely to Succeed" at our annual Ho Jo Potluck Dinner in 1961. If he can claim the honor, I will be more than happy to send him the traditional prize: all the Ho Jo Cola concentrated syrup he can drink.

Judy Hrabchak
Canonsburg, Pa.

Special Delivery

I welcome with enthusiasm Patrick Young's article "The Thoroughly Modern Midwife" [SR, Sept. 2]. American women don't know what they have been missing.

Three years ago, while I lived in England, I bore our fourth child. The delivery was handled by a midwife. She was thoroughly professional, while totally and personally concerned with me and the baby.

My three first children were born in well-run and humane maternity departments of American hospitals. But, given their assembly-line methods, I can barely recall being present at the birth. In a sense the mother in the American birth process is a nuisance, so much so that she must be tied down, drugged, and, sometimes, restrained from delivering until the doctor arrives.

Childbirth is a joyful experience. Yet it was not until a midwife helped me deliver a child that I experienced childbirth.

Alice Walsh
Louisville, Ky.

Guck, Bugs, and Bureaucracy

What most depressed me about Colman McCarthy's article "A Regular Family Meal (Aargh!)" [SR, Sept. 2] was that he called poor Helen "a fine and homey cook"—and then went on to say that all her food came out of cans and boxes.

The safest cook these days is the one who would never, never, never think of touching such guck as Cool Whip, Lipton's soup, or Wonder bread, and would think more than twice about eating the tasteless and mushy beef that diethylstilbestrol produces. If our taste buds have been so dulled that we regard such foods as "fine and homey," we deserve everything the manufacturers throw at us.

E. N. Anderson, Jr.
Associate Professor of Anthropology
University of California
Riverside, Calif.