

Apathy

Public's Reading

great impact on business and
ent. But they all expressed
ment that the consumer in-
ust pick themselves off the
concentrate on such things
ment payment to consumer
who wish to make a case
federal regulatory agency,
ngthening the consumer's
hin individual government
and on public financing of
ional campaigns so that
atives will not be beholden
contributors.

at the seminar could ex-
pletely the public's appar-
ation from those who are
or quality in goods and ser-
vices in labeling and pack-
d for honesty in the market-

Explanation might be that
advocates are no longer
common folk representing
folk, but as people who
pose things on other people.
ner advocates are regarded
public as still another self-
group, like big business,
labor, the government, the
medical professions, and

Another thing, many of the
ed and capable leaders in
iner movement have taken
s in government and many
ovement's early proposals
n pre-empted, accepted or
by government.

ent survey by the Federal
mission showed that 35 of
ls had come from the con-
d public-interest movement,
Michael Pertschuk, chair-
he FTC and an early con-
tivist on Capitol Hill. Carol
Foreman, assistant secretary
ulture for consumer and nu-
tices, was formerly execu-
tor of the Consumer Feder-
America. Joan Claybrook,
rator of the national high-
ic safety administration, an
f the U.S. Department of
ation, used to be director of
ader group called Congress
which worked for public-in-
islation.

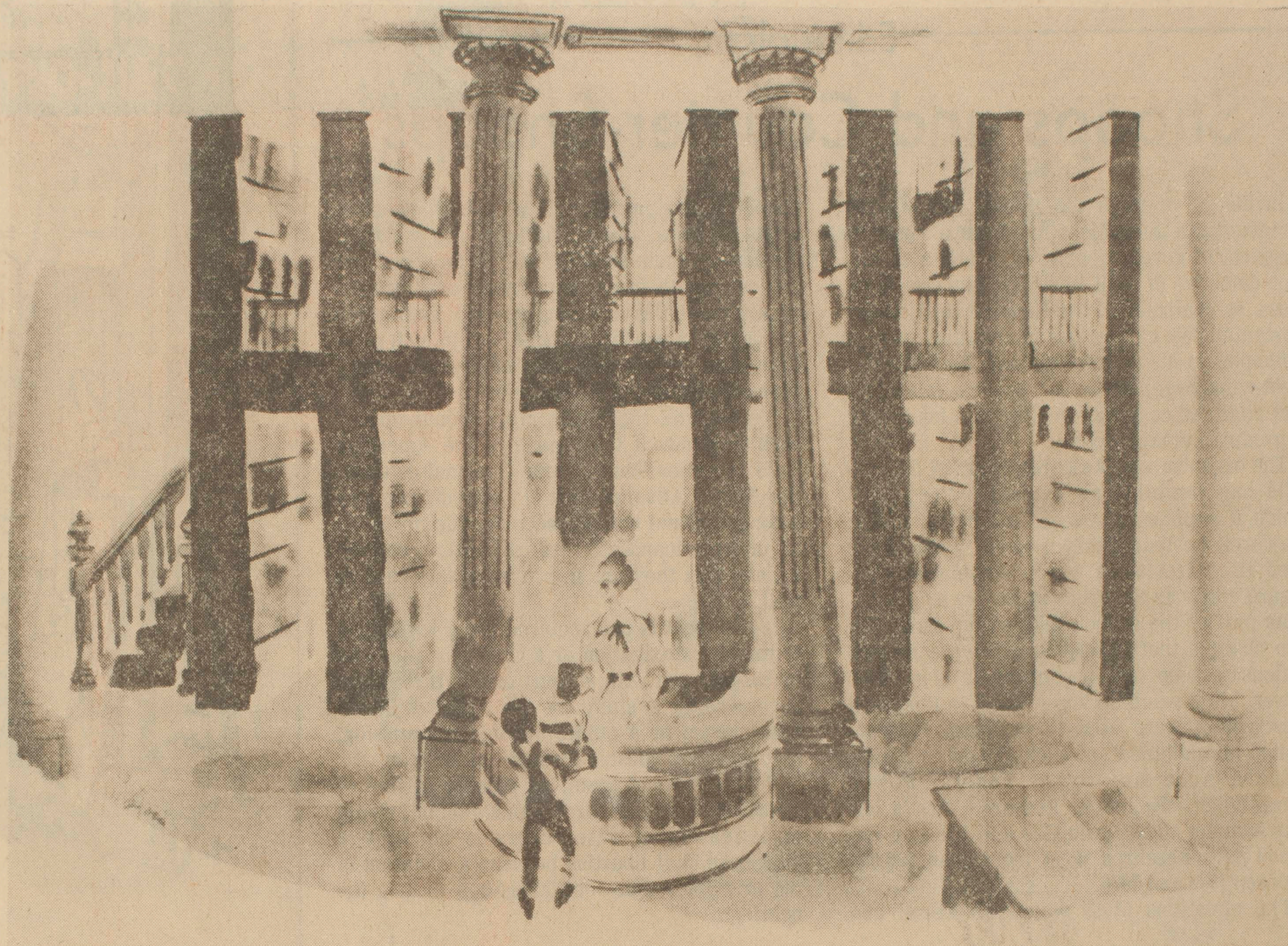
uk, Foreman and Clayb-
speakers at the seminar as
Post, executive director of
ess Roundtable, and Jeffrey
irector of government and
y affairs of the U.S. Cham-
merce.

business representatives
e consumer advocates were
t the very fires they stoked.

edore J. Jacobs, counsel
enate Governmental Affairs
e and former associate of
ader, told the conference:
embers of Congress were
eir disarict. The one sen-
o you think we need another
acy?" was enough. That said

ded: "The present outlook
nsumer movement is bleak.
gress is a mean Congress.
at what it did on abortion
Equal Rights Amendment.
bers are just looking for a
o defeat bills that help peo-

, Ralph Nader's image is
, but the consumer move-
sn't need a Che Guevara to
. It needs a Samuel Gomp-
anize it."



My Favorite Town – Fresno, California

By William Saroyan

Editor's note: The Bee received permission from Ford Times and author William Saroyan to reprint "My Favorite Town — Fresno, California," which appeared in an August 1952 issue of Ford Times. Saroyan's nostalgic piece appears in this month's Ford Times, concurrent with the release of his newest novel, "Chance Meetings," which is reviewed on Page 4 of this section. Saroyan was born in Fresno and dropped out of high school (Fresno Tech) after one year. He won a Pulitzer Prize in 1940 for his play "Time of Your Life." The accompanying painting by Fresno water colorist Rollin Pickford is one of seven which appeared with Saroyan's piece in 1952. The Pickford painting is the property of Ford's permanent art collection and is on loan to the Fresno County Free Library, which houses the Saroyan collection. The painting depicts the old Municipal Library on Broadway. The youngster checking out books is typical of many boys of the time, including Saroyan, who visited the library regularly.

My mother's cousin, Hovagim Saroyan, dead 35 years now, was the human race. He had a vineyard of 30 acres of muscats in Goshen, a railroad siding eight or nine miles out of town, or was it Lone Star? I know it wasn't Malaga, for I had other relatives there.

Hovagim was a man who seemed to have been made of bone and stone, and yet no one laughed with so much joy and compassion; softly sometimes, almost silently, other times loudly and with all of his body, so that he fell or flung himself to the ground, rolled over, leaped up, and nearly died. Perhaps it was laughter that killed him at 37. I don't know. I've never been able to decide what it is that ends mortal life.

He lived alone on the vineyard in a kind of shack-house in which among other things was a phonograph and a dozen records of songs of Armenia, Kurdistan, and Turkey. He had a cow. He had a revolver and a shotgun. He had a horse and a buggy.

Two or three times he brought the

horse and the buggy to the little house on San Benito Avenue, picked up my brother Henry and myself, and took us to the Goshen vineyard. At sundown he got out his shotgun and we went along with him to the muscat vines to see what we would see. We saw jackrabbits, which were pests, which ate the young shoots of new vines. Hovagim shot them and they leaped and died. We saw quail, doves, and kildees, but, better than seeing kildees, we heard them as they plunged straight away, wailing clean and clear at the enormity of being part of life, a cry both joyous and despairing, which I shall never forget and which shall always be associated in my thinking and in my memory with the human race and one of its first exponents, Hovagim.

After dark we walked back to the house and there he cooked supper and we sat down in the light of a kerosene lamp and ate and talked — in a mixture of bad Armenian and bad English. After supper he put a record on the phonograph and we lis-

tened to the old music. He put his water-pipe in order, sat down on the floor, smoked, and listened to the old music.

It was said of him that he had a wife in Bitlis, and two sons; but the wife had died, and the sons had gone along to her father's house. Now Hovagim was alone in California. No one was so fiercely devoted to kindness and to truth as this lonely man.

In the last years of his short life he took another wife; but one knew that he'd lost his life when he'd lost his wife and his sons.

Suddenly I was at his funeral and that was the end of Hovagim, except that here I am, 35 years later, writing about him.

Hovagim was the human race: sorrowful, lonely, laughing.

There were others, many others: relatives, friends, strangers.

Huff sold popcorn from a wagon on The Republican Corner when I sold papers there every night after school. He was a skinny old man with a large patch of black cloth over his left eye and cheek. At first glance people were frightened by his appearance; perhaps at second, too. I do not remember anybody ever stopping to chat with him. He seemed grim, if not sinister.

Actually he was a lonely old man who lived in a furnished room, whose only possession in the world was The Republican Corner. From his room he pushed his wagon to his corner every morning around 10, and back again every night around 10.

Huff and I became friends when he was perhaps in his late 70s and I was 9 or 10. I had been selling papers on that corner for about a month before we began to speak to one another.

One rainy night he called me over to the wagon and handed me a bag of popcorn. I thanked him and ate the popcorn. It was very good. After that, we began to be pals. Every

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Saroyan's Fresno

Continued from Page H1

night when things were quiet, almost nobody in the streets, we stood and talked.

Huff, I discovered, was an atheist, but like so many small-town atheists he kept his ideas to himself and was very deeply a good man, perhaps a religious one.

I remember that when he remarked that the human race was vicious I did not feel wiahat he w speaking with hatred; I felt rather that he spoke with regret, compassion, and perhaps even love. He told me about writers whose books he had read — itself inflamed, watery, and appeared to be on the verge of falling out of his head.

As time went on I became entirely oblivious of his physical appehoranc because I sensed his inner handsomeness. He was a proud and independent man.

One night I offered to push the wagon home for him, for I lived in the same direction, but he would have none of it.

The following day when I reached the corner with my papers Huff wasn't there. I went to the house on Mono Street where he lived and the landlady said he was sick in bed. I visited him in his room.

As we talked I knew how ill and tired he was and yet how eager he was not to give over and die. He wanted to stay in the world. He wanted to get back to The Republican Corner with his popcorn wagon, so he could go on beholding the human race and being a member of it. He asked me if I would come back the following day during my lunch hour. I said I would.

He was up, sitting on a chair, waiting, very tired when I got there. He asked if I would push the wagon to the corner for him. I did, and left him there and went back to school. After school found him still there, smiling faintly because he was so ill.

This procedure continued for a month. In the meantime from the Public Library I got the books he had read and began to read around in them: Ingersoll, Paine, Emerson. I read swiftly and carelessly but I think I got what was important for me to get: that the human race is anything any of us wishes to notice and believe it is, and that it *can* be anything we hope.

Huff and I talked about these things. Since it is true, I must remark that now and then I found myself suddenly disliking him very much — his terrible deterioration, his bad luck, his misery and loneliness, his insistence on staying alive at his corner of the world, his very appearance and smell — but soon enough this dislike would pass and I would know that whoever he was, whoever he had been, he was a good man, a helpless one, an earnest one, my neighbor, my friend, my contemporary.

Every day at noon and every night at 10 for a month or so I got his wagon back and forth. I knew he was dying. I even asked if he wanted to go to the County Hospital out by the Fairgrounds and get in bed and rest the rest of his life.

He did not. He wanted to follow the schedule we were following.

One day at noon the landlady told me he had died during the night, and so I never saw him again. I didn't go to his funeral. I don't even know if he had one. The theory around town about old men like Huff was that they were misers, and that they had great wealth hidden away somewhere. I never believed any of this about Huff. I knew he had had a popcorn wagon for some time. I never saw the wagon again, either.

Huff was the human race, too.

A boy my age who came to Emerson School barefooted in the winter was another. His family had come to town in a wagon that they parked alongside the Santa Fe Railroad tracks near Foley's Packinghouse. There were four or five children, the father and mother. They lived in and around the wagon.

The boy came to school about two weeks, and then the family picked up and went somewhere else. He was a patient fellow who probably suffered more than anybody ever guessed, especially when he could not tell Miss Chambers his address, and when so many of the other boys looked at him as if he were a freak simply because he had no shoes.

I thought a great deal about trying to become this boy's friend but it was not to be. He wanted no friend and it was understandable that he didn't. I wanted to tell him that he could sell papers and make money — help his family and himself — but it is sometimes the very deepest kind of rudeness to try to be of help to some people.

There were others, too, many others.

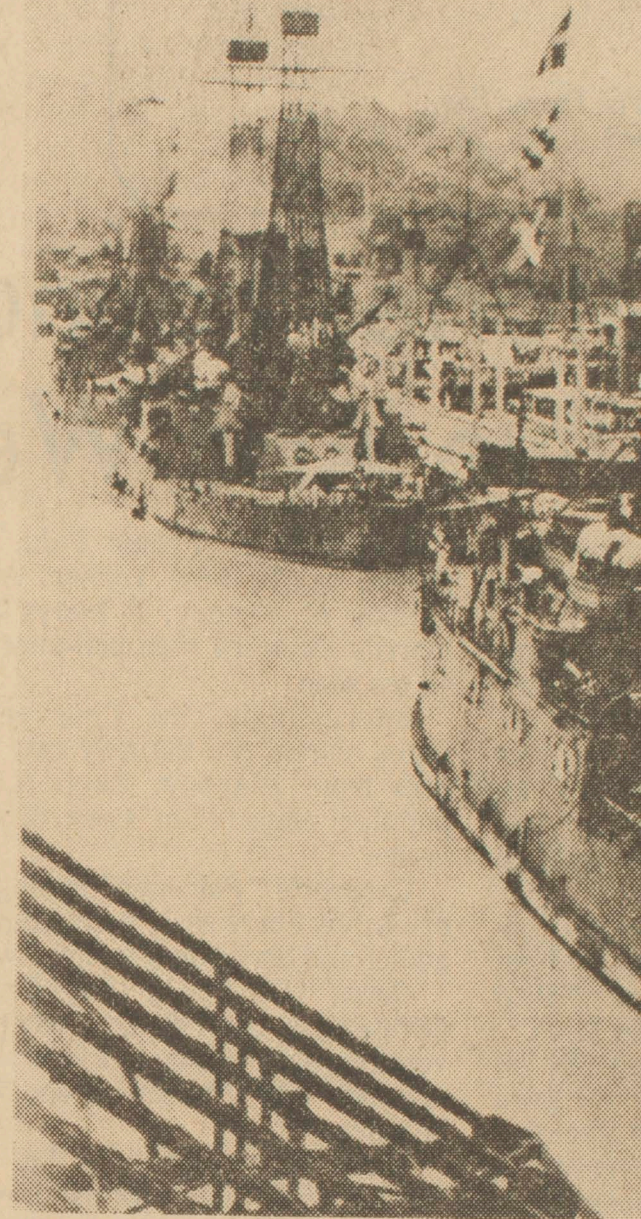
But there were places, too, and the places that meant the most to me I have already mentioned: the Public Library and the Fairgrounds. I needed both. I needed to read, and I needed to see the spectacle of man in action, showing himself off, his livestock, his produce, his machinery, his art even: the wretched paintings and sculptures his confusion and boredom had driven him to making.

Two other places were very important to me in Fresno: the theatre and the church. The names of the theatres were: Liberty, Kinema, Bijou, Strand, Hippodrome, Orpheum. The church was The First Armenian Presbyterian.

At the theatres I saw man in moving pictures, on the stage, and in vaudeville. He was forever in search of something: escape from boredom and failure, passage to grace and meaning.

Only at church did he seem to come near grace and meaning, especially when he opened the hymn book and his mouth in earnest song. I sang, too. I still do. The Protestant songs are thus forever a part of my own search for meaning.

There is no end to a town, any town, if it's where you were born in the first place and where you were born again, as it is written all men must be. But oh! the weather there, the heavenly weather there in the spring, the summer, the autumn, the fall, the winter — the hot sun and the heavy rain, the new green of spring and the fire-golden of fall: the farmer's weather of Fresno, in which I lived and became a part of the human race. The last thing I shall forget is the weather there.



A Peruvian warship passes through the Panama Canal locks.

Panama Canal

PANAMA AND THE BUILDING OF THE CANAL (Edited by Jerome D. Laval); Graphic Arts Technology; \$7.95, softbound.

This is the second volume in the "Images of Age" stereograph series. Editor-publisher Laval projects the series may reach as many as 200 titles eventually.

Panama is a timely subject and Laval, grandson of pioneer Fresno photographer Claude "Papa" Laval, has put together a volume of 93 photographs spread over 190 pages.

The prints Laval selected are from negatives taken by specially-designed cameras which recorded two distinct images with every click of the shutter — stereographs.

The 93 selected photos are from 600 negatives Laval picked from the Keystone-Mast collection housed at the University of California at Riverside.

The majority of the photos have not been published before and the few which have are reproduced from the original glass plates taken by an army of globe-trotting photographers.

"Our press-run was upwards of 10,000 copies," said Laval, "and this is the first time we've aimed for a national distribution."

"We don't know where it's going to go — the book — but we've accumulated orders from two major book dealers throughout the United States, and we think it'll sell well in Panama."

Laval traveled to Panama last December, spending two weeks there, taking some photographs of his own. Two of Laval's photos are on the back two pages.

"The Panamanians were extraordinarily cooperative and helpful," Laval explained. "They are