

## Philadelphia

# COMING HOME

Ever since Vietnam, a cocky ex-marine has been waging a war for survival against the Veterans Administration here.

By Hoag Levins

It begins with razor-tipped arrows and reticence on a sidewalk in Clementon, New Jersey.

Two men arrive at the end of a long driveway and turn to face the garage doors of a newly constructed tract house. One man sits in a wheelchair and wears a T-shirt exposing thick arms. A tattoo of a skull peers ominously off one bicep. Both arms are pock-marked with ragged patches of shiny scar tissue which resemble craters of melted plastic.

The man propels the wheelchair with kamikaze-like nonchalance and makes such a sharp turn at the foot of the driveway that it almost causes his quiver of hunting arrows to spill. He ignores the near-accident and continues talking as he makes a few final adjustments on the large fiberglass bow in his lap. Held in one hand, the bow hovers slightly above the empty space where the man's legs used to be.

The second man is shifting from foot to foot. His one hand fidgets back and forth across the spiral-wire spine of the notebook he carries.

The legless man test-draws the bow string and pulls an arrow from the quiver. For a moment, the arrow rests in his lap, where a tiny bit of sunlight steals through to glint off the steel tip.

"It has to be you," the legless man says. "I've tried everything else. Now they're saying I'm crazy. You're my last chance."

"I can't," says the standing man.

"I'll help you with letters to Washington or research the law or make phone calls, but don't ask me to *write* about it."

"You're a brother, man. You were in The Nam. That's why it has to be you. I've read your stuff. That's why I picked you. I don't want another reporter coming around to do another feature about the poor, crippled dude from South Philadelphia. I want somebody who *knows* how badly Nam can fuck up your head. You *know*, man. It's got to be you."

The arrow is fitted on the string and its tip raised out of the shadows so that it catches full sunlight—which explodes off the edges in gaudy silver bursts.

"It's not that easy," says the standing man. His hands are plunged deep in his pockets now. "You ever wondered why there are so many Nam vets working in newspapers and magazines and TV today, but so few stories about veterans being done? I'll tell you. It's because when you've been to The Nam and you sit down to interview other Nam vets for a calm, objective article, something happens. You go back and sit down at your typewriter and it's like the keyboard was suddenly wired for 5,000 volts. It's like your brain pops a circuit. Like you get jolts in places you didn't think were jolttable anymore. I'll help you however I can. But not an article. I can't do that. Don't ask me."

"But that's *it*, man. That's why it has

Photographed by Hoag Levins



**Maybe you can be  
one of us.**

**The Marines**  
**800-423-2600**





to be you. You *know* what I'm feeling. Look, I'm not asking you to help me get something for nothing. I've been everywhere else. You're the last place I got. Christ! You know how hard it is for me to ask for help. You know how tired I get of needing help? I don't want a free ride. I just want some god-damn dignity."

The bow is lifted so that it clears the chair. Shoulder muscles ripple as the string is drawn back and released in one smooth action. The standing man flinches involuntarily as the arrow strikes the wooden garage doors with a loud whack and embeds itself to half-shaft. The legless man sits and calmly, methodically, fires four more arrows through the doors.

"My wife hates it when I do this. I know I shouldn't. But, shit, it feels good. Like I'm in control of something. It's a bitch afterwards, because the doors got to be fixed up. But it's better then sitting in the house vegetating all day. You know what I mean?"

**W**E WENT FOR THE same reasons they have always gone; for the same reasons we had American eagles and death skulls and daggers and Marine bulldogs tattooed on our arms.

We went to be heroes.

We went to take our place next to our fathers and our uncles and John Wayne.

Only, this one was different. This one had no heroes. Only victims. This one had no glory. Only gore. This one had no honor. Only humiliation.

More than two million of us went. Some came back in boxes. Some came home alive, but with shredded bodies. Others of us came back alive, but with shredded minds.

Frank Mastrogiovanni was one of us. He left behind the South Philadelphia row house; the buddies in the 13th and Wharton gang; the colorful posters in the Marine recruiter's office and headed out for The Nam to be a hero.

But instead of a hero, he came back home with two stumps and blown-out eardrums and a load of metal they will never be able to take out of his body. He came back to South Philadelphia to lie for months in the amputee ward of the U.S. Naval Hospital where you didn't hear much of the National Anthem at night: you heard the rattling pipes and drugged groans and the rats skittering around under the beds.

It wasn't a complete failure for Mastrogiovanni. For ten minutes one day, he did become a certified, honest-to-God hero. That happened April 10th, 1971, on the upper decks of Veterans Stadium when he threw out the first baseball of the season. That was when disabled vets were still fashionable to

'Suddenly, I was in the spotlight. Everyone was shaking my hand. Photographers were all over the place. One guy was saying, "He's going to be a lifetime guest of the Phillies because of what he's done for his country."'

have around for season openers and ribbon cuttings.

Frank wore his artificial legs for the first time that day. He wore his dress blues and they took his picture about a hundred times. Features writers crowded close to catch his words. Public relations men patted him on the back. Strangers in dark suits gravely shook his hand.

And then, the photographers went away. The reporters went away. The beautiful women and the PR flacks and strangers and dignitaries went away and Veterans Stadium was empty.

And then—much the same as he had done to the ball earlier in the day—Frank Mastrogiovanni and all he represented were summarily thrown out.

*The President of the United States takes pleasure in presenting the Bronze Star [the nation's third highest combat decoration] to Corporal Frank N. Mastrogiovanni; United States Marine Corps:*

*For meritorious service in connection with combat operations against the enemy in the Republic of Vietnam while serving as a rifleman with Company "E," 2nd battalion, 1st Marines, 1st Marine Division, Fleet Marine Force. Corporal Mastrogiovanni demonstrated exceptional leadership and initiative participating in numerous patrols and ambushes, plus operation HOANG DIEU. This outstanding marine repeatedly distinguished himself by his courage and composure under fire. Corporal Mastrogiovanni's leadership, superior professionalism and unwavering devotion to duty contributed significantly to the accomplishment of his unit's mission and were in keeping with the highest traditions of the Marine Corps and the United States Naval Service.*

**I**T'S EARLY MORNING and Frank Mastrogiovanni is sitting in the living room of his home in Clementon. Minutes before, he had come down from the second-floor bedroom—using both hands and two leg stumps so that he resembled an awkward, pale crab as he descended the

stairs.

At the base of the steps, he pops himself into a wheelchair and zips across the room. The two stumps stick out from the cut-off dungaree shorts. One stump ends above the knee and looks like a roll of flesh-colored bread dough turned in upon itself at the end. The other stump ends below the knee—in a stubby extension of bone and skin that looks and moves like the flipper of a small seal.

"I don't hide them. I'm comfortable with them. That took a while. But now I'm cool," he explains. "I don't mind crawling up and down the stairs at home, but it's a real drag in public. I don't wear my artificial legs much because they don't fit right and they hurt and the damned VA takes a long time to get a new pair. So I mostly use the chair."

The talk of the artificial limbs takes Mastrogiovanni's mind back to the first time he wore them: that April day in 1971 when he threw out the first ball at Veterans Stadium.

"It was a really weird day—in a lot of ways. First there was this thing between Tony and me, Tony Alongo. We were in the amp ward together. He was from Detroit and had lost one leg in Nam. At first, they had picked him to throw the ball out. But later—it was political or something—they decided that since they had a guy from South Philadelphia in the hospital, it might be better if he threw out the first ball.

"So, both Tony and I were sent to the stadium. But no one said which one of us would actually throw the ball—so Tony and I had to work that out. It was awkward. It was probably the only time losing two legs ever helped me. Tony had lost only one, so I 'won' and got to throw the ball. Tony was bitter—about that and everything else. He couldn't get his head together at all. He kept saying 'They're using us. Don't let them use us this way.' I didn't fully understand what he meant—until much later.

"To understand what that day meant to me, you got to know that no one ever did anything for me my whole life. It was always just my mother and me against everybody. Nothing much came our way. Now, suddenly, I was in the spotlight. Everyone was shaking my hand. Photographers were all over the place. I was in a daze. This one guy was telling the crowd, '... and Frank is going to get a lifetime pass to the Vet. He's going to be a lifetime guest of the Phillies because of what he had done for his country. ...' Later, they told me to pick up my pass in the office.

"Well, when it was over, I go to the office and they hadn't heard anything about a pass. The guy there treats me like I'm trying to hustle him and says, 'I don't know who told you that, but



we don't give lifetime passes. I don't know. Maybe we can give you a season pass. Will that satisfy you?' I'm standing in the middle of this office and these people are looking at me and I say 'Fuck this, man. I'm not asking for nothing. They told me to come here.' I feel like a real ass because suddenly it looks like I'm begging for a pass.

"Anyway, they finally give me a season pass. It was in the top row of right field—get it? A double amputee drags his ass up the steps to the top row of right field for his free seat. If he manages to get there, he can't see a fucking thing because it is so far away.

"I didn't go with the pass. I went and bought my own box seat ticket. It was a small price to pay for my dignity.

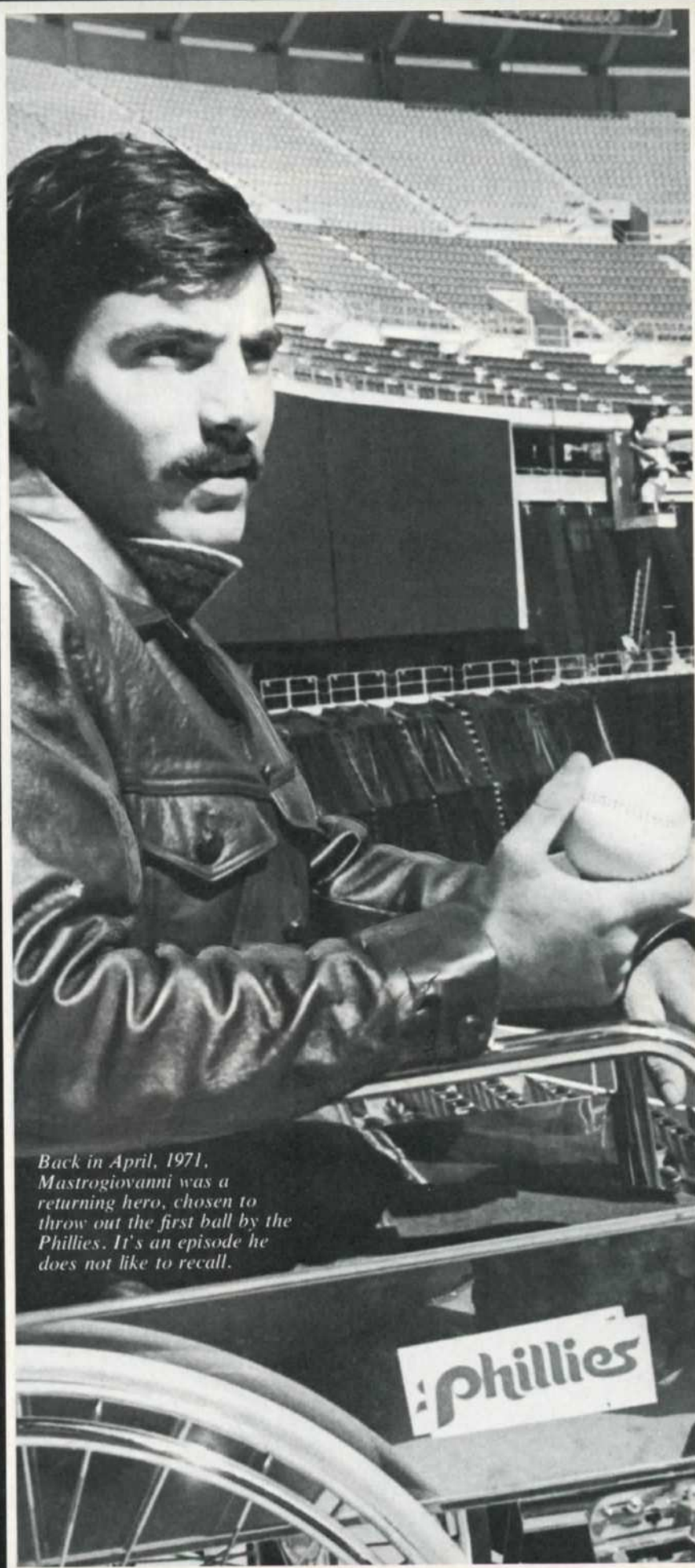
"Then there was this hassle with the parking. I would go in the lot and right up close they have a special 'handicapped' parking section. But what happens is the attendants hustle people—if you give them \$2 as a 'tip,' they let anyone park close there. So, this one day I drive in to see a game and park my car in the 'handicapped' section. I got my legs on that day. My license plate has a wheelchair symbol for handicapped parking. But this guy runs over and says, 'Two dollars. Two dollars. It'll cost you two extra dollars to park here.'

"I say, 'Look, man, I'm disabled and I'm supposed to park here. That's what the sign says.' I ignore him and get out of the car but he keeps yelling at me for two dollars. A whole bunch of people are going by and I'm trying to explain that I got to park up close because I can't walk long distances on my legs. He's saying 'My ass, you got two legs there. Give me my two dollars.'

"By this time, I'm so goddamned mad—all I wanted to do is be a normal person and watch a fucking baseball game. Anyway, I unbuckle my pants. All the people stop now and are watching because we're both yelling at each other. I drop my pants and I throw two dollars at the guy. I'm standing there in my underwear with my stumps stuck in the top of my artificial legs. The guy is going crazy now. Trying to get my pants up. Trying to give me back the money. Finally, I pull up my pants and leave the money on the ground. I go to the game, but the whole day is ruined. Like every time I go to Veterans Stadium, I get fucked. I don't go much anymore."

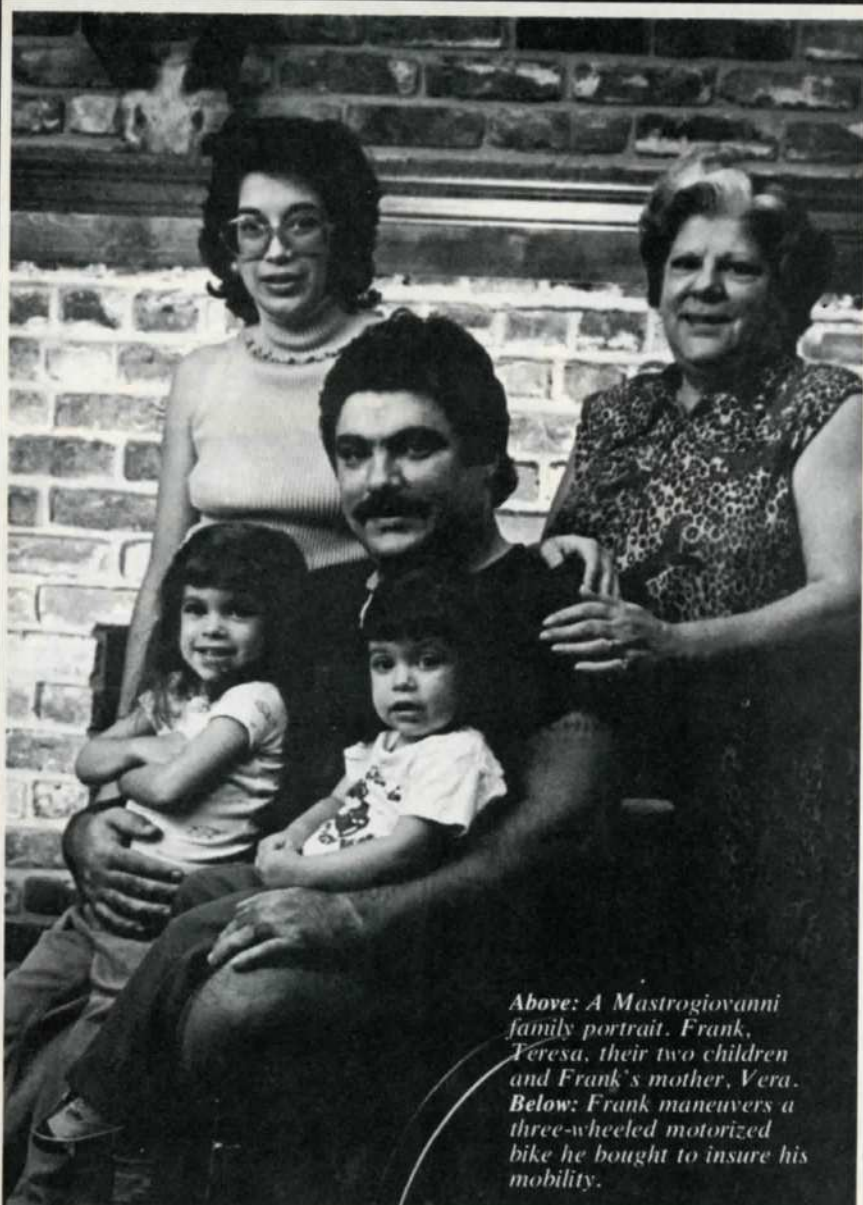
*There is no purpose in proving who hurts more—you or us or the vets or the guys in jail or the women looking in from the outside or, of course, all those people long or newly dead whom no amount of any kind of therapy yet invented will restore. The anger and grief become too overpowering to go on counting out hurts.*

—*"We Are All Prisoners Of War"*  
by Chuck Noell & Gary Wood



*Back in April, 1971, Mastrogiovanni was a returning hero, chosen to throw out the first ball by the Phillies. It's an episode he does not like to recall.*





*Above: A Mastrogiovanni family portrait. Frank, Teresa, their two children and Frank's mother, Vera. Below: Frank maneuvers a three-wheeled motorized bike he bought to insure his mobility.*



**F**IFTY-NINE-YEAR-OLD Vera Mastrogiovanni sits in the kitchen of her tiny rented row home on Mercy Street in South Philadelphia, hair tied back with a tired bit of red twine, face as weary-looking as the faded colors of her cotton housecoat.

Minutes before, she had greeted a friend of her son's as if she had known him all her life. Leading him immediately into the kitchen, she lit a Salem—one of 20 which would be stubbed out in the ashtray before the morning was over—and busied herself at the counter as she talked. Seconds later, fresh-squeezed orange juice appears and a coffee pot bubbles to life.

Vera Mastrogiovanni doesn't talk much about how hard life has been to her. For that you've got to talk to others who know her. She raised her only son on her own, working as a barmaid, piece-work seamstress, canning factory worker, and by taking in washing and ironing.

"That kid is all she ever really had," explained a person close to the family. "He was a real hell-raiser, but he wasn't a nasty kid. He was just very spirited. She had her hands full, but she glowed whenever she talked of him. Everything she did was for him. I don't think I've ever seen a mother and son so close."

Another match is touched to a Salem as Vera Mastrogiovanni pours the last of the coffee. Next to the ashtray at her elbow is a plastic napkin holder with a figure of the Sacred Heart of Jesus on it. Jesus is holding his hand up in blessing.

"When Chip—that's been his nickname since he was a kid—got his orders for Vietnam, I was going crazy," Vera says. "I was beside myself. I did something I never did before. I went to the people you go to when there is no place else to go. Don't ask me to name them. You live down here in South Philadelphia all your life and you know them. I went and said, 'My son just got orders to Vietnam. He is my whole life. He is all I have. I'll do anything; pay anything to have his orders changed.' I was told it would cost \$2,000 and Chip would have new orders within 48 hours."

"Well I didn't have \$2,000. I only had \$225 in the bank. And \$2,000 was like a million dollars to me. I went to a loan shark. I had nowhere else to go. The sharks were going \$5 on \$25 and I knew I would never be able to pay the loan off. I knew I'd be working for the rest of my life to pay it off. But it didn't matter. I was ready to do anything I had to do."

"I wrote to Chip and told him what I was trying to do—so he'd be ready for whatever happened. God! I'll never forget that. He wrote back a letter and said he was going to Vietnam, just like



everyone else in his outfit. He said it was his duty and he believed in it and if I went ahead and did what I was planning to do, he would never speak to me again. What could I do? I stopped the whole thing. The next thing I knew, he was in Vietnam.

"I remember the Marine captain," she said. "He came to the door in dress blues. I saw him and I knew why he had come. I remember falling down and he was saying, 'But he's not dead. He's only wounded. Your son is still alive. He's just wounded.' But I couldn't understand what he was saying at the time. I just kept screaming and then I passed out."

*Sleep well, sleep well, my son.  
Tomorrow you become a young man.  
You'll carry sword and gun.*

*Sleep well, sleep well, my son.  
When you become a young man,  
You'll kill your friends and brothers.*

*Sleep well, sleep well, my son.  
Tomorrow when you become a young man,  
You'll not sleep well again.*

—DO NGHE  
Contemporary Vietnamese poet

For most of us who were there, it comes at odd moments. Sometimes on a quiet night, just before falling asleep. Or sometimes it comes suddenly, triggered by a song on the radio. Or sometimes it comes gently, at parties, where it rides atop the blue smoke of a hand-rolled cigarette.

This particular night, it came drifting across a bottle of scotch which sat on the kitchen table. The legless man slapped his stump and remembered the way the jungle smelled at night when the other men were asleep in their bunkers and he crouched beside the sandbags and barbed-wire on guard duty.

His companion remembered the sharp, whacking sounds bullets make when they puncture the skin of a flying airplane. And the rest rushes in and overtakes both men: the bitter taste of Ba Moui Ba 33 beer consumed warm because of the lack of ice; the acrid smell of aviation gas mixed with the musky odors coming from the black mud of a jungle river bank; the thunder of HUEYs and Chinooks hovering over every landscape like khaki-colored grasshoppers; the peppery tang of dog meat skewered on bamboo slivers and roasted over outdoor fires; the thick-throated clatter of M-16s on full automatic; the way in which fear can instantly sour the smell of a man's sweat; the crackling noise made by flames on thatch; the way the eyes of a 15-year-old whore avoid meeting the eyes of her customer; crummy C-rats; dynamite reefer; body bags of the same material and color as oversized trash bags;

Of all the dangers existing in Nam, none was quite as bad as booby traps. They were not like assaults—which could be expected and prepared for. Nor even like snipers whose first rounds spoke of a hostile presence.

roaring blossoms of napalm; body counts; frags; incoming; booby traps.

On mention of booby traps, the scotch bottle is lifted. Large quantities of the amber liquid are poured into the water tumblers. There is a pause across the table top.

Of all the dangers which existed throughout The Nam, none was quite as bad as booby traps. They were not like assaults—which could be expected and prepared for. Nor like overhead incoming—which could be heard. Nor even like snipers—whose first rounds spoke of a hostile presence.

Booby traps could come at you anywhere, any time, any way. On a street in Danang or Saigon, a garbage heap or hedge could suddenly let loose a wave of metal shards from a concealed Claymore mine. A bicycle propped against a guard shack could suddenly explode—its body having been packed with explosives and a crude timer rigged beneath the seat. An innocent grocery peddle cart could disintegrate as the hundred pounds of plastic explosives within took down the front of a nine-story building.

In the field, it was worse, and booby traps could be expected with each step one took. Some were as ingenious as they were ancient—poisonous snakes, captured and hung up by the tail in thick foliage or just inside the doorway of an abandoned hooch. Suspended by their tails, the snakes struggled for a while and then rested quietly—until a passing American throat provided a target for their frenzied anger and venom.

There were "whips," for which saplings were fastened with steel prongs so that when sprung by trip wire, they impaled a man at mid-body—like a giant fork.

There were "Venus Fly Traps," through which a foot would plunge and then be skewered by dozens of loose-hanging barbed shafts which embedded themselves deeper with every pull of the foot.

There were the ever-popular punji pits which ranged in size from foot-length to body-length. Victims stepped or fell in and were impaled on bamboo or fire-hardened wood stakes smeared

with garbage, buffalo stool or poison.

Hand grenades were very popular also. They were compact, easily concealed and could be rigged with simple trip mechanisms. They were set everywhere—beneath a bar stool, a latrine seat, a fresh corpse, a seemingly abandoned weapon; inside buses and other vehicles. They would detonate at the slightest touch.

About as popular as grenades were Howitzer shells. They were larger and more awkward to handle, but they could be easily planted in a hole and wired for detonation by pressure or trip wire. They had devastating results on trucks, tanks and foot soldiers.

Sometimes, the artillery shell would take their human victims for a "ride." The initial detonation would propel the projectile—and victim—up in the air while the secondary explosion and fragmentation of the shell would shred the man before he hit ground again.

Howitzer shells were quite lethal in this manner. Designed to fragment into thousands of pieces of shrapnel ranging from 2,500-grain chunks the size of half dollars down to pebble-size 75-grain pieces, they created a storm of flying metal.

The large pieces could cut a fair-sized tree in half at close range. The small pieces traveled as a "wall" of shrapnel that could strip the same tree of its bark and outer layers of wood.

On the human body, the effect was similar. The large pieces would sever limbs while the smaller pieces would clean away the flesh, but often leave the bone intact. When it happened this way, a man tumbled back to the ground and had a few seconds to sit dumbly and contemplate the stringy remains of his legs, from which extended portions of living, blue bone, glistening in the jungle sun. Then, mercifully, the victim passed out from shock and massive loss of blood.

This is the way it was for Frank Mastrogianni on Friday, February 12th, 1971, when he was walking point on a search and destroy mission through the jungles of I Corps, just south of the DMZ.

Dropped by chopper in the morning, Mastrogianni spent most of the afternoon scouring the trail for booby traps as the men behind him watched for snipers.

Mastrogianni found and disarmed eight booby traps that day.

His legs found the ninth.

26,800,000 men came of draft age between August 4th, 1964, when the Tonkin Gulf Resolution marked the nation's formal entry into the war, and March 28th, 1973, when the last American troops left. Fifty-one thousand died—17,000 from gunshot wounds, 7,500 from multiple fragmentation wounds, 6,700 from grenades and mines,

continued on page 270



# Valley Forge Valley Forge Valley Forge Valley Forge Music Fair

RTE. 202 DEVON EXIT  
DEVON, PA.

LEE GUBER AND SHELLY GROSS PRESENT:

TUES. SEPT. 12 thru SUN. SEPT. 17



## DIONNE WARWICK RAY CHARLES

Tues., Wed., Thurs. (8:30 p.m.),  
Sun. (3 & 7:30 p.m.), \$8.75, \$7.75.  
Fri. (8:30 p.m.), Sat. (7 & 10:30 p.m.) \$9.75, \$8.75.

MON. SEPT. 18 thru SUN. SEPT. 24



## DAVID MARILYN BILLY BRENNER MCCOO DAVIS, JR.

Mon. thru Thurs. (8:30 p.m.),  
Sun. (7:30 p.m.), \$8.75, \$7.75.  
Fri. (8:30 p.m.), Sat. (7 & 10:30 p.m.), \$9.75, \$8.75.

TUES. SEPT. 26 thru  
SUN. OCT 1

## MITZI GAYNOR

starring in

## THE MITZI GAYNOR SHOW

STAGED & DIRECTED BY  
TONY CHARMOLI

Tues., Wed., Thurs. (8:30 p.m.),  
Sun. (3 & 7:30 p.m.), \$9.75, \$8.75.  
Fri. (8:30 p.m.), Sat. (7 & 10:30 p.m.), \$10.75, \$9.75.

prices include taxes and parking

BOX OFFICE & INFO: (215) 644-5000  
GROUP DISCOUNTS (215) 647-2307

Tickets available at all TICKETRON OUTLETS

CHARGE ON BAC/VISA or MC: 647-7870

(nominal service charge on phone orders)

MUSIC FAIR ENTERPRISES, INC. PRODS.

## Coming Home

continued from page 161

10,500 from other enemy action, 8,000 from non-hostile causes. Roughly 5,000 lost one or more limbs in the war. More than two million served in the war zone and millions more had their future shaped by the threat of going to war. Only 6,000 women saw military service in Vietnam. But as sisters, girl friends, and wives, millions of draft-age women paid a heavy share of the emotional cost of the war. Vietnam wrought havoc on millions of lives in a manner that most Americans may never understand.

—“Chance and Circumstance: The Draft, The War, and The Vietnam Generation,” by Lawrence M. Baskir and William A. Strauss.

“One day, they told me Chip had come home and I could finally see him in the hospital,” recalled Vera Mastrogianni. “I had been living for that day for a long time. I went to the hospital. I was very nervous. When I actually got to the amputee ward, I didn’t go in. For a while I just stood there looking through the windows. They had these two square little windows in the doors. I stretched up and looked through and all I could see were all these stumps strung up in the air. It was like a forest of stumps all wrapped in white.

“I was afraid I wouldn’t know which one was Chip and that I might walk right by him. I went in and I kept saying over and over to myself, ‘Dear God, please give me strength. Please don’t let me faint.’ I was feeling faint and I was fighting back tears and I was walking slowly past each bed with its strung-up stumps trying to see the face. To see if it was Chip. You don’t know how I prayed that I wouldn’t cry. Chip had enough to deal with and I knew he didn’t need a crying mother on top of that.”

For the five months that Frank Mastrogianni was in the Philadelphia Naval Hospital, Vera and her five sisters spent their days cooking up vats of spaghetti, sauce and meatballs and taking them in, along with dozens of hoagies, to distribute to all the 50 patients in the amp ward.

“It was like a prison,” remembered Vera Mastrogianni. “These boys had given so much and were supposed to be heroes but instead you went in there and it was like they were prison inmates. Sometimes the officers would come through and tell us to take the food and leave. There didn’t seem to be any rules. It was whatever the officer or head nurse felt like doing that day. One day, one officer—it was a woman—came in and asked for a bunch of the spaghetti we had brought. So we gave her some. She sat down, ate it and then told us visiting hours were over

# LORAIN Mfg. Company

A factory  
outlet  
featuring famous  
brands  
of jr. and misses  
coats, dresses &  
sportswear  
at Factory Outlet  
Prices.

ROUTE 130 NORTH 613 BLACK HORSE PIKE  
BURLINGTON, N.J. HADDON HEIGHTS, N.J.  
609-386-5554 609-546-8915

95 MAIN ST. 35 MARKET ST.  
FLEMINGTON, N.J. ELMWOOD PARK, N.J.  
201-782-8688 201-796-3838

8216 ROOSEVELT BLVD.  
PHILADELPHIA, PA.  
215-333-3363

## ABRASIVES

EQUIPMENT & SUPPLIES  
FOR BLASTING, CLEANING,  
TUMBLING, POLISHING,  
BUFFING, LAPPING  
AND GRINDING

- Elgin Diamond Products
- Baystate Wheels
- Aluminum Oxide • Testing Sands
- Silicon Carbide • Soda Blast
- Buffing Compounds
- Burnishing Compounds
- Lapping Compounds
- Polishing Powders • Sparkle Beads
- Glass Beads • Sand • Corundum
- Garnet • Nut Shells • Tripoli
- Pumice • Steel Shot • Emery
- Rouge • Flint Shot • Quartz
- Tumbling Media & Equip.
- Vibratory Media & Equip.
- Trinco Blast Cabinets
- I.C.M. Cabinets • Titan Blast Pots
- Key Bulk Blast Machines
- A.L.C. Sandy Jets

MICRO-GRAIN® Precision Powders  
POLY-CHEM® Tumbling Compounds  
POLY-GRIT® Slag Abrasives

IMMEDIATE DELIVERY FROM STOCK  
WRITE ON COMPANY LETTERHEAD FOR CATALOG

## MDC INDUSTRIES

400 West Glenwood Avenue  
Philadelphia, Pa. 19140 (215) 426-5925



and that we had to get out. I said, 'How can you do this? You just sat there and ate and you're throwing us out before we can feed the boys?' She said, 'Get out.' I would come home and I'd sit at this table and I'd cry my eyes out each night. I didn't know where I was going to get the strength for the next day. But I never let Chip see me crying.

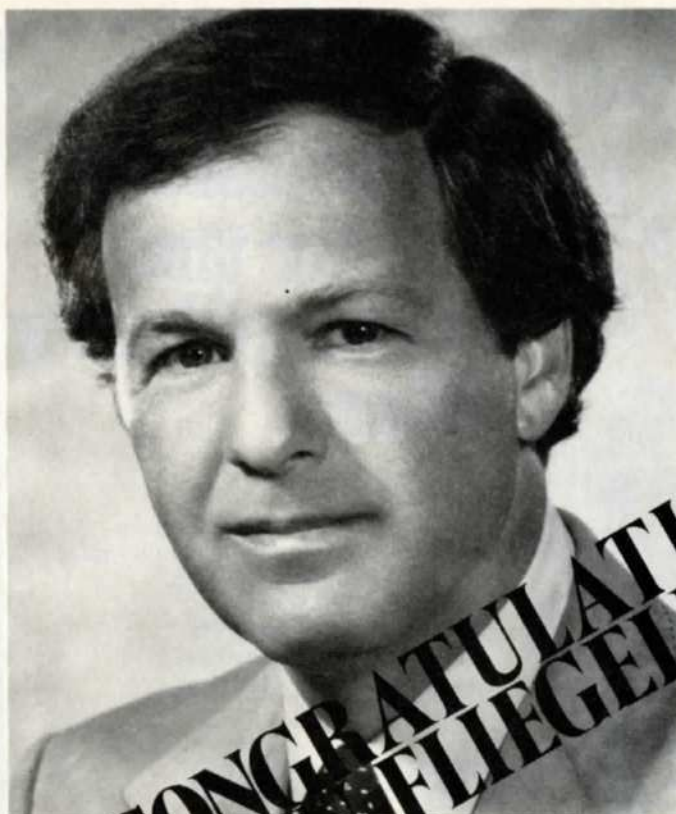
"It was so hard to be there and watch as the other families came in for the first time. It wasn't so hard to watch the mothers and the fathers. But to watch the girl friends come in. That's what hurt. The girls would come in and they'd walk down the rows of beds toward their boyfriend and even before they found him, you could see it in their eyes: they weren't ever coming back. Sometimes it was the boys themselves that would cut things off. Their girl would come in for the first time and the boy would be laying there with no legs or no arms and he'd say something so cutting and nasty—so that the girl would leave in tears and never come back.

"I didn't understand at first how they could do that. But later, I could see where they were terrified of being abandoned by the girl. And every day they had watched girls come in and even get sick after visiting other amputees. So when *their* girl came in for the first time, they wanted to be the one who cut her off. At least they would have that. At least they felt like they had control. At least it wouldn't be the girl first leaving them.

"When Chip first came home, Teresa, his girl friend, had a hard time with it. The first time I went to see him, she didn't come along. It was hard for her. My heart was aching—hoping she'd stand by him and not run away like the others. The next time, she did go and she was an angel. They got married and have given me two beautiful grandchildren.

"After the shock of those first visits wore off, we could come and go and we tried to help out as much as we could with Chip and the others. I began to realize one day that you couldn't get wheelchairs or other things you needed. I would run around trying to find a wheelchair and was told there weren't enough. So the boys would sometimes fight over the ones available. Or they'd get up real early to get one for the day.

"I was going around asking, 'How can this be? How can these boys who did so much in Vietnam come here to a Navy Hospital and not have enough wheelchairs or stump stockings or other things?' No one would answer me. But finally, an older man—he was from World War II with a leg missing—called me aside and said, 'Look, I'm going to tell you how it works here because you're running yourself ragged.



## CONGRATULATIONS IRVIN FLIEGELMAN

### Honor Agent of the Equitable's Eastern Division

Each year The Equitable's Old Guard, an association of Agency Managers, designates an Honor Agent for each of the company's seven sales divisions. The individuals selected are those who have distinguished themselves professionally and have contributed their time and effort to community affairs. Irvin Fliegelman, of the Tracy/Hausmann Agency in Philadelphia, has earned first place among more than 1,200 agents in the Equitable's Eastern Division.

This achievement is one of many in Irv's outstanding career. After graduating with a BS degree from Rider College, Trenton, N.J., he joined the Equitable in 1966. He has since earned many of the company's top honors, including membership in Equitable's President's Cabinet, National Council, Order of Excalibur, and Hall of Fame. In 1970 he was named one of Equitable's top five Young Agents of the Year, and in 1977 was his agency's leading producer.

He is a Life and Qualifying Member of the industry's Million Dollar Round Table. Among his outstanding outside activities he is active in his community's Allied Jewish Appeal Annual Campaign, serving as chairman of this campaign in 1978-1979. He is Second Vice President of his synagogue and is a member of the Board of Directors of the Rider College Alumni Association. Irv has also been active in sports, and for the past seven years has sponsored a team and coached in the Plymouth Township Junior American Basketball League. He is a member of Green Valley Country Club, and has lectured before many organizations on insurance subjects.

Irv, his wife Susan and their two children, Scott and Jodi, reside in Norristown, Pa. He is a partner in the insurance firm of Wise and Fliegelman Associates, Inc.



The Equitable Life Assurance Society  
of the United States  
1700 Market Street, Suite 1910  
Philadelphia, Pa. 19103  
(215) 561-3500

The Equitable Life Assurance Society  
of the United States, New York, N.Y.



# NEW Fall Fashions designed exclusively for the Extraordinary Man



Our Fall Collection includes such fashion leaders as Palm Beach, Manhattan, Hardy Amies, Phoenix, Rainfair, Redwood, Sportswear, William Barry, Outerwear by Mighty Mac, and Manhattan accessories.

Big: 44 to 72 / Tall: 39 to 60 XL  
Shoes: 8 to 15EEE



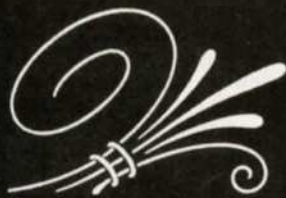
## George Jacobs

Clothier for Big & Tall Men

Philadelphia/Cherry Hill/Lehigh Valley Mall

(215) WA 3-2118 (609) 795-4110 (215) 264-8528

# For Your Convenience



If your business involves travel, then convenience is important to you. And convenience is what you get at The Sheraton. We are centrally located across from Virginia Commonwealth University, near the downtown business and shopping district, with easy access to major highways and interstates. We feature roomy, comfortable accommodations, meeting and banquet facilities, swimming pool and a fine

restaurant.

When you stay in Richmond, stay at the Sheraton. We're here for your convenience.

The Sheraton Motor Inn, Richmond, Virginia is operated by Richmond Hotels Company under a license issued by Sheraton Inns, Inc.



## Sheraton Motor Inn

SHERATON HOTELS & INNS, WORLDWIDE  
FRANKLIN & BELVIDERE STREETS  
RICHMOND, VA. 23220 (804) 643-2831

## Coming Home

There are plenty of wheelchairs. You just have to know how to get them. You walk out that door and down the hallway and to a certain room. You hand the man \$5 and say you want a chair.'

"And that's how it really did work. People were paying bribes to get their sons wheelchairs and stump stockings and other things. I kept saying, 'I don't believe this.' But that's the way it was.

"And you couldn't complain because then it would go against your boy. When you started asking questions or complaining, they would take it out on the boys. So you kept your mouth shut and did the best you could. It was terrible."

*I assure you it is the President's intention that . . . these deserving veterans . . . be provided for in a manner which does them justice and does not compromise the Nation's honor in meeting its debt to them.*

—letter to Vera Mastrogiovanni

from Odell W. Vaughn  
Chief Benefits Officer  
Veterans Administration  
Washington, D.C.

The corner at 13th and Wharton doesn't look much different from the rest of South Philadelphia. On one side of the street is Franzini's shop, which has been there as long as anyone can remember. Inside, old man Franzini dispenses newspapers, soda pop, candy bars and neighborhood gossip. Across the street is the American Baking Company whose workrooms send out the warm odor of hot bread to waft across the expanse of block-square Columbus Park. From the near corner of the park, one can sit on a bench or lay in the grass and see tidy red-brick row homes stretching out endlessly.

Like the corner itself, the neighborhood changes little from year to year. People still hang out American flags on holidays and march their families off to church every Sunday morning. In the early evening, you can catch them on their front steps debating Rizzo's chances; Tayoun's possibilities; the price of pork chops; unemployment; the black menace; Jimmy Carter's ineptness; and the drug problem which has ravaged the area's youth.

Back in the late '60s, drugs were not much of an item here. Then, gang wars were the big thing and the grassy knoll of Columbus Park was home to the 13th and Wharton gang.

Looking back, many area residents grudgingly admit that, given their choice, they'd take the broken arms and fractured jaws of those former gangwar days to the glue sniffers and speed freaks who now take over the neighborhood's alleyways after dark.

The members of the old gang still



gather at 13th and Wharton on warm nights and weekend afternoons to drink beer; loll in the sun; reminisce and shake their heads in astonishment at how different the young girls are today from the way they were ten years ago.

Now, instead of corner bums, they are plumbers, butchers, bakers, carpenters and hairdressers. One of them is a double amputee who is still known here by his adolescent nickname, "Chip."

Back in the old days, when Frank Mastrogiovanni ran with 13th and Wharton, Columbus Park was a major battleground where the local boys worked out their differences—via knuckles and lead pipes—with such rivals as the 10th and Carpenter gang, the 7th and Annin gang and the 7th and Catharine gang.

Ironically, among the tactics used by 13th and Wharton to protect its turf were booby traps designed so that attacking gangs would tumble in hidden holes, stumble over ankle-high ropes, or trip their way across carpets of jagged rocks or broken glass while the locals retreated over the rooftops and prepared a counterattack.

This particular afternoon, there are a dozen former members of the gang gathered on the corner. They spread out a blanket and take off their shirts and rub themselves with Johnson's Baby Oil so that their tattoos shine vividly, like fresh oil paintings. As they stretch in the sun, one man runs across the street and returns with quart bottles of beer which are opened and passed from mouth to mouth.

"In the old days," they explain, "before drugs fucked everything up here, every gang had a guy like Chip. We didn't have guns, but things went down pretty heavy with fists and, sometimes, pipes and chains.

"Chip was one of the young ones, he was always the first to step out against someone coming in. I mean, like when you're in a gang and there is a fight about to come down you sort of hang back and try not to look like you're hanging back. You look mean, hoping *you* don't have to step out first. Chip wasn't like that. If it was coming down, Chip was the first one there.

"Like there'd be a big guy coming at Chip, and Chip would take a couple of bad whacks right off. He'd go down and the big guy would back off, kind of smiling because he knew nobody was going to take whacks like that and come back out again. But that is when Chip really got going. Like it would trigger something in him. He'd come off the ground and be all over the big guy, and the big guy'd be on the ground bleeding from five places wondering what the fuck happened.



## Academy of Social Dancing

1920 Chestnut St., Phila., Pa.

1 P.M. to 10 P.M. | 561-0323

one free lesson

learn to dance.



**Drissel  
Business Machines, Inc.**

235 No. 12th Street  
Philadelphia, Pa.  
922-6161

**THE TOTAL RESPONSIBILITY  
COMPANY.**



**Everything in Fireplaces  
and Wood Stoves from A to Z  
GLASS SCREENS**

*Unique, hard-to-find fireplace goods.  
Authorized dealer for 50 manufacturers.*

238 So. Broad St., Woodbury, N.J. (609) 845-2361  
15 Min. from W. Whitman & Ben Franklin Bridges



Can we make your summer place a palace?



## SHORE THING.

So you've set up summer house-keeping by the shore. Right in the thick of the action. Smart move. But four walls do not a showplace make. That's our department.

At Kensington, we've got the makings for a palace. Exquisite furnishings, sumptuous carpetings and decorator accessories. (Do it yourself or let our talented Design Staff give you a hand.)

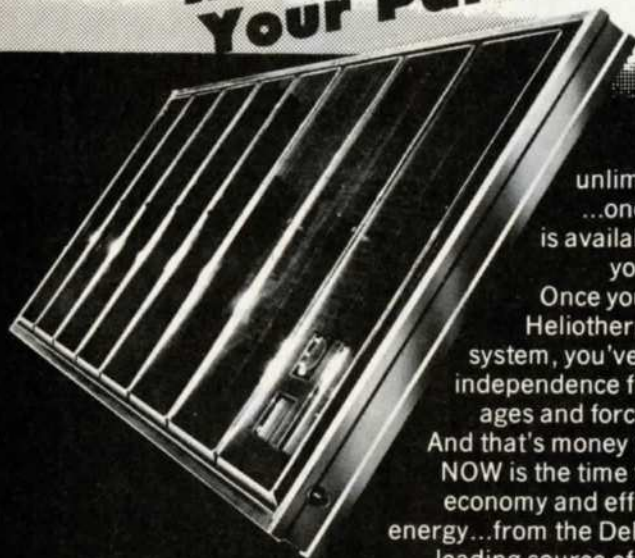
Why not give us a call. (If you're in Atlantic City or environs, we're right in your backyard.) Do it today. Tomorrow for shore.

Since 1912  
**Kensington**  
Furniture and Carpets



200 Tilton Road, Northfield, N.J. • Across the Bay from Margate • (609) 641-4800

**Make the Sun  
Your Partner!**



Choose a partner with unlimited resources...one who's energy is available NOW when you need it most. Once you've installed a Heliotherm solar energy system, you've declared your independence from fuel shortages and forced shutdowns. And that's money in your pocket. NOW is the time to consider the economy and efficiency of solar energy...from the Delaware Valley's leading source of solar systems.

## Heliotherm & Sun

HELIO THERM, INC., LENNI, PENNSYLVANIA 19052  
(215) 459-9030

## Coming Home

"Chip had quick hands and a lot of heart. That's what got him by and why so many guys down here respected him then. Heart. He wouldn't stop until he was either unconscious or a winner.

"He was also kind of a clown in some ways. Like if there was a guy on a ladder painting his storefront, it would be Chip who would run over and shake the shit out of the ladder. He'd never let the guy fall off, but he scared the living shit out of him. Then he'd stand there and argue with the guy trying to get him to see how funny it all was.

"Chip wasn't a bully, even though he was mean in a fight. He was really into sandlot football. He was a coach; and if a kid's old man had kept the kid in for punishment, Chip would stop around the house and talk to the father—trying to convince him that he should cut the kid a break and let him attend football practice. He was like a father to some of those younger kids.

"He was also different from most of us because he *wanted* to go in the service and then he *wanted* to go to Vietnam. Most of the guys on the corner had no time for that shit. It was a bullshit war to them. You know? It wasn't *my* war. I had nothing against the VC or whoever it was we were supposed to be fighting. But Chip had this heavy thing about, you know, doing the patriotic thing. Everyone respected him for that.

"Some of the guys went to see him when he finally got to the navy hospital here. But most of us didn't want to go to the hospital because the place was such a shit house. You'd go in and all these guys were slugged out and it was so horrible. You'd go in and see Chip and he'd be groggy a lot of the time. You'd ask the other guys in the beds why he was so groggy and they'd say Chip was raising hell about something again and they gave him something to 'quiet' him.

"That's the way he is, man. He's not diplomatic. There'd be rats or rotten food or no orderlies or no wheelchairs and Chip would be yelling, 'DO SOMETHING ABOUT THESE GODDAMNED RATS! A MAN NEEDS AN ORDERLY HERE, WHERE ARE THE GODDAMNED ORDERLIES! WHERE ARE THE WHEELCHAIRS!' He'd make an issue of the problems that the other guys had just given up on.

"I remember when Chip was due to get out but there was some foul-up in his records or something. There was always a foul-up in everything there. It was unbelievable. Anyway, he called the guys at 13th and Wharton and said 'I can't stand it anymore. I'm going crazy. They won't let me out of here.'

"So, five of us headed over to the



hospital. I mean, we were going there to kick some ass. It was like a search and destroy mission for the 13th and Wharton. We went into the hospital and picked Chip up out of his bed and started carrying him down the ward. We were grabbing up Chip's stuff and the orderlies were running around like a bunch of pissants yelling, 'You can't do this. You can't do this.' And one of the guys says 'Get out the way, motherfucker, or get hurt.' The orderlies got out of the way.

FRANK NICKOLAS MASTROGIOVANNI/CORPORAL, U.S. MARINE CORPS:

*I extend to you my personal thanks and sincere appreciation of a grateful nation for your contribution of honorable service to our country. You have helped maintain the security of the nation during a critical time in its history with a devotion to duty and a spirit in keeping with the proud tradition of the military service.*

*I trust that in the coming years you will maintain an active interest in the Armed Forces and the purpose for which you served. My best wishes to you for happiness and success in the future.*

—Richard M. Nixon  
Commander in Chief

Like a large mallet of meat, Frank Mastrogiovanni's fist thumped the tabletop so that the glasses rattled and the scotch bottle threatened to tip. "Look, I know I'm hot-tempered. But I've always been that way. Yeah, I yell sometimes when things are going wrong. But for Christ's sake, can everything go so wrong for seven years?"

"It's not just the big things, it's the small things, too. Like I haven't yet gotten the \$200 in government bonds that were taken out of my pay in the Marines. So I call up and they give me a runaround or shift me from one phone to another until I'm back with the person I started with and he wants to transfer me to another phone. I mean, for years I've tried to find out what happened to that \$200 in bonds. I still don't know.

"I come back home to South Philadelphia and I was due to get a 'Vietnam veteran's bonus.' Now, that wasn't something I was asking for. They passed the law. So I call up after a year and say, 'Hey, I never got my bonus.' Another runaround.

"Or things like stump stockings. Very important to an amputee. They're made of pure virgin wool and you wear them to cushion your stumps. Well, you get one pair a month from the VA. But most amputees I know go through three, four pairs a month. So you end up buying them yourself or working out some under-the-table deal with supply. I mean, I find myself saying, 'Why am I sitting here begging the VA to give me stockings to cover the stumps of the

**WE'LL  
RUN AROUND!**

If you want it, that is. In typesetter talk, a run-around is type set in narrower measure than adjacent text in order to accommodate a cut-in illustration.

Of course, we can give you much more than a run-around. We can give you computerized composition, electronically controlled platemaking — and a host of other modern, sophisticated techniques.

In fact, we can offer you a complete printing service under one roof. From creative art, design and layout, through typesetting, camera, printing, binding and mailing.

So when you think about your next printing job, think of Chilton Printing. We'll give you what you want — even a run-around.

For more information, call Walt Becker at (215) SH 8-2000. Or write Chilton Printing, 56th & Chestnut Streets, Philadelphia, Pa. 19139. While you're at it, ask for a free copy of our *Quality in Print: An Insider's Guide*.

**Chilton**  
PRINTING



# WILDFLOWERS

Now Open for Sunday Brunch  
11-3. Dinner Every Evening.  
Special Private Parties. New  
"Wintergarten Room"

514-16 South Fifth Street  
WA 3-6708  
(Reservations Strongly Suggested)

## Twin Tournedos of Beef.



Just another thing we do well.

## The Indian Chief

Rt. 70, at the Medford circle, Medford, N.J.  
(609) 654-5776

Luncheon - Dinner - Cocktails  
We accept Diners Club and American Express

## La Chaumière

2040 Sanson Street

### Spotlite

"Bill Zimmerman is the Internationally Acclaimed  
Grand Master Chef of All."

### Phila. Magazine

"Food is excellent. Service impeccable."

### Collegiate Guide

"Bill Zimmerman is at the top in French Cuisine.  
He is Phila's best kept secret."

Locust 7-8455

## Coming Home

legs I left in Vietnam?' No one should have to *beg* for this kind of thing.

"Or, one day I have to go to the VA hospital in Philadelphia because I break out in a weird rash all over my body. The damned doctor keeps asking me, 'Do you use drugs? Do you use drugs? Are you *sure* you don't use drugs?' I keep saying, 'No, I don't use drugs.' But he keeps asking me and saying 'You can tell *me*. If you use drugs you can tell me about it.' Finally, I'm saying, 'For Christ's sake, just because I was in The Nam doesn't mean I'm a junkie or a psycho. I got a rash not a narcotic habit.' But he wouldn't let up.

"What pissed me off about that whole thing was that the doctor already *had* samples of my blood. He could have seen if I was using drugs by analyzing my blood, right? Well, he would have found traces of scotch—because I do drink my scotch. But no drugs. That was never my thing. Just for a rash I got to take a ration of shit that gets me mad for days after that. Why can't I just be an ordinary guy who goes in with an ordinary rash and gets a smile from the VA doctor and something for the rash? Is that too much to ask?

"Or, back in 1976—in October—my wife is about to have our second daughter. We take her to St. Agnes Hospital in South Philadelphia because that is where we always went. Now, understand that it used to be that my dependents could go to any hospital for treatment and it was paid for as part of my disabled benefits. But this time, I submit the bills and they tell me that the law was changed, didn't I know?

"The new law is that if you live within 40 miles of a Navy hospital, your family has to go there for treatment—they can't go to another hospital. So, we should have gone to the Navy hospital. But, we didn't know about the new law.

"I call them up to straighten it out. They say they notified every disabled veteran in the area by letter. I said I didn't get a letter. They said I must have gotten a letter. So, I call up a bunch of other guys I know who are disabled vets—they never heard of the new law and none of them got letters. So, I call back and start saying, 'I checked around with these guys and none of us got letters.' Well, it went on and on like this for almost a year. People would ask me what the hell I was trying to do, causing trouble like this.

"In the end—it was July of 1977—they finally paid for the baby and all at St. Agnes. But, I mean they were wrong. They never told anybody about the change and then they give you all kinds of hell for not knowing.

"Or, I got a wife and two kids and I'm entitled to a specially designed

## Nils Sanborn introduces tires for your Sport & Import



Sportmotive now  
has premium, high  
quality, high per-  
formance tires  
including Kleber,  
Metzler & Sep-  
perit. Sizes to  
fit almost all  
makes and  
models.

Outstanding accessories, parts & service  
for your sports or luxury foreign car.

**sportmotive** INC.

718 W. Lancaster Ave., Bryn Mawr, Pa. LA 5-5910

## C.C. Charlie's

Restauranté Discotheque



Philadelphia's finest disco supper club.

Complimentary dance lessons  
every Tuesday night.

Fairway Plaza  
Red Lion Road & Philmont Avenue  
Huntingdon Valley, Penna. 947-5018

Dinner: Tues.-Sun. 5:00-11:00 PM  
Late Snack: Tues.-Sun. 11:00-1:00 AM  
Disco: Tues.-Sun. 10:00-2:00 AM



house for my disability. So I go to the VA to get rolling on that and they tell me it will be three years before they can even process the request. Out of sheer luck, a builder I knew took a personal interest and went out of his way to have plans drawn up and build the place for me cheap in New Jersey—or I'd still be out of a house.

"Now, they throw that at me when I'm complaining about school problems. They say, 'But, Frank, you already have a house and a specially adapted vehicle from the VA. Don't you think you have enough?' They try to put you on the defensive. I won't go. I don't feel any guilt about having a VA house and car. Man, I earned them in Vietnam. I paid a pair of legs for them.

"That's what Tony Alongo had been talking about. I finally understood why he had been so angry. He had been through it already and he was trying to tell me what it was like. I keep thinking of Tony and what happened to him and I can't tell you what it does to my head."

*Lance Corporal Tony Alongo; recipient of the Bronze Star as well as the South Vietnamese Cross of Gallantry; leg amputee; embittered veteran and fellow-patient with Frank Mastrogiovanni in the Philadelphia Navy Hospital, was discharged from the Marines shortly after he appeared with Mastrogiovanni to throw out the first ball at Veterans Stadium in 1971. Four months after he returned home to Detroit, Alongo died after ingesting a lethal combination of alcohol and pills.*

"YOU KNOW HOW it sometimes takes you a long while to understand what really happened?" said Mastrogiovanni. "That's the way it was for me with Tony. I promised myself that they weren't going to do that to me. They weren't going to drive me down. I was going to fight back.

"There have been all sorts of problems because I won't go along with what the VA counselors want me to do. They told me at first that they were setting me up for a job with the VA—a desk job doing paperwork. I said, 'Thanks, but no thanks. That's not what I want to do.' They got pissed. 'We went to a lot of trouble to do this, Frank.'

"But I figure I only lost my legs in The Nam. I didn't lose my right to run my own life or decide what I would like to try or where I'd like to work. I mean, when I came home to South Philadelphia, Frank Rizzo offered me a job in City Hall. \$17,000-a-year doing desk work. He had a lot of class to offer me something like that. I really appreciated it, but I turned it down. It's like

We sell encyclopedias, too. But there's a difference.

We sell World Book and Britannica and International and Americana. We sell every major encyclopedia published in the U.S., even 1978 editions. And we sell them at a real discount—some for half of what you'd pay, buying from the door-to-door salesman.

There's another difference. We don't care what set of encyclopedia you buy, as long as it's the right one. So if you came in and told us you

wanted to buy the World Book for your twelve year old, we'd honestly tell you that in our opinion your child has already begun to outgrow that encyclopedia. We wouldn't ask you to take our word for it, either. We'd suggest you call any public library and talk to someone who knows reference books.

Want a good set of encyclopedia for your child? Want to save some money and a lot of grief? Come see us. We do exist.

### The Discount Encyclopedia Center

38 S. 19th Street, Philadelphia 561-5090

**10,000 encyclopedia salesmen swear we don't exist.**



## OLYMPIC CABINET CRAFT

Your Center for Custom-Made Unpainted Furniture  
**Presents . . . THE STATE of the ART!**



### the Ultimate PLATFORM BED

Storage and convenience with charm . . . created to provide beauty and to solve the age old question "Where do I put it?" Like every piece we make, available in any size or configuration you may require.

**Professional Custom Finishing at low, low prices**

AVAILABLE IN BIRCH, WALNUT OR OAK



BOOKCASES • DESKS • LOFT & BUNK BEDS • WALL SYSTEMS • CHESTS • DRESSERS

**"Everything Possible to Create in Unpainted Furniture"**  
**At 17th & SANSOM STS.**

Mon.-Sat. 9-6PM  
Wed. & Fri. to 8 PM

**LO 9-1000-01**



## The heirlooms of tomorrow are here today.

Simplified lines of danish design, combined with the skill of expert craftsmen, makes our unique collection timeless. These are only a few of our carefully selected chairs. We have the tables and buffet to go with them, naturally!



# SCANDIA HOUSE

1733 Chestnut St., Philadelphia / LO 3-0842 / Daily & Sat 10-5:30, Wed til 9



## Big Ben's inviting your business associates to stay with him

He's got loads of room. At the Benjamin Franklin Hotel there are 1200 spacious guest rooms. With all the niceties, all the services a big hotel can offer. And best of all, the Ben's got a great location: close to government offices, department stores and historic sites. So treat your out-of-town associates in a big way.

Book them at Philadelphia's big, big hotel. Call (215) 922-8600.



Chestnut Street at Ninth  
Philadelphia, PA 19105

## Coming Home

I want to have a profession. I mean, I don't want a place to sit every day and collect a check. I want a purpose. I want to do something because I'm good at it, not because it is a job created for a poor gimp who couldn't get a job anyplace else.

"But you tell that to the VA and they start climbing the walls. 'You're not cooperating, Frank. You're going to have to learn to live with your limitations.'"

"When I first got out of the hospital, I was really down. You feel like half a person. You're self-conscious of your stumps and the way you have to move around. But I got turned out to this amputee in Harrisburg who is a karate instructor who was teaching karate to disabled vets. I go to the VA and say I'd like to try that. They say, 'Don't be silly, Frank. Amputees can't do karate. You're being unreal.'"

"So, for two years I went on my own to Harrisburg and took lessons. The guy there cut me a break on the cost because he knew I didn't have much money and I had to drive out to Harrisburg once a week. I'll never forget: I finally went to a tournament in North Carolina. The matches were between able-bodied men. I fought walking on my stumps, the way I had trained. I didn't win in North Carolina, but I held my own against an able-bodied man. That whole thing changed my life. I got a grip on myself and a sense of what I could and could not do. I lost my self-conscious feelings about my stumps.

"But at the same time, things were getting worse at the VA. I also had gone for my high school equivalency diploma—because I dropped out of school before I went into the Marines. I got the diploma and I wanted to go to photography school. But the VA didn't think much of that. They wanted me to do things they had planned for me.

"It got so I'd go in to a counselor and he would have my records on the desk and he'd ask, 'Oh, Frank, there's a blank spot here. What was your father's name?' I'd say, 'Look, we've been through this a couple of times already. I don't know my father's name. I didn't have a father.' Then he'd start with 'Now, Frank, is that why you're so angry at the world? Is that why you're having so much trouble readjusting to reality; because you're a bastard and you never knew your father. Is that it, Frank?'"

"So, I'd come across the desk and say, 'Hey, motherfucker, how would you like me to take your head off? I'm having trouble adjusting because I got no fucking legs and it's hard to walk that way. And if you lay any more shit on me about being a bastard, I'm going to give you a shot.'"



"That is how it would go. I'd go in and they'd either refuse to answer things for me or they'd get into these raps on my 'adjustment problems.' And I'd get mad and yell like hell. After a while I took it as a joke, thinking, 'Fuck you, man. I've dealt with mortar attacks and booby traps and surgeons' knives and I haven't caved in yet. You're not going to get me with a bunch of goddamned red tape. No way.

"But then, the problems were getting worse, with getting into a school and all. Another guy inside the VA—he's an amp too—gets me aside one day and says, 'Frank, check your records. They're pushing you into a corner. You don't know what they can do with records. They're loading yours so you look like a psycho, like they used to do in the hospital.'

"Let me explain that—in the hospitals, that was the first thing they used. If a dude started raising too much hell and too many people started noticing, they would order the guy to see a psychiatrist. It only had to be *one* time. But after that, any time a congressman called and said, 'I have a disturbing letter from so-and-so about conditions in veterans' hospitals, the local VA guys could whisper, 'Oh, didn't you *know*, congressman, he has been under the care of our psychiatrist.' The end, man. The dude was completely neutralized. That's what it's about, man. You rock the boat and ask too many questions, they neutralize you.

"It took me three months to get all my records—and I couldn't believe what was in them. Every time they were goading me with shit like 'Is it because you're a bastard, Frank?' and I'd come at them yelling, they were writing it down. But in the records it reads like they were just sitting there quietly when I came through the door like a raving lunatic.

"But now I can't do anything about it. Now, they tell me I can't do anything more about school or anything else until I see a VA psychiatrist. They've been trying to get me into the shrink for a while. I won't go. I'm not crazy, man. I'm just trying to get the VA to treat disabled veterans like men, with dignity and individual rights, instead of like a bunch of fucking half-wit gimps who can't run their own lives."

*These are excerpts from Frank Mastrogianni's Veterans Administration confidential "Training Files" spanning the period from 1972 to the present:*

*"As the veteran continued talking his voice got louder and appeared to be more upset. As the conversation went on more and more profanity entered into his comments. He made some statements that could*

**Serving the Main Line to Society Hill**



**Change your cooktop to match your menu**

**JENN-AIR GRILL-RANGE**



Jenn-Air's incredibly versatile model selection lets you create a range to meet your every need! In cooktops, choose the beauty of smooth white glass-ceramic or the electric conventional-element. Simply lift out either cartridge to convert your range to a Char-Flavor grill in seconds! Convected or Conventional radiant heat in your oven at the flip of a switch! The Conventional cooks your present recipes without change. Convected, your Jenn-Air cooks cooler and faster. (Turkeys, roasts and hams cook at 50° lower temperature, reducing cooking time as much as 30%!)

See the largest Jenn-Air display in the Delaware Valley

**Dolan's**

210 W. Lancaster Ave. Ardmore, Pa.  
MI-2-3008



**Circle Ford.**  
3000 W. Chester Pike, Broomall EL 6-4500

**King of the Crabs**



11 a.m. to 1 a.m. Daily, 4 p.m. to 11 p.m. Sunday  
804-06 SOUTH 2ND STREET • 339-912



# HILL LEASING

HARRY WOLFINGTON & FRANK DUFFY

## ALL MODELS

Leasing imported & domestics from Chevrolet to  
Datsun 280/Z to Mercedes 450 SLC.

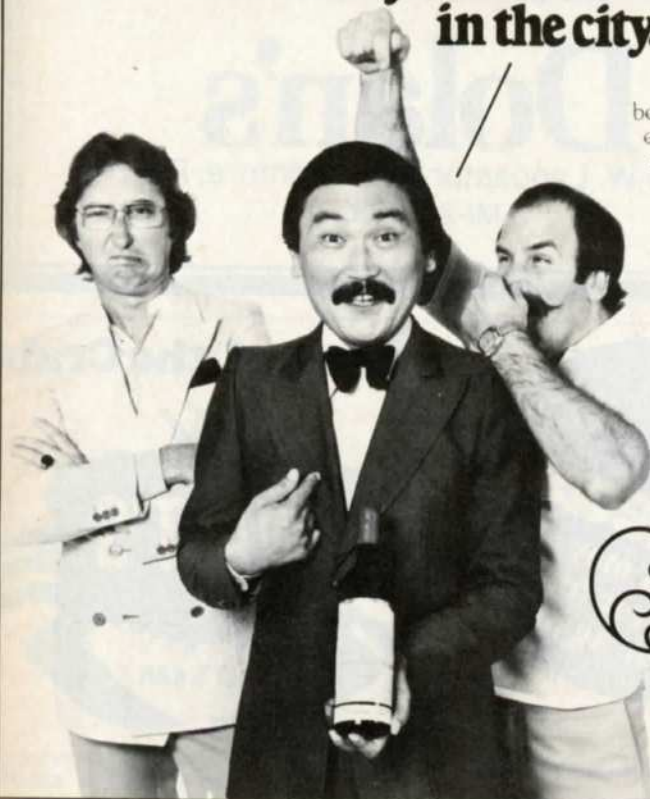
## AUTOS & TRUCKS

24 to 48 month leases available. Open & closed end.  
Low monthly cost with the most personalized service.

771 EAST LANCASTER AVE.,  
VILLANOVA, PA. (215) 527-5115

**I'm Agan, the maitre d' at Shippens.  
Mort and Wally think I'm the best  
in the city.**

As Philadelphia's  
best maitre d', I'll do  
everything I can to  
make your dinner  
delightful.



**SHIPPENS**

Restaurant  
and Bar  
Fourth and  
Bainbridge Sts.  
Phila., Pa. • 925-2325

## Coming Home

*be construed as threats."*

—Ed Pyne, VA Vocational  
Rehabilitation Specialist  
Training Report

"Today the veteran demanded that he be allowed to review his training records. He was told that the procedure to be followed was that records should be reviewed by appropriate personnel, and then the veteran would be sent an appointment letter indicating where and when his records would be reviewed with him. He refused to follow this procedure; he said that he is not leaving until he gets his records. He challenged us to call the guards and take him to jail."

—unsigned VA incident report

"Veteran has difficulty handling his frustrations. Periodically, veteran would have emotional outbursts, characterized by hostility, loudness, sometimes abusive language and unreasonableness. The Vocational Rehabilitation Board recommended that the veteran be referred for a [psychiatric] evaluation."

—A. Freedland, VA Vocational  
Rehabilitation Specialist  
Medical memorandum

"Dear Mr. Mastrogianni: Thank you for your inquiry concerning your difficulty in obtaining authorization for homebound training. I have been advised by the Veterans Administration in Philadelphia that they would like you to have a [psychiatric] evaluation at their clinic before they can recommend you for further training."

—James J. Florio, Member of Congress  
Response to request for help

EVEN THOUGH THE FULL significance may have escaped us, all of us knew from the start that this was to be an experience like none other in our lives. We knew that from the first moment the 707 touched concrete, reversed engines and rolled to a stop at the end of a runway lined with palm trees, nervous Asian faces and sand-bagged gun bunkers.

It was an experience we wanted to savor; to collect with our senses; to recreate in our letters home; and, most of all, to photograph. Born sons to the boob tube, we were the first generation of warriors who were visual media junkies. Cameras were as much a part of our basic equipment as were cartridge clips.

And for the late bloomers who failed to take cameras, there was the PX. The same PX that sold us our Canadian Club; our TEAC tape recorders; our Sony portables; our Pioneer amplifiers; our porcelain elephants; our hair spray and canned hams and cigarettes, also sold Nikons, Canons, Minoltas and Yashicas—dirt cheap.

We brought The Nam home with us in cardboard boxes stuffed with grainy black and white snapshots and tin cases filled with color slides. Inside were black-pajamaed women stooping at their cooking braziers; roadside fish markets; sampans jammed close to a make-



shift river dock like water bugs clustered at a bit of garbage; flip-eaved pagodas with peeling Buddhas peering from their smoky interiors; the red umbrellas of a Vietnamese wedding; the white robes of mourning of a Vietnamese funeral; the endless carpets of rice shoots and women with shoulder poles carrying young plants for transplanting; children swimming in bomb crater "lakes"; rope-muscled xyclo drivers careening in and out of traffic; sad-eyed water buffalo with horns the size of tree limbs; the last rays of sun catching the gossamer leg panels of a woman's ao dai on a Da Nang street; the rib-sailed junks cruising amidst the limestone pillars thrust up—like a moonscape—from the waters of Nha Trang harbor; a blown-away tank, sunk at a crazy angle in the mud so that it looks vaguely like some wounded steel-plate elephant that tumbled down haphazardly to die.

We put it all on film and it was not only the exotic visions themselves, but the process of creating them that sunk in so deeply and came back with us—along with our discharges and GI school benefits—to Los Angeles and Chicago and New York and Philadelphia.

In Philadelphia, we looked around to find a school that would teach us the fine points of photography and show us how to make a profession of it in civilian life. Some of us found the Antonelli School of Photography whose advertising heavily stressed that it was a "VA Approved" institution.

It took a couple of weeks for the novelty to wear off; for the perceptions to adjust to what was going on in those classrooms. And this is what we found: we found a school where all our classmates were veterans. We found a school whose main textbook was a mimeograph of a U.S. Navy Photographic Manual. We found a school where students spent weeks taking pictures of a vase or a box and years to cover photographic basics that can be learned in months by an individual of normal intelligence. We found a school that sold us our equipment and paper and film at 15 to 20% above the prices of other downtown photo supply houses. We found a school where it took as long as three years to get to color photography.

In short, we found a school whose primary focus appeared to be the business of keeping open the pipeline between its cash registers and the VA disbursement office.

And after a semester or two a lot of us gathered up our notebooks and our prints and told Antonelli's front office to take their school and stuff it.

It didn't much matter how many of us dropped out because there were always more wanting to sign up and start their GI benefits—and their dream of

# HAVE YOURSELF A DYNAMITE

## "WEEKEND WONDER IN NEW YORK CITY"

2 days and  
1 solid night of  
non-stop fun! JUST **\$49.95**  
per person, double occupancy, including tips and taxes  
(exc. baggage handling).

All prices are subject to change without notice.

Come Friday or Saturday. Get a deluxe room at Loews Drake. A sumptuous breakfast in bed or a choice of breakfast or brunch in the Drake Room. Plus dinner, dancing and the 9:30 P.M. show at the one-and-only Shepheard's, the dynamite disco that's got New York jumping.

*Loews Drake*

What the world is coming to:  
**LOEWS HOTELS**

The Great Restoration of the Good Things In Life.  
Park Avenue at 56th Street, New York 10022.  
(212) 421-0900.

For reservations, see your travel agent or call LRI, Inc. (Loews Representation International) at (215) 665-8520 in Philadelphia. Balance of state, call (800) 462-4949 (toll-free) (Philadelphia).

## EXPLORE OUR WORLD

### IT HAS EVERYTHING UNDER THE SUN

on its own 200 acre estate located just 5 minutes from picturesque Christiansted. 18 hole golf course, 8 championship tennis courts, 3 beaches, watersports center. Truly the most complete vacation resort on St. Croix, in the Virgin Islands or the whole Caribbean.



*The Buccaneer's* for a world all your own

For reservations, brochures and information see your travel agent or call Mr. Ralph Locke (212) 586-3070. Box P, 315 E. 72nd St., NYC 10021.





**Voted best  
cheesecake 2 years  
in a row by  
Philadelphia  
Magazine.**

**COCKTAILS  
AND DINING.**

1515 Locust St. • 546-7373

The fabulous Sheraton 18 hole  
Championship golf course  
FREDERICKSBURG, VIRGINIA



**2 great  
golf  
packages!**

**\$144** GET AWAY  
WEEKEND  
FOR 2

- Friday noon to Sunday noon
- Double Occupancy Lodging  
for 2 nights
- Unlimited Green Fees
- Unlimited Cart Fees
- 2 breakfasts—2 dinners  
(Gratuities & liquor not included)

**\$279** 4 DAYS  
FUN & GOLF  
FOR 2

Wednesday noon to Sunday noon.  
Same great features for 4 days.

**TENNIS • DANCING  
LIVE SHOWS**

RESERVATIONS:  
call Pro Shop  
703 786-8385  
Or write Box 747,  
Fredericksburg, Va.  
22401

**Sheraton-Fredericksburg  
Motor Inn**

On I-95, less than an hour from Washington, D. C.

## Coming Home

a photographic career—rolling.

Last year, one of those new students was Frank Mastrogiovanni.

FROM THE FIRST, the VA counselors weren't crazy about Mastrogiovanni's idea of going to photography school. For one thing, how would he get around for things like the required nature photography? Mastrogiovanni had already solved that by purchasing a small three-wheeled motorized bike which he was using to roam the woods and fields, as well as the streets.

After a few weeks at Antonelli's, Mastrogiovanni was in the woods and had an accident with the three-wheeler. Not a bad accident, just a tip-over; but it landed him on his delicate stumps, injuring them. Unable to wear his artificial legs, he returned to school in a wheelchair—and soon began to raise hell about the architectural barriers that kept a wheelchair-bound person from entering or moving around inside

the school.

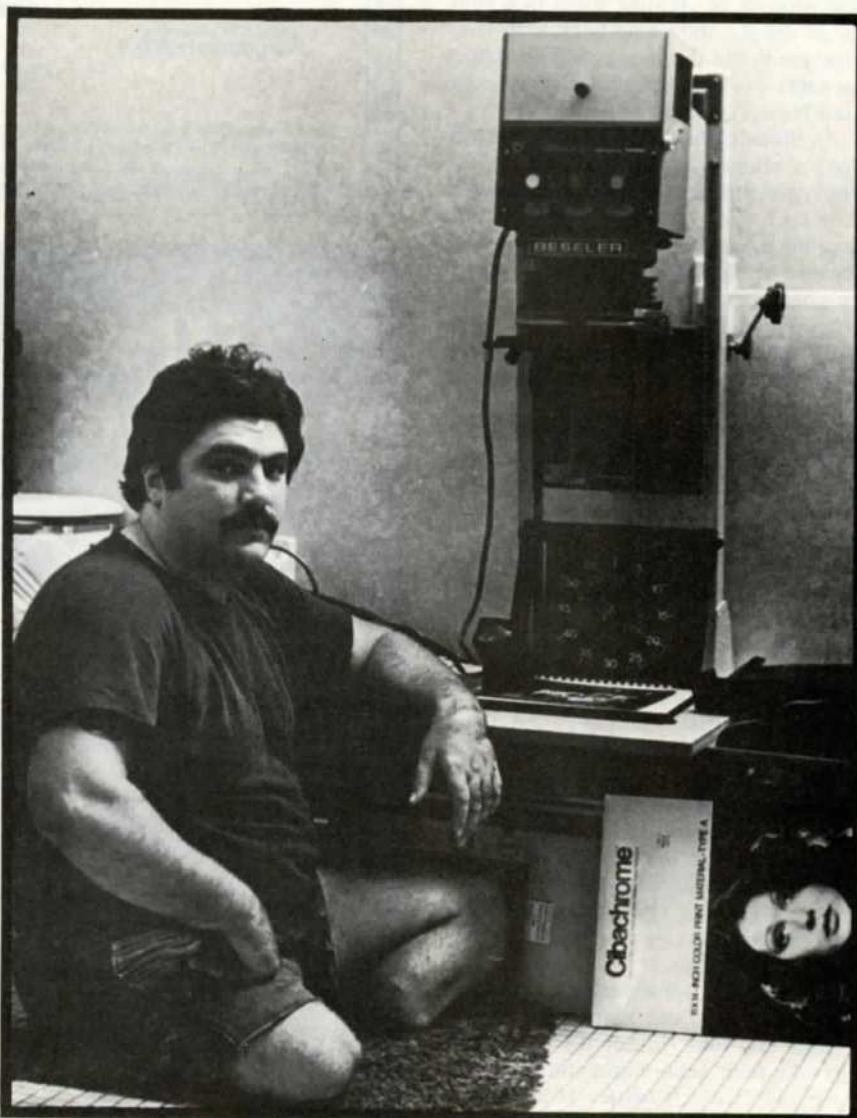
Records indicate that the Antonelli School responded to Mastrogiovanni's complaints by citing a pre-enrollment agreement—that he would wear artificial legs to school.

Mastrogiovanni replied that Antonelli was making the bulk of its money from veterans and ought to have ramps and other modifications that would allow disabled veterans in wheelchairs easy access and use of the facilities.

One of the biggest architectural barriers was the set of steps which prevented a wheelchair from getting into the building from the street.

Antonelli and the VA worked out an agreement—that Mastrogiovanni would wheel his chair up to the front steps each day and wait until he could find someone to help him inside.

Correspondence from both the VA and the school indicates that neither could understand why Mastrogiovanni never came back after that. Neither



*When the Veterans Administration wouldn't support Mastrogiovanni's interest in becoming a photographer, he built a darkroom he could operate himself.*



could apparently understand why the former Marine wasn't willing to flag down classmates and ask them to grab him by his armpits and stumps and trundle him up the stairs and into the building.

Mastrogiovanni didn't give up, though. He went home, began building a darkroom and small studio in his garage in which all equipment was at wheelchair level. Then he went back to the VA and asked to have his remaining GI education benefits applied to hiring a special teacher for homebound training in photography. "Homebound Training" is a program often set up by the VA for disabled veterans who find it difficult to get around or take training in normal learning institutions.

But the VA refused and now says that Mastrogiovanni's injuries "aren't serious enough" to warrant such a program. They also insist that he now has a "non-service related personality disorder" and will not approve him for the rest of his GI educational benefits until he sees their clinic psychiatrist.

And Mastrogiovanni has been as adamant in his refusal to see a VA psychiatrist or be talked out of his determination to study photography.

Which brings us to the present—as Frank Mastrogiovanni sits at his kitchen table opening another bottle of scotch, surrounded by Marine and Veterans Administration documents that tell the story of the last eight years of his life. He notes in passing that he drinks more scotch than he used to, but that it is harder for him to relax now.

YOU LEAVE HIS KITCHEN and walk past the plastic flesh-colored legs standing in the corner; past the two dark-haired daughters lolling on the living room rug; past the quiet wife with sad eyes; past the dusty boxes of photographic equipment, and out into the night air.

And you can't help thinking about Tony Alongo and what was going through his head those last minutes when he lost consciousness and went down in Detroit. Or about the hundreds of thousands of America's other throw-away soldiers who lost a piece of themselves in The Nam and came home to a country which figured it could forget the war by forgetting them.

A DIRT BIKE TRACK in the woods of Blackwood, New Jersey.

Out across the expanse of badly rutted clay and scrubby hills, human forms hunch forward gunning their stripped-down motorcycles around the steep turns and up and off the crest of the high ridges to land on their rear tires, spewing wild clouds of red dust and gravel in their wake.

Up on the dirt access road and im-

# YOU CAN DO IT!

Learn how to take pictures in 42 seconds with the new Pentax ME.



The Pentax ME is the world's smallest, fully-automatic, easy-to-use 35mm SLR you can buy.

- So small it practically fits into your pocket.
- Revolutionary new electronics.
- Accessory Auto-winder automatically advances the film after each shot.
- Exposure system is fully automatic, electronic and ultra-accurate.
- Film loading is easy and fool-proof.
- Durable and sturdy all-metal body.

Come in for a 42-Second demonstration today.

**SPECIAL SEPTEMBER PRICE:**

ME w. 50mm f/1.7 SMC lens.

Optional ME winder ..... 109.99  
\*Sold only with case ..... 24.99

**279<sup>99</sup>**

**PLUS FREE BONUS COUPON BOOK**

with purchase of any camera over \$50!

Giving you after the sale savings up to \$30 and more on lenses, accessories, albums, processing and a whole lot more!

## 35 MM STEAL!

**Pentax K-1000**

w. 50mm f/2.0 SMC lens

Easy handling. Great pictures.

- Enjoy fine 35mm photography at the cost of a good pocket camera.
- Shutter speeds from 1 second to an action-stopping 1/1000th second.
- Accepts full system of interchangeable Pentax bayonet mount lenses.

Come in for a demonstration today.

**169<sup>99</sup>\***

\*Sold only w. case 19.99



**LENS SPECIAL!** 85-210mm f/3.8 Macro-Zoom for Pentax K Mt.

**159.99**

**Delaware Valley's Largest Photo Dealer ... with The Best Camera Specialists ... Let us help you!**

Near you...with 14 convenient locations:



We accept most major credit cards.

- Lawrence Park Center ..... EL 6-2500
- The Gallery at Market East ..... 925-9500
- Suburban Station Concourse ... LO 7-5927
- Manoa Shopping Center ..... SU 9-0266
- Springfield Mall ..... 328-0600
- Exton Square Mall ..... 363-6702
- King of Prussia Plaza ..... 265-6556
- Valley Forge Center ..... 265-2233
- Montgomery Mall ..... 362-0890
- Oxford Valley Mall ..... 752-0311
- Quaker Bridge Mall ..... 609-799-1860
- Ellisburg Circle ..... 609-428-0888
- Echelon Mall ..... 609-772-1480

**OPENING IN SEPTEMBER IN THE CHRISTIANA MALL, Newark, Delaware!**





# 'UNCHAIN' YOURSELF Try Land & Sea

## RESTAURANT-COCKTAIL LOUNGE

YES, DELAWARE VALLEY, YOU CAN FIND GREAT DINING IN THE SUBURBS. Break away from the "chains" & "franchise" operations... get out of the "Tree," stop waiting at the "Station." Enjoy the steaks, seafood and other delicacies that make the LAND & SEA menu sparkle. LAND & SEA: A suburban restaurant with fine food. Atmosphere with class.

## LUNCHEON - DINNER LATE NIGHT DINING

2900 Street Road  
Across from Keystone Race Track  
Cornwells Heights, Pa.  
(215) 638-0888  
Diners Club & American Express Welcome

**We  
don't just  
serve dinner.  
We  
conduct it.**



Lunch 11:30-2:30, Mon.-Fri.

# KANPAI

New Market at  
Head House Square  
Phila., Pa. 925-1532

**We make a scene at  
your table.**

## Coming Home

prompt parking area, cars with bike trailers and rows of vans are lined up. At the rear of one of the vans are two men. One draws the immediate stares of incoming vehicles. Wearing a football jersey, he is standing on the stumps of his amputated legs so that at a quick glance he could be mistaken for a midget. Covering his lower trunk are a pair of old football pants, altered so that the former knee pads now serve as stump pads.

The two men open the doors of the van and begin to wrestle with a three-wheel Honda All-Terrain Vehicle which resembles a large, bloated tricycle. Standing to the side, the pair pull the bike out so that it falls to the ground clumsily.

"That's another thing," said the legless man. "I told the Veterans Administration that I got this bike, and that with the van and the bike and the wheelchair I could get around and take pictures almost anywhere. I got a lot of mobility. I can go into the woods alone. I can roam the fields. I asked them, 'Hey, can you get me an aluminum ramp so I can get the bike in and out of the van myself?' They said no."

"They said it wasn't 'realistic' for me to think I could use a motorcycle to get around. Like the same way they told me it wasn't 'reasonable' to think I could be a photographer."

The legless man leaped atop the seat and lifted on a bag of camera equipment and a tripod.

"I know they think it's crazy. And maybe it is—for them," said the man above the rumble of the motor. "Well, this is what I got to say to them and their shrink who thinks I'm crazy: fuck it, man. They can keep their ramp. I'll get the bike in and out myself. They won't let me study photography with a teacher? Fuck that, too. I'll teach myself. That's what I been doing. It's slower. But I'll do it. I'm not going to play the poor, polite cripple like they want me to. I've given up as much of myself to them as I intend to give."

And with that, Frank Mastrogianni put the bike in gear and chugged out across the rugged terrain toward the racing track. There, he turned the bike off, dismounted and rummaged for a moment in his camera bag.

Then, holding the straps of a Minolta camera in his teeth, he loped off on two stumps and two hands like an aroused primate. Up he went on his hands and stumps: across the discarded tires and jagged rocks; through the prickly, knee-high weeds and up a steep hill to a vantage point on the crest where he took a steady bead on long-legged men throwing themselves through the air atop roaring, brightly colored machines.



# WILLIAM PENN Inn

## 3 QUALITY RESTAURANTS

### The MAYFAIR

### The CLUTTERBUCKS

### The COMMONWEALTH CLUB

Enjoy the relaxed atmosphere of the MAYFAIR, with its full menu and salad bar... the warm and friendly mood of the CLUTTERBUCKS, with its succulent seafood and reasonable prices... or the luxury of the private-membership COMMONWEALTH CLUB. Open seven days a week for lunch, dinner or your next family or business affair.

Rt. 202 at Sumneytown Pike

Gwynedd, PA 19436

Ph. (215) 699-9272