

# "Tail-In-Air" == A Campus Friend

By EUGENE S. McCARTNEY

A SLEEK gray body scampering across the window ledge and signaling a timid yet cordial "Hello!" with a flashing, bushy tail and not tarrying for an answer. That is how Tail-in-Air introduced himself to me in my lofty office on the fourth floor of Angell Hall. That is the way he made his first overture of friendship. On the next day he returned to see what impression his first hasty visit had made. Walnuts were on the ledge to welcome him, but, alas! they were not cracked, and he had neither the time nor the inclination to drill his way into them. He wanted an outright dole, not a job. He departed in chagrin. On the third day there was awaiting him a New Deal, consisting of nuts already cracked. Thereafter our mutual esteem grew with the ripening of our friendship.

My first office chore every morning has now become the cracking of nuts. Whenever I fail to provide sufficient for Tail-in-Air's daily need, or, as I am loath to say, for his daily greed, his wistful looks work on my sympathy and I crack some more on the ledge beside him. At first the jarring, discordant noises of the hammer offended his sensitive ears, and he scurried away; but gradually, as he learned that they connoted kernels, they became as melodious as dinner chimes, and now he retreats from the blows only far enough to permit the sounds to mellow before reaching him. As the last echoes are dying away he is nibbling again. He knows where the larder is, and his mouth waters as he sees me reaching for a second (or a third) helping. I sometimes struggle against his wheedling manner, but not always with success—at least not before the third helping, when I realize that mind must triumph over heart.

IN December he ate twelve or fifteen walnuts a day until he had exhausted the supply I had gathered. During most of January he consumed twenty-five or thirty hickory nuts daily, with his further capacities still unsounded. Counting how much a guest eats is an inexcusable breach of hospitality, but prudential considerations overcame my scruples. I wish

Tail-in-Air to live for me, not to dig his grave with his teeth. Late in January he himself realized that he was getting too many calories, and he began to skip a day now and then, during which time he lived on his principal. I do not believe that he is overexercising his teeth at present. Fortunately for Tail-in-Air's physical well-being there have been a few days when he was snowbound.

On a blustery January day Tail-in-Air experienced the utmost difficulty in deciding whether to dine facing the wind or with his back to it. He tried the trial-and-error method, as became a squirrel with University associations. He would sit first one way and then the other, but he finally made up his mind to use his arching tail as a windbreak. This became his habitual posture whenever a strong wind was blowing.

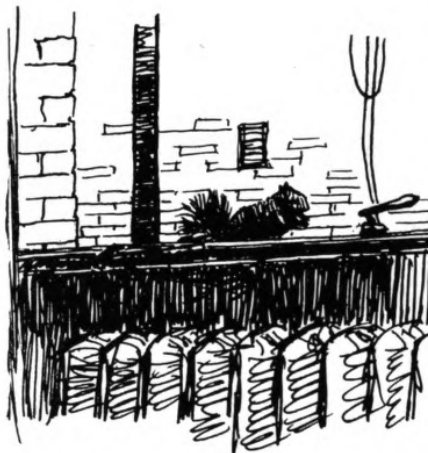
ONE Saturday night I did not leave any nuts on the ledge because I knew that sparrows would get them early the next day. When I stopped at my office late on Sunday morning Tail-in-Air was slowly

creeping away, obviously in low spirits. His dragging tail showed plainly what he thought of people who fail to keep appointments. When he heard me open the window his tail bobbed up into an interrogation mark and his whole body betrayed expectancy. A few nuts won his forgiveness.

Early in January two bluejays began to "chisel in" on Tail-in-Air's meals. They would swoop down, pick up a piece of a nut, and fly quickly away, with obvious pride in their knavery. Tail-in-Air, however, is a squatter sovereign. He eats his nuts on the premises; in fact, he has mastered his inherited trait of hoarding at a time when human beings are practicing it.

Tail-in-Air is quite selfish, however. He never goes out and brings another squirrel. He never shares the good tidings of great joy. His selfishness and his overeating are the only defects in his character. I might correct the latter shortcoming by budgeting his nuts, but I prefer to be charitable and to blame genes and heredity for his very human failing of liking to eat. It is true that he does not masticate well—that is the reason I do not extract the kernels entirely from the shells—but I must not hold against him his eating too quickly or his tendency toward overweight until I myself can set him a better example.

My relations with Tail-in-Air are somewhat paternalistic, yet I do not think that I am destroying his initia-



TAIL-IN-AIR ON THE WINDOW LEDGE

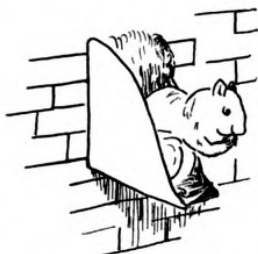
*As seen from the author's desk.*



PLEADING FOR NUTS



tive or his feeling that he is self-sustaining. The nuts in my office would have been available to any of his cousins had they made overtures to me. Tail-in-Air is the only Campus squirrel that had the enterprise and the resourcefulness to search me out and to get started "on a shoestring." Some of my envious friends now wish to adopt a squirrel, but, so far as I know, none of Tail-in-Air's companions have been able to match his acumen in picking out a philanthropic guardian.



The window ledge is Tail-in-Air's stage, and he is a moving picture. He needs no director, for he acts spontaneously. The furniture consists solely of nuts in the foreground at the beginning of an act and of debris in the background at the end. The conventions are few and simple. After an act Tail-in-Air jumps off the stage for a few minutes. In the first act he eats his daily dozen; in later acts, as many more as he can inveigle or commandeer.

His stagecraft includes winsome grimaces, artful coaxings, cajolings, pleadings, and posings. In his most captivating posture—his second-helping posture—he sits erect, rests his prayerful forefeet on his breast, and gazes at me benignly. When he has a nut he registers contentment perfectly. He also knows the appeal of his arching back and his whisking and waggish tail. He does not address me with words, but no gesticulating Roman ever expressed himself in more eloquent *sermo corporis*. Custom does not stale his infinite variety.

TAIL-IN-AIR has "it." All my visitors are attracted by him, and they go to the window to make his more intimate acquaintance. Friends who know both him and me are now more solicitous about his health than about mine. The sketches were made by admirers. I should not trust very far in a business transaction a person who does not have the qualities of mind and heart to make him like Tail-in-Air.

The machine age, as represented by my hammer, is giving Tail-in-Air more leisure for self-improvement. He now takes nuts from my fingers without biting or scratching them (my fingers, not the nuts). He sometimes leaves a bit of food on his platter. When he is ready to depart he says "Good-bye" with a two-syllable whisk of his tail to either side, without keeping me standing in the draft for five minutes.

I do not know where Tail-in-Air lives. There is no



NO SOCIAL UNREST IN  
SQUIRRELDOM

hospice amid the brick and mortar of the roof of Angell Hall. If his residence is University Hall he has to make a death-defying leap over the canyon between the two buildings. I believe that he reaches his runway around Angell Hall by climbing a tree. He enters the light well in front of my office by means of a drain through a thick wall. This drain was intended by the architects as a strictly one-way thoroughfare for the rain, but Tail-in-Air violates all traffic regulations and uses it for both ingress and egress. There is another drain in the light well, but in squirreldom, too, it seems to be bad luck to depart by a different door.

THE first time neighbors see the squirrel in the light well they think he is trapped, but if they would try to catch him (instead of running in alarm for the janitor) they would soon solve the riddle of how he makes his exits and his entrances.

When Tail-in-Air pours forth from the rainspout while



WHERE TAIL-IN-AIR  
MAKES HIS EXITS AND  
ENTRANCES

Greatly overweight but still  
able to reconnoiter.

I am editing an arid manuscript he is as refreshing as rain during a drought. He generally comes near hungry time. He is always welcome, for he makes lighter the burdens of this workaday world. Occasionally, however, his nerves are obviously on edge. Every sense, every muscle is alert for a quick getaway. I then know that, since his last visit, somebody has abused his confidence in human nature. He never says *Ab uno disce omnes* or *Ab omnibus disce unum*, but he acts it, and I am classed as a Greek bringing gifts.

Under such circumstances I play the Pharisee and try to show him that I am not as other men are.

I am not sure that I have befriended Tail-in-Air more than he has befriended me. There is doubtless mutuality in our relationship, but at all events he is earning his keep. I have often paid much more for far less cheer and pleasure and entertainment than my little hyphenated chum provides. I shall do my best to merit his continued confidence and esteem. If the tie that binds is ever broken he will have to do the breaking.

### Boston Alumni to Welcome President Ruthven

THIRTY members of the University of Michigan Club of Boston assembled at the University Club for a buffet supper and smoker on the evening of January 30. Announcement was made that President Alexander G. Ruthven had accepted the Club's invitation to attend and speak at its banquet on March 7. Professor Frank Nowak, of the History Department of Boston University, was the speaker of the evening. His topic was "Soviet Russia." The barrage of questions which followed the talk

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# My Angell Hall Squirrels

By EUGENE S. McCARTNEY



O MANY of Tail-in-Air's friends continue to inquire about his health and adventures—to the exclusion of mine—that I am adding a second chapter to his biography.

In the issue of the *ALUMNUS* for March 2 I told how he introduced himself to me early in December last year and how a casual meeting while he was foraging led to an abiding friendship.

There is now a Mrs. Tail-in-Air. During the long winter months while Tail-in-Air and I were becoming more intimate through almost daily association as he ate nuts on the window ledge outside my office, I expected to have to share his affections with another in the spring, but some anticipated events are attended by great surprises. Mr. and Mrs. Tail-in-Air announced their own marriage to me and in a manner quite unconventional.



A silhouette study of Tail-in-Air on the window ledge outside the author's office, in front of which is a light well.

A little before noon on March 24 Tail-in-Air seized a piece of nut, ran to the rainspout in the light well in front of my office (see the photographs), and leaped up. To his surprise and mine something which had the right-of-way in the two-foot drain and which was speeding down it with great momentum struck him on the nose and sent him into a tailspin. The inquisitive head of another squirrel protruded from the drain. That was my introduction to Mrs. Tail-in-Air (*née* Shadow-Tail). She seemed more amused than alarmed, but Tail-in-Air's native dignity was a trifle ruffled. There were no attendant circumstances to lead one to suspect that the collision was other than an entirely unavoidable traffic accident, but, as later developments proved, it was a bad omen for their domestic felicity.

The union of Mr. and Mrs. Tail-in-Air seems to have been a matter of propinquity instead of having been "made in heaven." She took him for better or for worse, and is now suffering from his unilateral interpretation of the compact. He will not allow her to dine with him. She may have all she can eat, but she must sit at the second table or else anticipate him. On one occasion I outwitted him by tossing nuts over his head to the madam twenty-five feet away. Even if she appears after he has gorged himself he drives her away. Several times I have seen her assert her claim to equal rights, and I have heard her chatter an indignant protest as he was chasing her, but it is always the same old story. She has to go. One such "scene" ended with a tuft of fur in his mouth. He was just as egocentric



"In the spring . . ."

on Mother's Day, when she had to yield to him some peanuts which a friend had sent as a special treat. In squirreldom there is no immediate danger of the institution of a matriarchal form of society.

THERE are at least two children from this marriage. I saw them last spring at the foot of the tree which the old folks use as a ladder to the roof of Angell Hall, but they have never come to the light well. I expected them to follow their parents as soon as they acquired enough athletic skill to do the necessary four-foot high jumps coming and returning. During the summer I lived in constant fear that the purchase of nuts for them would make further inroads on my golf-ball budget, which had already been depleted by their elders. I am glad that squirrels are not gregarious.

Last spring the madam came less frequently than did Tail-in-Air, doubtless because of maternal duties. Being at that time less familiar than he with the economy of abundance she ate with greater relish and broke nuts into smaller pieces in order to extract the last morsels. If she dined while I was out of my office, the more fragmentary kitchen middens which she left were clear proof that she rather than her mate had been enjoying my hospitality.

Tail-in-Air still rather insists on having his nuts cracked. He drops uncracked ones and looks at me appealingly. My sympathy for him because he has a broken front tooth hampers my effort to reform him. I am trying not to spoil the madam, who is quite willing to drill her way into nuts. It requires less than three minutes for her to break the shell of a hickory nut and to get the kernel. When she prefers to eat elsewhere, as she not infrequently does, she carries away two nuts at a time. She then dines on the cornice, from which the débris falls down to the steps of Angell Hall, where its presence sometimes proves a mystery. Deluges stranger than rains of shells are mentioned in the records of folklore.

THE nut-cracking operations, which I have often watched the madam perform at a distance of less than six feet, are a model of efficiency. Holding a hickory nut with its long axis in a vertical position, she uses her lower teeth to gouge out a slit near one end. When she has reached the kernel she turns the nut to a horizontal position beside her mouth and applies her lower teeth to the upper surface of the slit. Without exerting much extra effort she breaks off a piece of the shell. She is ready to eat within a minute after she has picked up a nut. She has com-



pletely dispelled an old illusion of mine that the energy expended in breaking into a shell is greater than that stored up in the kernel. And I now wonder why we speak of a difficult problem as a hard nut to crack.

My squirrels consider peanuts a great treat and can eat a ten-cent bag of them (63 nuts) in less than two days. They like peanut bars which are not salted. One day I set out half an apple for desert for Tail-in-Air, but, boy-like, he ate it first. He scooped out the flesh with great skill and avoided the vitamin-bearing skin, which was distasteful to him. Squirrels like corn, but I have always been afraid to give mine an ear of popcorn on a very hot



Tail-in-Air posing for his picture in late July, while suffering from mange and wearing a very shabby fur coat. He is sitting in the midst of kitchen middens (hickory nut shells).

The light well in front of the author's office is clearly shown here. The window ledge on which the squirrels dine is seen in the foreground. The facing bricks form the back of the wall which contains the inscription above the columns of Angell Hall. In the center of the picture, below the row of louvers, is the rainspout of the drain through which the squirrels enter the light well from the cornice.

day. They merely sniff at buttered popcorn. As a dietitian explains, they do not like "fats."

Squirrels are dainty in their eating habits, even if they do let the shells fall where they may. Long ago Pliny the Elder selected the squirrel as an example of the animals which use their forefeet as "hands" in conveying food to their mouths. My assistant does complain, however, that my squirrels make loud noises when they eat, but do not several nations of mankind show their appreciation of hospitality by making gustatory sounds? Noiseless foods are bad for the teeth of squirrels. Their teeth, unlike those of the human animal, require a lot of exercise.

I water my squirrels as well as feed them. They have their own private drinking cup. It has replaced a glass, which used to topple over and baptize them when they tried to rest their forefeet on it. They are very cunning when they are drinking. As they lap up water one can see the fur moving halfway down their bodies.

Though Tail-in-Air engages in a tug-of-war with me when I refuse to release my grip on a nut held between my fingers and though he confidently rests his feet on my fingers while picking up nuts from my palm, he keeps every sense alert when he is on the sill inside. Before crossing from the ledge he takes an exploratory glance with his brilliant round eyes to make sure that there are no lurking dangers and then cautiously and stealthily pussyfoots in, as quietly as night descending. He thinks entry is *verboden*, and the mischievous delight which he

seems to experience in committing a minor transgression makes him seem quite human. At times he puts his forefeet on the inner edge of the sill, as if he were going to spring down, but he always looks before he leaps—and he never leaps.

Tail-in-Air's eternal vigilance in surroundings where he has safely dined since the first week in December of last year makes me realize as never before how unceasingly watchful must be those animals which live the lives of the hunted. If his upraised tail strikes a loop in the shade cord, he scampers away; if he upsets the nut carton and it falls to the floor with a crash, he scampers away; if the telephone bell rings, he scampers away; if he hears a dog bark, he scampers away. As the responsible head of a family last spring he was always scampering, scampering, scampering. Fatherhood constrained him to take fewer risks. Some of his wariness may be due to his having seen hanging in my office a fur coat similar to his own. He is not aware that his own pelt is safe during the summer months at least.

There is one thing, however, which terrifies Tail-in-Air more than do the dangers which I have mentioned. It is a speech. If he hears a student practicing one in the debating room adjoining, a not infrequent occurrence, he forgets all about the pangs of hunger until the next day. There are worse things than a gnawing at the stomach. He has never tarried long enough to permit any of these forensic exercises to become an after-dinner speech.

The madam is more furtive than Tail-in-Air. I can recognize her by the undulatory motion of her back as she creeps along the window ledge. She is scary when the window is open. Once in a while, however, she displays unusual confidence. On a sunny afternoon in September she sprawled out lazily on the window sill, like a bear rug in a trophy room. I was somewhat inclined to resent her action as being unduly familiar and informal. She is not so much afraid of a speech as of amateur photography. She has never allowed us to snap her picture.

UNLIKE robins, which sometimes fight their own reflection, neither squirrel pays the slightest heed to a mirror.

Last spring Tail-in-Air fell into great disfavor for a few days. There were two counts in the bill of particulars against him: submarginal treatment of his wife, as already noted, and the showing of cowardice in the face of the enemy. On May 23, while he was eating on one end of the window ledge, he suddenly cocked his head to one side and gazed intently at something not within my field of vision. A minute later the madam jumped up to the "filling station" on the opposite end of the ledge and started to eat a nut. He bared his teeth and angrily drove her out of the light well, but not without some audible protests on her part. A little later, after Tail-in-Air had resumed his meal, she returned with a corespondent. Just as soon as Tail-in-Air caught sight of the third squirrel he cringed. Instinctively he realized that he was no match for the intruder, and he allowed the bully to drive him



away without putting up a fight. With what measure ye mete, so shall it be meted unto you.

It was bad enough for Tail-in-Air to make a matrimonial arena of the light well, although there were some amusing sides to the situation, but his showing the white feather broke me up for a week. My peace of mind was further disturbed when friends charged me with having "softened" Tail-in-Air through my efforts to civilize him.

The big, bad squirrel returned the next day, but I have not seen him since. The triangle has not continued, so that I am again disposed to accept as true the zoologist's assertion that squirrels are monogamous (and not triangular).

In June smaller but more insidious enemies began to attack Tail-in-Air. Late in the month he lost some of his fur, and his tail became less bushy. He was suffering from mange. My efforts to gain a sympathetic understanding of his case by reading up on parasitology were frustrated by such terms as "ectoparasites," "endoparasites," and "desquamating epidermis." According to a bulletin that reached me during my absence in July he was in great distress and his wardrobe was quite skimpy, although he never became a full-fledged (or an unfledged) nudist. He was reported "missing" during August, when he was ashamed to appear in public. On September 7, four days after my return, he came back wearing the shabbiest fur coat I have ever seen, though full of life and with a reassuring sparkle in his eyes. He was ravenously hungry. To my great relief his fur soon started growing again, and it is now so thick that it presages a severe winter almost as clearly as does the madam's chic heavy coat.

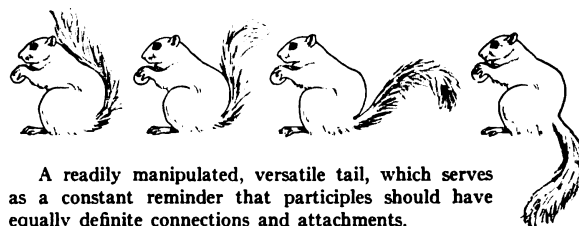
At last I have solved the problem of how the squirrels make their way from the ground to my office, which is on the fourth floor of Angell Hall above the portico. A cornice runs along both the front and the back of the building, but does not extend around the north and south ends. It is four feet below the top of the walls, except at the middle, where the distance is much greater because of the fifth floor. One Sunday, after Tail-in-Air had been eating for ten minutes, I left my office and perched on the west wall of the lower roof at the north end of the building. Thirty-five minutes later he appeared on the cornice, hopping leisurely around the corner formed by the extension of the portico. The four-foot wall of the lower roof confronted him. There was opportunity for a running take-off, but he made the distance with the greatest ease by a standing high jump. The bricks on the inside gave him sufficient footing to climb down most of the way to the roof four feet below. He then crossed to the east wall, jumped the four feet from the roof, and made his way along the top of the wall to the second tree from the northeast end.

HE HAD become aware of my presence as soon as he had made his first leap to the west wall, and he scurried about nervously before he crossed to the other side. After he had climbed halfway down the tree he settled himself on a branch, where he remained quiet for forty-five minutes. Whether or not this was a deliberate attempt to outwait me, my long vigil gave me time for

reflection. Tail-in-Air had chosen his residence with privacy and security in mind. If he was opposed to my returning one of his numerous calls upon me, I would respect his wishes. I left him in the tree. I do not yet know where he lives.

Like the Phoenician navigators of old who, when being followed, ran their ship aground rather than reveal a trade route, Tail-in-Air has carefully guarded the secret of his devious course to the people whom he is exploiting (my assistant and me). I believe that even the madam had to trail him, for I have never seen them come or go in company. His initiative and enterprise in ferreting out an ever-renewing source of food supply stamp him as a great explorer. The madam's I. Q. is not so high. In spite of repeated failures she still tries to cache nuts in the heavy tar paper laid on a concrete roof. Her more sophisticated husband takes no thought for the morrow. The present only toucheth him.

My squirrels are beautiful, especially when they expand their tails like flowers in bloom, a thing which they do when they are happy and entirely free from fear. My mental picture of perfect contentment is Tail-in-Air sitting on the window ledge nibbling at nuts and with his caudal plume gracefully curving up his back to the crown of his head. The sight of him so composed is always restful to me, but in another way he is helpful to me in my editorial duties. When I observe his bushy tail and note



A readily manipulated, versatile tail, which serves as a constant reminder that participles should have equally definite connections and attachments.

how much more graceful and manageable and serviceable it is because it has a definite organic connection with his body, I resume work on manuscripts with greater determination to establish a similar organic connection between all dangling participles and the sentences in which they stand. In his quiet, unobtrusive way Tail-in-Air is thus aiding in raising the grammatical standard of our publications.

Last winter two bluejays visited the window ledge and carried away pieces of nuts. All through the summer they (or other bluejays) prowled around and kept the bill of fare under surveillance. They are sure to present themselves when peanuts are being served. As they alight on the ledge they watch me closely. When they think a propitious moment has arrived they seize a nut with a quick stabbing motion of their beaks and retreat with all speed to the top of the wall, where they seem to register elation over their adroitness. Within the last month I have discovered that by setting out an ear of corn I can lure them to the window without being pestered by sparrows, which are not strong enough to pull the grains from the cob. The attire of the bluejays appears to me to be as brilliant during the entire summer as during the winter, and I am



glad to welcome visitors so gorgeously dressed. The body is not always more than the raiment.

The frost is on the pumpkin and nuts are again dropping from the trees. I now feel that the time has come for me to make my relations with my squirrels still more personal by harvesting their meals with my own hands, even though walnuts stain my fingers in the process. As long as my bushy-tailed friends care to visit me they will find the latchstring out and a bite to eat.

While the printer was setting type for this paper an event long awaited came to pass. A little after eight o'clock on the morning of October 10 one of Tail-in-Air's children dropped in on us. It was far less scary than either of its parents had been while making our acquaintance, and it ventured inside to snook around on the window sill. It doubtless regarded my assistant and me as just two more squirrels, of a somewhat unfamiliar species. It was a captivating little bundle of fur, and it upset our office routine for most of the day. It was especially cunning when it huddled itself up and raised its bushy umbrella over its head as rain began to fall.

When it had eaten its fill and was ready to leave late in the morning, after staying far too long for a first call, it found itself unable to get out of the light well. It could not make the two-foot jump to the rainspout. Time and again it tried, but it always fell back in defeat. Exhausted and recognizing the futility of further efforts, it sought shelter from the rain on the ledge of a window in a room adjoining. It was a most pathetic sight as it prayerfully rested its forefeet on its breast.

Early in the afternoon I arranged an inclined runway to provide it with a means of escape from its prison. At about a quarter to four the anxious mother, which had been in the light well several times during the day, came and took her baby away. From a vantage point in a classroom I later discovered both squirrels on top of the west wall, at the north end of Angell Hall. The mother was giving the young squirrel first-aid treatment by licking it. She had evidently made the four-foot jump from the cornice while holding it by the nape of the neck. Her distress when the young one either fell or jumped down again to the cornice may readily be imagined. I could not find out what ultimately happened to the little squirrel, but I hope that mother love triumphed at last and that I shall have another chance to welcome it when it has grown both larger and wiser.

For the delightful drawings of the squirrels I am indebted to Miss Grace Eager.

### Alumni to Gather in New York City Before Columbia Game

THE University of Michigan Club of New York City is sponsoring an All-Eastern Michigan dinner at the Pennsylvania Hotel, New York, on October 25, the eve of the Michigan-Columbia football contest. Athletic Director Fielding H. Yost, and Coach Harry Kipke will be present at this stag dinner.

Michigan Alumni Headquarters will be in the lobby of

the Pennsylvania Hotel. All Michigan alumni who are in New York that week-end are urged to register at this rendezvous. Edward L. Cleary, '07l, Director of the First District, will be there; Emory J. Hyde, '04l, now President of the Alumni Association and former Director of the First District, also will be present.

The Club at New York is thus starting off the year in its vigorous fashion. At a business meeting on Friday night, October 4, new officers and members of the Board of Governors were elected, and the well-laid plans for this year's activities were perfected.

The new President is John A. Keane, '10-'13, '13-'14, and the new Vice-President is Miller H. Pontius, '14l, '10-'11. G. Lawton Johnson, '31, was chosen for another term as Secretary-Treasurer.

Those newly elected to the Board of Governors are: William H. Harden, '12e, who is just retiring as President of the Club; Glenn A. Woodhouse, '15e; Eric A. Kerbey, '21e; and Richard F. Gretsche, '30e.

### Aigler Addresses Seattle Alumni

BOTH August 3 and September 3 were special occasions for the University of Michigan Club of Seattle—the first, the date of its 14th Annual Picnic and the second, the highly successful dinner at which Michigan alumni assembled to greet and honor Professor Ralph W. Aigler, '07l, of the University Law School.



PROFESSOR RALPH W. AIGLER

The dinner for Professor Aigler was preceded and followed by receptions. There was Michigan music with David Starr, '02e, at the piano and with Arrigo Young, '07e, Donald McEwan, '25d, g'25-'26, and Club Secretary Morris J. Robinson, '04l, to lead the singing. The new High School Football Trophy was displayed, everybody was introduced and then President Roby M. Burley, '20, presented Professor Aigler as the speaker of the occasion.

In an intimate conversational manner, Professor Aigler touched on many subjects of interest to the alumni including intramural and intercollegiate athletics—matters on which he is authority through his chairmanship of the Board in Control of Physical Education. The Law School, of whose faculty he is a member, and general affairs at the University came in for their share of attention, and he was able to answer, through his talk, many questions which interested the Seattle group. Following the formal

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# "Peter Pan" and My Other Campus Squirrels

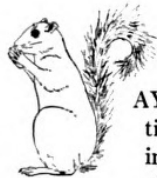
By EUGENE S. McCARTNEY

With Drawings of Squirrels by Grace Eager

A squirrel to a mountain:

"If I cannot carry forests on my back,  
Neither can you crack a nut."

—Emerson, *Fable*



AYING no heed whatever to social conventions little Peter Pan chose an early morning hour for his first visit to me. At eight o'clock on October 10 he was already making himself at home on the window ledge of my office. Fortunately his matutinal call did not embarrass my assistant or me in the slightest, for he was even then breakfasting on nuts set out the previous evening for his parents, Mr. and Mrs. Tail-in-Air (who gained some publicity last year in the issues of the *ALUMNUS* for March 2 and October 19). He was just as welcome as he was unexpected.

When Peter Pan came to us he was still babykins. I had never before seen so young and small a squirrel in the fall. He was one of the last squirrels of summer and belonged to a second litter in a year favorable for large families in squirreldom. When the fur on his neck and back was ruffled by the wind or mussed by the rain he looked attractively pert and pertly attractive. We named him Peter Pan because he was so cunning that we hoped he would never grow up. He has no nickname, though at times we affectionately call him Peterkin.

PETER PAN'S coat is gray, but he is a fox squirrel, not a gray squirrel. Certain learned persons would make him live and move and have his being as *Sciurus niger rufiventer*. Somewhere or other I have read that Adam named the animals, but there are weighty chronological and geographical reasons against his having known either Greek or Latin.

The hero of this article is the young squirrel which I

left on the cornice on the west side of Angell Hall in the story in the issue of October 19. I had previously seen his mother licking his neck on the top of the wall four feet above the cornice. Evidently she had leaped up while holding him by the nape of the neck, but he had either fallen or jumped down again. *Facilis descensus Averno*.

A few days later he was again in the light well in front of my office, much to my relief, but, since his mother was not with him, once more he caused me concern about his return journey. As he kept coming, my curiosity kept mounting. On the occasion of his first visit he could not make the necessary two-foot jump in order to get out of the light well (see the photograph on this page), and I had to make an incline for him. How, then, did he surmount two four-foot barriers between the light well and home? One day I went out on the roof and took a position near the northern end of the west wall. After patiently waiting on his convenience for a half hour I had my assistant chase him out of the light well, the only time we have been so rude to a squirrel guest. He



PETER PAN IN AN ENGAGING POSE

The squirrel is sitting on the window ledge outside the author's office, on the fourth floor of Angell Hall. This photograph shows the light well between the office and the back of the wall which contains the inscription above the columns of the portico. The lowest opening in the background is the drain by which the squirrels enter the light well from the cornice. The incline or runway leading to the drain is visible, though indistinct. The light well is 9 feet wide and 134 feet long, so that it forms an excellent stage for the drama which the squirrels enact.

soon appeared around the corner formed by the projection of the portico of Angell Hall and passed the point where I had seen Tail-in-Air make the four-foot jump last spring. He came thirty feet nearer and then suddenly vanished. I rubbed my eyes. Did he have a cap of invisibility? In a second or two he was on the roof inside. He had passed through a very small drain which had escaped my notice, but which could hardly be large enough for well-fed adult squirrels. He then crossed the roof and made his way through a similar small drain to the cornice on the east side of the building, from which a

tree afforded him access to the ground. (See the sketch of Angell Hall on the next page.)

On the day of his arrival Peterkin was not mistrustful of us, for he came inside and snooked around on the window sill while we were near him, but within a few days he had learned fear of man. It was not long, however, before he regained confidence in us and was again taking nuts from our hands.

Peter Pan is fond of apples, but I saw him shy at a quarter of one which had its brilliant red side facing him as he approached. He was wary. Long-distance inspection and sniffing did not reassure him. It might bite, or sting, or kick, or fly up at him. He let it alone. Instinct is not enough for a baby squirrel; he must supplement it by experience.

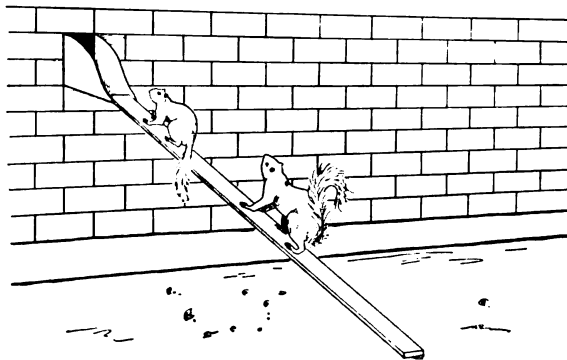
Nor did Peter Pan inherit a knowledge of peanuts. He does not live on or near a goober plantation. He would not take a peanut from my hand right after he had been taking walnuts. There *was* some reason for fear. The shell of one which I pressed too hard exploded point-blank in his face. Later on, after he had sampled a hulled nut and found it palatable, he was ready to tackle a shell, in spite of some misgivings. He was equally timid about breaking the shells of some assorted nuts which a Boston friend of the squirrels had sent. He spurned almonds in the shell as if they were something noxious, nor would he eat the kernel of a hazel nut.

If there are not enough nuts on the ledge Peter Pan rises erect and looks in at us. This is his way of standing up for his rights. One day the cupboard was bare when he got there, and his forlorn, wistful eyes made us so uncomfortable that we did some hurried emergency marketing while our guest was waiting for his meal.

PETERKIN has often put the claws of a forefoot against the windowpane while appealing for nuts. I am loath to say that this is an expedient to attract attention, but I do not put it above his I. Q. Two other squirrels have done the same thing, though infrequently. Peter Pan shows by his excitement that he knows what is meant when I reach down to the larder. It did not take him long to learn that a hammer and the thunder it makes had a very intimate connection with the object of his visits. (We have an inherent right to spoil the baby of the colony by cracking nuts. At present his teeth are not abnormally long.)

On the day of Peter Pan's arrival we observed that his tail was gray, the only conspicuously gray tail which we have seen, but one morning we noticed a reddish brown tail dogging a squirrel of the same size as Peter Pan. We

concluded that Peter Pan had ceased to worry about the continuance of the food supply and that his tail had registered his emancipation from anxiety, but when we saw gray and reddish brown tails within a few minutes of each other we recognized that the change was only apparent, and that we should make another entry in our census list. The new arrival was Peter Pan's brother, whom we later dubbed Reddy.



MRS. TAIL-IN-AIR ESCORTING PETER PAN HOME

On the day of his first visit Peter Pan made numerous desperate attempts to jump up to the drain, but finally had to desist through sheer exhaustion. The incline enabled him to get out of the light well after he had been imprisoned in it for about eight hours.

control the cup. On December 13 I saw him plant his forefeet firmly on the bottom.

One day after Peter Pan and I had been watching each other for several minutes he yawned a wide, abysmal yawn. It was the first time I had seen a squirrel so comport himself, but I do wish my guests would go home before they yawn.

Peter Pan "freezes" more than the other squirrels do. He does not run away until watchful waiting assures him that discretion is the better part of valor. He was the first squirrel bold enough to take nuts from my hand on one side of the ledge while Tail-in-Air was sitting jealously alert on the other. He does not give up his booty when being chased. As we shall see, he can "take it" when he has to. He is one of two young squirrels competing for food with a group of older ones, so that conditions are such as to call forth all his ingenuity and resourcefulness.

Since I do not have enough data to enable me to draw comparisons between young squirrels I dare not say that Peter Pan is precocious, but to me his face is far more expressive, vivacious, interested, and winsome than are those of the older squirrels. His eyes have more sparkle and are more revealing. He is a blithesome spirit. Whether he was born with personality or achieved it or had it thrust upon him by circumstances I do not know. His arrival continues to be an event in the day's work:

LEARNING how to drink from a cup without getting water in places where it is not wanted is an art of civilization which even an adult squirrel does not master in a hurry. On November 6 Peter Pan rested his forefeet on one side of the squirrels' drinking cup. It suddenly became animated: one side slipped from under him and the other flew up. It dashed water in his face. He was not aquatic, and he ran away faster than the water pursued. Gradually, however, he learned to con-



Peter Pan before he had learned how to drink from a cup without "putting his foot in it."



that of the older squirrels is more or less routine. His hour visits are sometimes shorter than the fifteen-minute calls of other guests.

At times it seems to me that Peter Pan regards his tail as a caudal plume, for he moves it so daintily and gracefully and deliberately as to convey the impression that he is peacocking.

The tail of a squirrel serves as a sunshade, an umbrella, or a windbreak, depending on the weather. Among the branches of a tree it is sometimes an equilibrator and sometimes a rudder. When coiled around its owner in a nest it is a blanket or a comfort. On the squirrel's stage of life each tail in its time plays many parts.

Though the tail has numerous beneficial uses, it is a liability for a fugitive, since he may find difficulty in keeping it out of reach of a pursuer on mischief bent. I have in my possession a rather large tuft of fur tied in ribbon, which Topsy, a robust older sister who "just grow'd," tore from Peter Pan's tail while I was within two feet of them. On December 12 there were at least three squirrels with conspicuous lacunae in their tail fur. I am indebted to Topsy for a vivid demonstration of the origin of the metaphorical expression "to make fur fly."

**S**QUIRRELS also use their tails as a signal code, the complexity of which I began to realize only when competition for



An expanded tail registering the happiness and the contentment that are manifest at the other extremity of its owner.

frightened or combative. They move them with a restless rhythmic motion when they are somewhat nervous, but are standing their ground. They wave them gently, with fur expanded like a flower in bloom, when they are happy and contented.

Peter Pan resorts to caudal gesticulation more frequently than do the other squirrels, probably because, owing to his smallness, he has to run through a greater gauntlet of experiences in getting his nuts and in keeping them after he does get them. He often betrays nervousness when taking nuts from my fingers, but he is more demonstrative in showing delight. His tail may be emotionally constituted.

**D**URING October and November my squirrels never ate in company on the window ledge, but in December, when the days were shorter, they began to become hungry at the same time (if indeed they were not always hungry or pretending to be), and hence they appeared in the light well in groups of four or five. Each

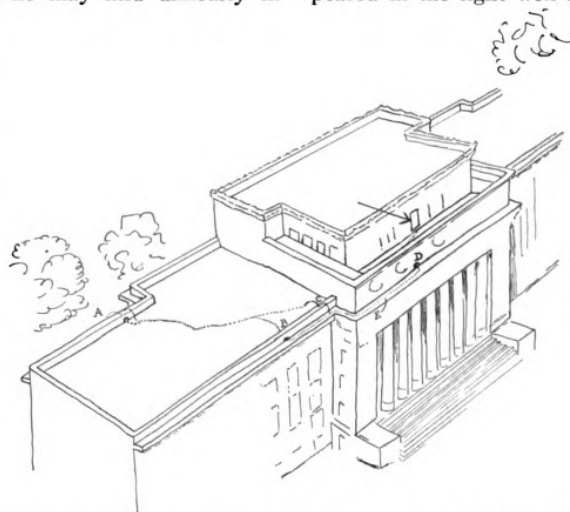
would sit erect in a passive belligerent attitude waiting for the other fellows to start something. As they became bolder two would mount the ledge at the same time, but they were never friendly under such circumstances. On December 17 I saw three on the ledge together.

As long as Bouncer Tail-in-Air, who first discovered the store of nuts on the ledge, is engaged in eating, all other members of the dining club have to content themselves with window shopping. He has so mastered the art of command that, as a rule, his mere presence is enough to keep them at a respectful distance. The larger young squirrels do as they are done by, and they drive away the smaller young ones.

**L**AST fall Peter Pan was not strong enough to muscle his way up to the

lunch counter, and he had to be an opportunist. On some days the ledge was preoccupied by the larger squirrels most of the morning, so that his table, like the Psalmist's, was prepared in the midst of his enemies.

One day as Peter Pan jumped down from the ledge with a peanut in his mouth he saw hostile squirrels approaching from either side. Holding his ground and his peanut, he watched them a second or two. When the lower tackler came near he began to run and, with excellent change of pace, reversed his field and raced down the sidelines to the southern goal (the second exit to the cornice), which he reached with "the ball" still in his possession. "Nobody laid a hand on him." I have never seen a more spectacular run on the light well gridiron.



#### THE SQUIRRELS' LINE OF COMMUNICATIONS

A sketch of Angell Hall, showing the route of the squirrels from the northeast corner to the window of the author's office (indicated by the arrow in the sketch) on the fourth floor at the middle of the west side. Some of the squirrels reach point A by means of two trees at the northeast corner. Others climb a tree near the southeast corner and then run north along the cornice. At A there is a four-foot jump from the top of the wall to the roof; at C the old squirrels jump up four feet from the roof to the top of the west wall and down four feet to the cornice (E), which they use as a runway till they come to D, a drain leading to the light well (see the photograph on the first page). Peter Pan comes through a small drain at B, and so avoids the jump. I have seen him use a similar drain just below A when returning.

nuts in the light well became so keen as to stir up passions and emotions. The wig-wagging forced itself upon my attention last October. My squirrels shake their tails violently and quickly and often with snap and vim when they are angry or



Being the youngest of the regular visitors, Peter Pan has naturally been attacked more frequently than the others have, but he has always taken the roughing good-naturedly. I have seen him jump eighteen inches in the air to escape an assailant. I do not know what his ceiling is at present. He is sage enough to run away when menaced, but brave enough to return immediately, whereas the other fugitives may not reappear till the next day.

THE worst assault on Peter Pan took place on November 10, at the hands (teeth) of his father, Tail-in-Air, who chased him with determination and bit at his neck. After the encounter, which I was powerless to stop, Peter Pan returned to the window, apparently in search of protection. He was quivering and was obviously agitated. I had never before seen a squirrel so wrought up. His shoulders were making spasmodic movements, like those of a person hiccupping. They continued very marked for at least two days, and there were some slight traces of them as late as November 23. I am positive that Peter Pan was quite normal before the attack, and I feel warranted in blaming Tail-in-Air for his condition. Not all ills and pains which emanate from one's father are congenital.

The nape of the neck seems to be the place which the squirrels wish to reach when the capacious light well is not roomy enough for two of them at the same time. This is the spot which Peterkin's solicitous mother nipped at when she was trying to make him go home with her. My squirrels know how to put teeth into their edicts; they are experts in implementing their wishes.

It was distressing to me to find that in squirreldom society is not a whit better constituted than among mankind. Squirrels selfishly struggle for possession of the food supply, and the end justifies the means. There is no comity among them when internal affairs and self-interest are involved. Sanctions are hard to apply, and when they are applied they are not understood. One might just as well try to make an aggressor nation feel a sense of guilt.

"Squirrels for nuts contend and, wrong or right,  
For the world's empire kings ambitious fight."

WHEN Peter Pan grows up, Peter Pan the chief sufferer in the light well during the fall, he will doubtless lord it over other squirrels (including his own children, the Petersons) and show that he is a chip off the old block.

Peter Pan did not wait long before he began to fulfill my prophecy, which was made in December. On February 10 a larger young squirrel jumped down to the floor of my office to investigate things in general and a basket of nuts in particular. When it had satisfied its curiosity it tried to use the top of the radiator as a substation on its way out, but Peter Pan, holding a tactical advantage on the window sill, refused to allow it to gain a firm footing on the radiator. Finally the older squirrel seized a higher position on a filing case, from which it made a desperate leap to the sill. Its momentum carried it on to freedom—ignominiously, but successfully.

My story may tax the credulity of readers who recall having seen squirrels playfully chasing one another on

the campus, but I have never observed any recreational flight and pursuit in the light well. My squirrels play hound and hare in earnest until the hare puts some distance between himself and the nuts. And when two of them meet there is seldom any doubt which is to be the hound and which the hare. They know instinctively, and they never change rôles. Several became tired of acting the hare day after day and finally ceased coming.

If the weaker squirrels show spunk anywhere it is on the incline to the drain. It does seem to me that they all know the tactical value of this elevation, for on it they often shake their tails in anger and defiance. Even there, however, the chasing continues, and they used to knock the incline down while thus engaged. The crashing of the strip of board served as a gong to end a round of strange skirmishing which was not resumed till the following day. We put a brick and a stone at the bottom of the incline to make it secure and to enable the squirrels to quarrel in greater comfort.

IN this drama the drain and the cornice are generally regarded as sanctuaries. Unlike human beings, my squirrels seldom carry their enmities outside. A friend did, however, see one of them strike the steps of Angell Hall three stories below and, on looking up, discovered the head of another squirrel peering over the cornice. Presumably there had been an encounter or an accident at the neck of the traffic bottle, the drain from the cornice to the light well. The victim walked away apparently unharmed.\* Its escape seemed providential.

It was three or four weeks after this event before I was sure that I saw Mrs. Tail-in-Air again. If she was the squirrel which fell, it would have required some sagacity for her, even though uninjured, to find her way home through the narrow, much-used passageway between Angell Hall and Haven Hall.

The squirrels' family circle has finally been broken. During my absence over the Christmas holidays Big Ears fell down between the radiator and the wall of a classroom, where he became tightly wedged. He was exhausted when rescued and was found dead a little later. Another fatality was Reddy, who was frozen to death by the intense cold of January 22, under circumstances which caused me no little self-recrimination.

The first squirrel who foraged in the light well was Tail-in-Air. He made his initial raid early in December, 1934. It was not till the following March that the madam learned we were successfully treating the gnawing pains which daily recur in the stomach. On the advent of Peter Pan and other squirrels in October and November we were confronted with the perplexing problem of census taking. There was Tail-in-Air, whom we could recognize by the aggrieved way in which he dropped uncracked nuts and pitifully appealed to us to have a  
(Continued on Page 296)

\* In *Squirrels and Other Fur-Bearers*, John Burroughs states that all species of squirrels seem to be able to ease or break a fall or a leap from great heights. A few paragraphs farther on he adds: "In making the flying leap . . . the animals' legs are widely extended, their bodies broadened and flattened, the tail stiffened and slightly curved, and a curious tremulous motion runs through all. It is very obvious that a deliberate attempt is made to present the broadest surface possible to the air, and I think a red squirrel might leap from almost any height to the ground without injury. I was greatly astonished when I first saw how much my squirrels flattened themselves while sunning. They seemed to me to be as flat as bear rugs."



## "Peter Pan" and My Other Campus Squirrels

(Continued from Page 288)

heart; and then there was Mrs. Tail-in-Air, who made her head save her heels by carrying away two hickory nuts at a time and who tried to do her walnut marketing in similar time-saving fashion; and then there were Topsy and Topsius, who were twins, but not identical ones, like Tweedledum and Tweedledee; and then there was Brownie, so named from brown markings on the back of his head and neck; and then there was Epauettes, with brown on his shoulders, who, like Brownie, came only infrequently and finally ceased to visit us; and then there was Reddy (now deceased), Peter Pan's brother; and then there was Big Ears (also deceased), recognizable by his sheeppose face as well as by his long, up-standing ears; and then there was Roughneck, another big-eared squirrel, whose character was untouched by the breath of scandal, but who wore unsightly neck furs; and then there was the stranger within our gates who betrayed his strangeness by not knowing where the "filling station" was and by experiencing difficulty in finding his way out of the light well; and then—and then—and then I got all mixed up. After all, a census merely shows how numerous we have become and not how delightful we are individually.

THE squirrels which "matriculate" with me are, like the students attending the University, the cream of the state. Fortunately, I no longer have to fear that some alphabetic agency of the Government will compel me to assassinate or to plow under any of the surplus squirrels which I am raising.

Friends of Tail-in-Air will be glad to learn that he has become a large, beautiful squirrel. He can now meet the test of adulthood among human beings—cessation of growth except around the middle. He is increasing in wisdom as well as in girth. His expression is more mature. By comparison with the younger squirrels he seems patriarchal. When I see him majestically dominating the ledge and awing the hungry colony with his dignity and composure, I think of the august Roman senators whom the Gallic sackers of Rome feared to molest as they calmly sat in their seats.



His Majesty, Tail-in-Air, presiding upon the window ledge.

I used to be afraid to buy nuts in large quantities lest the squirrels desert me and leave me stocked up on a falling market, but, just as the world will make a beaten track to the door of him who invents the best mousetrap, so squirrels will gather on the window ledge of him who contrives to have the greatest store of nuts. Now that the time-consuming problem of gaining a living has been solved for my squirrels I do not know what they are doing with their added leisure, although I suspect that they are spending some of it at the nibble bowl in mundane ingestion of food. Nuts are habit-forming.

I am living in fear that one of my squirrels may give birth to quintuplets. I dread the publicity that attaches to such an event. Youngsters should be given an opportunity to lead normal lives. Sextuplets or septuplets would be an irremediable calamity—and there would be another word with a misbehaving accent.

An indictment frequently made against squirrels is that they gnaw their way into attics, but is not that far less criminal than forcing entrance into a first or a second story, a practice of which man is guilty? Martial calls the squirrel *inamabilis*, "unlovable." May we conclude from his plaint that squirrels broke into his attic? And may we draw the archaeological deduction that Roman houses in general had attics?

BIRDS keep coming to get the crumbs that fall from the rich squirrel's table. I often wonder how the blue-jays are able to find peanuts a few minutes after I set them on the ledge. Several white-breasted nuthatches were frequent visitors during the fall and winter. Two or three flew into my office, and one was so bewildered that it allowed me to catch it. Bird book in hand, I made sure that an ornithologist was right in asserting that this species of bird has a characteristic short, square tail. The tail and the author were in strict agreement. The same book says that the tail is nearly always pointed toward the zenith, doubtless an avian counterpart of hitching one's wagon to a star.

Peter Pan, however, is the omega as well as the alpha of this story. We gave him his name in the hope that he would never grow up, but he is belying our hope. He is growing up. He is also becoming rotund. No amount of exercise could burn up all the nuts which he daily consumes. He is experiencing the customary and inevitable results of hoarding calories.

Squirrels of the species to which Peter Pan belongs mate early in the year. On January 11 I saw three pairs in one tree. I do not yet know, however, whether Peterkin has ever had any "serious intentions." If he won't tell, perhaps Time will.

## Pittsburgh Mayor Honored by His Fellow Alumni

THE University of Michigan Club of Pittsburgh honored the Mayor of Pittsburgh, William N. McNair, '03*l*, at a special luncheon given on February 27 at the Hotel Henry. Bruce S. Shannon, '34*b.ad*, e'29-'30, Secretary of the Club; and Lester E. Wahrenburg, '24*e*, were active in making arrangements for the affair. Mayor McNair was not called upon for a formal address but was the center of interest during and after the luncheon, answering many questions put to him by his fellow alumni.

Among those present were:

William M. Sturgeon, '84*l*; William Kaufman, '91*l*; Benjamin R. B. Townsend, '93-'94, m'94-'98; Thaddeus L. Farnham, '97*e*; William M. McKee, '99*e*; Thomas E. Lynch, e'96-'00; Anthony Lucas, '06*l*; Benjamin P. Brasley, '06*l*; William G. Moore, e'03-'05; Lewis A. Estes, '08, '10*e*; Wencel A. Neumann, '09; Bradley McK. Burns, '12*l*; Vine F. Covert, '08-'09; Carl E. Wolfston, '13*e*; Guy W. Knight, '09-'11; Max A. Blumer, '16, '17*m*; James M. Moore, '21*e*; Raymond R. Shroyer, '22; Robert R. Clark, '24, '26*m*; Vernon B. Qua, '26*e*; Morton Frank, '33.