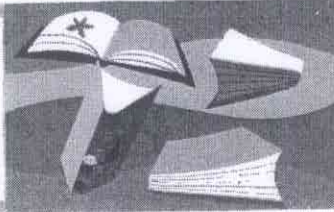


# Trade Winds



Once again I am constrained to come to the defense of Ebenezer Scrooge, a misunderstood man. A rereading of *A Christmas Carol* last week indicates that he did not hate Christmas—not nearly so much, for instance, as a large segment

growing older, and other things that Scrooge thinks important. When Scrooge is asked for donations for the poor, he rightly recalls that he pays taxes to support the poorhouse and jails, where the poor are incarcerated. True, Scrooge's attitude is ungenerous, but he only asks to be left alone, and when he repairs to his gloomy quarters on Christmas Eve, it appears possible that he might be as poor as he claims.

Scrooge's character has one strong virtue: he is easily convinced. In one short night, he completely reverses his notions about Christmas and his entire outlook on life is transformed. In fact, almost immediately after he has chatted with the apparition of Jacob Marley, Ebenezer begins to change for the better. The story of Tiny Tim and the tour with the three Ghosts of Christmas Past, Present, and Future is superfluous evidence.

So, please, let's not be too hard on Scrooge after this. Overnight he was



of the Christian world which considered the celebration frivolous not many decades ago.

Scrooge was merely a miser. He cried "Bah! Humbug!" at his nephew because the boy was trying to use Christmas as a means of forgetting about paying bills,

transformed into a lovable, generous person. Could it happen to one of us?

A little book called *Offbeat Humor* from Peter Pauper Press seems aptly named. It tells about a man who was bitten by a dog. A few days later the doctor told him he had rabies. The patient took out a pad and pen and started writing.

"No need to write your will," said the doctor. "We'll pull you through."

"It's not my will," said the man. "It's a list of people I'm going to bite."

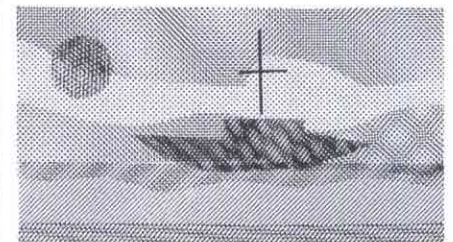
Among the critics of the report of the Warren Commission is John Rothman. He thinks the text is all right, but he says the index is terrible. As editor of *The New York Times Index*, he knows. (*The Times Index*, in simple terms, is a means by which you can look up anything that was printed in the paper since the first edition in 1851.)

The index of the Warren report is practically useless as a guide to the contents of the document. Names are listed with nothing but a string of page numbers after them. A search for data about Oswald's stay in the Soviet Union, Rothman points out, would entail a check of nearly all the 250 references to Oswald. Subject terms such as "wounds," "press coverage," and "prison" are omitted altogether.

Today indexing is a science, Rothman explains. Finding what's been printed in journals and books can be a headache. Indexers now call themselves "information retrievers." At the University of Pittsburgh they study the subject at a "knowledge availability center." The federal government has financed two studies on information retrieval. But for some reason someone slipped up on the Warren report.

After his own *Times Index* Rothman believes the next best are those in *The World Almanac* and in the Sears, Roebuck catalogue.

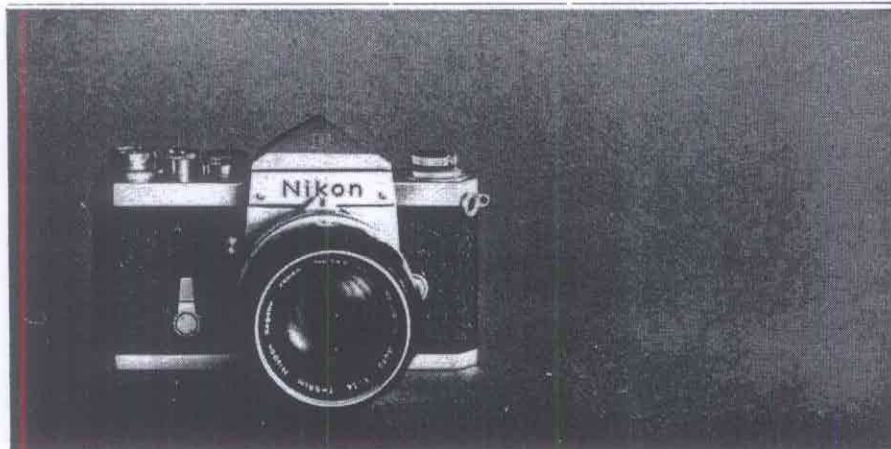
It took three years of hard work for Morris Weeks, Jr., to edit *The Complete Boating Encyclopedia*, just published by Golden Press. Last summer, though, it



seemed that he had a few free days when the galleys had been corrected and the book was on the press.

"Let's go sailing," he said to his wife, Antoinette.

Soon they were relaxing as their four-



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