



The Historian

Preserving Today for Tomorrow

Volume 5 Number 5

September — October 2011

1970 the Year of George A. Rowley

This article is the eleventh in a series adapted from the transcripts of the Historical Society's first archivist, Marjorie F. Jones. Additional information was taken from five Historical Society Journals published between 1980 and 1982, *Fulfilling Retirement Dreams*, published by the Historical Society in 1989 and numerous issues of the 1970, 1971 and 1972 *Leisure World News*.



Noted cartoonist George A. Rowley.

By the time he was nine years old, George A. Rowley's future seemed ordained. "I used to run around at school from classroom to classroom, drawing display pictures of Santa Claus and turkeys and you-name-it," he recalled.

The schoolboy artist grew up to become a cartoon animator at the Disney Studio during the golden age of *Snow White*, *Pinocchio*, *Fantasia*, *Bambi* and *Song of the South*. After 36 years of achievement with the Hollywood cartoon industry, he packed up his pens and paints for a move to Leisure World where his talents were promptly utilized for countless community activities.

For more than ten years, starting on August 10, 1970, the cartoons of George Rowley brightened the pages of *Leisure World News* and the lives of Leisure World residents. They were incisive and humorous comments on the foibles and fancies of our residents. He was the moderator of the "What Was My Line" television game show on the community's Channel 6.

Rowley was born in Sioux City, Iowa, and spent his boyhood there and in Omaha. His early penchant for art drew him like a magnet for further studies at the Omaha Art Academy and The Chicago Art Institute. After moving west in the early 1930s, he continued his art studies at Chouinard and also encountered a young public school teacher named Mina Throne, who later became his wife. Their first meeting was a blind date jointly arranged by his brother and her roommate. The latter couple also subsequently married and was Mabel and Ernest Rowley of Leisure World.

In 1934, George Rowley joined the Disney Studio's Effects Animation Department where he remained for 21 years as animator and department head. In addition to the beloved features previously mentioned, he has animation credits for 11 other full-length Disney films including: *The Three Caballeros*, *Make Mine Music*, *Fun and Fancy Free*, *The Adventures of Ichabod and Mr. Toad*, *Cinderella*, *Alice in Wonderland*, *Peter Pan* and *Lady and the Tramp*.

One of his special projects on *Three Caballeros* was an intricate ending in which a bull pranced onto the scene and burst into a mind-boggling fireworks display spelling out "The End" in various languages, concluding with a lively burst of red-white-and-blue for the English translation. When asked about the scene Rowley laughed and responded, "I spent literally months working on the scene and each time I saw it in a theater, they pulled the curtains right over the ending."

Rowley commented on his years with Walt Disney: "It was a priceless experience. He was a taskmaster and a genius, with

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Rowley from Page 1

the amazing faculty of knowing what the public wanted and how to give it to them."

In 1955, he was hired by Paramount Studios to serve as animation supervisor for *The Ten Commandments*. On this project he devised a new method of filming sequences combining animation with live action to produce life-like effects for the movie which went on to win a Special Effects Oscar. Film buffs may recall one of Rowley's contributions—a pillar of fire with writhing fingers that majestically wrote out the Ten Commandments on stone tablets. Another was the famous parting of the Red Sea.

He animated titles for the Doris Day film, *Teacher's Pet*, and special animated effects in Alfred Hitchcock's *Vertigo* were also part of his work at Para-



Rowley used his custom made desk to develop another cartoon—this one about the Thrift Shop.



mount. Rowley later worked under contract at Sketch Book Films, Larry Harmon Productions and Filmation Studios. He concluded with five years as Hanna Barbera Productions' supervising animator before retiring in 1970.

For the next ten years after retiring, Rowley's cartoons enlivened the pages of the *Leisure World News*, drawing such comments as, "he has brought much laughter to us by letting us see the humorous side of our foibles" ... "his humorous caricatures hold the mirror up to ourselves."

Rowley was a guest teacher at art schools and frequently appeared before local clubs and other groups in the surrounding community, illustrating his talks with cartoons which he donated for use as door prizes and charity raffles.

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PATIO PANIC.



CHIVALRY IS NOT DEAD, -YET !



CHANGE OF PLACE



HAPPY "MOTHER'S DAY"



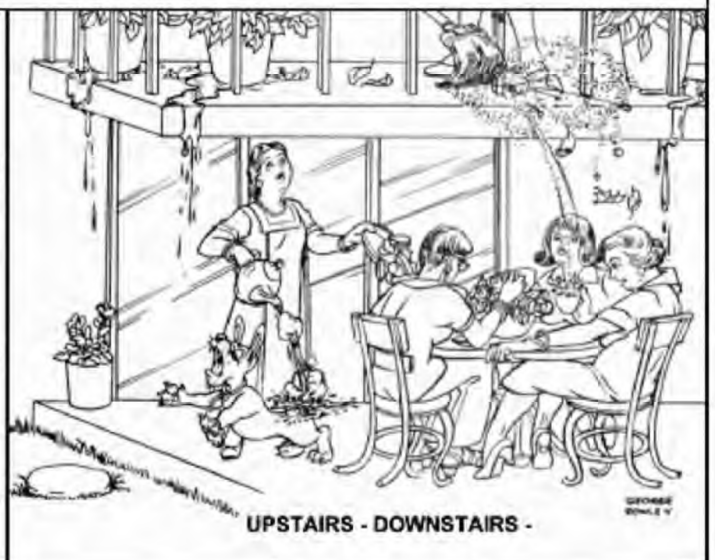
BUS STOP.

Rowley from Page 3

His favorite appearances were at public schools and youth group meetings, where he delighted his young audiences by inviting them to take his sketchpad and draw a line which he then transformed into the character of their choice.

Rowley's volunteer artwork also embellished the massive fireplace at Clubhouse I during various holidays and appeared on the letterheads and directories of countless community groups. "I'm always doing something for someone, and that's good for us all," he commented.

George Rowley was the Historical Society's Honoree for the Month of January, 1982.

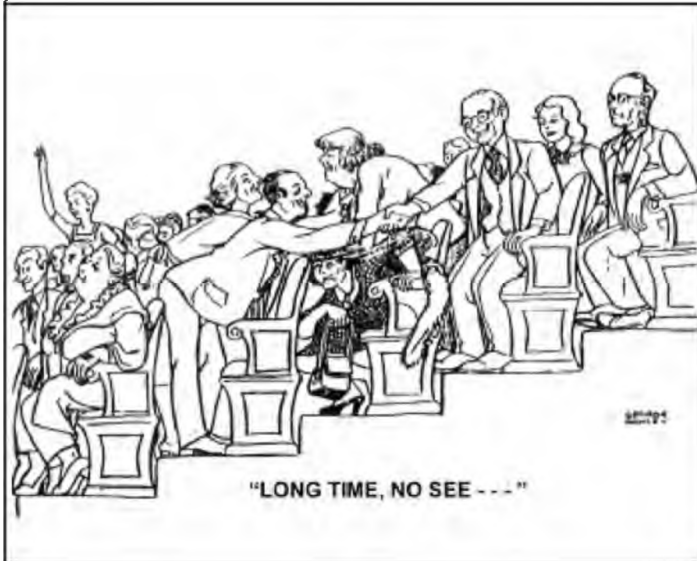




POINT OF VIEW



THE FREELoader.



"LONG TIME, NO SEE - - -"



WOMEN'S LIB



SPIRITUAL GUIDANCE



PEOPLE WATCHERS



PILGRIM'S PROGRESS



GEORGE ROWLEY



OF LIFE AND LIMB

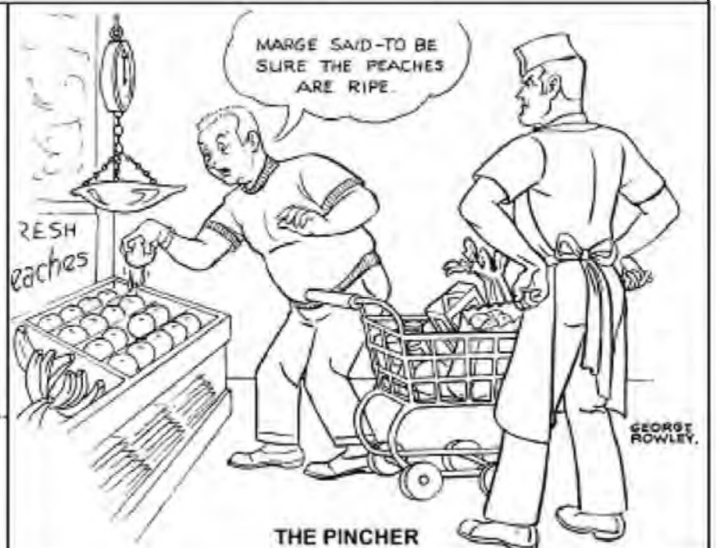


GEORGE ROWLEY

CONSOLATION



POT SHOT

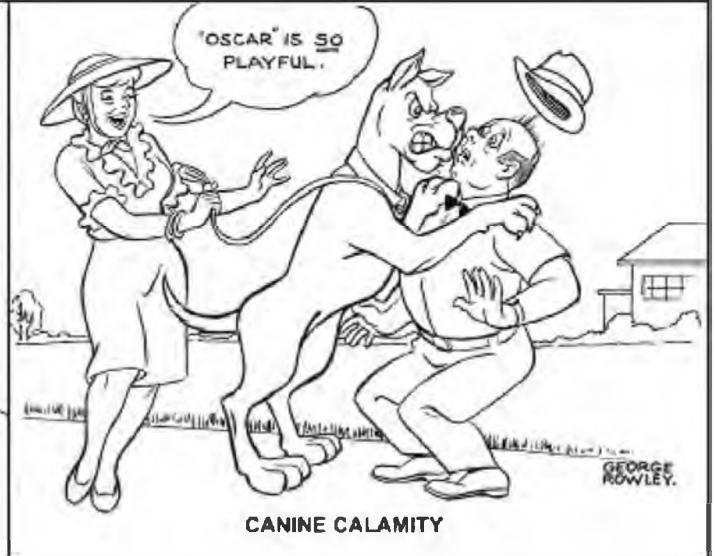


GEORGE ROWLEY

THE PINCHER



HAIR RAISER



CANINE CALAMITY



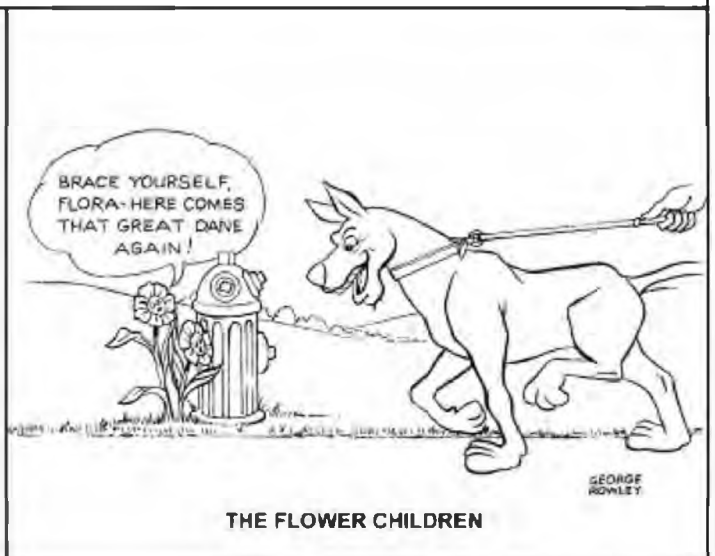
EXHIBIT "A"



WISHFUL THINKING



EMBARRASSING MOMENTS



THE FLOWER CHILDREN

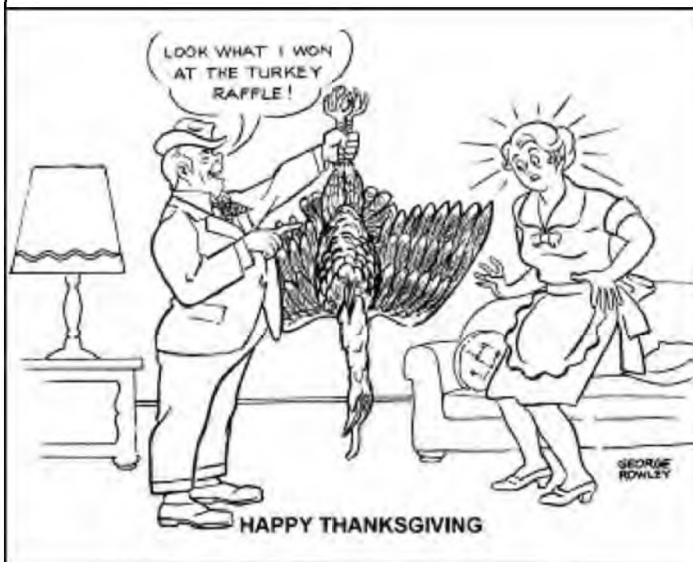


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All cartoons printed in this issue are courtesy of The Leisure World News

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