

TIME

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TIME, APRIL 5, 1968

A letter from the PUBLISHER

James R. Shepley

UNDER the pressure of encompassing the world's news within weekly deadlines, TIME's editors can rarely afford the luxury of reflecting on the results of the stories they worked on last week or last month. But often we receive letters and calls from individuals and corporations whose lives have been changed by a TIME story. While many of these effects are on a rather large scale, we are fascinated by what we hear from people who were involved in smaller stories.

One case in point revolves around a four-line footnote. It appeared in a Modern Living story (Jan. 5) about a peripatetic, perfectionist omelet maker named Rudolph Stanish. The footnote described his special omelet pan and gave the name of its distributor, Manhattan's Bridge Co. When we began to get an exceptional number of letters and calls from would-be purchasers of the pan, we checked with the company's owner, Fred Bridge.

We found his modest kitchen-equipment supply company digging itself out from orders coming from Tokyo to Manitoba, Liberia to Panama, from stores such as Macy's and Neiman-Marcus, from soldiers in Viet Nam, as well as newlyweds in Nebraska. Nearly 8,000 pans have now been sold, and three months later, orders are still coming in at six times the average of a year ago. And the busy Mr. Bridge is still marveling at the power of a footnote.

Another case is that of Captain Svend T. Simonsen, who was the subject of a Business story (Feb. 2). The story noted how Simonsen, who emigrated to the U.S. at 15, had taught himself English and sailing, then taught others navigation while in the military service, before setting up a mail-order course in the nautical skill a year and a half ago. The story, said Simonsen, "completely

changed the lives, fates and fortunes of the Simonsen family and many other people."

Until TIME's story ran, Captain Simonsen, his wife and a staff of three were able to handle the courses in a modest office in Santa Barbara, cutting stencils and running off lessons on a mimeograph machine. As a result of the story, their mail tripled, monthly enrollment in the navigation course more than doubled, franchise and translation requests came in from Europe and Africa, and sales of a sextant they supply to students went up dramatically. The Simonsens are now expanding business to include a "Nautical Book a Month Club," an air-navigation course, and sales of other nautical aids such as a mini-compass and a "Course Converter"—a device that takes the math out of course charting and leaves more time for leisure.

The new interest in Captain Simonsen's enterprise has brought with it some special demands. One woman explorer wrote him that she and her two teen-age daughters were embarking on a two-year seafaring voyage along the aborigine-inhabited north coast of Australia—with no knowledge of boats or the area. Captain Simonsen, who sailed the waters as a civilian employee in the Army's Transportation Corps, now finds himself technical consultant to the expedition. Along with these results came some echoes of the past. Simonsen got a friendly phone call from a man who, when an alcoholic, had tried to kill the captain aboard ship in 1943. The man, now reformed, has become a successful lawyer in Boston.

We experienced a rather warm feeling ourselves when Captain Simonsen wrote to tell us of all this and ended up saying that "nothing can ever match the response from a story in TIME."

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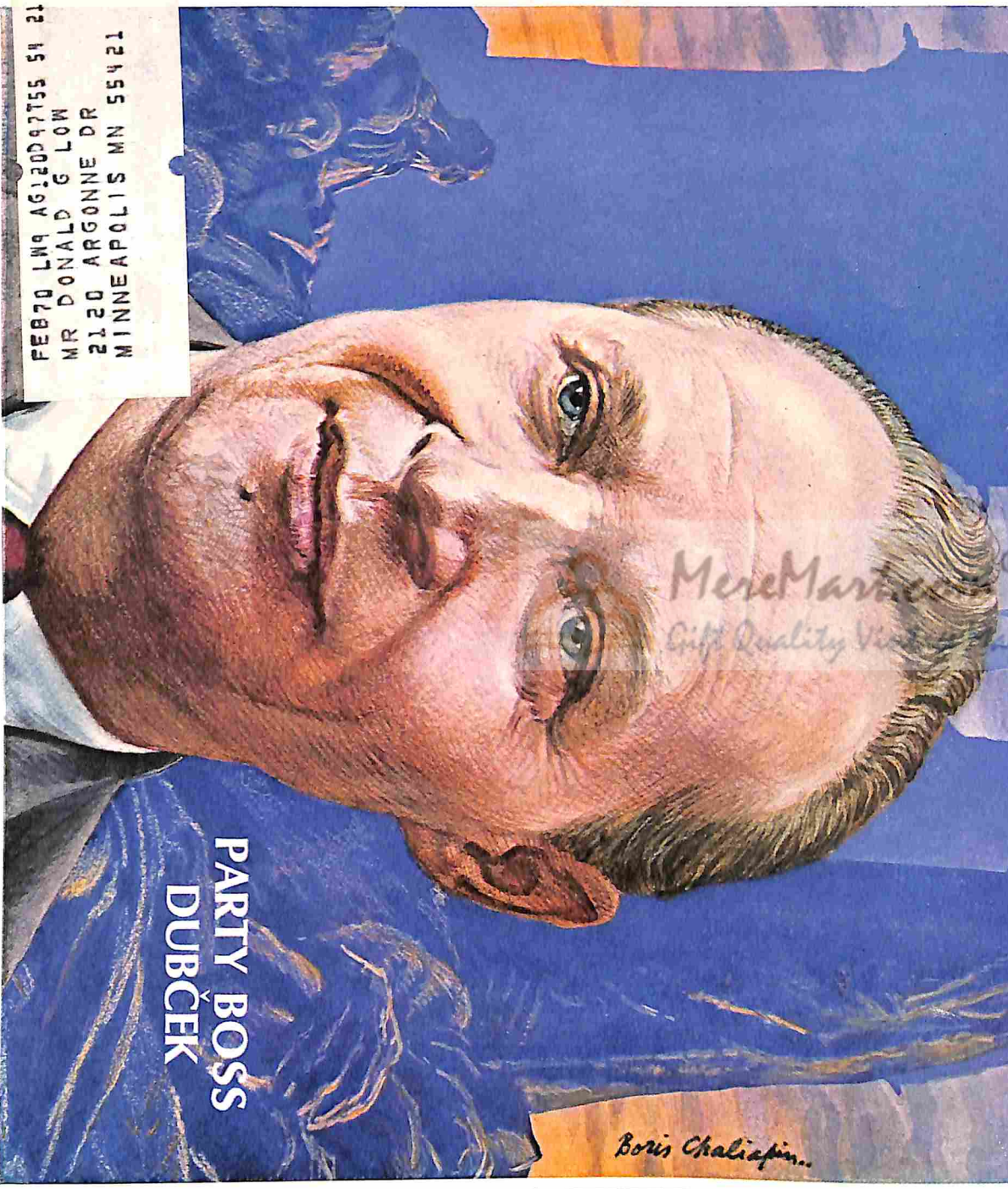
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