

**Famous Artists Cartoon Course**

**Westport, Connecticut**

**Kids**

Lesson

**17**

Rube Goldberg

Milton Caniff

Al Capp

Harry Haenigsen

Willard Mullin

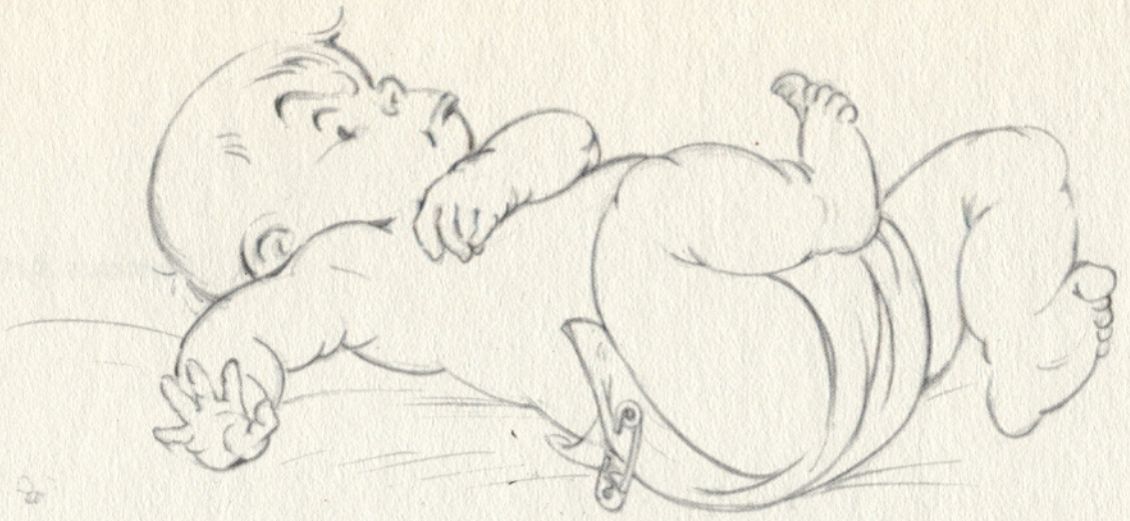
Gurney Williams

Dick Cavalli

Whitney Darrow, Jr.

Virgil Partch

Barney Tobey



### **We were all kids once**

At some time in their lives, each of your readers was a child. Memories of childhood are pleasant things to most of us. A universal experience, and a pleasant one at that, is a great asset when you are trying to please the public. Don't forget your childhood.



## Kids in comics

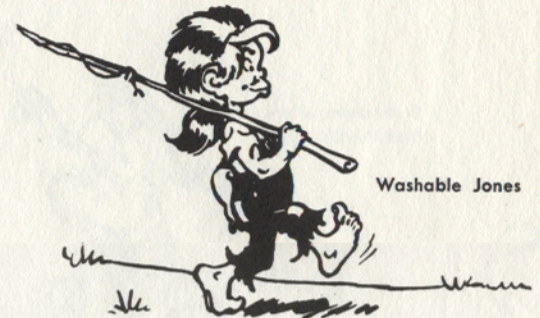
The very first strip of them all was a kid strip: "The Yellow Kid." And what a kid! He wandered around the slums, in and out of saloons and made fresh remarks about everything from politics to the size of Mrs. Murphy's fanny. Today things are slightly different.

In the first place, it seems that kids aren't kids any more. They're "juveniles," and have Authorities, mostly self-appointed. Parents, teachers and educators in general are more organized now and are given to letting off blasts at editors. Editors do not enjoy adverse criticism from large groups of potential customers. So — a large number of taboos have grown up about handling the actions of printed children and you are here advised to keep your kids fairly unobservant of the facts of life.

Funny thing is, most kinds *are* innocents. They live in a very different world from us adults, and even with taboos, there's plenty of humor left to go around. A child's comments on the adult world can be wonderfully funny. As secondary characters in a comic story, children have no peers. Many a dull story that has gone dead in the mind of the artist has been saved by the addition of a kid character to give it new life.

When drawing children or creating a story for them remember that children are *not* small adults. To draw a convincing child the proportions must be right for his or her age. Also, one must keep up with the styles. Children's dress changes almost as much as their mother's. Especially is this true of teen-agers. Teen-agers seem to spend most of their time trying to add to — or take away from — their dress to make themselves stand out from the crowd. This goes for the boys as well as the girls. A cartoonist who is drawing a teen-age strip must keep his ear to the ground of the High School campus.

The cartoonist must study the psychology of the age group he is working with. Children just don't think or act like adults. They live in a world of their own. To be successful, the cartoonist must invade this world and attempt to capture its peculiarities and charm and transfer them to the drawing paper. Not only must he capture their mental outlook, but he must put across their vocabulary and their physical actions with fidelity.



Children's slang also changes from day to day. There is nothing deader than yesterday's slang, and the cartoonist must be doubly sure that the words he is putting in his character's mouth are not out of date. The radio, television and movies will usually give you a tip-off as to what is coming out of the mouths of babes this week.

If only adults were reading the comics the artist wouldn't have to worry too much about how he handles children in his feature. But kids themselves are avid comic fans. Teen-agers love to read teen age strips—and if things aren't going just as they think they should they will soon let the artist know what they think is wrong.

Remember that children are more flexible than adults. Their muscles and bones don't seem to have any limitations. Children never stand or sit still. They are constantly on the move. Exaggeration of action is expected by your reader when you draw children. Here again your sketch pad must be put to use. Go down to the nearest playground or school and spend some time making fast, rough sketches of children in action. One or two hours of sketching will give you enough material to work with at home for a month. When you make finished drawings from your rough sketches of children try to keep as much of the freedom of line and motion as you can. Too many artists freeze up on the pen or brush when they're making the finished drawing, and thereby lose all the nice lines of their rough pencil sketches.

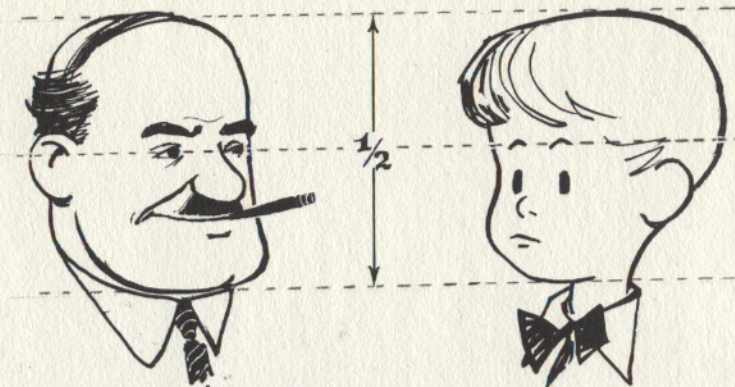
Each of your faculty members has created several kid drawings for you in this lesson. You will notice that no two of them have drawn children the same, but in each case there is no doubt that they are children, as distinct from adults. When you are drawing children be sure that they fit in with the rest of your work. Naturally, if you are drawing them, they will have characteristics peculiar to your work. But, if you have created a special style for any one particular job, be doubly sure that the children you add are drawn in the same style.

When drawing children it is well to remember that where there are children there are pets. Here is where your knowledge of animals will help you create realism. Props, from plastic ducks to hot rods, should be authentic when used around children.

### Kids are different

When drawing children you must remember that their proportions are different from an adult's. A kid's head is larger in relation to the height of his figure, the neck is thin and, up to the age of four or five, the arms and legs are short and chubby.

Kids don't just walk — they hop, skip, jump and, at times, drag their feet, but always with action. A normal living room is a gymnasium for them. This page shows some useful pointers.



Using the eyes as a dividing line, you can see that the child has more head above the eyes than below. His eyes are large and his nose is small in relation to the size of the face

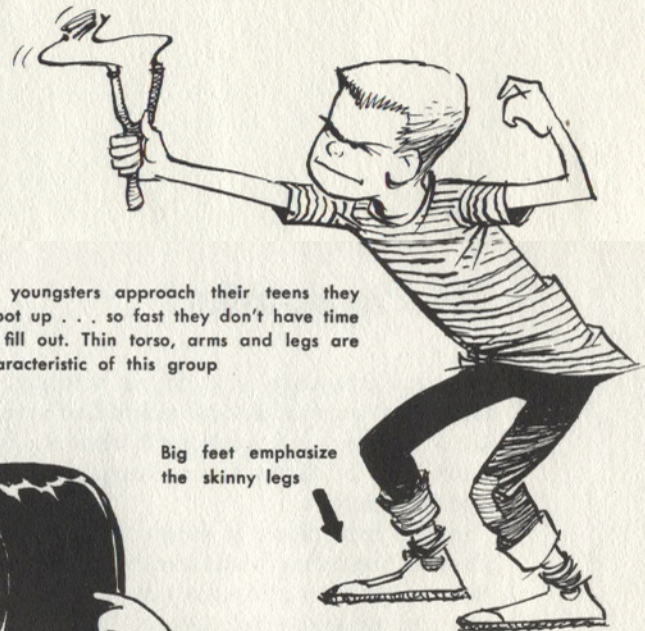
Remember: where there's kids there's dogs



Keep outlines smooth . . . simple

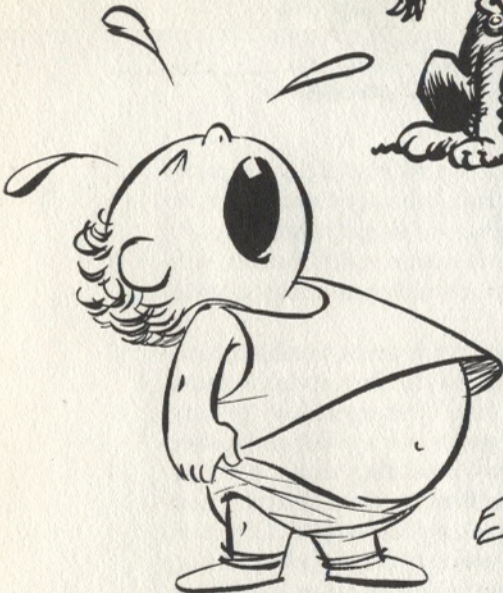


As youngsters approach their teens they shoot up . . . so fast they don't have time to fill out. Thin torso, arms and legs are characteristic of this group

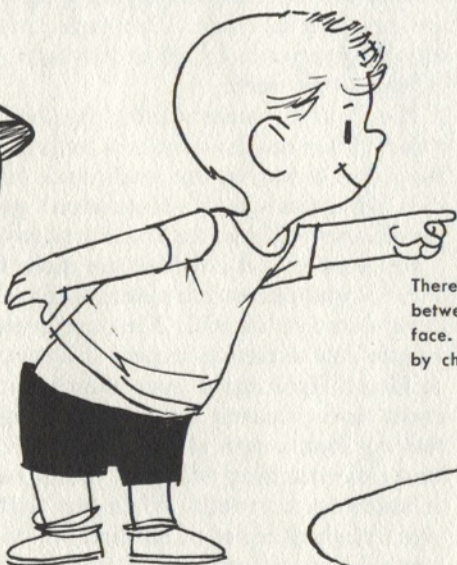


Big feet emphasize the skinny legs

Babies are mostly head . . . and stummick



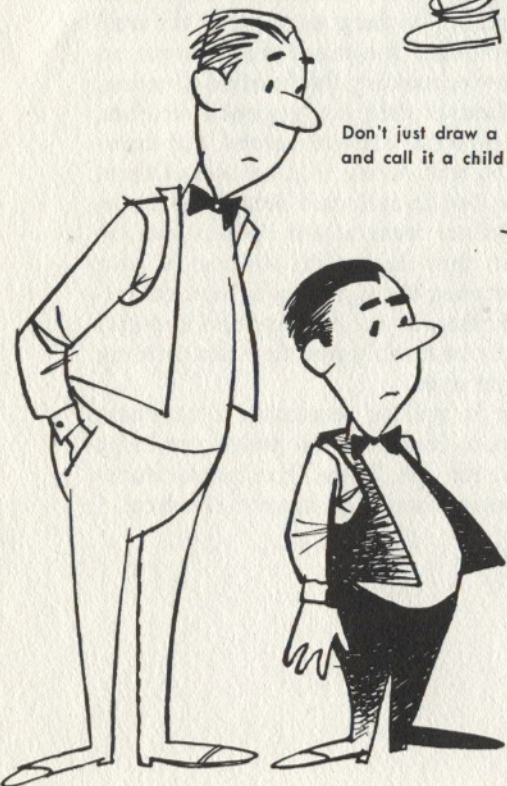
There is very little difference between a small boy's or girl's face. You can change the sex by changing the hair



IN OUR SET IT TAKES A HAIR RIBBON TO SHOW THE DIFFERENCE!



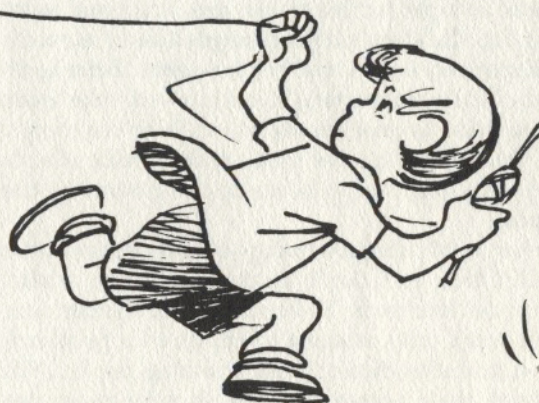
Don't just draw a small adult and call it a child



Are you a midget, Mithler?



Keep your kids moving — real ones never stand still



Normal children are active, curious and like to get into things. They are not dolls on display



This page was designed to show the changes in the relative proportion of the head and features at different ages



**AT ONE YEAR** the head is large in proportion to the face and features which seem enclosed by chubby, full cheeks. The eyes are placed lower on the head. The chin and nose are quite small and the neck is short and fatty. The eyebrows on an infant of this age are very light



**AT SIX YEARS** the head seems smaller in proportion to the face which is growing larger with the chin becoming more pronounced. The mouth and the nose show a more definite shape at this age and the neck is growing longer



**AT ELEVEN YEARS** a pronounced change has taken place. The head is definitely smaller in proportion, the face has lengthened with the jaw and chin becoming quite definite. The nose has grown longer and the eyes are placed higher. The mouth assumes a firmer quality. The neck grows longer and begins to develop



**AT SEVENTEEN** we have almost an adult head with adult proportions. The eyes, lips, nose and chin having developed almost to their full size, now begin to show definite characteristics while the jaw and cheekbones assume much more prominence with the construction of the neck also becoming more pronounced

### Babies

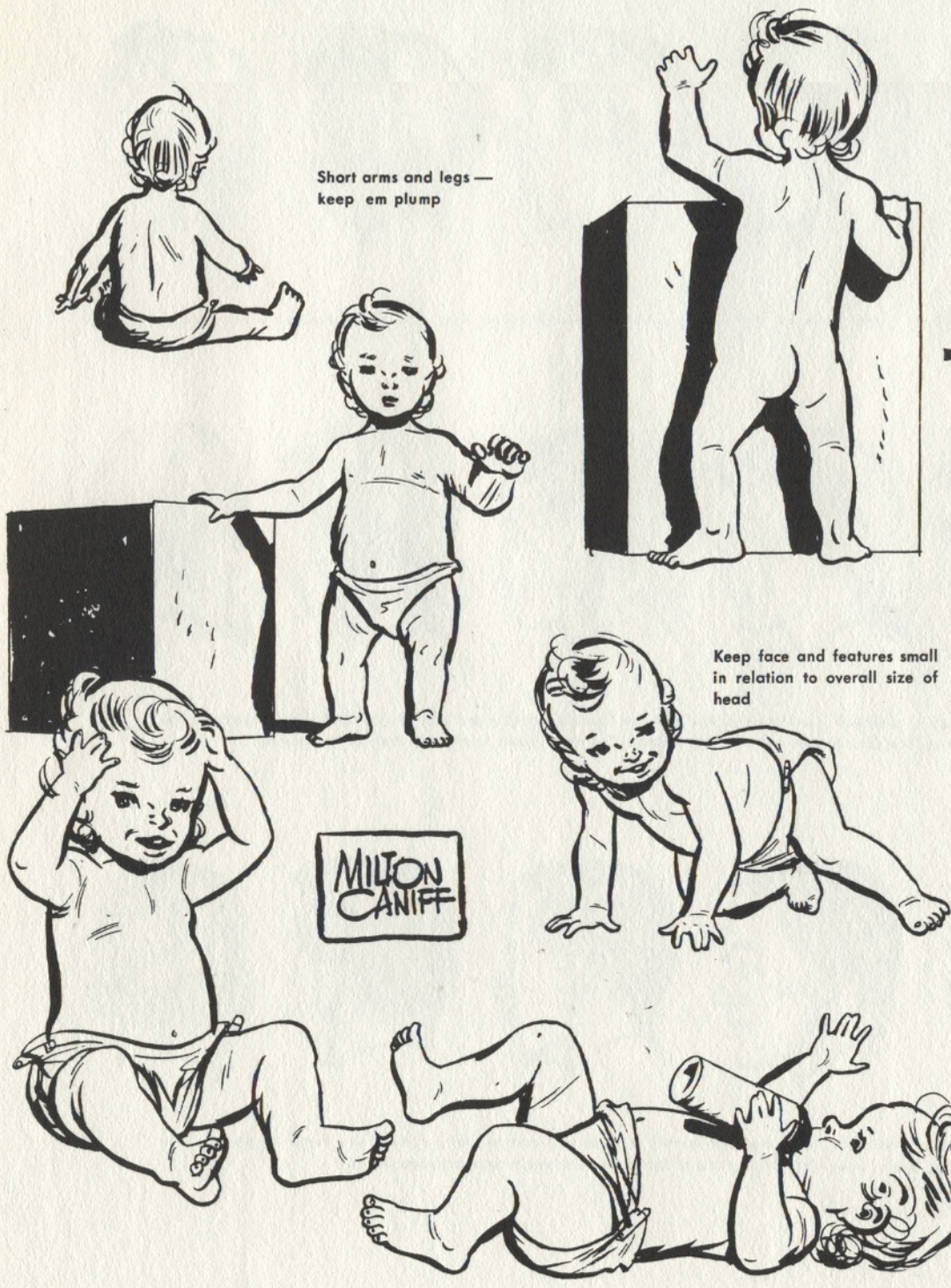
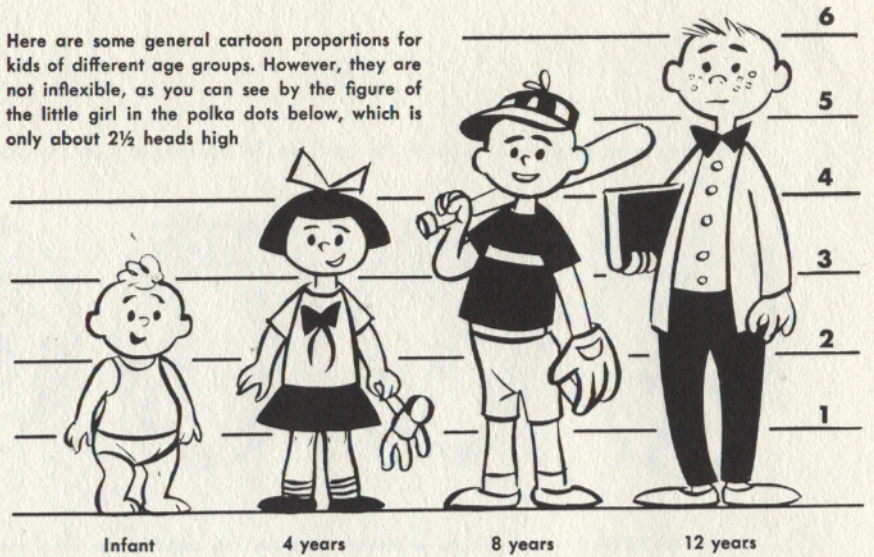
The simplest way to teach children's proportions is by the "heads high" method — expressing the height of the figure in terms of the number of heads it is high.

Illustrators, concerned with drawing kids realistically, as on the preceding page, use ideal proportions for the different age groups. These proportions are: at birth nearly 4 heads high, at one year 4½ heads high, at four years 5½ heads high, at eight years a little over 6 heads high, and at twelve almost 7 heads high.

However, we're cartoonists — not illustrators — so for comic effect we take liberties with these "ideal" measurements and exaggerate them as illustrated in the diagram at the right.

When you draw babies, the important things to remember are: the small, fat face low on a large head, the smallness of the pudgy hands and feet, and the soft plumpness of the overall figure. Try sketching them from life. They make excellent models — they stay in one place and don't criticize your work.

Here are some general cartoon proportions for kids of different age groups. However, they are not inflexible, as you can see by the figure of the little girl in the polka dots below, which is only about 2½ heads high



Short arms and legs — keep 'em plump

Keep face and features small in relation to overall size of head

Knobby knees and bony elbows may show up as kids grow older, but in the younger set the joints are covered by smooth layers of fat

Dimples instead of bone appear at elbow and knee joints

Your very young children will look their age if you exaggerate the long torso and short legs characteristic of the group

Around New Year's Day this little guy is a must

W. H. MULLIN

### 5 - 8 years old

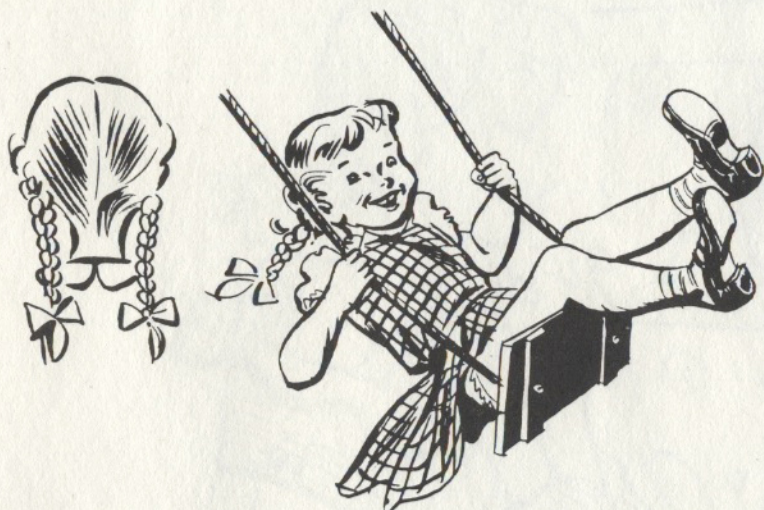
Between the ages of five and eight children stay fairly close to home and mother. They are still at an age when they need baby-sitters. These children are human beings before they grow up and get grumpy. They ask questions and demand answers which give cartoonists wonderful material. Keep tuned in on the doings of the kids in *your* neighborhood.



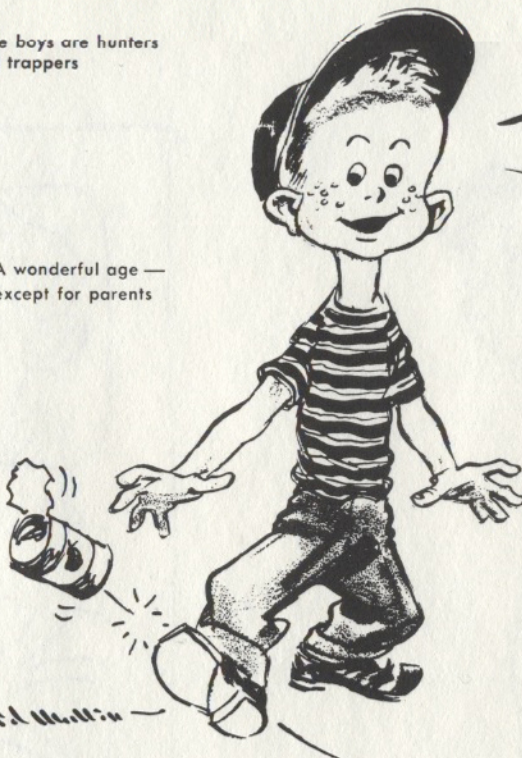
Little girls have the maternal instinct



Little boys are hunters and trappers



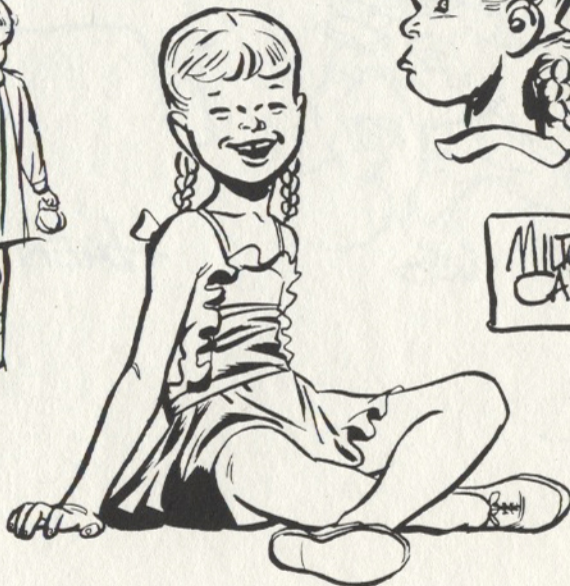
A wonderful age — except for parents



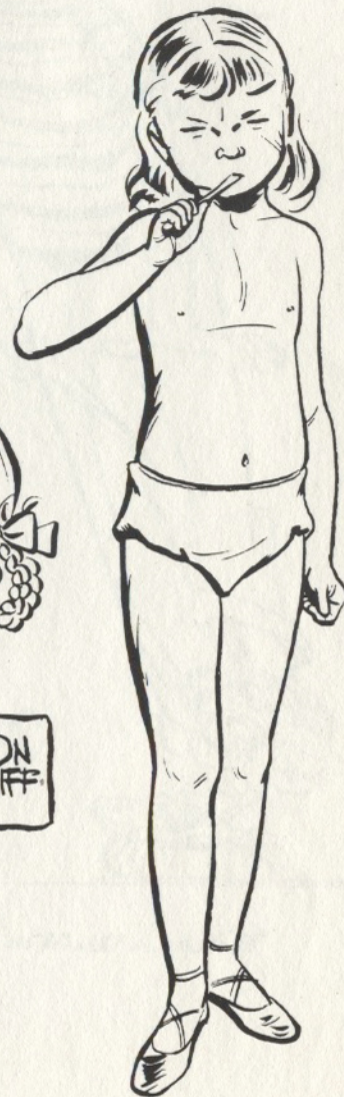
MILTON CANIFF



A five-year-old with erroneous dietary ideas



MILTON CANIFF



### 9-12 years old

Between nine and twelve most kids start to get around more on their own hook. They are no longer babies: their faces take on more character and their figures and nicknames can fluctuate between fat and skinny. They join the Scouts (don't forget the Girl Scouts!) and jump whole-heartedly into fads and hobbies that are tough on parents. Box tops are big business in this league. They read the comics and *like* the ones that have action and are funny. Love interest means nothing in their young lives: in the movies they like you'll notice that the cowboy kisses his horse, not the heroine.

Some cartoonists, mostly without children of their own, have been known to become *too* sentimental about their ink-and-paper kids. Willard Mullin has a good, common-sense word on this:

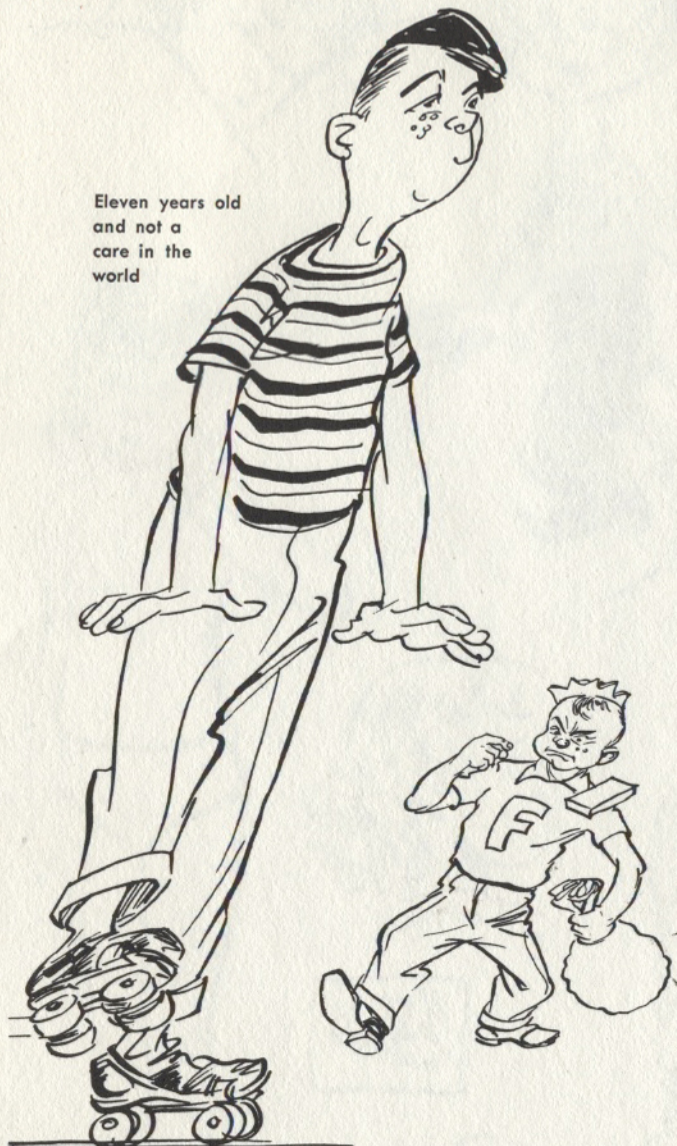
"Babies are cute and I'm reasonably fond of them. With that statement off my chest, I believe I can safely say that there are, however, a good proportion of small monsters taking refuge behind their youth. Same way with children of all ages. In the process of growing up, it has been my experience that some kids

were likable and made enjoyable companions — while others were liable to throw rocks and steal catcher's mitts. What I'm trying to say is that children are *people* — they aren't just decorative little china dolls. They are human beings and have juvenile but *human* reactions that make good ammunition for cartoon ideas."

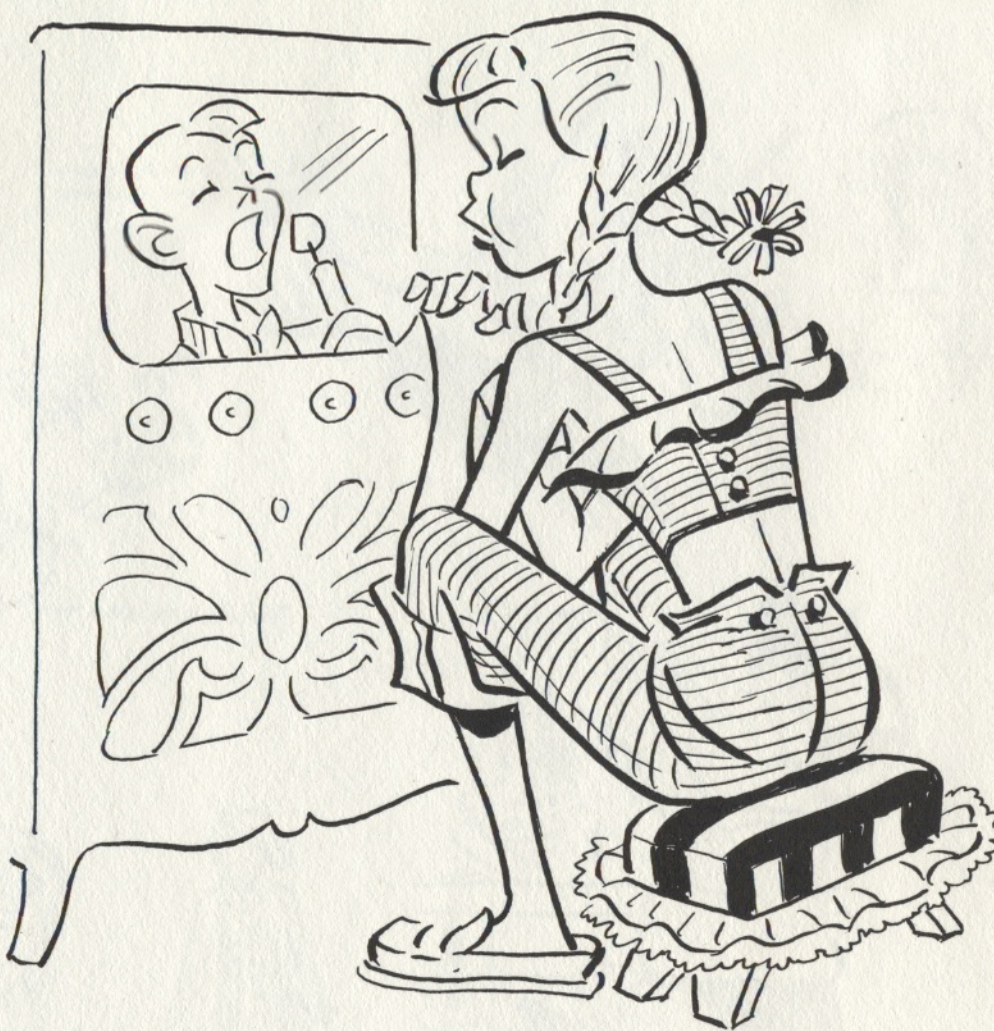
In the adventure strip business, when Steve Canyon and the world he lives in get a little too hard-boiled, Milton Caniff finds that a bit about children can supply a light, warm touch that is the perfect psychological foil for grown-up skulduggery.

As you see, we have included a large percentage of girls in our examples. There is a reason for this. Because most cartoonists grew up, if any, as boys with a masculine view of things, you find a lot more young males than girls in their cartoons. A smart cartoonist, however, will remember that half his customers are ladies. If you leave half the human race out of your work you are only using half the available material.

Eleven years old  
and not a  
care in the  
world



Willard Mullin

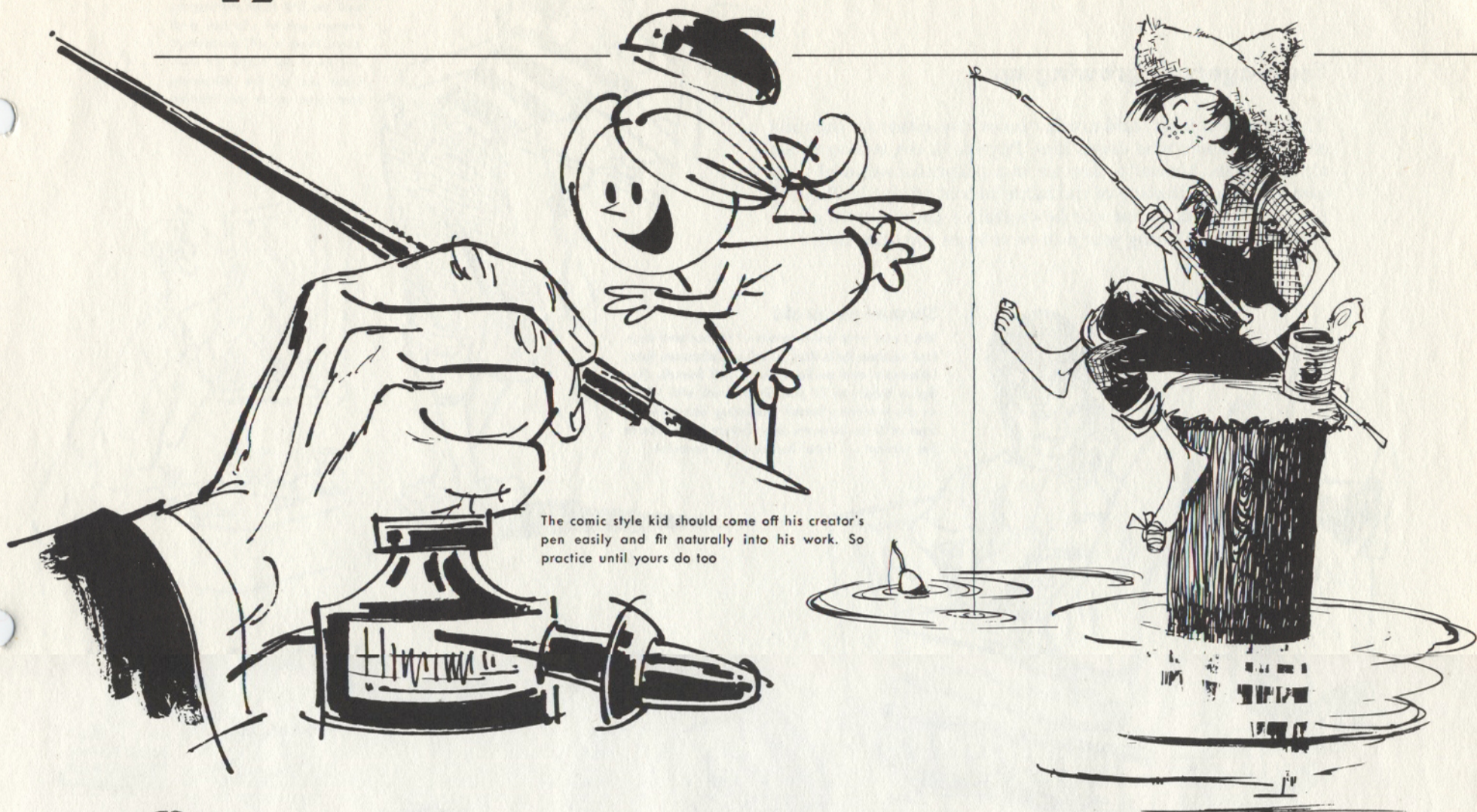


HAENIGSEN

Ten years old

Most young ladies are considerably more interested in softball and food than in crooners. On television she much prefers the Lonesome Wrangler

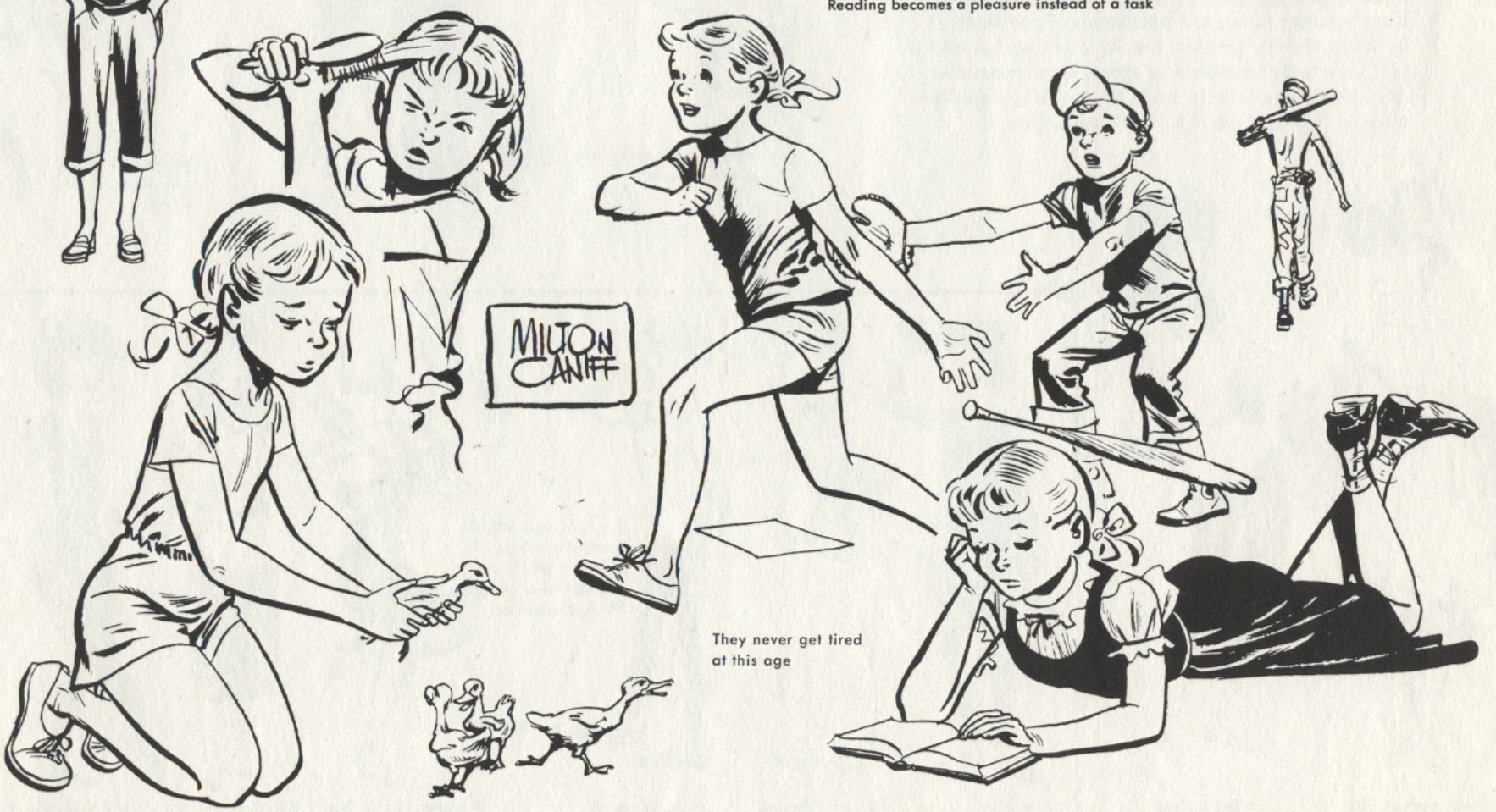




The comic style kid should come off his creator's pen easily and fit naturally into his work. So practice until yours do too



Reading becomes a pleasure instead of a task



They never get tired at this age

**Teen-agers — growing up**

The transition from child to adult is not easy, either for the child or the cartoonist who draws him. Physically, the teen-agers are almost adults. Mentally, they are in a delightful world of their own which avoids many of the harsh facts of adult life. Remember to give them action and be careful of current style crazes. Have fun remembering your own teens when you draw them.

**Thirteen years old**

Comes the age of thirteen and the first faint stirrings of awareness of clothes and boys. Food is still paramount but here she starts the constant use of the telephone that goes on for her lifetime



At seventeen — how would a moustache look?

**Sixteen years old**

She's now very much aware of clothes and boys (not necessarily in that order) and discusses them intimately and endlessly with girl friends. Her figure begins to fill out. She's struck with terror as she envisions herself becoming obese in the eyes of boys. So every new dietary fad captures her interest . . . if not her complete devotion

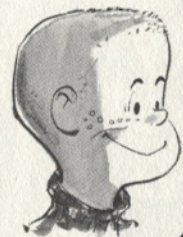


**They're extremists**

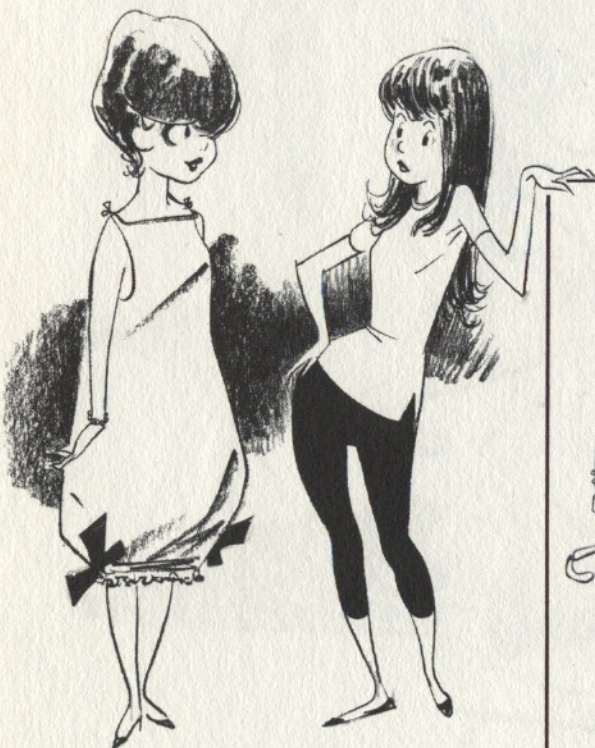
Like pendulums, members of the teen-age set swing from one extreme to the other. Their clothing is too loose or too tight, their hair too long or too short and their manner either too boisterous or too bashful . . . in short, they're just too much! They accept and reject fads with bewildering speed, so a cartoonist, to depict them accurately, must be constantly aware of what is "in" and what is "out" with them



With girls it's either way up or way down

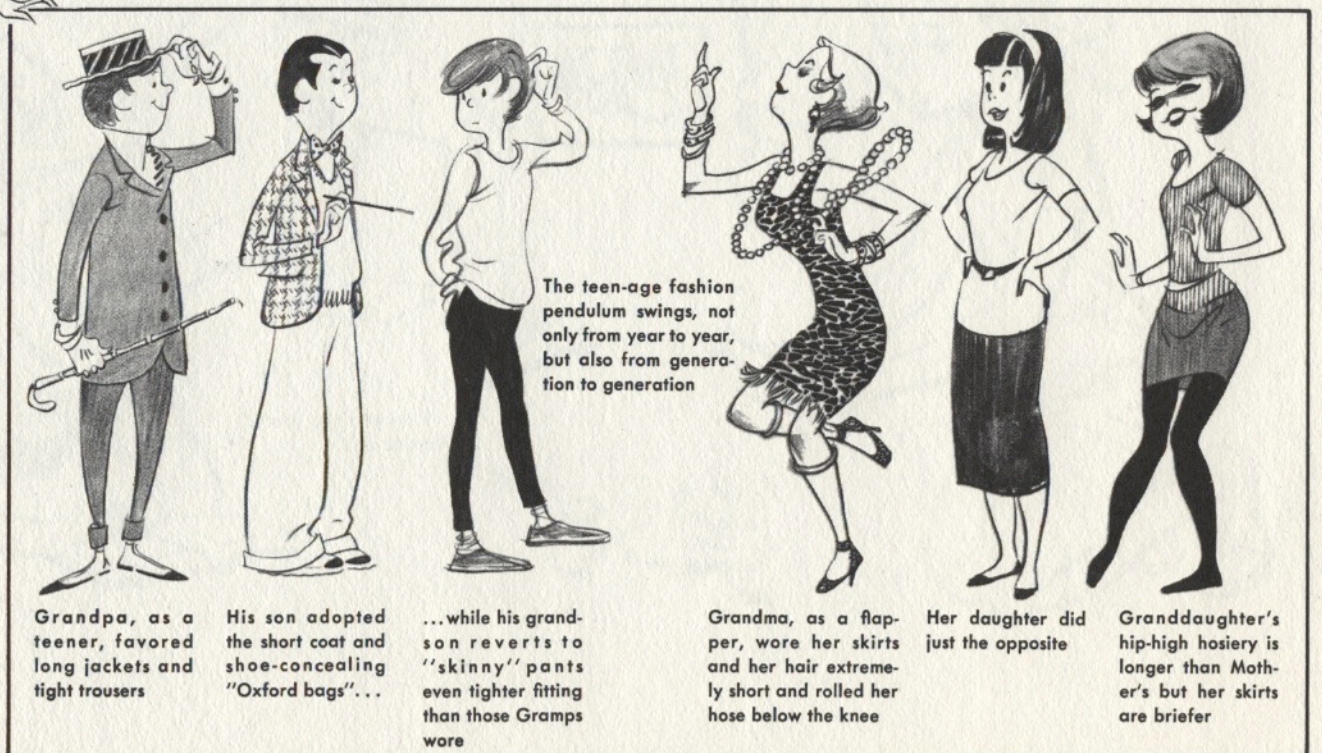


With boys it's either no hair . . . or mohair!



Their clothing fits either like the "sack" . . .

. . . or like the proverbial glove



The teen-age fashion pendulum swings, not only from year to year, but also from generation to generation

Grandpa, as a teener, favored the short coat and long jackets and tight trousers

His son adopted the short coat and shoe-concealing "Oxford bags" . . .

. . . while his grandson reverts to "skinny" pants even tighter fitting than those Gramps wore

Grandma, as a flapper, wore her skirts and her hair extremely short and rolled her hose below the knee

Her daughter did just the opposite

Granddaughter's hip-high hosiery is longer than Mother's but her skirts are briefer

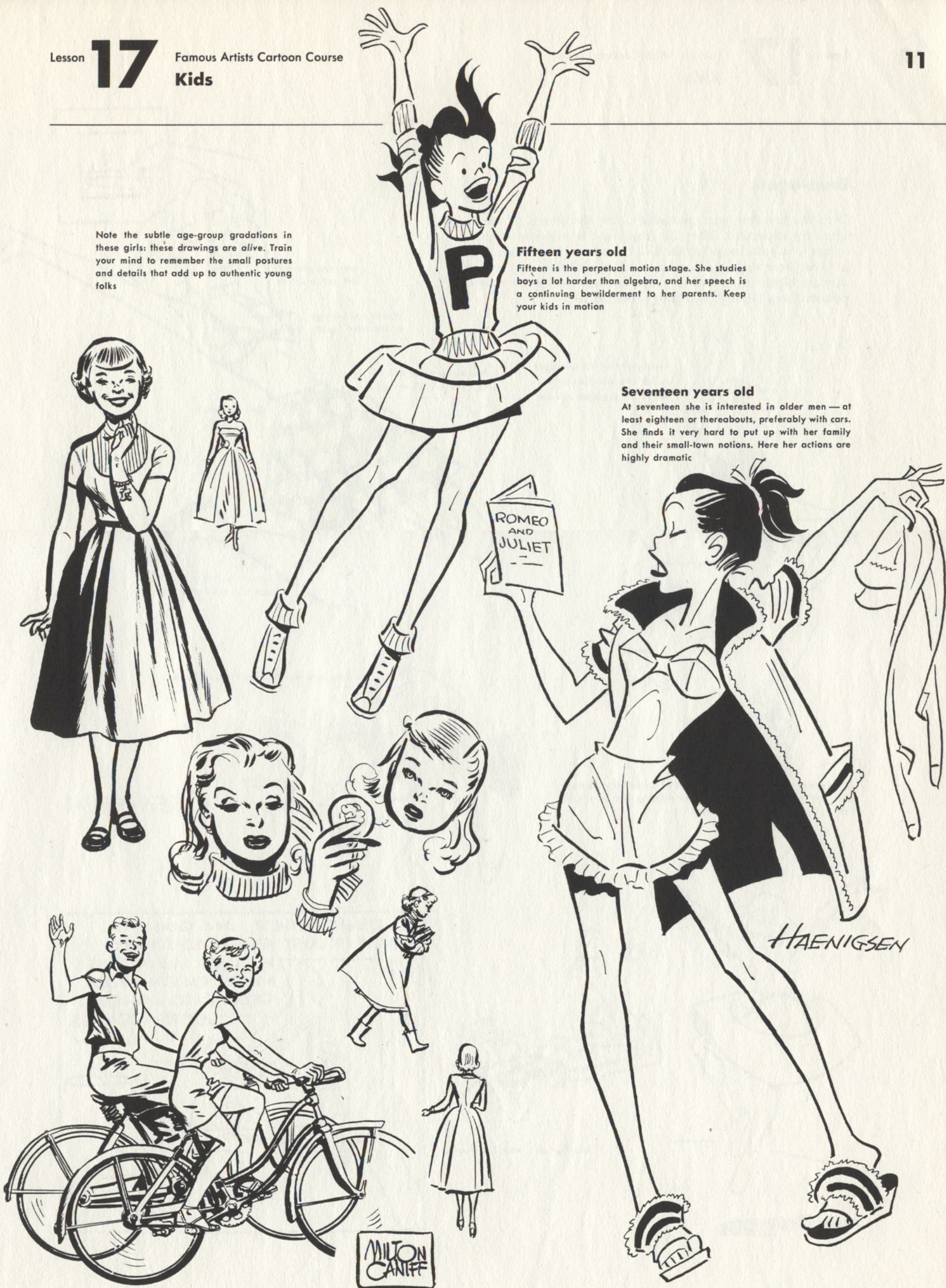
Note the subtle age-group gradations in these girls: these drawings are *alive*. Train your mind to remember the small postures and details that add up to authentic young folks

### Fifteen years old

Fifteen is the perpetual motion stage. She studies boys a lot harder than algebra, and her speech is a continuing bewilderment to her parents. Keep your kids in motion

### Seventeen years old

At seventeen she is interested in older men — at least eighteen or thereabouts, preferably with cars. She finds it very hard to put up with her family and their small-town notions. Here her actions are highly dramatic

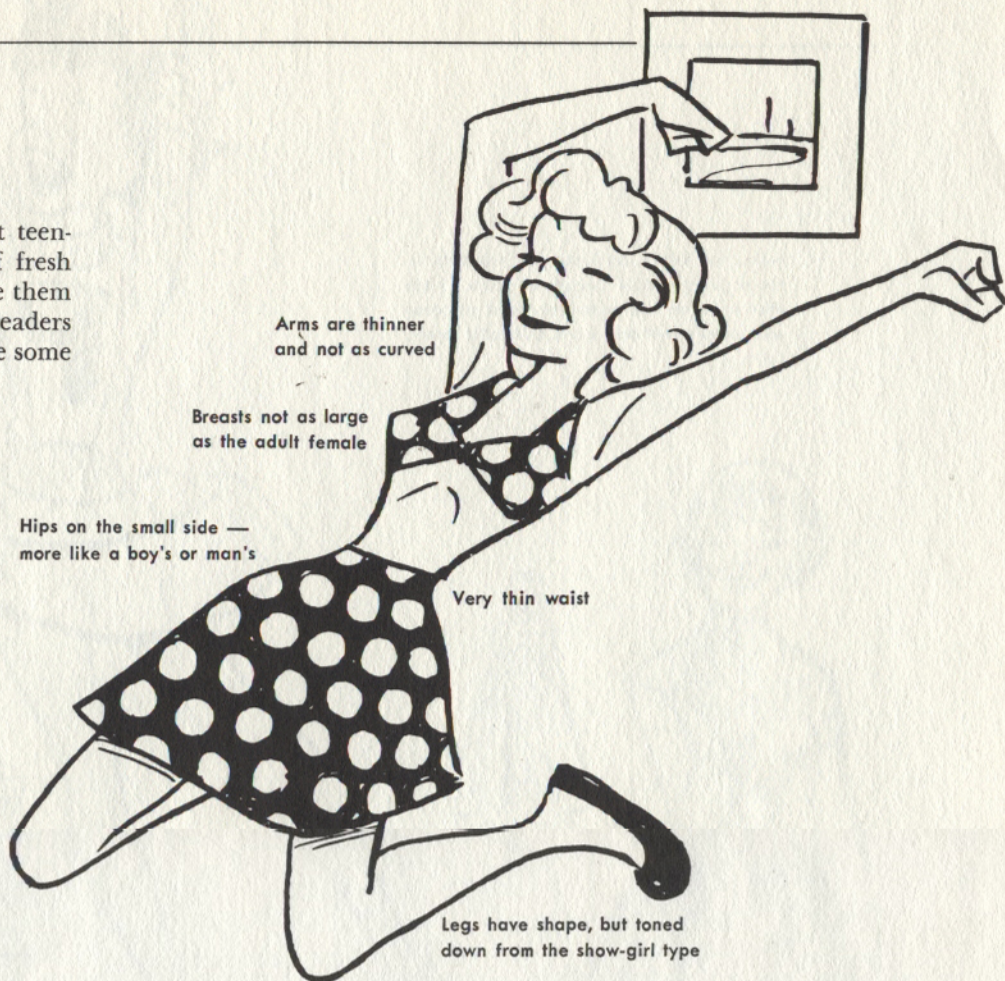


### Teen-agers

Over the past few years, publishers have discovered that teen-agers are important. They are important as a source of fresh humor — people, including the kids themselves, love to see them in print. Since they are important both to publishers and readers they are highly important to you as a cartoonist. Here are some pointers from "Penny" and Harry Haenigsen.



Remember that the teen-ager is full of youth and pep — she is not a smooth doll yet



Arms are thinner and not as curved

Breasts not as large as the adult female

Hips on the small side — more like a boy's or man's

Very thin waist

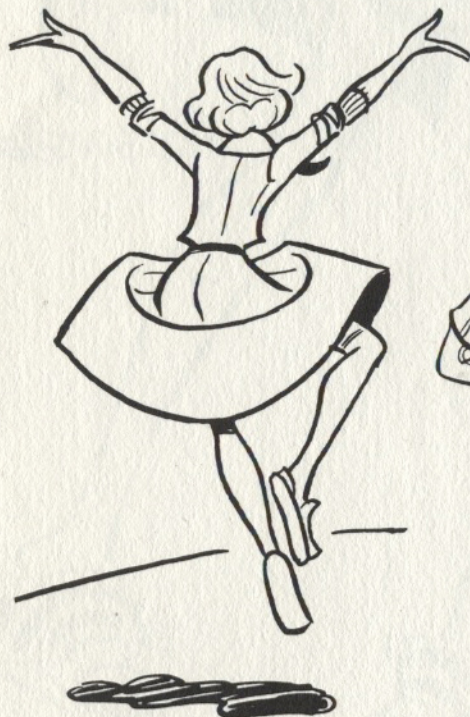
Legs have shape, but toned down from the show-girl type

When you draw teen-agers, remember their style of dress changes from day to day. Each group has bewildering new fads which you must keep up with in this field



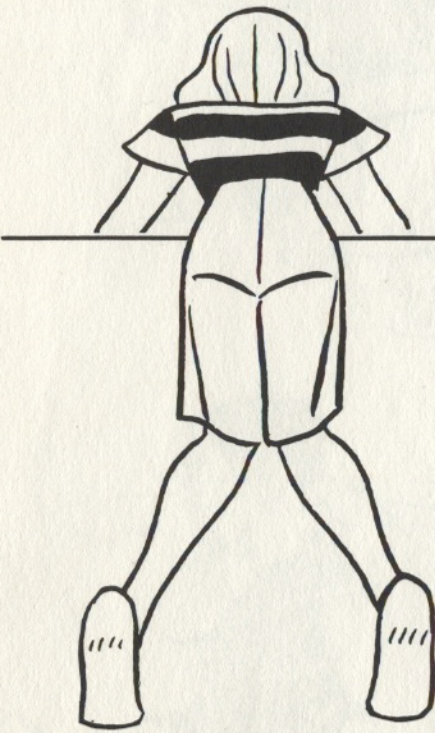
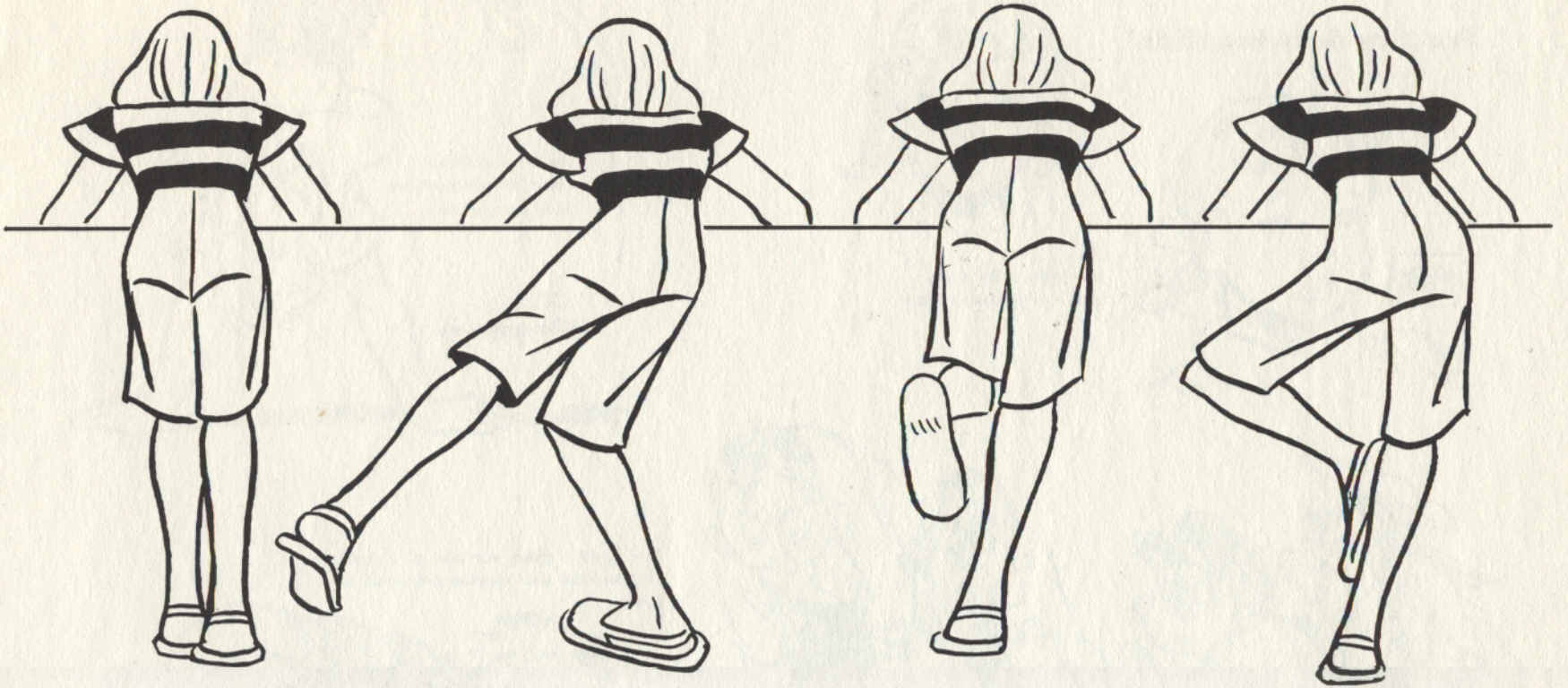
The teen age face is cute with plenty of hair

HAENIGSEN



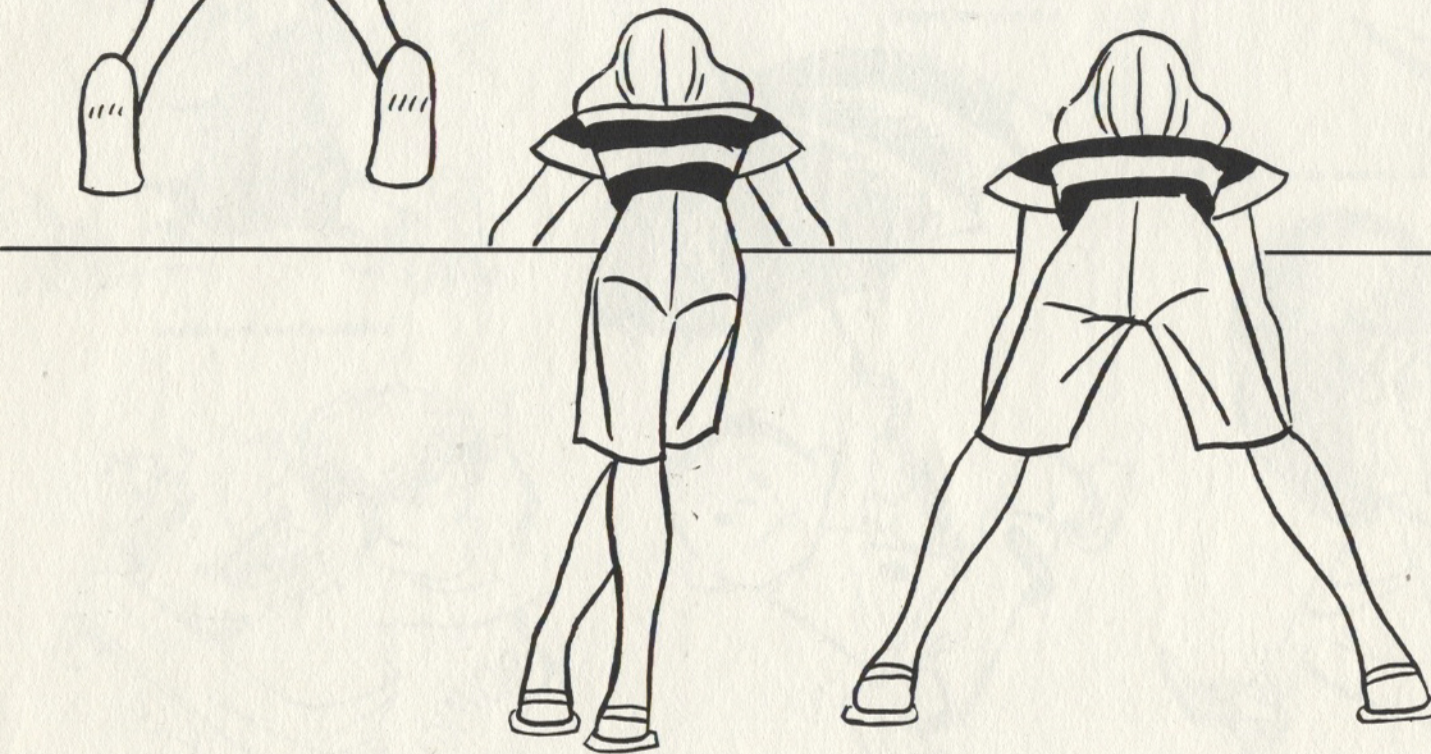
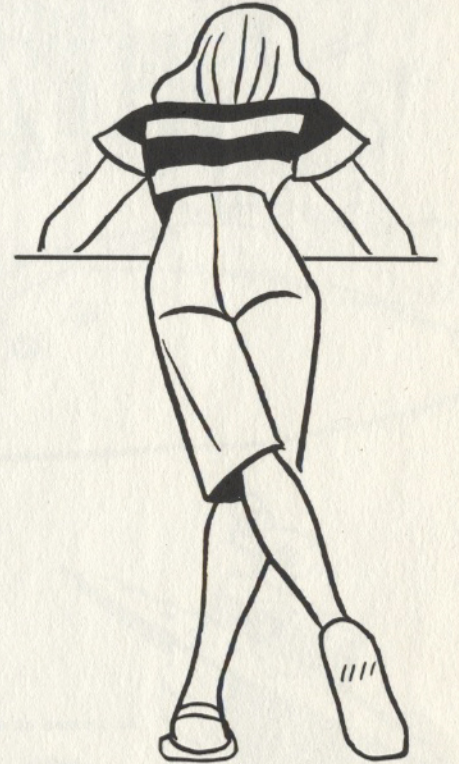
Teen age girls wear flat shoes





### Perpetual motion

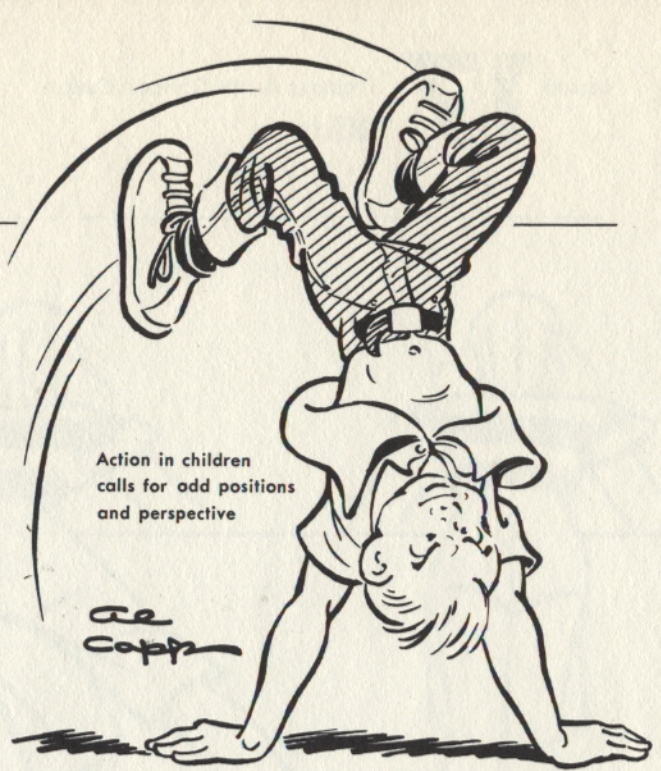
Because of her youth, a teen age girl can't stand or sit still for a moment. Here Penny, a leader in the teen age field, shows you what happens when she tries to stand still. This restless, constant activity leads to many strange positions, giving an alert cartoonist a wonderful chance for exaggeration and humorous drawing.



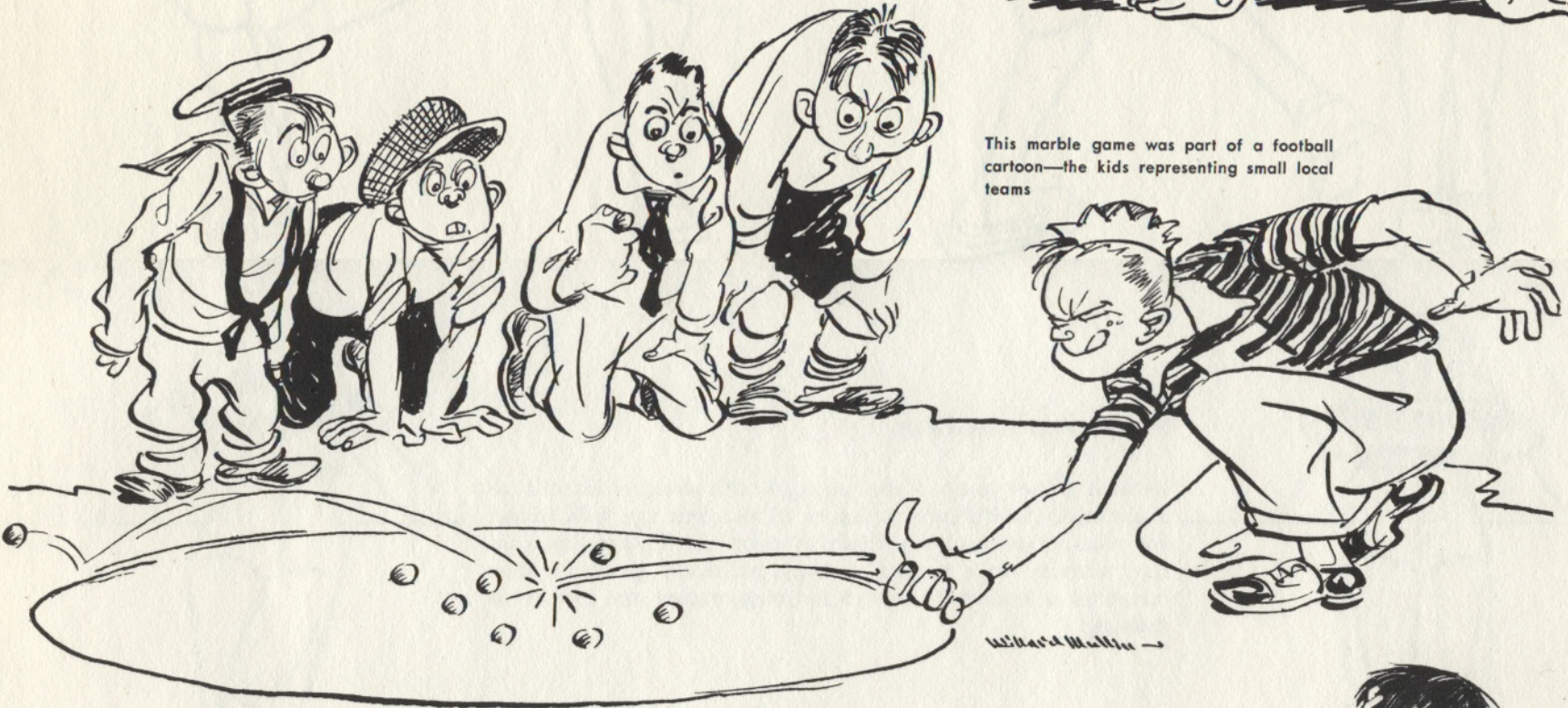
### Practice drawing Kids!



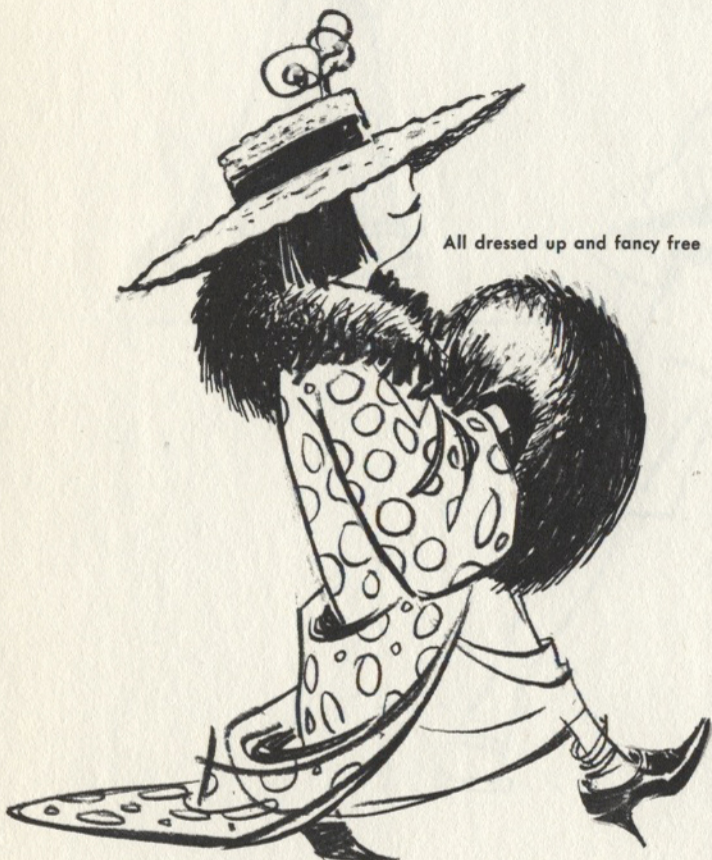
Little girls strike a soft spot in everybody's heart



Action in children calls for odd positions and perspective



This marble game was part of a football cartoon—the kids representing small local teams



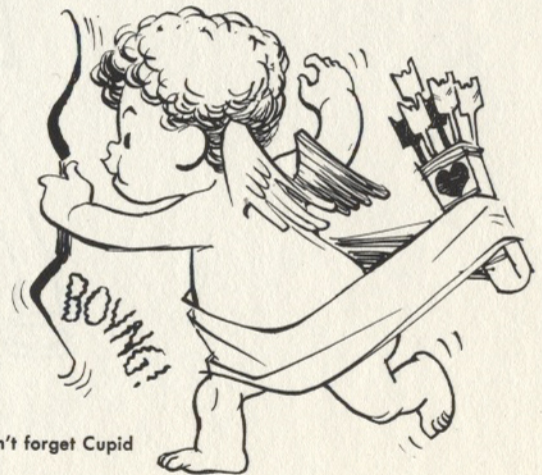
All dressed up and fancy free



Kids like to experiment. This often gets them into trouble—but make it funny, not tragic



Childhood has its problems



Don't forget Cupid

FAMOUS ARTISTS CARTOON COURSE  
Student Work  
Lesson 17

To study and practice

Our aim in preparing this lesson was to make you see the importance of including kids in your cartoon stories and to equip you with the knowledge you need in order to draw them correctly from the start. Remember: People love kids, and most of your readers will be people. Kids are an economic must for cartoonists.

For practice, put to work in your own drawings what you learn from the text and examples in the lesson. Then, for more practice (and it's fun, too), get out with a pencil and sketch real kids in action. Boiling these sketches down into ink drawings will provide you with a brood of cartoon children that you can really call your own because they fit into your own style. A peek ahead at Whitney Darrow's work in Lesson 24 (pages 20 -- 31) will give you an inspirational boost in this matter of sketching children for cartoons.

Our criticism of this assignment will be based mainly on the way you handle the children. However, at this stage of the course, we will feel free to comment on any or all of the points covered in previous lessons -- composition, perspective, props, etc., and especially figure action and facial expression.

The assignment you are to mail to the School for criticism

ASSIGNMENT

On a sheet of 11 x 14-inch Bristol board, ink a panel 8 inches high and 10 inches wide. Then draw the following scene: In a modern kitchen, a five-year-old is feeding a sardine sandwich to a baby, to the horror of a teen-age girl baby-sitter, while an eleven-year-old boy is helping himself to the contents of the refrigerator. Make the scene as lively and interesting as you know how, and use a pen or brush for inking.

Present your assignment in the same clean, professional manner you would use if you were submitting it to the cartoon buyer of a publication. Letter your name, address and student number carefully in the lower left-hand corner of each page. In the lower right corner, place the Lesson Number. Mail to:

FAMOUS ARTISTS CARTOON COURSE  
Westport, Connecticut