

The Importance of People

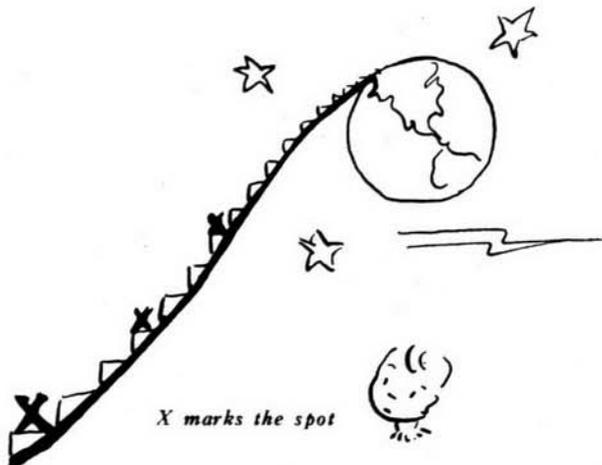
Ruth Cunningham

X MARKS THE SPOT

THERE IS a man named Jones — William Jones. As he walks by, his neighbors point to him and say, "There goes a loyal family man." He is kindly and generous to his wife and children. He works long and hard so

that they may live in greater comfort and happiness. If one looks closely, one may find he pulls some pretty dirty tricks on his business associates, but he "brings home the bacon" for his loved ones. Not long ago the matter of increased taxes to raise funds for better schools was brought before the community. "Nothing doing," said Mr. Jones. "My kids are almost through school now. I've taken care of my youngsters. Other people can take care of theirs."

Little Billy Jones had indulgent and devoted parents and a younger sister whom he adored. It would seem to have been the perfect family. Billy had such a good time with his own family that he never played much with other youngsters in the neighborhood, and his mother didn't encourage him to, for she liked to have him around. When he went to school, he had a tough time adjusting to living with other children until he found he could use his teachers as mother substitutes. He gave his teachers love and affection, and they in turn, flattered and pleased, protected him



from the rigors of group living. He was praised by everyone for the thoughtful things he did for his mother, and for the sweet and gentle way he played with his younger sister. He worked hard to get good grades in school so his

parents and teachers would be pleased. He was such a "good boy" that none of his teachers paid much attention to the fact



Played with sister

that he spent his time getting ahead of the other children rather than getting along with them.

Mr. Jones is a loyal family man. . . . "I've taken care of my kids. Other people can take care of theirs" X marks the spot where his growth got stuck.

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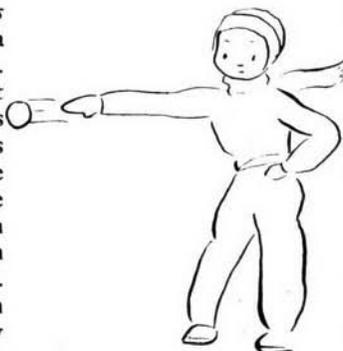
There is a man named Brown—James Brown. As he walks by, the people of the

town point to him and say, "There goes Centerville's best booster." He is president of the Centerville Chamber of Commerce, and you can bet your last nickel that he won't let any other community get ahead of *his* town. He helps Centerville have the best schools, the best traffic safety record, the best housing—the best of everything. It takes money of course, taxes, but he says, "Nothing is too good for Centerville. We've all got to pitch in and help. Dig deep in your pockets, folks, this is for *our* town." Not long ago, the matter of state equalization of school funds was brought up for vote. "Nothing doing," said Mr. Brown. "Centerville takes care of *its* kids. Let the other communities take care of theirs." And as for federal aid to education, which might take some money from Centerville to help impoverished schools in other states, why, 'twould be unthinkable!

Little Jimmy Brown always got along well with the children in his neighborhood, even in his preschool days. Of course, when youngsters from the next block wanted to use the ice slide in his back yard, he lead the snow battle that drove them

off, but the group in *his* block had a fine time. When he went to school, his teacher was pleased to see how well he got along with other children in the room. All through elementary school Jimmy was a leader when there

were inter-room contests, formal or informal. He worked hard to make his room first on the attendance record posted in the front hall. He managed to see to it that his room group had exclusive rights to some of the playground equipment. His teachers seldom saw him except when he was with his own room group so they didn't know



Snow battle

about the violent fights he had with youngsters from other rooms. They never guessed that the only cooperation he knew was within his in-group.

When Jimmy went to college, he was an ardent fraternity man. In fact, he still is. You should hear him tell with glee about the time the Alphas outsmarted the Betas by stuffing the ballot box during voting for class president.

Mr. Brown is Centerville's best booster. . . . "Centerville takes care of *its* kids. Let the other communities take care of theirs" X marks the spot where he got stuck.

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There is a man named Smith—Thomas Smith. As he walks by, people point to him and say, "There goes an American, a patriot." During the war he gave his time, his energy, his money, and his blood for his country. He would have given his life gladly if he hadn't been too old to go into active service. He follows the course of national affairs and puts his weight behind matters which he feels to be important for the national welfare, even though it may make things a little tough for himself, his family and his town. He is called on to make speeches on the Fourth of July.

Today he is being asked to help people of the world. For example, he might fight to have our immigration laws relaxed so the United States could help with the problems of displaced persons. "Nothing doing," says Mr. Smith. "America takes care of *its* people. Let the other parts of the world take care of theirs." He is being asked to do something about world cooperation. For example, he might fight to make possible a really fair international agreement about atomic bomb



4th of July speeches

information. "Nothing doing," says he. "I don't trust those Russians. America might lose some of her security and prestige—and that comes first."

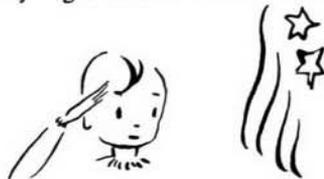
Little Tommy Smith grew up liking and getting along with almost everyone he knew. When in school and community he was taught that he should be loyal to his country, it wasn't hard for him to develop that loyalty. "After all," he reasoned, "I like all the people I know, and the people I know are all Americans, so I'll like all Americans." In school he learned that some people are not like Americans. Some wear funny wooden shoes. Some live in parts of the world where it is winter when it ought to be summer. Some eat birds' nest soup. But Americans are *right*. The teacher says so; the public speakers say so; the history books say so; the newspapers say so. So if there are people not like Americans, they must be wrong.

His teachers taught him mathematics to develop his reasoning, had him salute the flag to make him loyal, and gave him examinations in history to test his information. When he made high scores and had his name on the honor roll, they felt they'd done a good job.

Mr. Smith is an American, a 'patriot'. . . . "America takes care of *its* people. Let the other parts of the world take care of theirs. Be careful about this business of world cooperation. America might lose some of her security and prestige—and that comes first." . . . X marks the spot where he got stuck.

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Miss Bartlett is a wise teacher. She knows that youngsters must grow into ever widening loyalties and responsibilities; that unless there is careful guidance any youngster may "get stuck" at a low level of



Pledge of allegiance

development. She helps boys and girls learn to live with other youngsters in school with loyalty and good faith, without damaging their loyalties to their homes. Even as she teaches the pledge of allegiance to the flag, she teaches that one can be loyal to his world as well as to his nation,



Our world

just as one can be loyal to his community as well as to his family. She doesn't misuse some of our beautiful national ceremonies and customs or the history of our country as a means to teach a selfish patriotism or a narrow nationalism. Some do. For them, X marks the spot where they stunt the growth of a generation, letting it "get stuck" before its full development toward understanding that this is *our world*.

Our Readers Say (Continued from page 131)

THE CURE for the apathy and boredom which exists in the conventional school is the creative teacher who likes children and young people, is sensitive to their needs and interests, loves to teach, and is not afraid to deal with live issues in the classroom. But poor pay, long hours, big classes, and monotonous routine have not attracted or held such teachers. Creative teaching is a

great deal more difficult than textbook teaching. It requires smaller classes and more freedom for the teacher to plan with her students than most schools encourage. Until the American people are willing to pay for good education, they will continue to have schools staffed with the "non-creative, the non-ingenuous."—LAVONE A. HANNA.

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