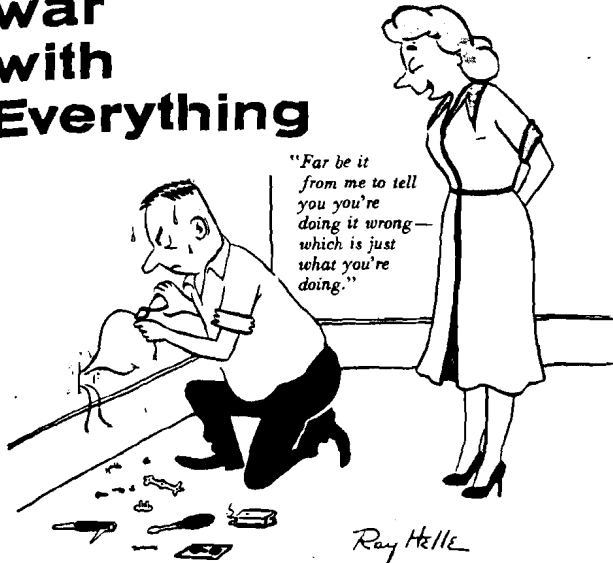


My war with Everything



Ray Helle

Everything is out to get you—and sooner or later it will.
By WILL STANTON

It's generally conceded that nobody else has the kind of bad luck I have. Repairmen, doctors, firemen, insurance adjusters—they all agree.

"If your luggage carrier had been a couple of inches lower," they all tell me, "the skis wouldn't have caught the overhead door."

"If you'd driven that spike anyplace else in the wall," they say, "you'd have missed the electric cable completely."

"If you'd stacked the storm windows the other way," they observe, "the ladder probably wouldn't have gone through all of them." And so on.

I think it's high time we took some of our attention from outer space and did some research on the hazards of modern suburban living. I offer this report as a sort of steppingstone.

The time I hurt my arm was a stormy Saturday night. I phoned the doctor and then I drove over to his house. He happened to be quite a close friend of mine at the time.

"I didn't get it straight over the phone," he said, leading me back to his office. "Is this a bruise or burn or a cut?"

"I guess you'd call it sort of a combination," I said. "Fran put a bandage on it."

"How did it happen?"

"It doesn't really amount to much," I said, "but Fran thought you should take a look. A hot wheelbarrow fell on it."

"I see." He sat down at the table and turned on the light. "You know, there's nothing wrong with relaxation; in fact, a little skylarking may be a healthy thing—at least for a younger person. But a man with responsibilities —"

"Listen," I said, "all I had to drink was a couple of beers. We were just having a little family cookout."

"I know—sometimes these things start out very innocently."

"If you'd let me finish telling you," I said. "I had just got a good fire going when the rain started, so I propped the wheelbarrow over it upside down. Then a little later I was reaching under to turn the hamburgers —"

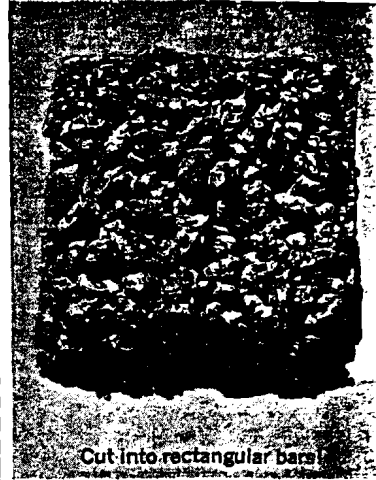
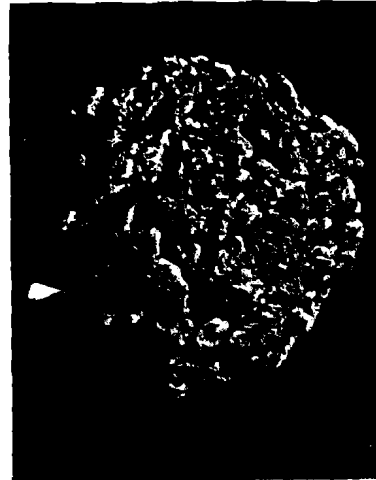
"Well," the doctor said, "we'd better have a look at it."

As I had expected, it wasn't serious—my accidents never are. Sometimes I think the worst thing about them is the absurd explanations they always seem to involve me in. Like the spaghetti sauce.

This happened on a Saturday too. We were having a big crowd in for dinner and Fran was going to serve spaghetti. The tomatoes and peppers were ripe so she made a lot of sauce. She left the kettle on the counter by the kitchen door while she cleaned the dining room. Jeannie had been watching her mother clean the Venetian blinds and when Fran went in to answer the phone I guess there was something about the vacuum-cleaner hose and the kettle of sauce that was just too much for the child. Anyhow, when I came home I found everybody in tears and the household rather disorganized. I called the repair company.

LOOK! YOU'RE AN ARTIST! WITH NEW SCOTCH CRISPIES

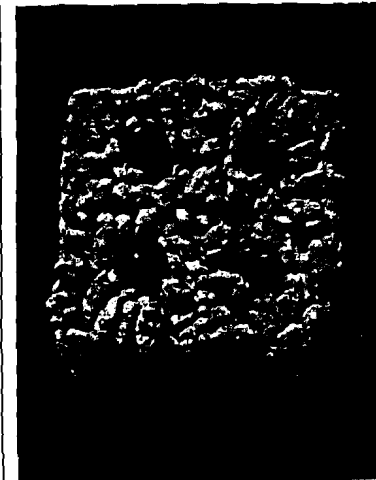
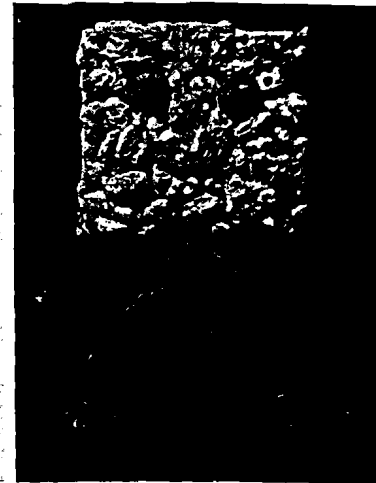
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SCOTCH CRISPIES

Combine and place over hot (not boiling) water: one 6-oz. pkg. of Nestlé's Butterscotch Morsels and ½ c. peanut butter. When butterscotch morsels start to melt, remove from heat. Add 3 c. Kellogg's Rice Krispies and mix well.