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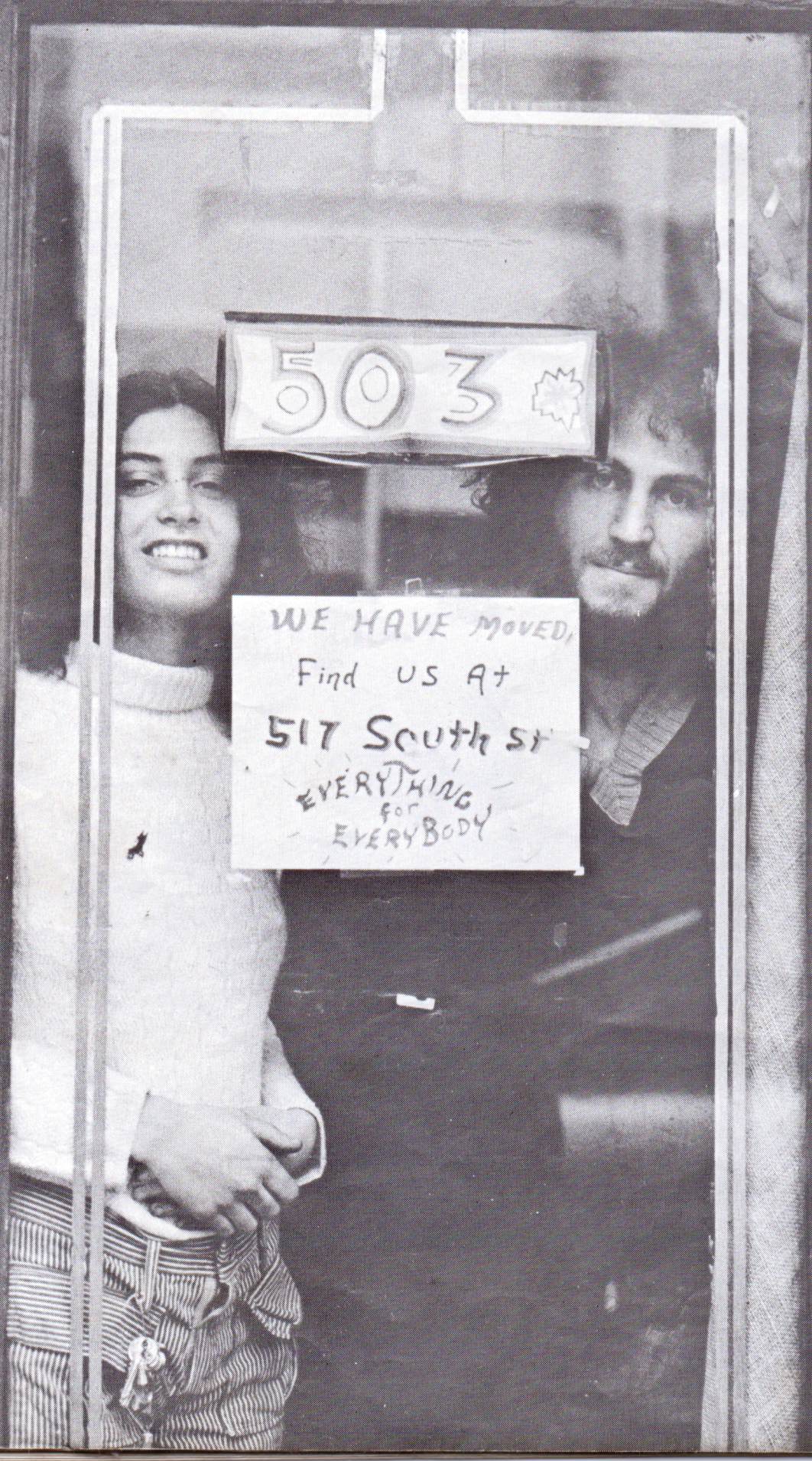
PHILADELPHIAN



**Do you want a  
5'2" Jewish redhead?**  
Then go to South Street  
and ask for Stan and Sharyn.

503

WE HAVE MOVED,  
Find US AT  
517 South St  
EVERYTHING  
for  
EVERYBODY



# They don't match up people for nothing. They charge a fee.

At Everything for Everybody, they don't live on love alone.

Here's Stan Pokras, vertical hair and horizontal beard, looking like a plugged-in Jesus, percolating around a dingy storefront at 503 South st.

"Good news, good news," he's saying, to no one in particular but to five or six people in general, "Stanley's a mother, Stanley's a mother."

All around Pokras, clutter. Little folders with black and white photos of pickles. Overstuffed overbroken chairs piled high with duffel bags and school books. South Street people spread over backless, armless chairs like blue-jeans afghans.

Stanley, a black cat who just gave birth to seven kittens, is enjoying the limelight. She stretches sensuously out for behind the burlap curtain that divides the little store. For a moment, as Stanley slinks through, a glimpse of the back room. Sink, mimeograph machine, coffee cups.

Pokras rolls a cigarette using Bugler tobacco and Zig Zag rolling papers. His eyes narrow. Inside the head, behind the eyes, is a computer-like list of skills, wants, needs, desires, fetishes and fixations.

The phone rings. A dark-haired, attractive Sharyn Strikowsky reaches for the baby blue phone.

"Everything for Everybody," she says.



"Hello," says the caller, "I'm looking for a red-haired Jewish girl, about 5' 2", to sit for my two little girls."

"Hold on a minute," says Sharyn.

Cradling the phone under her chin, Sharyn reaches for a gun-metal gray file card box. Leafing through 400 cards, she quickly takes out two or three.

"Do you need this right now, today?" she asks the caller.

"Yes, today," comes the answer.

"Look, we don't match people up for nothing," Sharyn says. "We charge a fee. It's \$15 for six

months, \$25 for a year. Do you mind paying that?"

"No, not if I can get what I want," the caller says.

"Okay," says Sharyn, "Here's two names to call. I'll mail you a membership card. Fill it out and mail it in with the money."

"Thanks a lot," says the caller.

"Bye, Bye," Sharyn says.

Dissolve to four days later. Same dingy storefront. A red-haired girl with a slightly hooked nose walks into Everything for Everybody. Sharyn is sitting there.

"I'm Judy Finestein," says the red head. "You placed me with a woman who wanted a sitter four days ago. Remember?"

Sharyn cocks her head. "Oh, sure," She says.

"Well, here's the woman's fee," says the girl. "She says thanks."

For a man who needed a masseur who works with peanut oil, for a man who wanted a wife, for a couple who wanted a free home, for a shore hotel owner who wanted to trade a free weekend at his hotel for a day's cleanup work, Everything for Everybody has been the place to go. A central resource listing center, this basically two-person operation matches up people's needs and wants with other people's offerings.

For a fee (they can't live on love alone), Stan Pokras and Sharyn

Strikowsky will file your talents or desires. Odds are, within a few days someone will call and be looking for a person just like you. Sound far out?

Item: A woman who wanted to transport cats to New York City to be spayed was matched up with a man who needed to desex his felines.

Item: A Society Hill-area synagogue which needed a sextant was matched up with a Rabbinical student who needed free room and board.

Item: A woman who wanted recorder lessons and offered flute lessons was matched up with a man who wanted flute lessons and offered recorder lessons.

Item: A middle-aged housewife who had gone psychedelic traded an electric can opener for a light show component.

Item: A man who wanted free help to repair his plumbing and handlots of open space in his house was matched up with a plumber who needed space for a photographic studio. They traded.

Not always so weird, EFE's day-to-day mission is to keep people in touch with one another. The whole concept grew out of a feeling of communal togetherness in the South Street area. Pokras, 24, graduated from Drexel University and worked for a while as an electronic technician at the Women's Medical College, now the Medical College of Pennsylvania. He gradually became disenchanted with technical work ("my head wasn't in it"), and gravitated towards South Street. Sharyn, 23, went to Lincoln High School (Class of January, 1965) and then left for California. She came back to Philadelphia in 1970 and tried to start a community coffee house in the South Street area. It folded.

"We got to know each other just walking around the street down here," Stan told a visitor recently. "You're always walking around, talking to people, meeting people, getting involved in projects. We saw each other a lot and finally said hello."

Stan founded EFE in June, 1970,



after visiting the organization's first office in New York City. The Philadelphia EFE is loosely associated with the New York version, but "loosely" is meant literally.

"It's awfully impersonal up there," said Sharyn. "People walk in off the street, sign up, get their addresses and walk out. We like to get to know our members."

EFE now claims 250 yearly members. For an annual or semi-annual fee, a member may take advantage of EFE's files as many times as he likes. A living example of how one can get his money's worth is Paul Spreng, a young artist, who got his wife, his apartment, his job, his wife's job, his cat and almost all of his clothes through EFE's service. Spreng is such a strong believer now that he plans to run EFE's Empty Box store. More about that later.

Stan said he got the EFE idea after reading the *Whole Earth Catalogue*, a California publication which lists, well, everything for everybody. It tells you how to build your own house, run your own macrobiotic farm, erect a geodesic dome, where to write for farming implements. In effect, EFE is a whole Philadelphia catalogue with Stan and Sharyn acting as librarians.

Besides Stanley the mother cat, who works for room and board, the only other EFE staffer is Jennifer Barker, 15, who lives in South Philadelphia. Jennifer is a sophomore in the Parkway Progra, school. She's getting social studies credits for putting in two afternoons each week at the EFE storefront.

"When my social studies tutor heard I was working here," she said recently, "he went ape. 'Great,' he said. 'You're meeting real people, doing real contact things. That's better than a classroom.' So he got me credit for working here."

Jennifer's experience at EFE has been mind-opening, to say the least.

"I couldn't have believed all the weird, freaked-out people--all of them wonderful--that I would meet here," she said. "This is a better class than I've ever had in a school."

Although EFE is just squeaking by financially, Stan and Sharyn have rather grandiose plans for the future.

"Here, here, let me show you something," said Stan, pulling a visitor by the arm.

He led the visitor down the street to 515 South st. There was Klinghoffer's, an abandoned carpet showroom. He unlocked the door into an incredible won-

derland. Stretching a full 100 feet back were two white-walled, fluorescently-lit halls, previously filled with carpets on racks, now filled with nothing but pipe-metal racks.

"We're moving into here in mid-April," he said. "This first floor is going to be an art gallery, run by Paul Spreng. We're going to charge artists \$5 a month to exhibit their works here and then we'll charge 20 percent markup over their prices to support out other things.

"Down in the basement we'll have workshops. There will be kilns and potter's wheels and saws and ceramic ovens--all the things local artists need to work on their crafts. We'll also have slide projectors showing pictures of works too large or too valuable to be shown here. If a customer asks, we'll give him the name and address of the artist, and the two can work out a purchase from there."

Stan took the stairs to the second floor two at a time. Again, there were two long halls, stretching back without interruption, into the white-light fluorescence.

"We're going to have a cooperative school up here," he said. "Already 15 families have signed their pre-school age children up. The parents and people from the community will teach. It won't cost too much to run because the staff will be volunteers. It'll be great."

Behind the three-floors of balls, carpet racks and large wooden platforms once used to display nine-by-twelve-foot rugs is a warren of rooms which will be used by Stan, Sharyn and whoever needs a room for the night.

"There's a feeling about South Street," explains Sharyn, "about the whole city for that matter. We feel like we're getting things together. A lot of us were born in Philadelphia and then moved away because we thought it was too dull here. But we're all back, living along South Street or up by the Art Museum.

"Philadelphia has got such potential. It's not like New York or L.A. Everything isn't ruined yet. It's not jammed and crowded and

hopeless. Especially here, around South Street, we're seeing something come back alive, something that was dead not too long ago. Merchants might be moving out, but people, and they're more important, are moving back in. And we're helping one another. "Philadelphia may be one of the last livable cities in America. We're trying to do our part to see that potential realized."

In the beginning, EFE had trouble. Stan offered one-month trial memberships for \$5. He listed talent offerings--people who had skills for hire--for free. That was in the last days of the 1960's economic boom. There was a shortage of labor. Over the past year, the listings for job offerings shrunk while the number of skill offerings grew. People began offering trades of skills for skills, rather than skills for money. But Stan and Sharyn see a light at the end of the tunnel.

"We might be one of the early indicators of an upturn in the economy," Stan said with a grin. "More and more employers are calling us, saying they need this job or that job filled, do we have anyone on file who can ake the job. And more listings of jobs are available."

"There was a time when a guy would come in and say 'I'm looking for a job, what listings do you have,' and we'd say, 'We don't even have any listings.' But now, we've got a pretty healthy file full of them."

Although most of the people who list their skills with EFE are long-hairs, a great many of the consumers--those who hire listees--are regular businessmen looking to fill a job without recourse to an employment agency. EFE sends out a monthly newsletter listing the skills offered or items for sale or jobs offered that haven't been matched up in the office. It's a testimony to EFE's skill that very few requests aren't filled almost immediately, by mail or phone, in the office.

"People sometimes just don't know where to run," said Stan. "They have something for sale or

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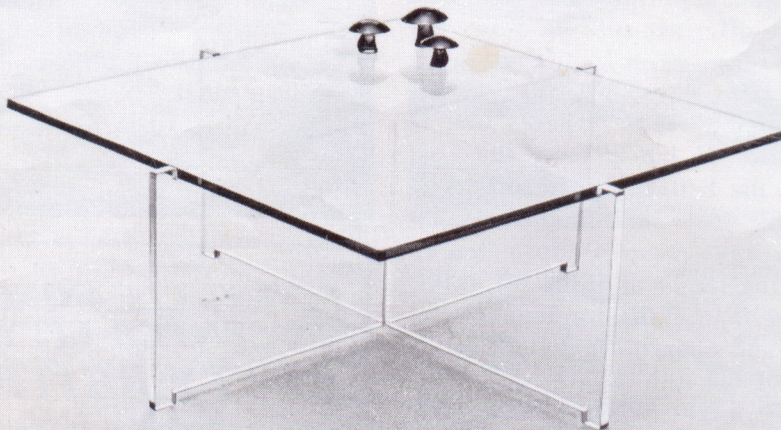
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need something done and they say to themselves, 'Now where the hell can I get someone to do this?' We're trying to provide a place where anyone can list any need or desire and get someone willing to fill it. You'd be surprised at the incredibly minute needs we've matched up, much to the member's surprise--and delight, I hope."

Stan and Sharyn are bustling around right now with their latest brainstorm, the Empty Box store. Before their art gallery goes into those long, long halls in Klinghoffer's, Stan and Sharyn have to raise money. Their idea--everyone needs containers. They've alerted the active crafts community around South Street (and it is a very sizable one) that a gallery will be opening to sell empty boxes, literally. EFE plans to exhibit, on consignment from artists, decorated boxes ranging from painted shipping cartons to intricately carved wooden chests. "Everybody's problem is they have too much," Stan explained. "Now they can buy something to put all that stuff in."

The struggle on South Street, day in, day out, is to survive. Every penny is watched. Every extravagant impulse is suppressed. Stan rolls his own cigarets, Sharyn takes care not to waste food. The staple diet item is a mammoth 50c hoagie from down the street. Not a gourmet's delight, but lots of bread and meat for half a buck. Stan and Sharyn have a faith in the eventual success of EFE which makes such skimping seem worthwhile right now. They love every minute of what they are doing.

"I couldn't be happier doing anything else," said Stan as he stood in the middle of what would become the EFE Art Galley. "I don't care how much I would be making. This is a job that brings people together, which fills felt needs, which helps transform Philadelphia and South Street into better places to live, better places to be. This is a dream of a lifetime. If it gets better, great. But I'm fulfilled, I'm happy, right now."

Sharyn nodded in vigorous agreement. ■

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