

## "REVEILLE"

(for p. 129)

by Byron B. Burnes

"I can't get 'em up, I can't get 'em up, I can't get 'em up in the maaaw-ning." That's the song the soldier's bugle is supposed to toot when the crackling notes of reveille rend the morning air. "I can't get 'em up," the bugler wails, but what a task he would have if all his sleeping comrades were deaf!

The efforts of the deaf to keep an appointment with the rosy finger of dawn have resulted in the invention of many weird and wonderful contraptions as auxiliary alarm clock equipment, and it is time now to describe some of them for the benefit of history, before they all vanish in favor of the modern electric radio clock.

One of the gravest problems of the deaf is how to disentangle themselves from the Morpheus headlock exactly at a given time in the morning. That is, it was a problem until the appearance of the radio clock. Nowadays you will find a radio clock in practically every deaf home. It turns on the light in the morning at any time it is asked, and the light will awaken most deaf sleepers. Those who are immune to light have made adaptations for the clock, such as an attachment which will set off a buzzer fastened to the bed. The buzzer causes the bed to vibrate, and if allowed to run long enough, it will start vibrations throughout the bedroom, the living room, the kitchen, the bathroom, and the apartments above and below and across the hall. The deaf sleeper usually awakens before the vibrations cross the street. He awakens amidst the cussing of neighboring apartment dwellers, but, being deaf, he is unaffected by the cuss words — which do not vibrate.

But before the advent of the marvelous radio clock, the deaf really resorted to some fantastic efforts to dispel their slumbers at the proper time.

Among the deaf the nearest approach to the army bugler probably is the supervisor (now better known as counselor) in a school for the deaf. It is his duty to get the pupils out of the sack in time for breakfast. This he accomplishes by shaking every bed, and he delegates some early risers in the dormitory to assist with the bed-shaking. This is effective. It fails only when the supervisor, himself, oversleeps, but supervisors do not oversleep. They have alarm contraptions of their own.

The only supervisor I know who needs no alarm is Louis Byouk, of the California School, who relies solely upon mental determination to get up in the morning. If he wants to get up at five o'clock in the morning, he merely tells himself so the night before, and five o'clock finds him up and smiling. There are other such gifted individuals among the deaf, but they are few and far between.

One time in the early days of my deafness, before I was aware of the alarm contraptions used by the deaf, it became necessary for me to arise at an early hour one morning to meet a train. I took an old-fashioned alarm clock to bed with me, clutched tightly in my hand, and I resolved to keep it clutched. The alarm cut loose at the proper time and I felt the jingling of the bell, and caught my train. Most of us wouldn't care to clutch an alarm clock in our hands through every night for the rest of our lives, however.

During my college days I spent a summer as a hotel employee in the Catskills and I had as partner Al

Rose, of Gallaudet football fame. Al is (or was) about the only person in the world who can sleep longer than I can, but as hotel employees we found it necessary to get up early in the morning. The lighting of a water heater was our special responsibility, and we had to have the water hot in time for the earliest riser among the hotel guests.

Rose and I slept in twin cots. I tied an alarm clock securely to the head of my cot and when the alarm sounded in the mornings the vibration was sufficient to arouse me. It wasn't my turn to light the fire every morning, though, so there was still the problem of how to arouse Al on his mornings. Summer mornings in the Catskills are quite chilly, and it was a terrifying ordeal to hop out of my cot each morning and bounce over and waken Al. I solved the problem by running a string from my cot to his. When my alarm sounded, I jerked the string and Al emerged from the covers cussing and fuming in his best fire-lighting form. By the end of the summer I got so I could jerk the string without even waking up.



Some marvelous inventions have been fashioned by deaf sleepers in efforts to enhance the service of alarm clocks, all made possible by the fact that the key with which you wind the alarm also unwinds as the bell rings. The simplest of these inventions is merely connecting this key by a string to the cord that switches on an electric bulb over the bed, in such a manner that when the alarm sounds, the string wraps itself around the unwinding key, tightening sufficiently to pull the light cord far enough to turn on the light. A light suddenly turned on in the face of most deaf sleepers will awaken them.

Nick Braunagel of the North Dakota School has written in his paper, *The Banner*, a description of the kind of alarm he uses. It is so simple, only a genius like Nick could have thought it up. Nick merely connects up his alarm clock with an electric fan and the alarm starts up the fan, which blows across his bed. Lest readers unacquainted with Nick fail to appreciate the potentialities of such a device, it should be pointed out here that Nick sleeps with windows wide open. A fan in his room in the North Dakota winter produces such an icy blast it freezes his snores and hangs them up in mid-air. Nick Braunagel is perhaps the only man in the world who would put up with arising each morning in the face of a blizzard, but Nick's sensibilities are cushioned by his 225 pounds.

There is a story of a deaf man in a Montana mining community who used a flatiron for an alarm. He used a string and pulley arrangement which suspended the flatiron near the ceiling during the night. When morning came his alarm clock would trip a release permitting the iron to drop to the floor. A flatiron falling from the ceiling in the stillness of the morning should waken the deafest of the deaf.

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(Continued)

This man's flatiron became a tradition in the village. It could be heard by all the neighbors, and all the miners in town depended upon its faithful boom to start them off to work. Came a day when the owner of the flatiron alarm took unto himself a bride. He took three days off from work and left town for a honeymoon trip. Upon his return he found that there had been no work in the mines for three days. All the miners were blissfully snoring away, awaiting the rousing boom of his flatiron.

When I was teaching in the South Dakota School, one of the pupils, named Horace Todd, had something of a monopoly on making an alarm gadget for deaf persons at the school. His contraption consisted of two slats hinged together, which were attached to the head of the bed. One slat, hanging from the hinge, carried a lead weight on its lower end. It had a hook which made connections with the key on the back of an alarm clock, which sat on a small platform attached to the head of the bed above the two slats. When the alarm sounded, the unwinding key would disengage itself from the hook on the slat, and the slat, with its lead weight, would slam down against its counterpart with a bang like that of a shotgun. The noise, of course, would not awaken a deaf sleeper, but the shock it produced would awaken both the sleeper and the bed beneath him. He made one of his gadgets for me.



Another deaf fellow in South Dakota — Grant Daniels — disengaged himself from the blankets in the mornings to the tune of another kind of alarm, which was used by numerous deaf people in years gone by. This was a sort of box-like arrangement, long and narrow, standing vertically at the head of the bed. Within the box were a number of small shelves, one above the other, sloping gently downward, and on the top shelf rested a small version of a cannon ball, about two inches in diameter, purloined perhaps from the innards of a tractor, where it served as a ball bearing, only, of course, Grant Daniels, a good church man, would not purloin. The ball was held in place on the top shelf by some kind of connection with the alarm key, and when the alarm sounded the key would release the ball. Urged authoritatively by gravity, the ball would roll off the shelf, hit the next one, roll on to the next, and so on until it had bounced off every shelf and come to rest at the bottom of the box. "Bong, bong, bong." Light sleepers would awaken with the first "bong". Those inclined to sleep more soundly might respond to a later bong, but the beauty in this kind of alarm was that it could be constructed to suit individual habits.

The hardest of the sleepers could make the box long enough to extend through the ceiling, enabling it to produce 67 bongs and 4 selahs.

I have heard of an elaboration of the slat contrivance produced by Horace Todd, but I have never seen it. At any rate, in this machine the top slat was supposed to be of the size and shape of an ironing board, and instead of banging against another slat to produce a loud retort, it would slam down right upon the person of the sleeper. If he happened to be too relaxed, there was a possibility that he would wake up in the basement.

When I was a kid at home my mother worked out a means of awakening me which should be commended both for its effectiveness and its simplicity of operation. My bedroom was in a room upstairs above the dining room and my mother did not relish the daily task of climbing the stairs to get me up. She would go into the dining room with a broom and use the broom handle as a sort of battering ram against the ceiling beneath my bed. Since the ceiling was of wood, this created sufficient vibration to waken me.

The most interesting and the most greatly to be desired of all alarm gadgets I have encountered came under my observation during a stay in a hospital. Each morning a beautiful creature immaculately clad in white would enter the room and tap me lightly on the shoulder.

Felix Kowalewski tells me that Heimo Antila had an alarm apparatus which must have been the most Rube Goldbergian of them all. Heimo's alarm was a rat trap, so fastened to the wall that it would pull the light switch when it went off, turning on the light by Heimo's bed. The trap was set off by a string connecting the bait trigger to the unwinding key of an alarm clock. This contraption deserves preservation in the Smithsonian Institute.

There may be other forms of alarms utilized by the deaf, but the kind most commonly used today is the radio clock, mentioned before. In two instances all alarm clocks lose their effectiveness, and the deaf are subject to this failing the same as anyone else. One occasion is when the sleeper responds to the alarm, turns over and shuts it off, and then falls back to sleep. The other instance is when he hops into bed at night, forgetting to set his alarm. The only remedy for these shortcomings is to refrain from going to bed.

