Film-Tech

The information contained in this Adobe Acrobat pdf file is provided at your own risk and good judgment.

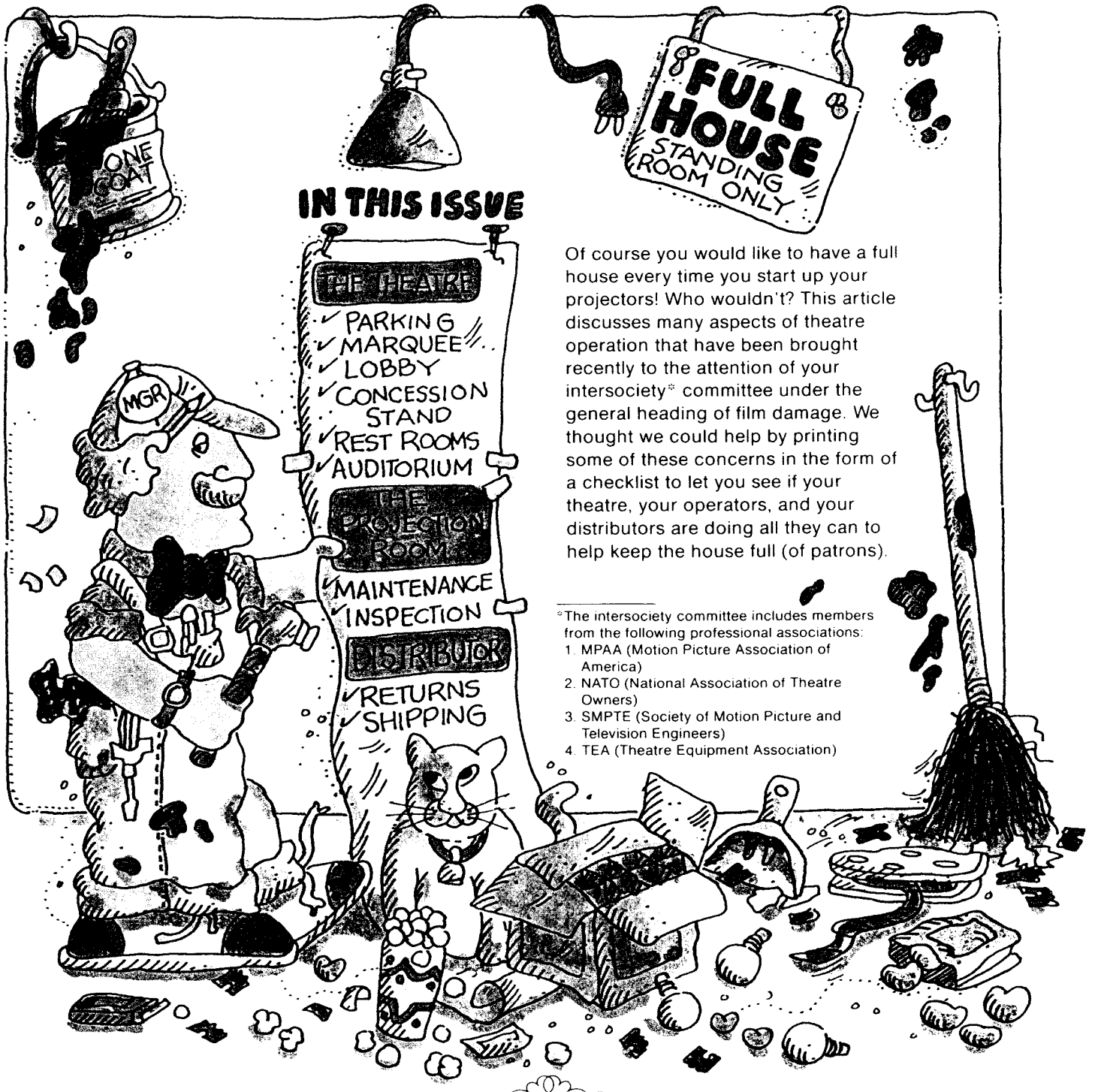
These manuals are designed to facilitate the exchange of information related to cinema projection and film handling, with no warranties nor obligations from the authors, for qualified field service engineers.

If you are not a qualified technician, please make no adjustments to anything you may read about in these Adobe manual downloads.

www.film-tech.com

THE CHECKLIST

MAINTAINING A QUALITY PRESENTATION



Of course you would like to have a full house every time you start up your projectors! Who wouldn't? This article discusses many aspects of theatre operation that have been brought recently to the attention of your intersociety* committee under the general heading of film damage. We thought we could help by printing some of these concerns in the form of a checklist to let you see if your theatre, your operators, and your distributors are doing all they can to help keep the house full (of patrons).

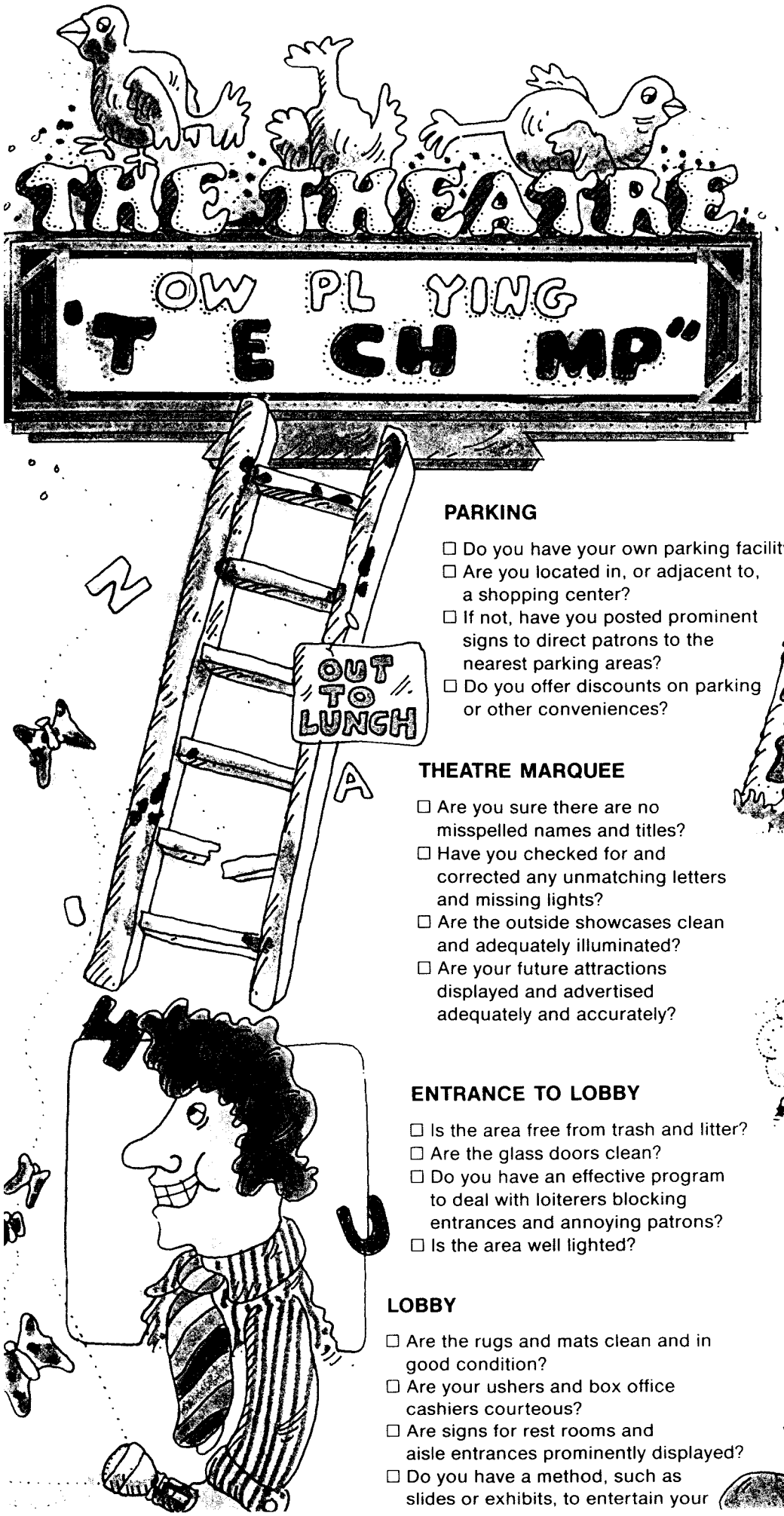
*The intersociety committee includes members from the following professional associations:

1. MPAA (Motion Picture Association of America)
2. NATO (National Association of Theatre Owners)
3. SMPTE (Society of Motion Picture and Television Engineers)
4. TEA (Theatre Equipment Association)

Percent of U.S. Recreation Dollars Spent on Movie Theatre Admissions (1981)—*2.4%*
(U.S. Dept. of Commerce)

Average Number of Seats Per Screen—*500*
(credit)?

Total Filmed Entertainment Industry Employment (1981)—*223,000*
(credit)?



SUCCESS IS NOT ALL IN THE BIDDING

Successful bidding for selected releases may not always be reflected by the grosses at the box office. To help make sure your initial investment can be translated into dollars, potential patrons literally have to be enticed to leave other recreational diversions to attend a showing at your theatre. Granted, the popularity of the show itself might be enough most of the time, but to add a little "house" insurance, see how well your theatre scores with the following checklist.

PARKING

- ☐ Do you have your own parking facility?
- ☐ Are you located in, or adjacent to, a shopping center?
- ☐ If not, have you posted prominent signs to direct patrons to the nearest parking areas?
- ☐ Do you offer discounts on parking or other conveniences?

THEATRE MARQUEE

- ☐ Are you sure there are no misspelled names and titles?
- ☐ Have you checked for and corrected any unmatching letters and missing lights?
- ☐ Are the outside showcases clean and adequately illuminated?
- ☐ Are your future attractions displayed and advertised adequately and accurately?

ENTRANCE TO LOBBY

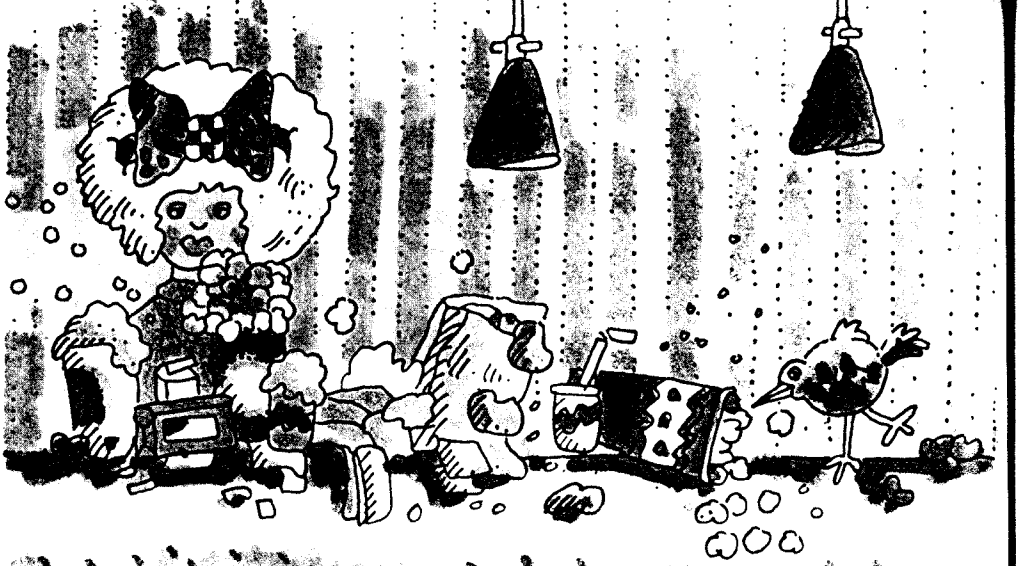
- ☐ Is the area free from trash and litter?
- ☐ Are the glass doors clean?
- ☐ Do you have an effective program to deal with loiterers blocking entrances and annoying patrons?
- ☐ Is the area well lighted?

LOBBY

- ☐ Are the rugs and mats clean and in good condition?
- ☐ Are your ushers and box office cashiers courteous?
- ☐ Are signs for rest rooms and aisle entrances prominently displayed?
- ☐ Do you have a method, such as slides or exhibits, to entertain your

CONCESSION STAND

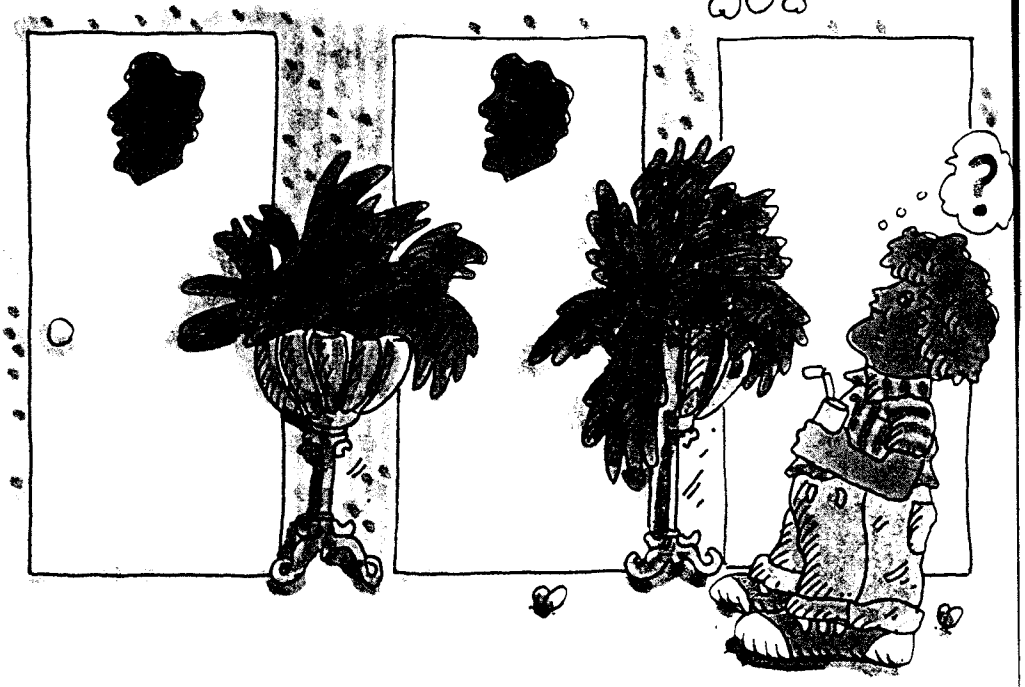
- ☐ Are the counters clean and attractive?
- ☐ Are your attendants courteous and dressed in clean uniforms?
- ☐ Do you have effective control over objectionable and permeating odors?
- ☐ Have you supplied adequate trash containers, and are they emptied at regular intervals to prevent stuffing and littering?



REST ROOMS

Among the many inhibitions that patrons might harbor, one of the most prevalent relates to personal hygiene. For the comfort and convenience of your patrons, the following items should all come up a big "Yes"!

- ☐ Are the rooms clearly marked?
- ☐ Do you keep the mirrors and wash basins clean?
- ☐ Is the floor clean, dry, and free of litter?
- ☐ Did you regularly fill the paper towel dispensers?
- ☐ Is there an adequate supply of toilet tissue?
- ☐ Are you using deodorizers or other means to control disagreeable odors?
- ☐ Are your rest rooms checked frequently for loiterers?

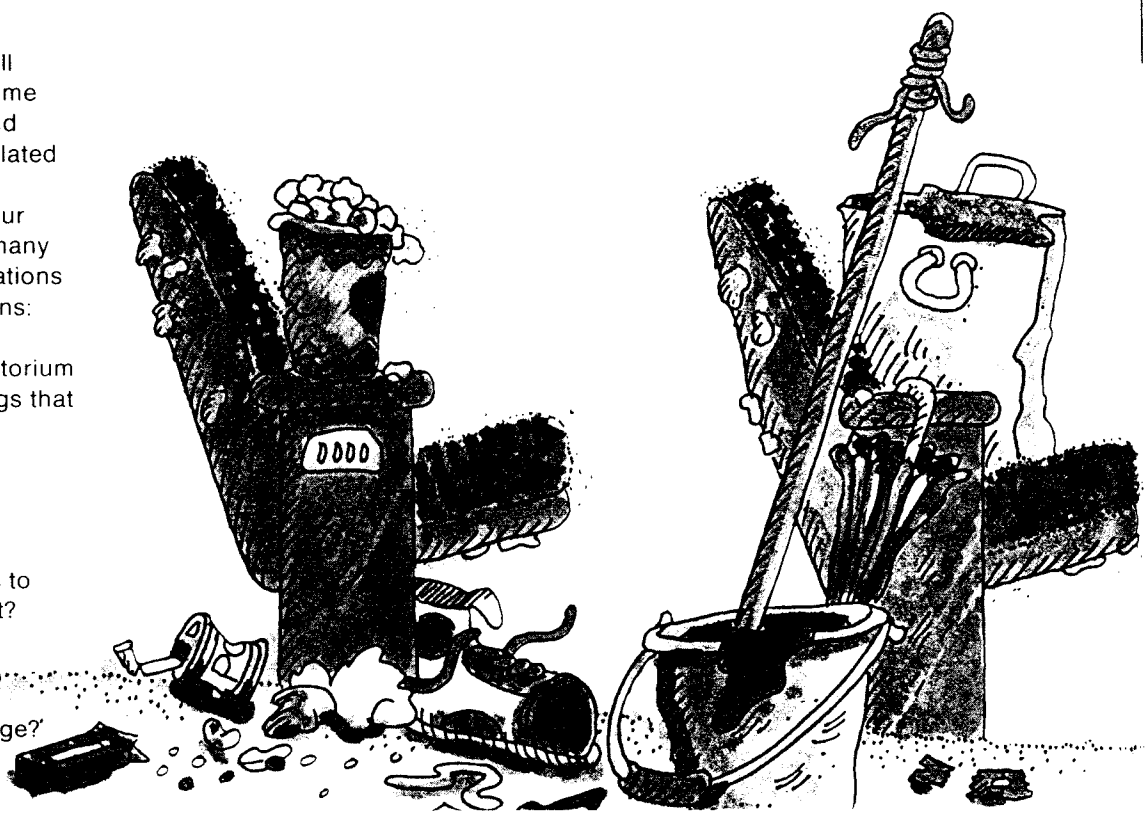


AUDITORIUM

The main theatre auditorium will occupy most of your patrons' time and attention. Their comfort and ability to relax will be closely related to the theatre environment you provide and to the quality of your presentation. A consensus of many patrons reveals certain expectations that pose the following questions:

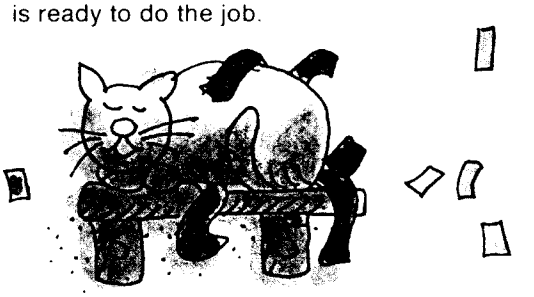
Do you provide . . .

- ☐ Effective control in your auditorium to maintain quiet surroundings that are free from disturbance?
- ☐ Clean aisles and seats?
- ☐ Adequate aisle lighting?
- ☐ An atmosphere free from concession stand odors?
- ☐ Shielding of necessary lights to prevent distracting stray light?
- ☐ Tightly closed, but properly working exit doors?
- ☐ A clean screen—free from streaks, smudges, and damage?



THE PROJECTION ROOM

The heart of your theatre is the projection room . . . although some of you may opt for the box office. Nevertheless, the return on your investment in selected feature releases depends a great deal on the quality of the presentation. We will deal later with the condition of the prints as you receive them, but for now let's see if your projection room is ready to do the job.



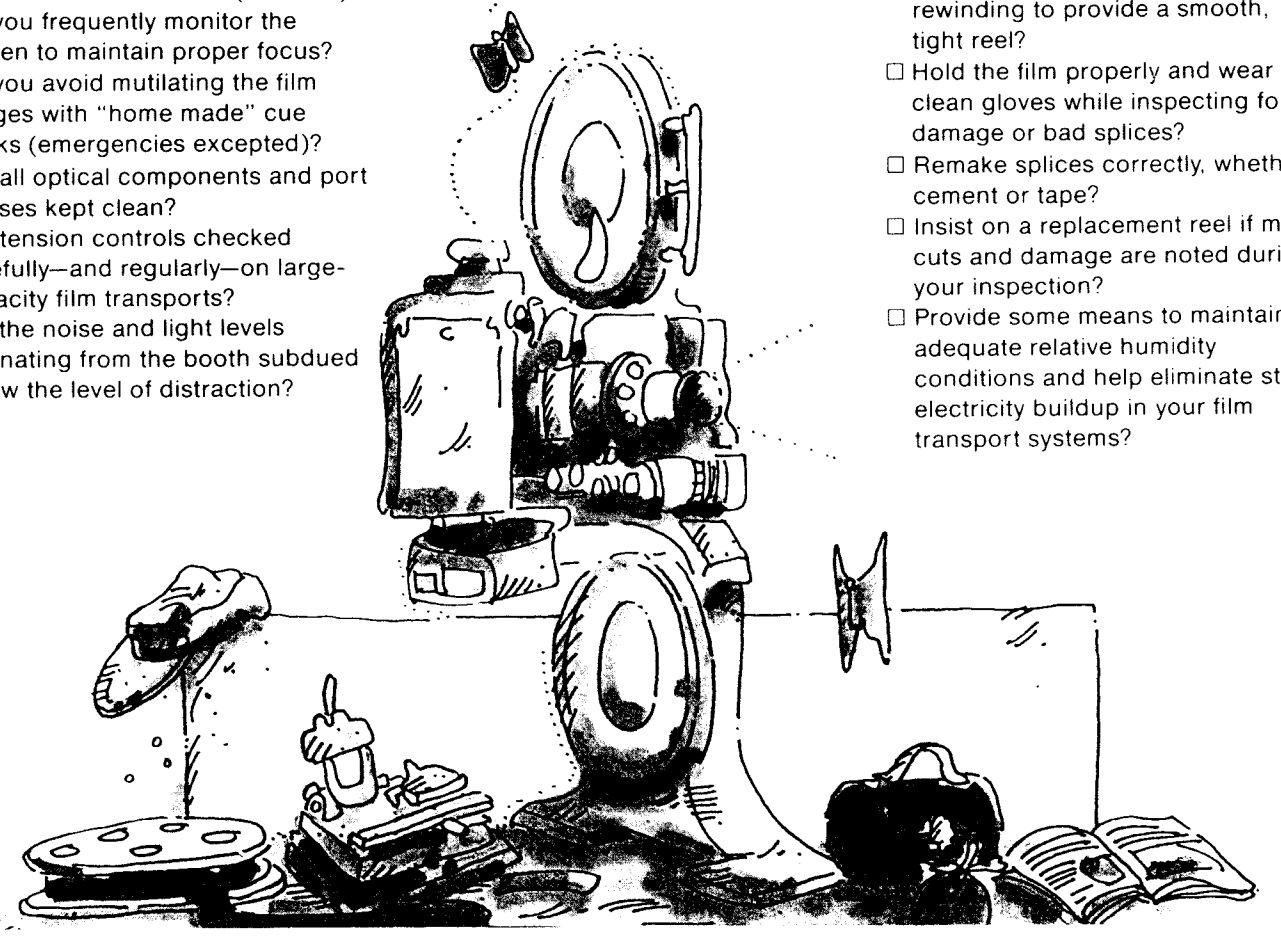
MAINTENANCE

- ☐ Is housekeeping a routine you perform daily?
- ☐ Do you have a maintenance checklist based on the equipment manual?
- ☐ Are you using the correct aperture plate and lens to provide a full, uncropped screen image?
- ☐ Are sound level and screen luminance balanced? (two projectors)
- ☐ Is the screen luminance within the limits of ANSI standards (16 ± 2 fL)?
- ☐ Do you frequently monitor the screen to maintain proper focus?
- ☐ Do you avoid mutilating the film images with "home made" cue marks (emergencies excepted)?
- ☐ Are all optical components and port glasses kept clean?
- ☐ Are tension controls checked carefully—and regularly—on large-capacity film transports?
- ☐ Are the noise and light levels emanating from the booth subdued below the level of distraction?

HANDLING & INSPECTION OF PRINTS

Because you can no longer be sure that the print you receive doesn't contain hidden damage, print inspection in the projection room has become routine. The extra effort is somewhat less objectionable for those using large reels or platters because the makeup operation requires individual reel winding anyway. How would you rate your booth on the handling tips listed below? Do you . . .

- ☐ Maintain constant tension while rewinding to provide a smooth, tight reel?
- ☐ Hold the film properly and wear clean gloves while inspecting for damage or bad splices?
- ☐ Remake splices correctly, whether cement or tape?
- ☐ Insist on a replacement reel if major cuts and damage are noted during your inspection?
- ☐ Provide some means to maintain adequate relative humidity conditions and help eliminate static electricity buildup in your film transport systems?



LET'S TAKE A BREAK

At this point, we would like to review with you some of the most common causes of film damage and abrasion.

EXCESSIVE TENSION

Whether too much tension occurs in the projector, or elsewhere in the film transport system, the result is usually objectionable on the screen and can often cause perforation damage as well. Assuming that the film had been properly lubricated at the laboratory, perforation damage can occur in the gate, or at the feed and holdback sprockets.

- ☐ Check for deposits on the trap rails and check the gate tension. Adjust gate tension enough to provide a steady screen image but not so tight that it produces a loud film clatter.
- ☐ Adjust tension on the projector reel spindles, if possible, to prevent "singing" sprockets.
- ☐ If all of these points check out OK, you may want to check the print for proper lubrication of film edges.

MISALIGNMENT OF FILM IN THE PROJECTOR

This problem can cause damage at the corners of the perforations and lead to film edge splitting and breaking.

- ☐ Check film alignment as it enters the feed sprocket or leaves the holdback sprocket.
- ☐ Check alignment of film in the projector gate.
- ☐ Examine the perforations on the print prior to using it. (Order a new reel or print if necessary.)

CREASED EDGES

Film edges can become creased if...

- ☐ The projector is improperly threaded so that the pad roller creases the film over the sprocket.
- ☐ The film is under high tension and binds against some component or one of the roller flanges.

RUN-OFFS & ROPING

This type of damage is often reported as "sprocket marked" and is caused when the film leaves the sprocket partially and rides over the sprocket teeth while under tension.

- ☐ Check for misaligned splices. Remake any such splices.
- ☐ Check for fold-over damaged film sections; repair or replace the section (or reel) if necessary.
- ☐ Check to see if any unperforated tape covers the perforations. Make any necessary repairs.

ABRASION & DIRT

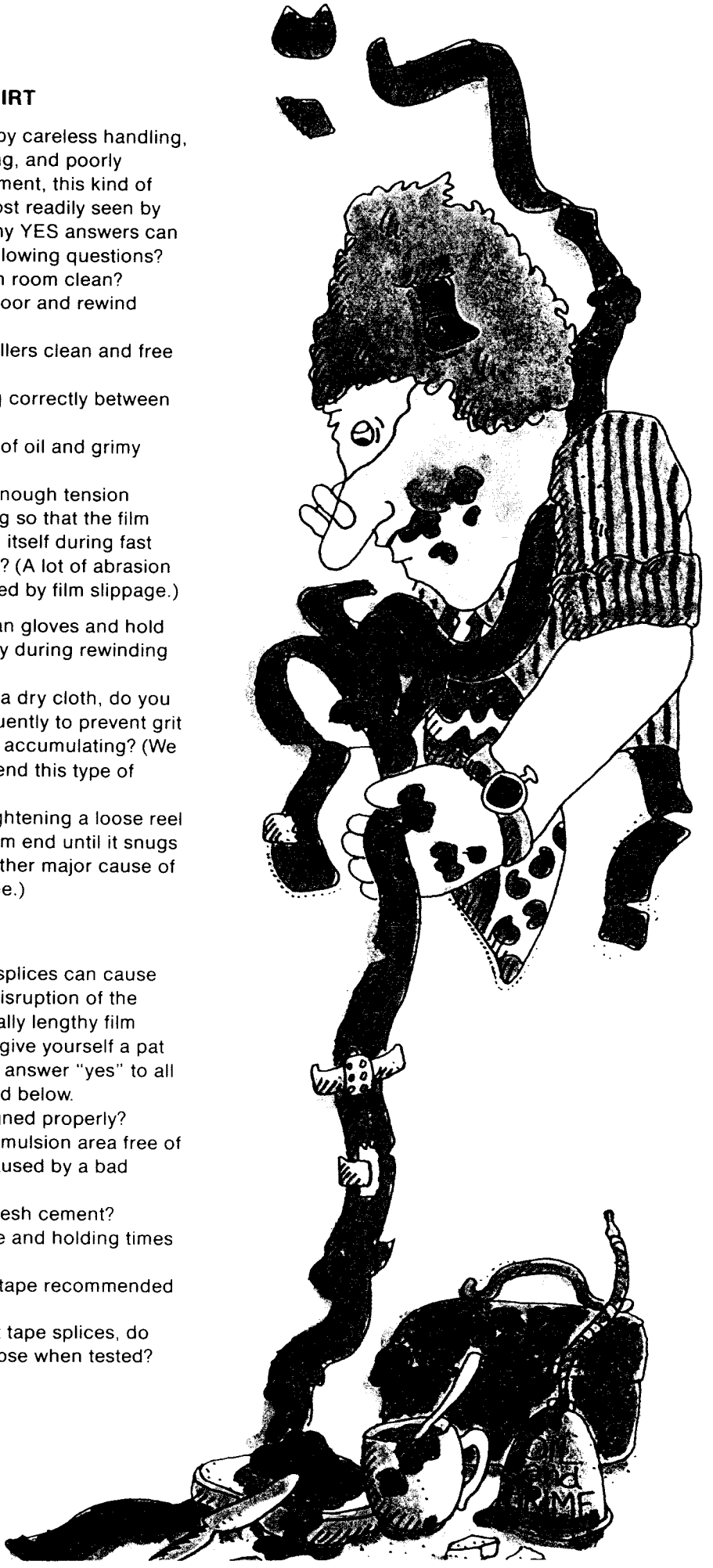
Primarily caused by careless handling, improper threading, and poorly maintained equipment, this kind of film damage is most readily seen by patrons. How many YES answers can you give to the following questions?

- ☐ Is the projection room clean? Especially the floor and rewind bench?
- ☐ Are the valve rollers clean and free turning?
- ☐ Is the film riding correctly between roller flanges?
- ☐ Is the print free of oil and grimy dirt?
- ☐ Are you using enough tension during rewinding so that the film does not slip on itself during fast starts and stops? (A lot of abrasion damage is caused by film slippage.)
- ☐ Do you use clean gloves and hold the film correctly during rewinding and inspection?
- ☐ If cleaning with a dry cloth, do you fold it over frequently to prevent grit and grime from accumulating? (We do not recommend this type of cleaning.)
- ☐ Do you avoid tightening a loose reel by pulling the film end until it snugs up? (This is another major cause of abrasion damage.)

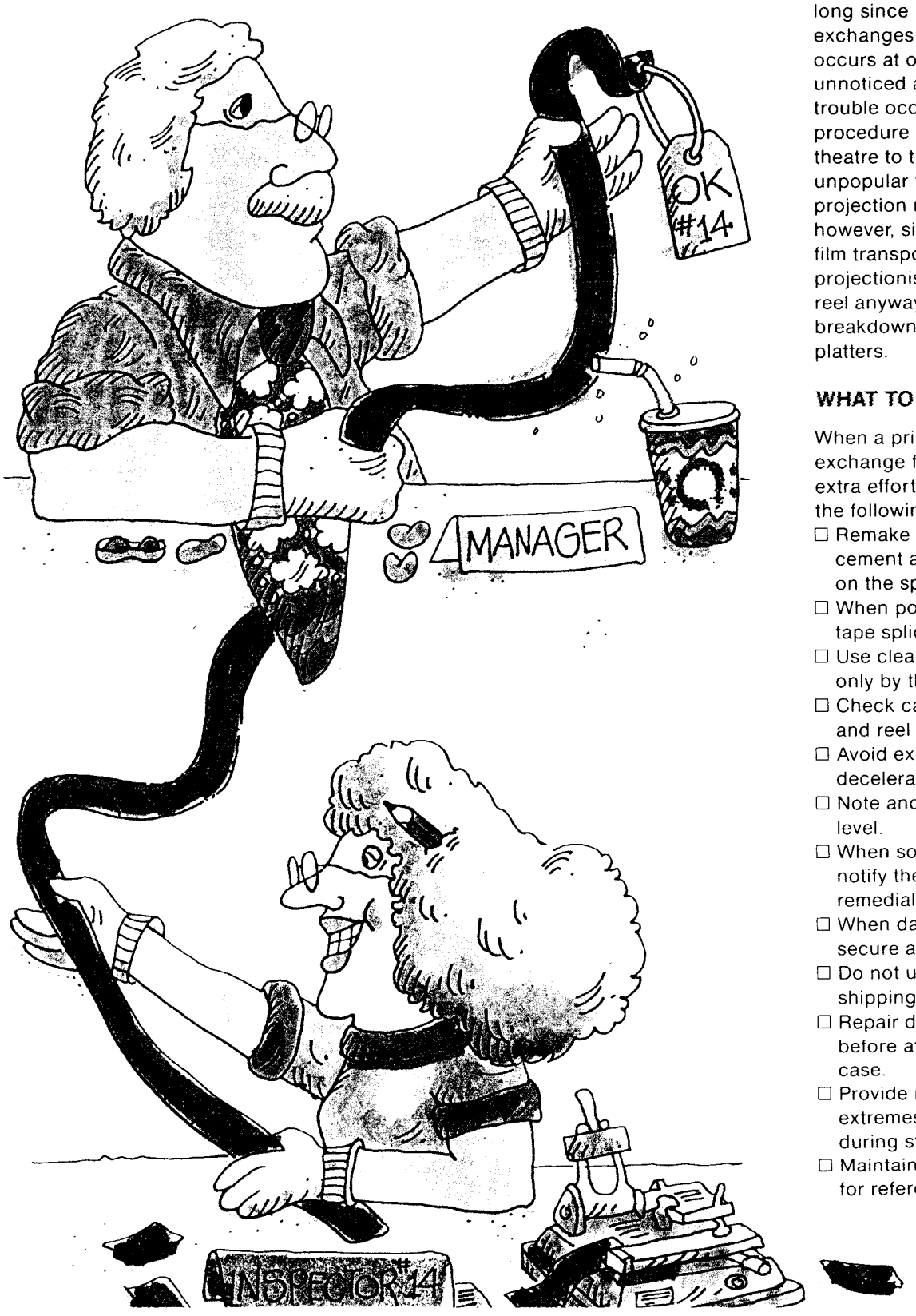
POOR SPLICES

Improperly made splices can cause run-offs, roping, disruption of the show, and potentially lengthy film damage. You can give yourself a pat on the back if you answer "yes" to all the questions listed below.

- ☐ Is the splice aligned properly?
- ☐ Is the scraped emulsion area free of deep gouges caused by a bad scraper?
- ☐ Are you using fresh cement?
- ☐ Are the pressure and holding times sufficient?
- ☐ Is your splicing tape recommended for film splices?
- ☐ If you make butt tape splices, do they resist collapse when tested?



THE DISTRIBUTOR



The distributor supplies the release prints that will be shown in your theatre. The prints originally are shipped to the distributor directly from the laboratory. After they are mounted onto regular (2000-foot) shipping reels, the prints are ready for distribution. At one time, the prints were returned to the exchange after each booking, but this practice has long since been discontinued in most exchanges. As a result, damage that occurs at one theatre can go unnoticed at the next theatre until trouble occurs. This general procedure of shipping prints from theatre to theatre has prompted the unpopular task of inspection in the projection room. All is not lost, however, since using large-capacity film transports makes it necessary for projectionists to wind through each reel anyway during makeup and breakdown of the large reels and platters.

WHAT TO DO?

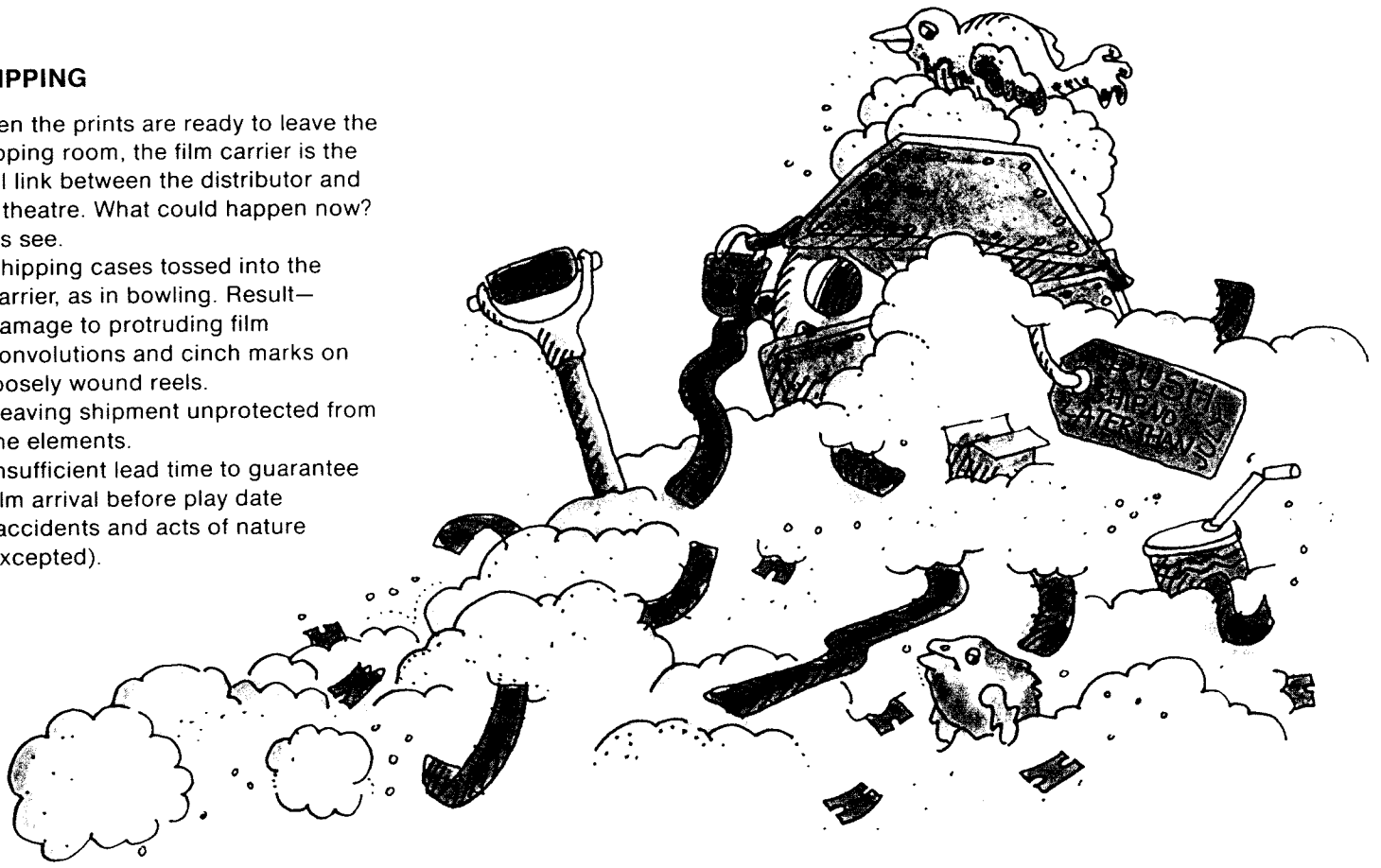
When a print does return to the exchange for inspection or checking, extra effort should be made to cover the following items.

- ☐ Remake poor splices using fresh cement and sufficient holding time on the splicer.
- ☐ When possible, peel apart faulty tape splices—do not cut.
- ☐ Use clean gloves and hold the film only by the edges.
- ☐ Check carefully as to subject matter and reel number identification.
- ☐ Avoid extremes in acceleration and deceleration during rewinding.
- ☐ Note and record abrasion and dirt level.
- ☐ When source of damage is known, notify theatre, if possible, so that remedial measures can be taken.
- ☐ When damage is excessive, try to secure a replacement reel.
- ☐ Do not use bent or damaged shipping reels.
- ☐ Repair dished shipping cases before attempting to force reels into case.
- ☐ Provide means to minimize extremes of heat and humidity during storage.
- ☐ Maintain records of print condition for reference.

SHIPPING

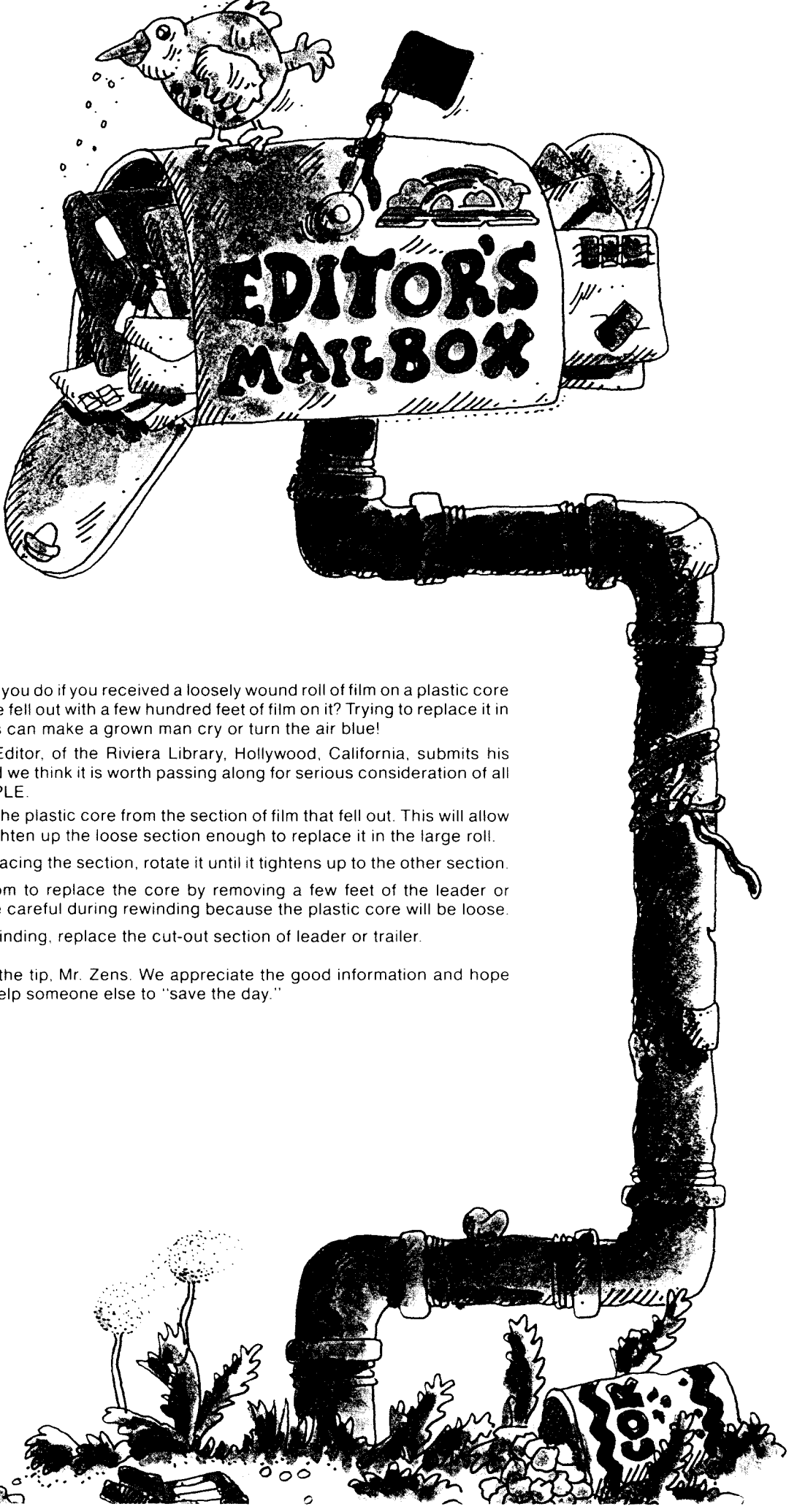
When the prints are ready to leave the shipping room, the film carrier is the final link between the distributor and the theatre. What could happen now? Let's see.

- ☐ Shipping cases tossed into the carrier, as in bowling. Result—damage to protruding film convolutions and cinch marks on loosely wound reels.
- ☐ Leaving shipment unprotected from the elements.
- ☐ Insufficient lead time to guarantee film arrival before play date (accidents and acts of nature excepted).



REWARDS

Looking back, this checklist, may appear overwhelming. However, if each segment of exhibition, that is, theatre owner or manager, operator, and exchange personnel, maintains vigilance and a genuine desire to provide a quality presentation for theatre patrons, the results can be very rewarding.



What would you do if you received a loosely wound roll of film on a plastic core and the core fell out with a few hundred feet of film on it? Trying to replace it in the roll as is can make a grown man cry or turn the air blue!

Will Zens, Editor, of the Riviera Library, Hollywood, California, submits his solution and we think it is worth passing along for serious consideration of all REEL PEOPLE.

1. Remove the plastic core from the section of film that fell out. This will allow you to tighten up the loose section enough to replace it in the large roll.
2. After replacing the section, rotate it until it tightens up to the other section.
3. Make room to replace the core by removing a few feet of the leader or trailer. Be careful during rewinding because the plastic core will be loose.
4. After rewinding, replace the cut-out section of leader or trailer.

Thanks for the tip, Mr. Zens. We appreciate the good information and hope that it will help someone else to "save the day."