

Antique Business

Attracts

Mother, Writer

Mix a combination of wife, mother of three, antique collector, business woman and writer, and you might very well arrive at a recipe for Virginia Novinger.

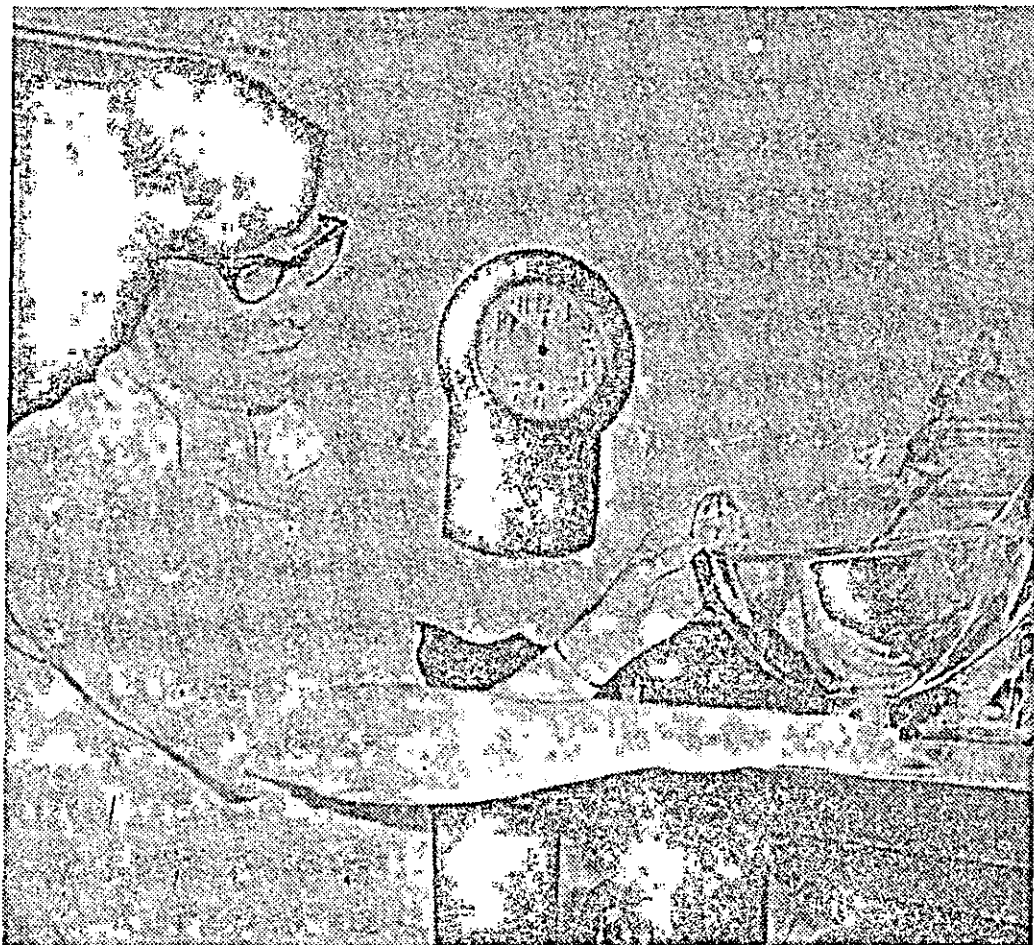
Two years ago Mrs. Novinger started the York Antiques and Imports at 104 W. Valette, Elmhurst. Still a growing business, the world of antiques and collector's items continues to captivate her. Her wares range from a clock dating to 1877, which serves as the shop's time-

piece, to a mahogany buffet which belonged to a descendant of Stephen Hopkins, a signer of the Declaration of Independence.

Her primary interest is her family. Mr. and Mrs.

Tracy W. Novinger reside at 310 S. Kenilworth in Elmhurst with their children Wally, a junior at Northern Illinois university, Melinda, a senior at York high school, and Dick, a freshman at York.

As an antique collector, Virginia states that she has "an Old English house full of antiques" and that she has



ON AN EMPIRE chest of the 1810 period, belonging to the family of Stephen Hopkins, Virginia displays a silver sheffield soup fureen from early 18th century England.

always been interested in collecting them and going to antique shows. In order to have this interest branch out into a business, it had to be more than a hobby. She must know her merchandise. That requires not only a keen eye but also a wide background of knowledge and experience from which to draw when she spies an item that looks worthwhile. A little private detective work on her part usually is rewarding.

Calling it a "know your hunch" business, Virginia describes this first business venture as "very enjoyable." "You never know," she says, "just what a person who enters the shop will want. It is not like a fast, supermarket pace where people come, make their purchases and leave. They look, observe, spot something and possibly buy an item. If they request something I don't have, I try to locate it for them."

The shop is stocked from purchases made at antique shows, bartering from buyers, and careful hunting by its owner. A visitor will find Victorian chairs and a love seat, a 175 year old samovar with the crests of seven Russian families, guns, quilts, chests, silver and china.

Every day a new customer, a new item to hunt down, and a new acquaintance make the work interesting and exciting for her.

"I am encouraged to see young people who are interested in antiques, come into the shop. It shows they have a feeling for tradition.

"It is particularly interesting to work with interior decorators. They know what items they want and how they want to use them."

She also points out that antique pieces can be used as complimentary accessories to a room decor.

Another part of her many faceted interests is her writ-

ing. She published three children's books several years ago and wrote three more this year. A fourth is in the works. The relaxed atmosphere of her shop lends itself to writing and work at the same time.

Virginia's venture as a business woman, prompted by a genuine curiosity and interest in her collections, has developed into more than an ordinary business because she enjoys her work and takes an interest in the people she meets.

Chicago,

HOW YOU'VE CHANGED!

Streets, Buildings, Even the People Are Different After Twenty Hectic Years

By Virginia B. Novinger

OLD RIP VAN WINKLE slept for 20 years and awoke to a whole new world. I recently awakened to a whole new world, too, but believe me, I have NOT spent the last 20 years sleeping. Not even napping!

I'm now at work in the Merchandise Mart as an assistant editor for Childcraft, after a 20 year stint at home. And how the face of my dear Chicago has changed in those 20 years! Of course, and let's face it, my own face has changed a little, too. If Chicago has a new wrinkle or two, so have I. Chicago's sky line has changed in places—fuller here, extended there, and the bitter truth again, I, too, am fuller here and extended there.

But here the similarities end.

Twenty years ago I worked harder, spent longer hours at my job, and received less pay for my work. In fact, now the DEDUCTIONS

taken from my semi-monthly check, even before I see it, are exactly \$5.50 more than I EARNED in the two weeks, 20 years ago. A 10 cent bus fare, 20 years ago, against a 72½ cent train ticket today; a 35 cent lunch, 20 years ago, against a \$1.25 lettuce leaf special today, further attest to the changes in the last two decades.

One of the more shocking changes, to me, is the way women dress today. When I worked in the Palmolive building all those years ago I never came downtown without a hat and gloves. I wore stockings and high heeled shoes no matter what the heat or humidity, and so did everyone else. For one ghastly interlude during the war, we even painted our legs to look as if we wore stockings, when there were no hose to be had.

But today?

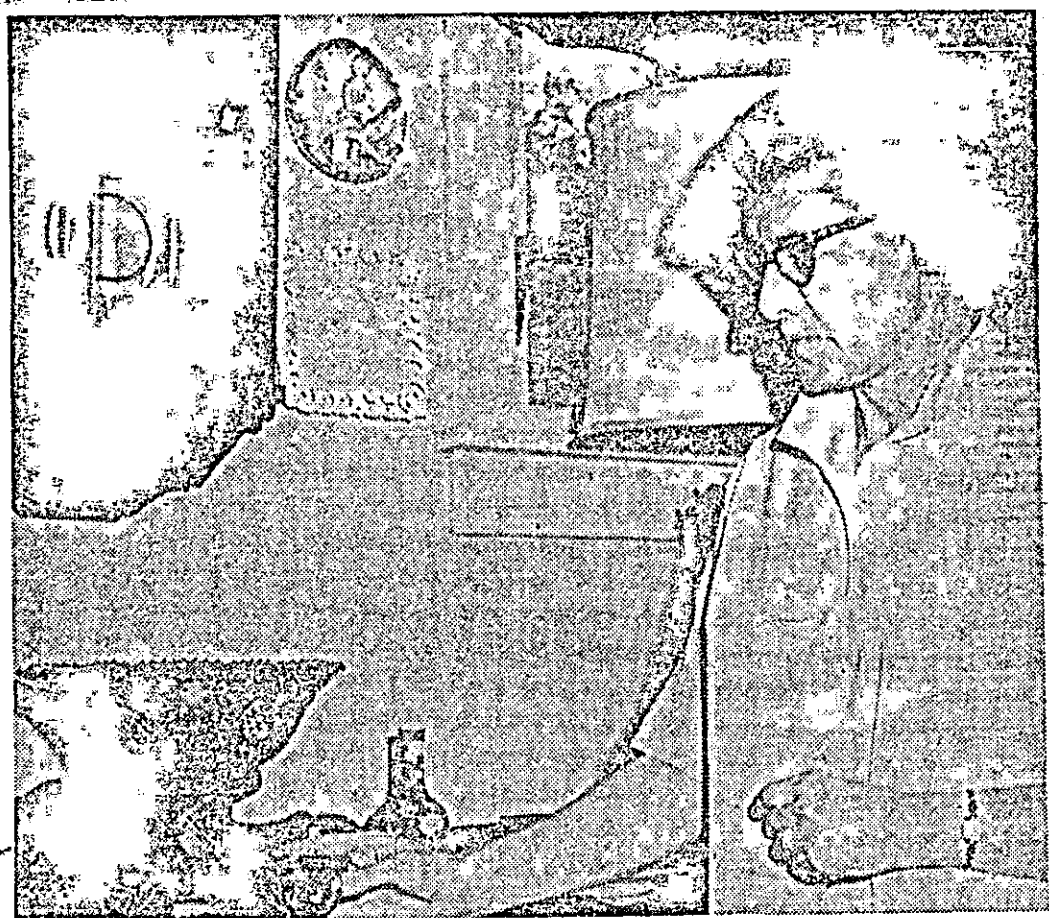
I'm almost embarrassed to say it but I've seen girls come downtown to their jobs today looking just one step out of bed. They've changed their pajamas or nightgowns for a dress, or skirt and blouse, but their hair and faces remain untouched. Babushkas hide wire rollers and bobby pins, metal clips, and rubber curlers. Not really hide, just make a pretense of concealing. There is an attitude of "You never meet anyone on a bus, so why should we bother to look presentable on the dull ride downtown?"

Hats? Gloves? Those are for church and funerals. And those flat, splayed-out shoes the girls wear over bare feet! No comment.

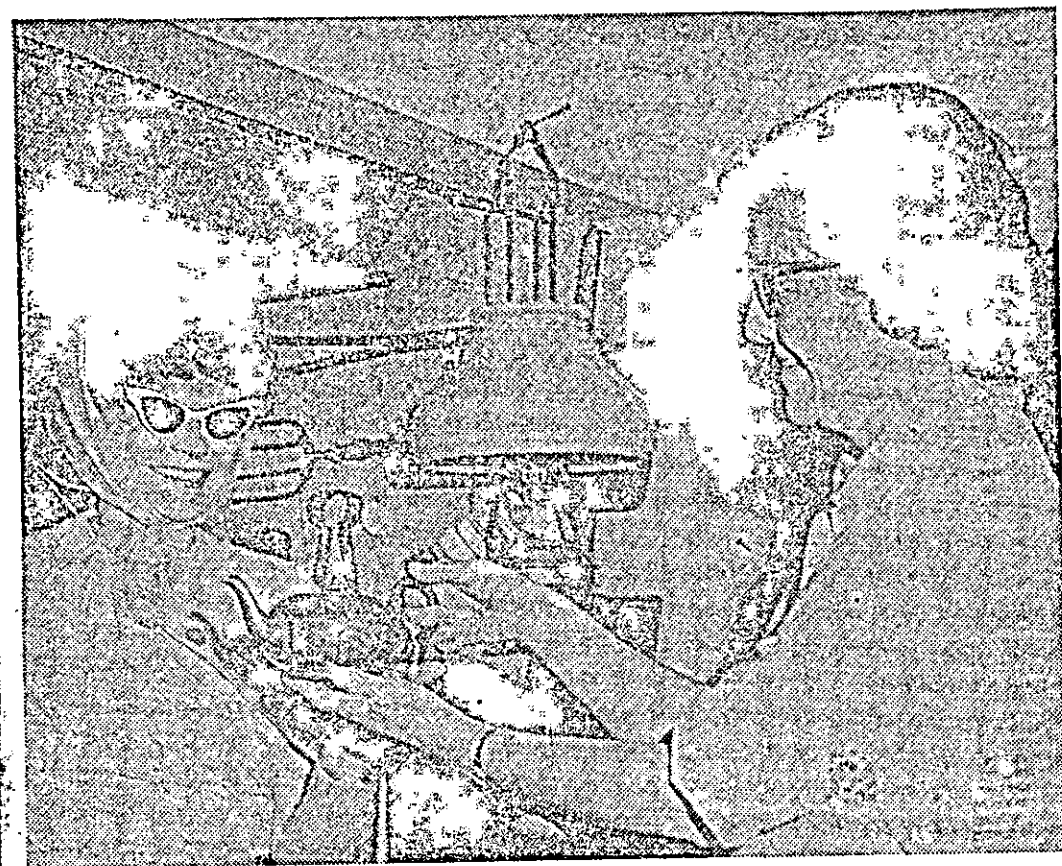
I'm treading on dangerous ground now, boss, and I know it. But, I don't think I'll ever get used to the two-times-a-day coffee breaks.

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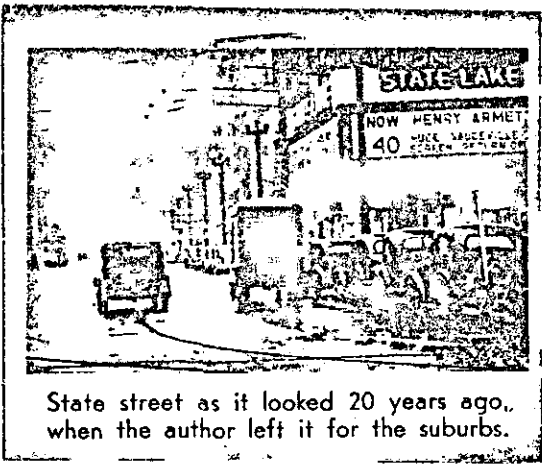
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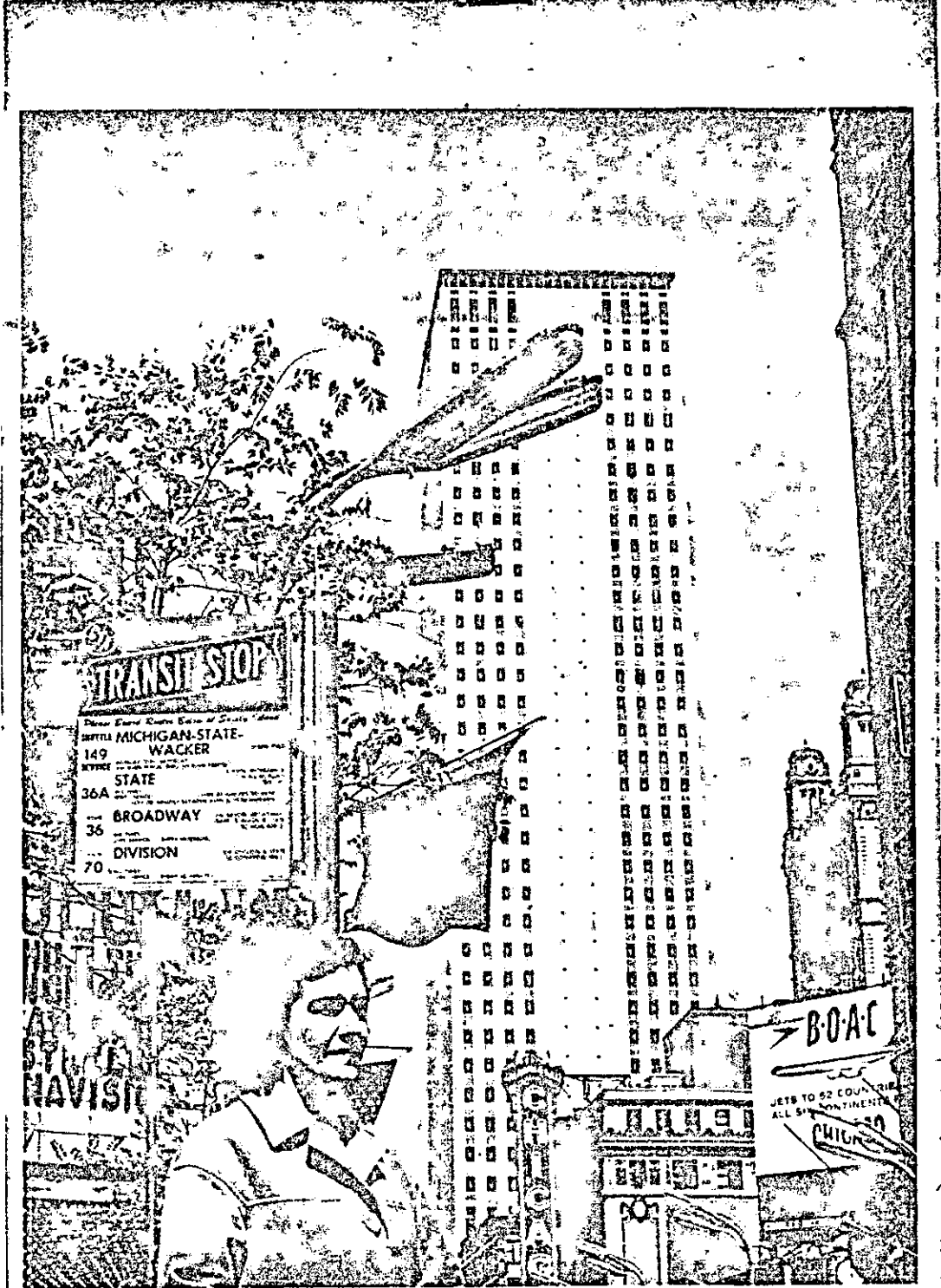
A PUNCH BOWL in marigold carnival glass in the Fashion pattern is one of the wares at Mrs. Novinger's antique shop.



READY TO SERVE her customer, Virginia shows a pewter tea pot to Mrs. Charles Mueller of Elmhurst. Mrs. Mueller's daughter, Cheryl, had just purchased a set of 100 year old doll dishes.



State street as it looked 20 years ago, when the author left it for the suburbs.



Mrs. Novinger and State street today . . . the street lights cut dreaming time in half.



Commuting on an air conditioned train . . . it beats housekeeping.



The office is air conditioned, too . . . coffee breaks come twice a day.

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the Grand Canyon. I've grilled hamburgers and hot dogs until the sight of either one turns me a particularly horrible shade of green. I've washed and ironed boys' pants from size 6 months right on thru size 20 [and those I'm still ironing!]. And the ironed ruffles and pleats on Little Girl's blouses and skirts would stretch from here to Dublin and back.

I have put 14,577 miles on a car, all by myself the last two years, driving from the library, to the swimming pool, to piano lessons, to Sunday school, to the grocery store, to rummage sales, to PTA meetings, to the movies, to Camp Fire Girl cookouts, and [being the mother of two boys] to the emergency room at the hospital.

Why the statistics?

Just this. My friends now say, "Ginny, I hear you've gone back to work!" WORK?

I ride into the city on an air conditioned commuter train. I sit in an air conditioned office. I hear soft music playing all day long. [The music at home varies between Dick Biondi and his fungi, and some limpid string chamber music to which No. 1 son currently is addicted.] I have the latest office equipment to work with. I am doing the kind of work I love most, with an enthusiastic, intelligent group of people. And I "eat out" every day! This is work? I suppose it is. But compared with the routine I've kept for the last 20 years, it is an all-pink birthday party!

Chicago has changed in other ways. Old buildings with soot blackened faces are gone and in their places stand tall, sturdy pillars of aluminum and steel. Trees grow on State street and flowers bloom on window sills in unlikely places. Tall facades of glass shinningly reveal the treasures to be found inside stores and travel bureaus, insurance offices, loan companies, and banks. Street cars have left the scene, but cabs and buses whiz by in an endless green and yellow daisy chain.

Theater marquees are bigger and brighter, bolder and brasher; street lights make daylight of darkness, which cuts in half the time for dreaming.

One thing has not changed, however. That is the Society of Girl Watchers. Now don't misunderstand, please. The Girl Watchers are not watching me anymore. O, to be perfectly honest, I suppose one does now and then, but he's usually an older type, a Man-of-Distinction-Girl-Watcher, and he looks pretty tired. But, they stand as they ever did, outside office buildings at noon, eyeing and appraising, speculating, and analyzing. I think, "Golly, pretty soon I'll have a son in their ranks," and I enjoy a secret little chuckle.

Yes, Chicago has changed, and yet she is much the same. One thing I do know. I love this windy, wonderful city now even as I loved it 20 years ago.



The cafeteria . . . no sneaking downstairs.