

# STEEPLEJACK

Lowell Thomas broadcast  
for the Literary Digest  
Tuesday, September 1, 1931.

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Good Evening, Everybody:-

1 An amazing bit of rescue work was  
2 done <sup>today — up</sup> at Rochester, New York. ~~today~~. Two  
3 steeplejacks were working at the top  
4 of a hundred and fifty foot chimney.  
5 The scaffolding which supported them  
6 broke. One man plunged down and was  
7 killed, but the other, James Kemp by  
8 name, managed to catch hold of a rope  
9 and support himself on a ledge about ~~x~~  
10 eight feet from the top of the chimney.  
11 The ledge on which James Kemp stood  
12 was ten inches wide. Well, just  
13 measure out ten inches and you'll have  
14 a vivid idea of the predicament of that  
15 chap stuck up there on the ten inch  
16 ledge 150 feet from the ground. It  
17 was just a question of how long he  
18 could ~~xxx~~ stick it out.

19 There was no way the rescuers  
20 could climb the chimney to help him.  
21 The only thing to do was to try to get  
22 a rope to him, so that he could make  
23 it fast and descend. But how could you  
24 get a rope up there?

25 The International News Service

1 says the first idea was an airplane.  
2 A plane went up and tried to lower a  
3 rope to Kemp as he clung to his perilous  
4 support. It was too windy. And the  
5 plane couldn't maneuver in a way so  
6 as to get the rope within Kemp's  
7 reach.

8 Next they tried a rocket. Coast  
9 guards swung into action with a rocket  
10 gun. They fired one of those  
11 projectiles with a rope attached to it.  
12 And it worked. They kept shooting the  
13 rocket up Kemp's way until the rope  
14 passed near enough so that he was able to  
15 get hold of it. He hauled up the rope  
16 to which the coastguards had attached a  
17 swing, and he made the contraption  
18 fast and ~~xx~~ was lowered to the ground.

19 Well, that chap had a hair  
20 raising adventure, and he carried it  
21 through with a splendid coolness and  
22 courage.

# GOLF

The big tea and bunker men <sup>Page</sup> 3  
were busy out in Chicago today. They

1 ~~Well, the golfers in Chicago~~  
2 finished their qualifying rounds this  
3 afternoon. The 32 have been selected  
4 who, beginning with tomorrow, will  
5 compete for the National Amateur  
6 Championship.

7 John Lehman of Chicago, and Arthur  
8 (Ducky) Yates of Rochester, were tied  
9 for the lowest score. Each one, says  
10 the International News Service, completed  
11 the 36 holes with a score of 148.

12 The golfers played over a wet,  
13 soggy ■ course. The United Press  
14 described <sup>S</sup> how they trudged along in a  
15 downpour of rain. The mud was so bad in  
16 places that the golfers were allowed to  
17 lift the ball out of the ooze and clean  
18 it off before making a shot. <sup>Otherwise they would have been playing with mud balls.</sup> But rain  
19 or no rain, the boys kept plodding  
20 along and played some excellent golf.

1           There's been <sup>quite</sup> a bit of talk about  
2 a couple of Maine guides, dead shots,  
3 deer hunters from the northern woods,  
4 who have come to New York to clean up  
5 the gangsters. Up there in Maine they  
6 heard about those baby-killing gun-men  
7 of the metropolis and they figured  
8 they'd come to New York and show them  
9 ~~har~~ gun men just what some real Maine  
10 rifle shooting was like. They guarantee  
11 to pick off gangsters at 200 yards.

12           *The United Press informs us that*  
13           They arrived in New York today,  
14 and at last reports were looking around  
15 the streets for underworld killers. Just  
16 how they are going to recognize an  
17 underworld killer when they see one is  
18 not related.

19           But the New York newspapers  
20 are giving those two gangster-exterminators  
21 from Maine quite a bit of a play. ~~up~~  
22 We're told that they look like real rough  
23 country pioneer fellers.

24           The New York Evening Post sent  
25 a reporter around to Police Commissioner  
Mulrooney to ask him about the

1 possibilities of the deer hunters  
2 opening fire on the gangsters along the  
3 sidewalks of New York. The Commissioner  
4 replied that if the deer hunters wanted  
5 their services accepted by the Police  
6 Department, they'd have to wait a  
7 little while, because they were right  
8 down at the tail end of a long waiting  
9 list. It appears that hundreds and  
10 hundreds of amateur enemies of gangdom  
11 have offered their services to the  
12 Police Department. They all want to  
13 come to New York and start blazing  
14 away at the gunmen.

15 The Commissioner declared that  
16 if the offers were accept<sup>ed</sup> the Police  
17 Department would have to appoint a  
18 special squad of detectives to go around  
19 with the gangster-exterminators and  
20 point out the gangsters to be exterminated.  
21 In fact, a suggestion has been made that  
22 such a squad of detectives should be  
23 called the Finger Squad. The ~~two~~ duties  
24 of the <sup>finger squad</sup> detective would be to walk up to  
25 a gangster and put a tinger on him,

whereupon the Maine guide or the Western two gun man or who ever the volunteer enemy of crime might be, would blaze away and effect the extermination.

Commissioner Mulrooney relates that offers of help have come from the broad sweeps of the western prairies, from the pampas of the Argentine and the belt of South Africa. There are two-gunmen three, four and even five-gunmen. There are hatchet men, knife throwers and stone throwers. And they all tell what they're going to do when they start exterminating the gangsters. A number are guides from Maine and elsewhere. And the Police Commissioner is of the opinion that these guides that show up in New York will have to be provided with guides to show them around.

Inspector Sullivan, the head of the Detective Force expresses a kindly wish regarding the various gangster exterminators that come to New York. He says he only hopes that none of those deer hunters or other pioneers get picked up by detectives and have any dangerous weapons on them. Or

1 ~~any dangerous weapons on them. Or~~  
2 they might get six months on Blackwell's  
3 Island. And that would be a terrible  
4 thing to happen to a gangster  
5 exterminator.

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1 I am afraid I'll have to give you  
2 this next dispatch in a sad, sad tone  
3 of voice. What's in a name? Well, I  
4 don't know about a long name, but there  
5 doesn't appear to be necessarily any  
6 heavenly virtue or angelic innocence  
7 in a short name.

8 Some time ago I told you about a  
9 short-name contest. A number of people  
10 entered the event, each one claiming to  
11 have the shortest name in the country.  
12 Among these was Ed Py. Yes, that's a  
13 short name, P-y. Well, I have here an  
14 Associated Press dispatch which relates  
15 that this same short-named candidate  
16 has sawed his way out of the Henry  
17 County jail in Indiana. Yes sir, Ed Py  
18 was in the cooler on a charge of larceny,  
19 but a jail doesn't seem to be able to  
20 hold a man with as short a name as that.  
21 Anyway, Ed sawed through the bars and  
22 got away.

23 Well, this follows right on the  
24 heels of another sad occurrence. The  
25 winner of the short-name contest was

1 A. A. Yes, his last name <sup>was</sup> ~~is~~ A, and he  
2 ~~spells~~ spells it just that way -- A.  
3 That is, he seemed to be the winner of  
4 the contest until a little later he  
5 admitted that his name wasn't A at all.  
6 It was just the first letter of his  
7 name. He had merely cut down his legal  
8 moniker <sup>for advertising purposes.</sup> And right after that he was  
9 accused of forgery, which he denies.

10 Well, with these interesting  
11 events following the short-name contest,  
12 I suppose they ought to hold a long-  
13 name contest and see what would happen  
14 then.

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Ben Adams  
(an editor of  
the Literary  
Digest)

Sept. 1, 1931.

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1           Wow, this looks like speed. Yes,  
2 it sure was speed.

3           At the Cleveland Air races the  
4 American Land Speed record was broken.  
5 Lowell Dayles of Springfield, Massachusetts,  
6 pushed along the course this afternoon  
7 at an average speed <sup>which the U.S. wires was</sup> ~~of~~ better than 267  
8 miles an hour.

9           Yes, that's a record and it  
10 certainly was fast.

11           And by the way, Ben Adams, one of  
12 the editors of the Literary Digest helped  
13 to break a record today, a record for  
14 carrying passengers in the air and Ben  
15 is right here to tell us about it.

16           What happened, Ben?  
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FOR BEN ADAMS

Well, Lowell, I never thought I would help break an aviation record. But I did it this morning. I went up over New York in this big German plane the DO-X, as guest of the Vaccum Oil Company. Do you know that there were actually 89 of us in that airplane -- 17 members of the crew and 72 guests and officials. I can just hear that German officer counting up to neun und achtzig. Just think of it. This was the record for the number of people ever carried ~~for~~ in any kind of flying machine in America. This big DO-X once carried 169 passengers on a short European flight. But 89 is a record for America.

I couldn't help thinking how comfortable it all was, not like the cramping cabin of an ordinary airplane, but like a big room. 89 of us aboard - and we didn't seem crowded. There we were in the main cabin of this three story DO-X! Engine room and control room above us. A storage deck below us. And we sat in comfortable armchairs arranged in groups for four or six people each. In fact that big cabin reminded me very much of a parlor car -- but no jarring, no bumping, no vibration, the noise of the engine kept out of our tight cabin. We could

have written letters or eaten meals in perfect comfort. Grand place for a bridge game. You know they had a dance on the way up from Norfolk. I wonder if one of these days we won't all of us be making long distance trips in big planes like the DO-X. Aviation experts who went along just raved over the delicacy of the controls. Anyway, I got a big thrill out of that ride.

1 Well, Ben, here's another German  
2 ship of the skies breaking into the news.  
3 The Graf Zeppelin landed at Pernambuco,  
4 Brazil, this afternoon. Earlier  
5 dispatches from the giant air liner  
6 said that she had a damaged stern.

7 The big dirigible was caught in  
8 a heavy rain and wind storm along the  
9 South American Coast, and as she ~~stuck~~  
10 struggled along the rear part of the  
11 ship was banged up a bit. The damage  
12 was not serious.

13 The International News Service  
14 reminds us that the Graf Zeppelin has  
15 made just another voyage across the ocean.  
16 She has flown all the way from Germany to  
17 South America in a non-stop flight. And  
18 now she has landed.

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20 This seems to have been a  
21 German field day - in the air. News comes  
22 from the Middle West that Capt. Wolfgang  
23 von Gronau, <sup>the trans-Atlantic flier</sup> landed in Chicago this evening,  
24 having flown all the way from Germany by  
25 way of Iceland, Greenland, and Canada, just  
the reverse of the route taken by Shorty Cramer  
on his tragic flight.

1 Now let me introduce a hero.  
2 He's a big fellow with a fierce look.  
3 He has scales on his back and a long  
4 powerful tail. And as for his face -  
5 well, it's one of those faces that  
6 only a mother could love, a long scaly  
7 snout and a gaping mouth full of  
8 ferocious teeth. Yes, it's old Brer  
9 Alligator - our hero.

10 And now let's have a loud hiss -  
11 hsss. The villain appears. Hsss.  
12 He has an oval shape and a long wicked  
13 snake-like neck - hsss. His name is  
14 Cooter, yes, Cooter, the villain of the  
15 piece. Hsss. He is the soft shelled  
16 turtle of southern waters.

17 The current issue of the  
18 Literary Digest comes out with a trumpet  
19 like blast in defense of good old Brer  
20 Alligator. He's a noble soul, ~~is~~  
21 ~~Brer Alligator~~, but the world ain't  
22 doing right by him. And folks are  
23 going to be sorry for treating him like  
24 like that.

25 The Digest, quoting an article

1 from Nature magazine, warns us that if  
 2 they don't stop ~~xxxxx~~ killing off the  
 3 alligators, why pretty soon there won't  
 4 be any more fish left in the lakes and  
 5 streams of the South.

6 The advance of civilization and  
 7 the work of the hunters is reducing the  
 8 numbers of southern alligators to a low  
 9 level. I suppose there are a lot of  
 10 people who won't shed any crocodile tears  
 11 about this, <sup>alligator tragedy.</sup> ~~but~~ The alligator has been  
 12 accused of being a destroyer of valuable  
 13 game fish. But this false idea the  
 14 Literary Digest proceeds to refute.  
 15 Alligators do eat fish, but mostly  
 16 that hardboiled <sup>member of the finny tribe</sup> ~~fish~~ known as the gar.  
 17 The gar is not <sup>good</sup> ~~good for game fish~~ anyway.  
 18 And besides he's a destroyer of the  
 19 spawn of the valuable fishes. And so  
 20 in destroying the gar the alligator  
 21 was doing his country a good deed. No,  
 22 the alligator is not in any sense the  
 23 fish destroying villain.

24 And now is the time where old  
 25 man Cooter enters the scene. The

1 Literary Digest tells us that he's the  
2 boy that ruins the fish. That soft  
3 shelled turtle is no good. He's just a  
4 plain destroyer.

5 Well, if you have a hero and a  
6 villain, why the right thing is for the  
7 hero to foil the villain and that's  
8 where old Brer Alligator shines. When  
9 stomachs of dead alligators are opened  
10 they ~~are~~ are commonly found to contain the  
11 remains of a few Cooters. The  
12 alligator regards that soft shelled  
13 turtle as a choice delicacy.

14 That article in the Literary  
15 Digest is illustrated with three of the  
16 most illuminating pictures. One shows  
17 our noble hero, the alligator, asleep  
18 on a muddy bank. The other shows  
19 Cooter, the villain. And still another  
20 shows us a whole raft of fragments of  
21 cooter shell ~~taken from the stomach of~~  
22 ~~the alligator.~~ *taken from the stomach of the alligator.*

23 Well, the logic of the  
24 matter is clear: - Cooter eats fish -  
25 alligator eats cooter - alligator saves

1 fish.

2           The Digest tells us that there's  
3 a lake in Louisiana which used to be  
4 full of both alligators and superb  
5 game fish. A town grew up nearby.

6 The alligators were killed off. Today  
7 there are neither alligators in the lake -  
8 nor fish. But there are thousands of  
9 cooters.

10           Some distance away is another  
11 lake. The alligators are there in force.  
12 There are mighty few cooters in that  
13 lake, but it's full of fish.

14           All over the farther South the  
15 cry is being raised that if they don't  
16 stop killing off the alligators, why,  
17 there won't be any fish left.

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1           A strange racing event was put on  
2 today, with crime and kidnapping in the  
3 background. An airplane flew a race  
4 with a carrier pigeon. The pigeon was  
5 released and started homing. The plane  
6 followed it, just kept right after that  
7 bird over the mazes of city streets and  
8 houses, and the plane tracked the pigeon  
9 to its destination.

10           As background, the International  
11 News Service tells of the disappearance  
12 of the son of a former <sup>New York</sup> Judge. ~~of New~~

13 ~~York.~~ A gang sent several carrier  
14 pigeons to the father and told him to  
15 use them in forwarding the money which  
16 would procure his son's release. It  
17 seemed a good way to get money to a  
18 kidnapping gang in such a way that they  
19 could not be caught.

20           Well, the police decided to  
21 follow one of those carrier pigeons as  
22 the bird winged its way home. But how  
23 can anybody follow a carrier pigeon?  
24 The answer was -- an airplane. Well,  
25 the plane did follow the pigeon all

1 right, and the trail led to a bird house  
2 in the back yard of a house in the town  
3 of Flushing.

4 The police immediately went to the  
5 owner, but he told them a story that  
6 convinced them as being true. He said  
7 that ~~■~~ a little while before a young  
8 man had rented the bird house. He said  
9 he wanted to keep a few pigeons in it.  
10 And for days the young man kept the *birds*  
11 ~~pigeons in the bird house~~ <sup>there</sup> and fed them  
12 daily. In that way the bird house was  
13 established as the home for the carrier  
14 pigeons. The police are now looking  
15 for the young man.

16 And talking about homing pigeons,  
17 here's one that's going to do a bit of  
18 homing <sup>through the gloaming</sup> right now, because it's time to  
19 say --

20 SO LONG UNTIL TOMORROW.  
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