

PRESIDENT'S REPORT FOR 1972

Invocation:

Come, unnamed saints and celestial muses,  
Despite our sins and corporate abuses,  
Lift us ever above red ink,  
Guide in ways that deficits shrink,  
Disgruntled stockholders convert their spleen  
To gratitude for this management team.

Message:

In nineteen hundred and seventy-two  
Your syndicate set a record, too.  
We earned per share some ninety percent  
Over the year that has just went.  
Income is up to unprecedented levels,  
Your equity too; 'tis time for revels

Chorus:

Don't you feel a sudden thrill  
To have your hand so near the till  
In a company with drive and pluck  
That's bound to make a pretty buck.

Message:

Let us review our many splendid holdings,  
Where Stygian oils gush into light from VP pumps,  
Where Dionysian brews and distillates,  
Unite townsmen in fraternal embrace,  
Gentle craftsmen in their sumptuous suites  
Convert ethereal chaos to Johnny Carson shows,  
While lithesome goddesses strum their lutes  
Cascading songs to bearded passersby.  
We proclaim with pride intense  
We have a social conscience.  
Not all is a breeze, and we often would feel better  
if  
We didn't have to make special call each month to  
to collect the rent from Cliff,

If our tenants troubled with electric ranges,  
cockroaches, and many other things had  
not called up and sung hello.  
Or if we only could have the Panos store front  
redesigned by Michael Angelo.  
But this is duty in a managerial sense,  
High-priced we are, yet worth our recompense;  
In fact we hope you will one day  
Approve executive retirement pay.  
Unfortunately we can't, this year,  
Give stockholders further cheer  
Due to prior obligations.  
Pocketing profits we must postpone  
In order to repay our Catamount loan  
And maintain accreditation.  
Good stockholders, do not weep  
Because of profits you cannot keep;  
But enjoy this celebration.  
Singing:

Chorus:

Don't you feel a sudden thrill  
To have your hand so near the till;  
The Syndicate harbors both drive and pluck  
Which some day yet will earn a buck.

## Reflections on an Unaudited Financial Statement

No one claimed his work was done  
As sin did threaten North Bennington  
For liquorous fluids were being dispensed  
Luring youths to indolence.  
No need a stick your memory to stir,  
You already recall the purchasing of the Villager,  
Thus snatching away from the hands of vice  
Its bar, bottles, glasses and ice.

Not Lancelots but Gallahads we  
Riding on Chargers of purity  
Downing temptations of insobriety.  
But up the stairs behind closed doors  
Lusting youths on many floors  
Snuggled all night with their amours.  
Saturday on Main Street at A.M. two,  
Windows crashed and tempers flew  
Thus sin returned to us anew.

Where were you then,  
My friend Karl Marx  
Why didn't we win?  
We held in our hands  
The means of production:  
Ours the choicest spot  
In the business district;  
Ours was trustee approval  
At their meetings;  
Ours the credit committee  
At the Catamount Bank.  
And nothing made us any bolder  
Than the wifely backing of every stockholder.

We may not have looked our part:  
Fat cigars none smoked in swivel chairs;  
None grew wealthier by selling his shares.  
Budgets kept us from growing more portly  
And Brooks Brothers suits rendered no one courtly.

You can tell Friedrich Engels and Comrade Lenin  
Most of us capitalist wore plain denim.  
Yet all the power within our grip  
Somehow from our hands did slip.

Sing a song of six bucks  
To buy some extra keys;  
Ten eager landlords  
Tenants they tried to please.  
We've got no hot water,  
The thermostat's set too low;  
Just send me an umbrella,  
The roof is leaking so.  
Sorry, Mr. Welling, sir,  
I'll pay my rent next week,  
But will you be so very good  
As to fix the faucet leak?

Those were the days we worked every hour  
To pay the Catamount Bank;  
At the end of the year we examined the books  
But the deficits never shrank.  
Now properties we no longer possess  
Turning our assets to few,  
While on their own the profits roll in;  
As for work, there's nothing to do.

I feel obliged to draw a moral,  
And you well may ask me which:  
The wages of virtue are only hard work  
And rewards of indolence rich.

June Hanks

Stock Holder's Lament

For years the presidential optimisms  
Did quell all fears of Cataclysms.  
"Grow rich!" he promised; "You'll have fun  
Investing in North Bennington,  
Where housing rentals never thin  
Nor profits from the demon gin."

With fantasies of future bliss  
I yielded then to avarice.  
Then watching this astounding asset,  
I planned retirement to Manhasset  
As those profits put the squeeze  
On horrid liabilities.  
Beach, surf, blue shoes would soon be chronic,  
Reclining chairs with gin and tonic.

Senor, Senor Presidente!  
Tell me, have those fulsome days  
Vanished under the East Mountain  
Or into the depths of Paran Lake?  
Can the audit's parentheses  
Be effaced and some how ease  
Abstinence from martinis?

Retirement dreams lie stored in cassette  
With flying fish and hounds of Bassett,  
Plus mermaids as an added facet  
To palm-treed beaches of Manhasset.  
Alas, so much does hang upon the fate  
Of our Sage City Syndicate.

L.M. Hanks  
March 1975

Unsolicited Comments from a Stockholder  
for the Meeting of the  
Sage City Syndicate, March 26, 1976

Yes, we've all read  
The annual reportation;  
It's time for good cheer  
And some jubilation.

So tonight we'll just jitter bug  
Sipping a little from a little brown jug;  
We'll drink all we want; we've just got a raise  
And sober up again in another few days.

True, a little cash hides away in a pocket,  
But who wears those pants?  
The Villager is gone, and who gets loans from  
Catamount?

We've put our money on the wire;  
Vanished now that noble block O'Dwyer,  
Monument and founding pillar  
That propped our brittle bones together,  
Combining truckers with college kids and more,  
Leaks in the ceiling with love on the floor.

Just by accounting we fail to see  
The many losses in respectability.  
Are they too gone, those Syndicated days  
When Welling silenced complaining tenants by  
merely fingering his rod?  
When a cold nod from Wickendon could lead some  
wretch to a one-way ride on Jolivette's truck?  
Scott and McCullough always let us know what's up;  
Then Hewitt and Condon stood up front to divert  
the cops,  
While Powers and Dickey pulled off the job.  
Alas, no more do villagers gasp and quake  
When some one whispers, "The Syndicate!"

So fat profits promise ease  
Driving highways in Mercedes,

Off with friends on the Susquehanna,  
Placing our bets at Tiajuanna.  
Some even ask, what could be finer  
Than a three-week trip to mainland China?  
Carry on like this, we're sure a goner;  
No one will respect us any longer.

Now is the time, our coffers can back it,  
to muscle in on some new racket.

The numbers game I don't recommend;  
Off-track betting is bringing its end.  
As for pot, it once was regal,  
But legislators are making it legal.  
Gambling profits are said to be down,  
And prostitution can't flourish in a college town.  
But I.T. & T. didn't declare a vacation  
When profits rolled in from their radio station.  
We too have something to do to make the kids reflect.  
When we walk down the street, we want respect!

LMH

Economic Reflections on the Annual Report  
of 1978

Our management, still astute and nimble,  
Kept the Syndicate as fit as a thimble.  
No one need say, " 'twas an easy yearful  
Just filling orders, keeping customers cheerful."  
First-rate materials were hard to obtain,  
But our quality standards were met just the same.  
Since income from sales tumbled mitely,  
Residual profits radiated less brightly,  
Yet despite mounting age our interests increased;  
Our rate of depreciation appears to have eased.

Let's utter glad thanks for being led by wise men  
Who prevented our producing the DC-10.  
Indeed, they foresaw OPEC strangulation  
And made us proud owners of a filling station.  
As gasoline prices soar upward in jumps,  
Cash flow will increase at all of our pumps.  
Should energy dwindle to still deeper slacks,  
We'll retire from work and just relax,  
And there will be less need to nationalize,  
If we fight winter chill in bed with our wives.

LMH



For a very nice fee, Larry would see  
If an apartment in town were free,  
And it caused him distress to dispossess  
When there were tenants in excess.

If arose trouble, he'd come on the double,  
A bruiser named William Scott,  
There never was jousting, simply an ousting  
That wasn't very quickly forgot.

Carl made it rich with a single fix  
Of a wire deemed undependable.  
When repairing one, another was undone,  
And his service became indispensable.

With innocent looks and his hands on the books  
Welling collected the rent,  
On each water faucet, he required a deposit  
Which he never returned in the ent.

The idea stank of profiting the bank  
And that's where Wick filled our need  
He diverted thousands for constructing housin's  
And never the bank did bleed.

Merritt gained awe with writing new law  
From his seat at a desk in Montpelier  
The real estate lobby kept him quite happy  
And that's why his deals grew mealier.

And Hanks, as you have already seen,  
Kept everyone forthright, honest and clean.

That was our winning team  
Of resolute men composed  
Each with some well-honed skill  
That drew respect from all

The glories of such teams have many years been sung  
By notables like Jefferson as well as Mao Tse-dung.

L.M.H.

Sage City Syndicate  
President's Report  
1982

It's good for us that Chairman Mao  
Is dead, not that we hold anything  
Against him but because otherwise  
We might have to tell him that  
With all our handsome looks  
And restraints in eating and drinking,  
We're really not capitalist backsliders despite  
The fiscal year of 1981.

T'was full six weeks we're hard at work  
From nine to ten in the morning,  
With most of us Sundays attending our kirk,  
A pew on the main floor adorning.

You're right that I forgot to mention  
We work on Mondays only,  
While some flew off to Sierra Leone  
Because their hearts were leonely.

Never forget how we labored that hour  
Trying to increase our rents;  
Our hearts said no, you better go slow,  
But then we used sense.

Thanks to our efficiency  
Spirits now roam free,  
While lesser gifted toil and slave  
On tropic beaches we can bathe.  
Returning brown and gently rested  
Because Sage City so wisely invested.

Consider: Kansas farmers work six  
Months before they can ease off  
To Florid keys, and retired  
Executives must come and sit  
Bound to their desks on Wednesday,  
There immobilized until  
Martini time at high noon.

Sage City leads the way,  
Scarcely stirs a single day;  
Let the cheers be sounded soft,  
Disturb not angels hovering aloft.  
Employing here a certain finesse  
We may labor even less:  
We'll count our shekels by computers,  
While Augie fills the carburetors.  
Then directors' fees can wax  
At no expense but income tax.

Enthusiastically submitted

Report and Recommendation  
to  
The Sage City Syndicate  
June 9, 1983

These many months your Seattle correspondent,  
Dreaming of home with continuing fondment,  
Wishes to report his best indicators  
Of attractive investment for Syndicators.

Here times are tough, since orders aren't flowing  
For the 767's of Mr. Boeing,  
And amiable lumberjacks have turned into grouchers  
Waiting for work at Weyerhaeuser's.

Public utilities, whoops, it's a mess,  
Unable to manage their indebtedness.  
While the governor is demanding support for  
his budget,  
The legislators are trying hard to fudge it.

Never mind!  
We've still a chance  
To make a deal  
Of elegance.

The First Seattle Bank's for sale  
We'll buy them up so they won't fail  
And lose those pretty tellers.  
It's a bit run-down but fit for mending.  
Interstate banks 'll bring joys unending  
To us financial fellers.  
Our credit standing won't be bad;  
We'll meet some lender in Baghdad  
With sentiments soft and mellow.

The site is ours near Merchants Bank,  
Where vault and Augie's leaky tank  
Will form the building's cellar.  
And from a structure towering high,

Layer on layer into the sky,  
Commands we'll shout and bellar.

Indeed, we'll meet on pent-house floor  
With views of Ascutney and Laborador  
While sitting on soft chinchilla.  
Reply by phone before too long!  
In June begins a home-bound song:  
What ho! A No. Benn. dweller.

LMH

## The Worry of 1984

The Syndicate, having gained  
A spot of land, must now  
Decide its proper use.  
Located in an unpenetrable jungle  
Bordering on a weed-infested lake,  
The range of choice  
Is only short of infinite,  
But not our patience.  
Let us examine three:

### Exhibit A

Title: Retornemus ad Indigenes = Give it to  
the Indians

On Paran's shores dwells Gichigumi  
Nigh unto the pitch-black ooze  
That spawns the lonely snapping turtle  
And wading anglers' hot abuse.

Beside the stream in shaded grove  
Clusters Gichi's wigwam kingdom.  
Gichigumi rules the wigwams  
Wigwams small and wigwams roomy,  
Some quite tidy, others gumi,  
Holding folk both gay and gloomy,  
But that's the job of Gichigumi.  
They're all content with deer meat jerkey  
Yet also like a joint of turkey.

There on full-moon nights the tom-toms  
Disperse all shreds of nature's hush  
As bouncy squaws and brown-eyed machos  
Dance and court all night in the bush.

### Exhibit B

Title: Santa Lucia



O'er Lago Paran's waves  
Glides our gondola,  
Passing 'neath the arched bridge  
Meets the festive funicula.

Lights from the nearby town  
Silhouette the crowded boats  
While rockets lift shadow's embrace  
From shawled signorina's face.

Viols, voices dispatch  
Music cross the silvery plain;  
Midnight joined by pealing bells  
Lucia's day returns again.

Paran's bosom still retains  
The records of fiesta:  
Earrings, bottles and some boots  
Among its weeds do nestle.

Exhibit C  
Title: Paran Antigua

There's a spot on our lot  
To build a classy condomin;  
Mountains north; the beach lies east;  
People clamor to get in.

No need for math; all rooms with bath  
Plus hot and cold running water; we've  
Tubs and showers of percheron powers.  
So you'r clean as you might wish to be.

Life's not too stark within our Park  
Of honey-suckle and sycamore;  
A beach chair too is there for you  
In the sunshine down by the shore.

A final tip, our skinny dip  
For nudists of controllable passion;  
No clothes need wearin' at Antigua's Paran,  
Where weeds tickle back in tender fashion.

These three vistas of our land  
Can well be multiplied:  
From Paran's depth one day will rise  
The hand with Excaliber.  
Some days one hears the ringing of  
The sunken bell near the first mill dam.  
Have no worry: St. George expelled the monster.  
So what shall we do with the acres on the Lake?

Image Trouble  
A Presidential Report

Business, too quiet in eighty-four;  
Such mud-gripped years, let's have no more.  
That vocal neighbor who always complains,  
The bill collector with vituperous refrains,  
Not even they called, no one, mind you please.  
The day has come to get down on our knees

Mr. Consultant, what do you say?  
What causes us to languish?  
Were halitosis your best diagnosis  
That too would relieve our anguish.

Here are his communications in sequence:

I

Is Sage City in Nevada or Utah?

II

How long has Sage City been in Vermont?

III

Why do you have an unlisted phone?

IV

Are you sometimes known as the Sage City  
Symphony?

V

Under our charter we can deal only with  
legitimate business.

It's your decision, Signore, Madonna,  
Augie's gas, or marijuana?  
Change our name to fit the bizz,  
As it customarily is,  
Or Change the bizz to fit the name  
With sodden diapers and cocaine?  
No need now for theoretics,  
First let's try verbal cosmetics.

1. For succinct vagueness  
Just "S.C.S."
2. But see how one word can change a state:  
"First Sage City Syndicate",  
"Sage City Guarantee Syndicate".
3. Translation also gives transformsa:  
"Syndicato della Cita Sapienta",  
"Cite des Sages Syndicat d'Initiativ".
4. Other face-lifting possibilities:  
"Allied Syndicates of Atchison, Topeka and  
Sage City",  
"01' Massa's Sage City Syndicated Enterprises".

Otherwise, Sage City Syndicate,  
In pure gold leaf upon the oaken strake  
Of a pirate ship with its jolly crew;  
That appeals to me too; and you?

Signed: L. Hanks  
April 12, 1985  
North Bennington

## Ballad of the Mid-eighties

Some years ago slid down the ways  
The capital ship Syndicata;  
With boards of oak, copper rivets planked  
She sat right tight on the water.

Then sparred and rigged t'gallant style,  
The crew aboard, their hearts aglowing,  
She embarked upon uncharted seas  
A favorable breeze ablowing.

Stout navigators carried her through  
Seventeen years of tempest,  
Steered her whole past the credit shoal,  
Unruffled, trim, yet unkemptest.

In the year of the ox, with all his flocks  
They set Augie ashore.  
All went on short ration, for the filling station  
Was tendering rent no more.

Then out of the mist appeared  
A wonderous, glistening cargo,  
A house a-welling with comely girls,  
And every one from Fargo.

They rigged their ship fastidiously  
To bring this lot aboard,  
But it proved to be a phantom freight  
Which never could be stored.

Though saved by fate by Loreleis,  
With thankful tears in their eyes,  
Their spirits soon did rise and hearten  
When on the deck appeared Paul Martin.

No pushover, he!  
He had to be lured  
With asphalted ramps

To brand new tanks  
For leaden and unleaden fuel,  
Plus a hershey bar  
With every gallon;  
It really was rather cruel!  
When reminded where he sat,  
He agreed to have a laundromat,  
Though never was he a plumber.

Then one sad day on a storm-churned sea  
Syndicata sprang a leak.  
Gasoline, gasoline everywhere  
And everywhere its reek.

Masts swung great arcs across the sky;  
The foundering hulk did writhe.  
"Ready about for the leeward shore.  
Man the pumps and say no more!"

"Oh captain, my captain,  
We've sailed a horrid trip.  
Just get us home; we'll never roam  
Nor give you any lip."

She limped into the harbor,  
Officials came aboard.  
They sniffed the gas and said "Alas!  
For now you're not insured."

No doubt, she's sound and easy to handle;  
Her stun sails are quite stunning.  
Yet it takes more courage to go to sea  
Encumbered with liability,  
But with that new and fearless crew  
They're sure to keep her running.

L.M.H.  
April 19, 1986

Meeting of Sage City Syndicate  
May 21, 1987

Fragment

Pause and look about you friends;  
This site itself to history lends:  
Here was born our Syndicate  
To mitigate No. Benn's dire fate.  
Here Cliff's firm hand did hold the key  
To quiet patron's sobriety,  
While Jasmine surveyed our empire fair  
With Dickey's bank and Toomey's repair,  
Upstreet our Fred in the old depot  
Hearing why our tenants were paying so slow.  
Sage City then in our power  
It was our Syndicate's finest hour.