

## LENS LEAGUE

814 CHANIN BLDG., NEW YORK, N. Y.

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Dear Lens League Member:

This is a letter of apology and explanation. The apology because the current Lens League selection is just now being mailed to you: the explanation because it certainly should follow the apology.

I hope (and think) you'll find CALIFORNIA AND THE WEST worth waiting for. You will receive your copy before you see any reviews, but book critics -- photographic and general -- who have read it are very enthusiastic. From jacket to concluding page, it is not only a usually engrossing photographic book, but it is also one of the most beautiful books you have ever seen. It is a book to be proud of, and everyone is telling me it is a fine summary in pictures and text of the first photographic Guggenheim award.

But to return to its being so late. The explanation is simple. First of all, I earn my living in the advertising business. Publishing photographic books (and a magazine) started as a hobby -- and grew, and grew, and grew. If the recompense necessary to carry on these ventures had grown accordingly, there would be no reason for lateness. But, alas, as is most often the case, it hasn't. So, much midnight oil is burned by me -- and occasionally I grow weary. On other occasions I become so engrossed in the books or the magazine I go to probably ridiculous lengths to get something a little better than it has been before. Result is almost chronic lateness.

And when (as is the case this year) a two-volume edition of U. S. CAMERA, an Edward Weston book, a Christmas issue of U. S. CAMERA magazine almost twice as large as the regular edition, and a big photographic show at Rockefeller Center with its attendant duties all arrive at once, I'm swamped and everything is late. Forgive it, please.

This means that the Toni Frissell book will not be ready until the first of February. Since Christmas is hard upon us, you will probably welcome the carry over. Some of the plates are already finished, and the book will be as gay as the Weston is classic. It is hard to imagine the wealth of fun and loveliness Toni Frissell has woven into these childrens' pictures. Many of the shots are of her own children, and will be a great help to anyone who ever has or ever will snap a child. That encompasses everybody.

Next year's series is already under discussion, but not completely decided. Here are some of the current suggestions: MANHATTAN by Andreas Feininger, a series of pictures of New York that are truly magnificent; THE AMERICAN INDIAN by Laura Gilpin, exquisite shots taken in the Southwest by one of America's great women photographers; another group, taken by the wife and daughter of Robert Flaherty as he made his great movies in Ireland (MAN OF ARAN), India (ELEPHANT BOY), Tahiti (MOANA), and in the Arctic (NANOOK OF THE NORTH), are a revelation in beauty and character study; Thomas Bouchard's famous dance pictures; a book on the work of famous refugee photographers now in America; and a dozen others have been suggested. Of course, the STEICHEN OMNIBUS will be the first MUST once we can clear certain copyright hurdles.

Both the Weston and the Frissell books will come to you at \$2.50, will retail at \$3.75. There will be a further saving on these books. The Outerbridge and Dmitri books made so many mentions of equipment and materials the Post Office Department gave them the highest mailing rate, putting them into the publication-carrying-advertising class. Such will not be the case with either of these books, so mailing costs will be the nominal book rate. Incidentally, we cannot furnish either the first or second selection, but will be glad to do so with the Weston book, postpaid at the regular list price to anyone wishing further copies. It will make an ideal Christmas gift.

U. S. CAMERA is also listed on the enclosed card at the regular price. It has become such a widespread Christmas gift, we will box it specially and send it to any address you desire.

Now that the pressure is off, I hope to write further memoranda on each of the books as they near completion. Won't you drop me a note with any comments you care to make -- and particularly any thoughts on books you would like to see in next year's series?

A Merry Christmas to you.

*Tom Maloney*  
Tom Maloney