

THE SATURDAY EVENING POST

SPECIAL COLLECTOR'S EDITION

REFLECTIONS OF AMERICA

70 Years of Outstanding *Post*
Covers by Norman Rockwell,
J.C. Leyendecker, and Other
Leading Artists



Norman
Rockwell



Art Connoisseur
Norman Rockwell
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1950s

Depicting Prosperity in Postwar America

In the 1950s, the covers of *The Saturday Evening Post* succeeded as never before in representing the American way of life. The decade, of course, brought prosperity to America, and it is this sense of well-being, security, and contentment that the covers of the *Post* reflected. Although the articles inside the magazine, and the announcement of special titles on the cover, kept up a constant alarm over communism abroad and communists at home, Cold War anxiety was absent from the cover art. In its place were familiar cover subjects: western vistas, rural panoramas, and urban scenes. But along with these was a new and predominating fascination with suburbia and the nuclear family.

Editor Ben Hibbs maintained the policy of featuring the work of a small number of artists, some of whom did 10 or more cover illustrations each year. Constantin Alajálov, John Clymer, Stevan Dohanos, John Falter, George Hughes, Amos Sewell, Thornton Utz, and of course Norman Rockwell continued the work they had previously done for the magazine. As the decade progressed, they were joined by Ben Kimberly Prins and Richard (Dick) Sargent; all told, these 10 men produced more than 450 covers during the 1950s. Their styles and their approaches were various, but the principal subject matter for each of them was America and the American people.

The work of Norman Rockwell was by this time inextricably bound with the idea and the image of the *Post*. During the '50s, on more than 40 covers, Rockwell continued to explore his own vision of America, partly nostalgic, partly humorous, always keenly realized. In *Saying Grace* (right), an elderly woman and a young boy bow their heads in prayer, astonishing the other patrons at a cheap restaurant. Regarded as one of Rockwell's signature works of this period, the original would sell for a record \$46 million 62 years later.

Rockwell's cover paintings are filled with details that enhance both the implied narrative and the mood. *Breaking Home Ties* (page 105) is rooted in detail. A working man, no doubt a farmer, sits in his work clothes by his son. The son is dressed in a suit, and his fancy red-and-white tie and socks match the colors of the State U. banner on his suitcase. The



Saying Grace, Norman Rockwell, November 24, 1951

NORMAN ROCKWELL

Rockwell drew on an experience from his own childhood to illustrate the 1958 cover below. "I ran away from home when I was a kid in Mamaroneck, and mooned around the shore kicking stones and watching the whitecaps on Long Island Sound," he wrote in his autobiography. "Pretty soon it started to get dark and cold and the wind sprang up and moaned in the trees. So I went home."



The Runaway, September 20, 1958



Soda Jerk, August 22, 1953



Marriage License, June 11, 1955



Before the Shot, March 15, 1958



Jockey Weighing In, June 28, 1958



Rockwell often made cameo appearances in his work. Both he and his wife Mary appear in the illustration below: Mary, in the third row left, and Norman — near the tail end of the rumor mill, bottom right.



Chain of Gossip, March 6, 1948

J.C. LEYENDECKER

To Leyendecker, a cover was more related to mural or sculpture work than illustration. Though some illustrators drew from photographs, he preferred working with subjects and did multiple studies and sketches of live models before completing a final painting of the elegant women, apple-cheeked children, or handsome men he was known for.



Lifeguard, Save Me!, August 9, 1924



July Fourth at the Beach, July 2, 1921



Marching Band Drummer, September 24, 1921



Indian Sunset, March 17, 1923



Knight in Shining Armor, July 17, 1926

CHARLES LIVINGSTON BULL (1874–1932)

Bull, who created 19 wildlife covers for the *Post*, began sketching at age 4. While working as chief taxidermist at the National Museum in Washington, D.C., he took night classes at the Corcoran Gallery of Art — both led to his future as a premier nature artist of the early 20th century.



Panther and Leopard Fighting, November 18, 1916



Roaring Lion, April 1, 1916

COLES PHILLIPS (1880–1927)

Credited with bringing Art Deco to advertising, Clarence Coles Phillips did 10 *Post* covers and invented the “fade-away” technique seen in *Broken Pearl Necklace* (lower right). Here, shape rather than shadow or outline define body, which merges seamlessly with the background. Using this technique, the magazine could appear to incorporate full-color images despite printing only one or two colors.



Flat Tire, July 15, 1922



Bathing Beauty and Rain, September 4, 1920



Bernice Bobs Her Hair, November 6, 1920



Flapper and Roadster, September 23, 1922



Broken Pearl Necklace, November 17, 1923

E.M. JACKSON

Jackson painted portraits of women but also turned his hand to portrayals of modern relationships. A particularly whimsical example of Jackson at his best is the cover below, depicting a young man serenading a young woman in a crescent moon.



Crescent Moon Couple, June 14, 1930



Ballroom Dancing, April 10, 1937

JOHN LAGATTA (1894–1977)

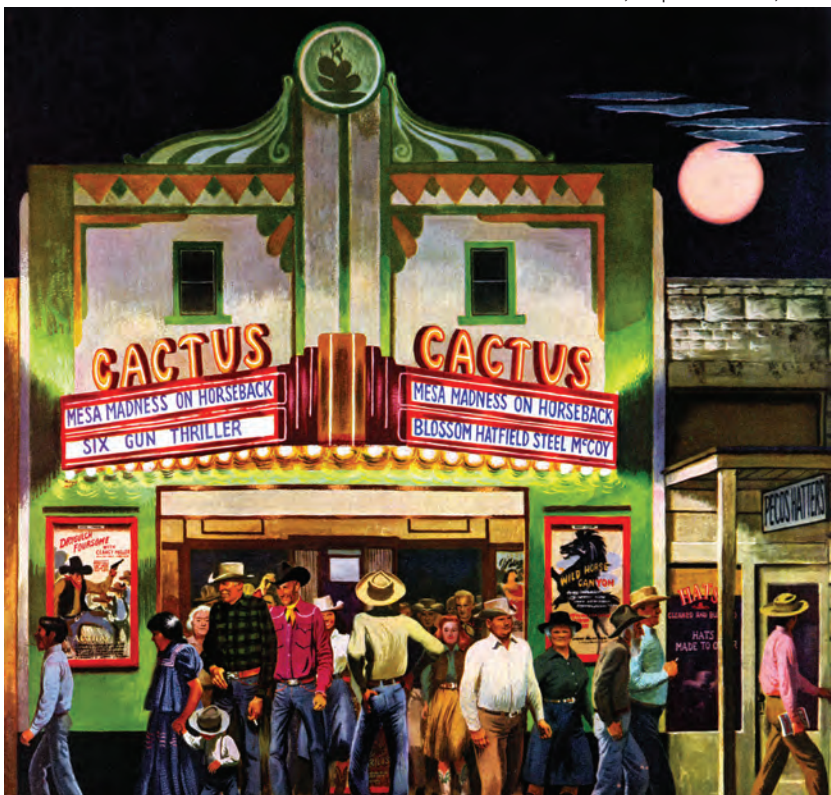
One of the most successful artists during the Depression, LaGatta worked in charcoal, chalk, oils, and pastels, often combining media to depict the long graceful figures he became famous for. From 1929 to 1941, LaGatta did 22 covers for the *Post*.

JOHN PHILIP FALTER (1910–1982)

Prophetically, Falter’s businessman father told him, “You won’t be an artist, son, until you’ve put a cover on *The Saturday Evening Post*.” After winning a scholarship to the Art Students League in New York City, he met other illustrators, including Norman Rockwell. Falter landed his first *Post* cover in 1943.



Gramercy Park, March 25, 1944



Cactus Theater, September 18, 1948



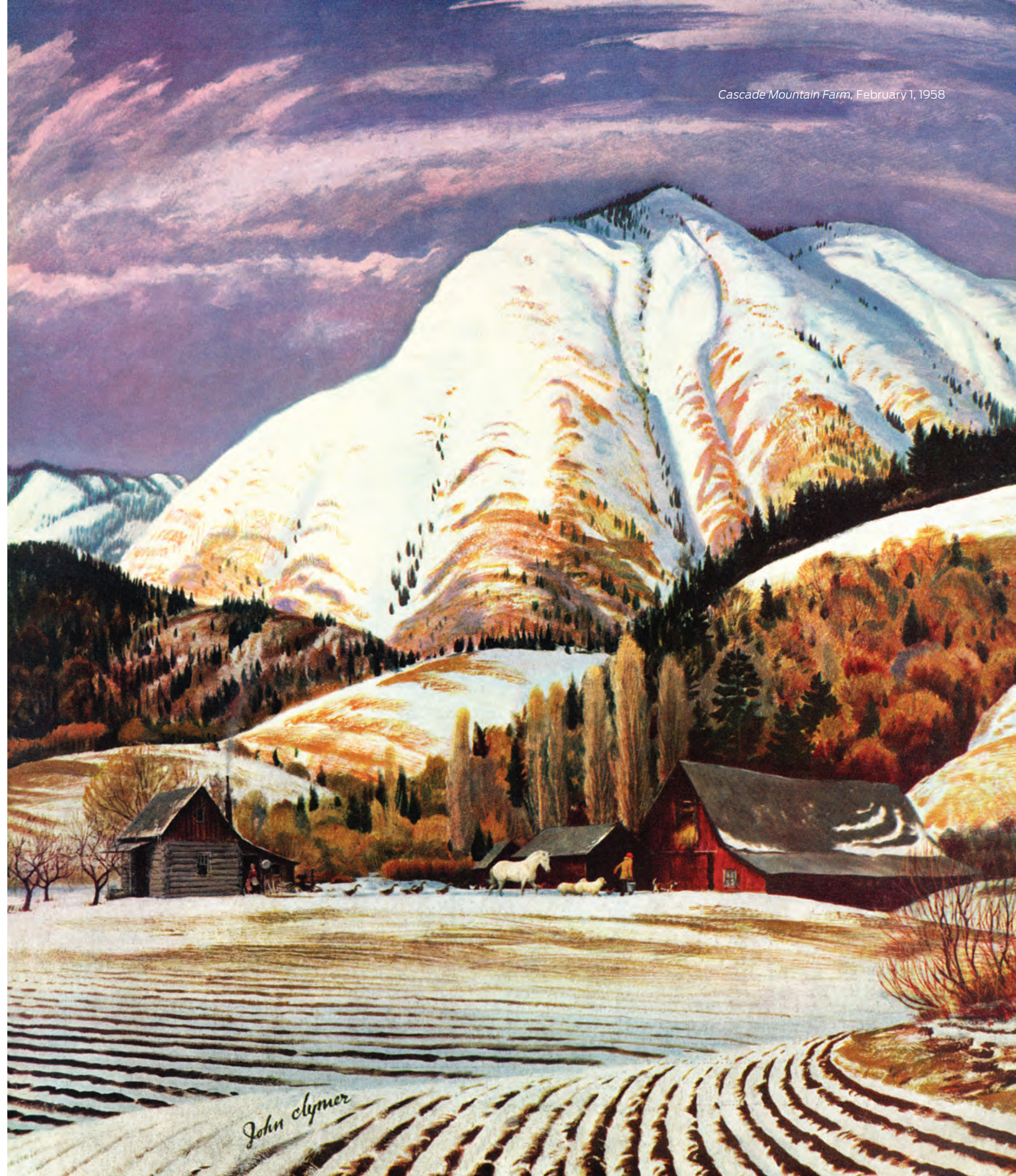
Amber Waves of Grain
September 8, 1945

JOHN CLYMER (1907–1989)

Born in Ellensburg, Washington, Clymer grew up fascinated by the foothills of the Cascade Mountains (right). Typically he placed small figures in the foreground of his panoramic paintings to reflect the epic scale of the Western scenery. These figures walk, hike, fish, or farm, but they are dwarfed by their surroundings.



Fishing on Mountain Lake, July 16, 1955



Cascade Mountain Farm, February 1, 1958

DICK SARGENT (1911–1978)

By the time Richard (Dick) Sargent began making a name for himself as an artist, he had started a family, which inspired some of the most successful of his 47 *Post* covers. His rambunctious, mischief-prone son Anthony was often a central figure in the illustrations, and his antics generated charming and poignant illustrations of 1950s suburban life.



Lookout Point, July 18, 1953



Hot Dogs, September 13, 1958

BEN KIMBERLY PRINS (1902–1980)

From bridge parties to babysitting, beachside storms to Fourth of July fireworks, Prins captured the everyday moments of the baby-boom era. For all the lightness of his tone, Prins' research was meticulous. "I learn a lot every time I have to scramble for my atmosphere," he said. Prins created 34 covers for the *Post* from 1953 through 1962, including this 1958 all-American backyard barbecue scene.

GEORGE HUGHES

Hughes' blend of humor and astute observation caught the imagination of a generation that was redefining itself. Most of his covers dealt with modern family life. Between 1948 and 1962, Hughes painted 115 *Post* covers, making him the most prolific artist during this period.



Poolside Piano Practice, June 11, 1960



Cowboy Asleep in Beauty Salon, May 6, 1961

KURT ARD (1925–)

Born in Copenhagen, Ard is a self-taught Danish illustrator, painter, and printmaker. Known for his realistic style and craftsmanship, he contributed eight humorous covers to the *Post*. Ard, like Rockwell, focused on the comic narratives of everyday life.