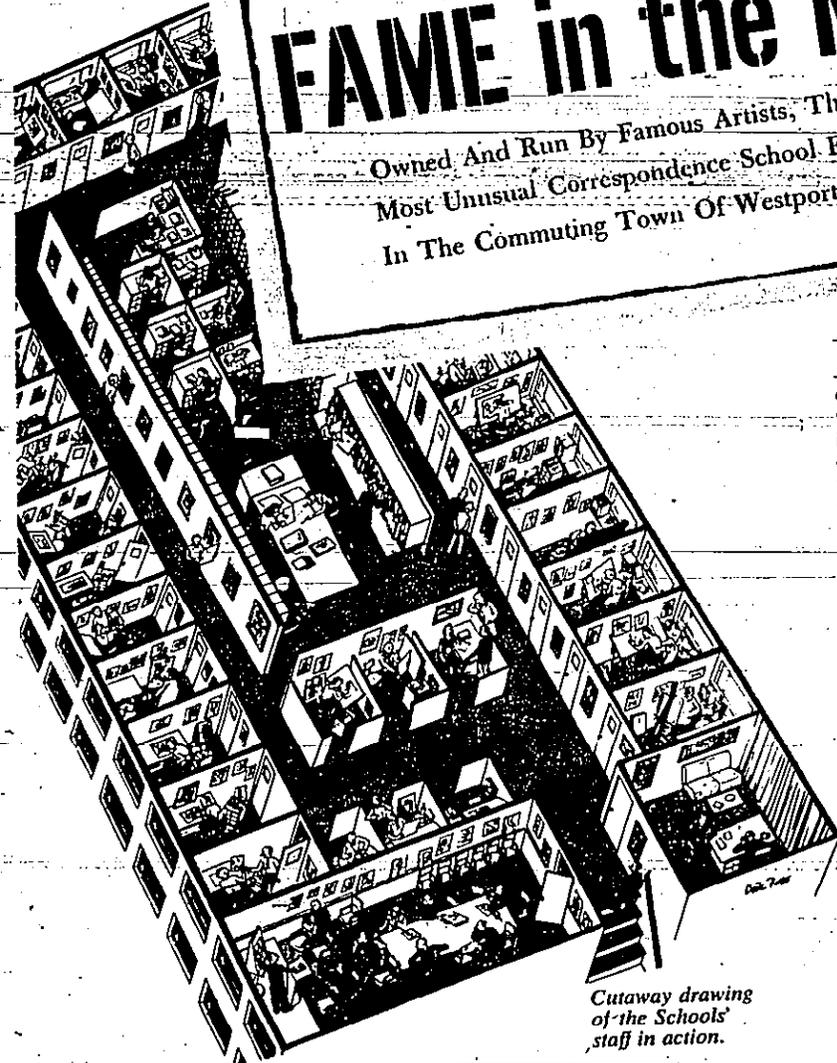


BY ERNEST LA FRANCE

FAME in the MAIL

Owned And Run By Famous Artists, The World's
Most Unusual Correspondence School Flourishes
In The Commuting Town Of Westport, Connecticut.



Cutaway drawing of the Schools' staff in action.

and bankers with here and there a lady cab driver, a glassblower, and a plumber. Half of them have had previous art training, including many professional artists, illustrators, and cartoonists who want to improve their techniques. Students range in age from 16 to 94, and there was one special case aged only 14.

Judging by the letters the students send in with their homework, they show a school spirit that makes the cheering section at Old Siwash seem listless by comparison. Famous Artists is probably the only school to which a student has written asking the foot sizes of the faculty, so she could knit them each a pair of Argyle socks.

Founded by Al Dorne

Chiefly responsible for the school spirit as well as the original school itself is energetic, fiftyish Famous Artist Al Dorne, reputed to have made up to \$100,000 a year for his illustrations in national magazines and advertisements.

Like many successful artists, he got to the top the hard way. Starting in New York's East Side, he left school in 7th Grade, sold newspapers in Times Square, painted eyebrows on dolls, broke into commercial art through trial and error and was making \$20,000 a year before he got out of his teens.

Also, like most successful artists, he was often buttonholed by less successful ones asking for advice. Existing art schools were long on art training, short on the more professional working methods needed for illustrating.

Why not, he asked himself, start a school that would have as teachers only successful illustrators?

He claims now that he first broached the subject to fellow-Famous Artist Fred Ludkens about twelve years ago while sitting in the Men's Bar of the Waldorf-Astoria on New York's Park Avenue. Others say he was working on the idea several years before. Most illustrators didn't think a correspondence school run by artists would work.

By 1948, Dorne, Ludkens and an art director named Ed Eberman had skeleton plans and the first draft of a series of

IF a neighbor you once considered hardly able to paint a fence has been turning out surprisingly professional-looking art work, sprinting to the post office to mail it out in 16" x 20" folders and excitedly quoting such masters as Norman Rockwell, Adolf Dehn and Milt Caniff as though they rode in the same car-pool, there is a simple explanation.

He (or she) is taking a correspondence course in commercial illustration, fine arts or cartooning at the Famous Artists Schools whose mailing address is simply Westport, Conn.

In addition to Rockwell, Dehn and Caniff, almost three dozen other topnotchers have pooled their skills and experience to pass on to their students. It is a good deal like studying golf under Sammy Snead, baseball under Yogi Berra, or tennis under Tony Trabert.

15,000 Students Enrolled

The student body, which totals around 15,000 in the U.S. and 56 foreign countries (including Antarctica), has some famous figures to match the Famous Artists: Dinah Shore, Red Skelton, José Ferrer, Henry Fonda, Tony Curtis and Pat Boone. Picked at random, a cross section would include housewives, doctors, boxers, lawyers, business executives,

Here an instructor teaches a student who may be a thousand miles away. He makes corrective drawings on canvas or paper, depending on the medium the student is using, to show him graphically how to improve his work. In addition, he dictates a letter of suggestion and criticism, so through words and pictures, the correspondent is shown how to get better results.

