

THIS WEEK'S GUEST WRITER

Beatrice La Force and her family came to Alpine in 1944. She is president of the Artists and Writers of Alpine, is active in The Players and has served as Librarian for the Alpine Library several years. Mrs. La Force formerly was Alpine correspondent for the Mountain Messenger, has written a number of articles and stories, has appeared twice in Reader's Digest's "Life in These United States," and also, at one time wrote a weekly radio program concerning San Diego County historical events which was dramatized.

SIGNS OF SPRING

My good housekeeping grandma used to sigh and say that she knew it was spring when the ants invaded her kitchen. My other grandma used to sigh, too, but differently, and mention vague stirrings in her heart and an intense longing for a gay new hat. To each individual spring has its special signals, and in a way it makes poets, or painters, romancers, or farmers, or milliners of us all. Some listen for the first song of spring birds. Some mark the day the Robins return—to eat the fruit buds!

Writer friend, Judy van der Veer, said in a recent letter, "The wonderful time is beginning." She had just been out in her fields and found a wild lilac in bloom and the first shooting star flower. Writer Bob Steelman of La Mesa confessed to a conflict between his typewriter and his garden spade. Roscoe Poland, whose clever epigrams appear often in the Saturday Evening Post, found himself sketching pictures on his copy paper. And Dorothy McDonald of Des-anso sat writing sentimental poetry instead of fact articles.

Alpine artist Jean McCullough was busily making a new spring bonnet complete with poesies and frivolous veil. Another Alpiner, who declines to be mentioned, took off her red flannels and got into some lacy lingerie. Hazel Hohanshelt rolled up her sleeves and got her "green fingers" into her garden ground. A realist Hazel, no waiting around for nature's uncertain bounty; she digs in and sees to it that her garden blooms and no perhaps.

Somebody heard Russel Gastil whistling the other morning in his pasture. Sounded like an original ode to spring, the observer stated. They also said he took a couple of what could have been dancing steps. Blanche McCall was bright as a peony in a colorful blouse and skirt at a recent luncheon.

Other signs of spring familiar to Alpiners are: Tom Hill Jr. and his tractor going down the road to plow a neighbor's field. The lone old Almond tree, by the road just this side of the river, in full lovely bloom. Lizards beginning to make tentative excursions along the fence posts. A big flock of buzzards making their short migration, resting on the hill back of our barn. A few night moths hovering beside my lamp at the study window.

And soon the wild plum thicket across the road from the Ball driveway will give its annual spring showing of beautiful blossoms. Sure makes me want a new hat with flowers on it, but I've got to go chase the ants out of my kitchen!