



**IT HELPS HIM THINK** — Pat Flanagan, 17, former Bismarcker who now lives in Bellaire, Tex., often stands on his head in the scientific laboratory he has outfitted in his home, saying it helps him think. Maybe more people should, for Pat has invented a device that allows persons to hear without ears—and has been offered a million dollars for it. (Life Magazine Photo)



**Hear Without Ears? See Without Eyes?**

## Ex-Bismarck Whiz Kid, 17, Offered \$ Million for Idea

"We may hear of him as a famous scientist."

These are the words Miss Marie Huber wrote across the record card of her seventh grade home room president in 1957 at Bismarck Junior High School.

Little did she know.

Just a few years later she—and the rest of the world—did.

**THE STUDENT** in question is Gillis Patrick Flanagan, Pat to all who know him, who, as a 17-year-old has invented a process to allow persons to hear without ears.

The idea came to him in a flash, and after 34 hours of almost steady experiment, he perfected it.

According to Life magazine, which this week has pages of type and pictures on the ex-Bismarcker, he has been offered a million dollars for the idea.

Pat is a son of Mr. and Mrs. Gil Flanagan, who lived in Bismarck twice in recent years where the father was associated with the Shell Oil Co.

They left here in 1953, going to Billings, Mont.,

and then to Texas, where they now live in Bellaire, Tex., a suburb of Houston.

**PAT WAS, IN MANY WAYS,** a typical teenager when he was here. But, in many ways he wasn't.

His records at Bismarck Junior High School show that he was much interested in many things—judo, band, choir, physics, chemistry, photography and ham radio. In fact, when he got his amateur radio license, he was one of the youngest in the city to do so.

At that time his ambition was to become a lawyer and join the FBI.

**NOW, HE IS WORKING** on an invention to allow persons to see without eyes. And, according to Life, he intends to go to college, but is indefinite as to his field.

Miss Huber, in addition to home room, had Pat for library and study hall when he was here. She remembers him as an "outstanding youngster, always doing research work."

"He was always way ahead of his times,"

she recalled.

His school records here have him listed as "a well-mannered boy with a pleasing personality and a good student."

HIS MATH TEACHER then, Gordon Holt, now principal at Richholt School, termed Pat a "real boy." Said Holt: "He's the kind you always remember — bright."

Even then he must have had a lot of talent, but he failed to leave too much of an impression on an ex-landlord.

"I remember the Flanagans very well," he said. "They were one of the nicest families ever. Sort of like an old shoe—they wore well. Pleasant, friendly, intelligent. But Pat was just a kid who was nuts about radio, just like his older brother Mike was nuts about hot rods."

AT THE BISMARCK Public Library, they knew Pat, too.

"He wasn't old enough to have an adult card, but he was there four or five nights a week with a list of articles he wanted to read from 'Popular Mechanics' or magazines of that order," an ex-librarian recalled. "Oh, did we get dusty piling through all the back issues in the basement for him."

As a radio bug, Pat chummed around with Bill Peters, son of Dr. and Mrs. C. H. Peters here. Pat was a year younger than Bill, who is now majoring in electrical engineering at North Dakota University.

"HE WAS OBSESSED with ham radio," Mrs. Peters said with a laugh when asked about Pat.

"He was here almost every day and every night. In fact, Bill used to get a little bit tired of his perpetual interest."

She was quick to add that Pat was never any trouble in a severe sense of the word.

"Once, when Pat was 13 and Bill, 14, the two got hold of a pair of walkie talkies. You never heard the end of it. They talked to each other all the time. Pat would be going home and he would call in to Bill:

" 'NOW I'M AT AVE. B and the coulee. Now I'm going into the house.'"

"The police finally heard about it and told the boys they were breaking the law."

Mrs. Peters is enthusiastic about Pat. "He was a clean cut, polite boy and we all knew he was brainy," she said.

Not too long ago the Flanagan

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family visited in Bismarck while on vacation. Their hostess sent Pat over to see Bill Peters and another friend, Monte Mueller.

"He's such a brain I don't know how to amuse him," she told friends later.

THIS IS PAT Flanagan as Bismarck remembers him.

Life describes him as "the twist champion of Bellaire, a moderate party-goer and girl chaser, the holder of a private pilot's license and a spectacular gymnast."

He calls his invention a neurophone and uses a radio process to induce a sensation of hearing in a person's nervous system with-

