**Womens' liberation has not caught fire in the predominantly Moslem Egypt. Waiters routinely approach the men to pay for bar tabs and dinner bills — even if the female makes it clear that she will be responsible for the bill.**

**Egyptian school children wear all manner of bright and cheerful clothing until they reach adulthood — then all changes to variations of black for the females and dull (by American standards) white and off-white galabias for the men.**

**The heat, the poverty, the diet, the customs — the hard life contribute greatly to the rapid aging of female Egyptians. The Egyptian woman (top) is fifteen, the American woman (bottom) is almost forty.**

## . . . *Ugly Americans*

(Continued from page 7)

been arrested immediately — maybe even publicly flogged for their transgression.

Like many of its neighbors, Egypt is predominantly Moslem — a religious environment where women are treated generally as second class citizens.

Because American tourism does not make up a significant part of Egypt's tourist trade, cab drivers, vendors or hotel waiters are not used to catering to the peculiar tastes of Americans.

They try. The darker Nubian Egyptians of the South appear to be more sensitive, more curious and less imposing than their lighter more Arab northern brothers. But often the Americans make it difficult for both the Nubians and the Arabs to stomach our cultural arrogance.

When a woman complains aggressively about service or food preparation, it is treated differently than when a man initiates the same kind of exchange. If the woman is unescorted, the Egyptians display little patience. Her complaints are largely ignored.

The head waiter of the hotel restaurant where we stayed revealed that black American females offer the Egyptians their most trying moments.

Not used to having women push their weight around or be as assertive as many men, the Egyptians find it difficult to hide their emotions particularly when it comes to a woman, particularly a non-European woman, telling a man what to do. It is more unexpected and hence less appreciated.

Waiters routinely approach the men to pay for the bar tabs and dinner bills — even if the female makes it clear that she is responsible for the bill. She is politely ignored. If she is persistent, the waiter walks away.

How dare she try to be equal.

Egyptian men are not used to seeing women walk alone — particularly at night. If they are devout Muslims, their sexual and social behavior is greatly regulated. A woman not of their culture is seen as not as risky or troublesome. They are perceived as sexually loose.

In the evening, Moslem women generally walk in pairs. The only females who walk alone at night and wear Western clothes are tourists and prostitutes. American women walking alone are considered to be easy prey for an aroused male. Why else would they walk when they do and dress as they do?

The modern, freer more independent females resent it, yet often refuse to alter their behavior to avoid being prey to unwelcome advances. Tight fitting revealed clothing truly stops traffic and wearing such clothing is taken as an invitation.

But presumed loose morals aren't the only message clothing can send in this exotic but, in many ways, conservative land.

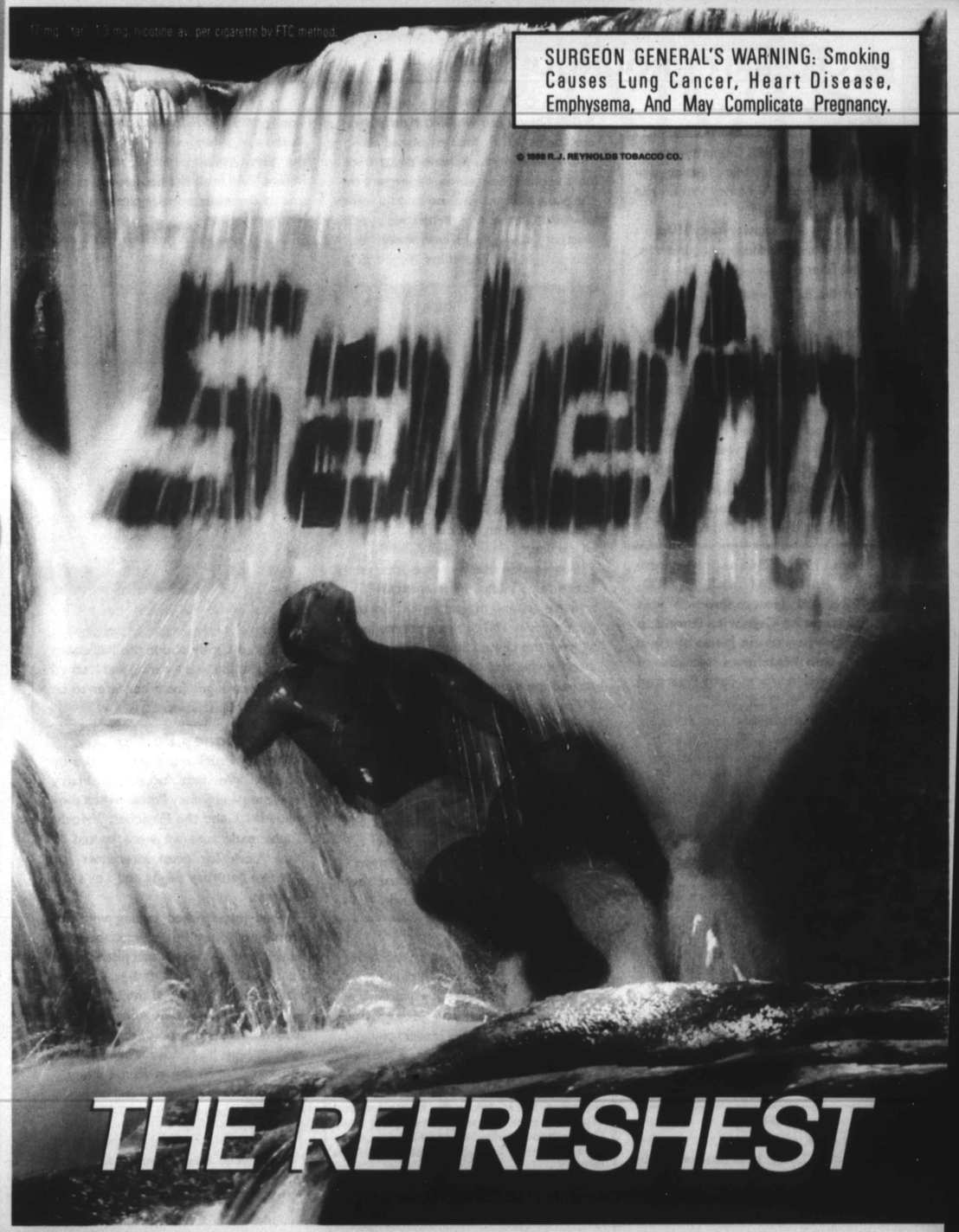
We traveled by bus to one of the hundreds of the buried, now revealed, temples of southern Egypt. The travelers were anxious to buy native Egyptian wares.

The long bright and beautifully colored gowns called galabias worn by many Egyptians were extremely appealing to most of the travelers — particularly by the men. On this particular day two male travelers purchased a pair, quickly changed into them, and wore them proudly for all to see.

The Egyptian guides began laughing uncontrollably and asked why there were so many gay men on the trip. You see the men had purchased gowns worn only by single females. Men rarely wear anything other than white. Married females generally wear black.

Travel to Egypt can be at times difficult for the person used to toilet paper, chlorinated water, and super markets. It can be even more difficult when one assumes it's just like home — only in a different language.

It's not.

African Americans? Not quite. Ugly Americans? Perhaps not intentionally.

**Mr. Murphy who has traveled extensively in North Africa, organizes Egyptian tours and has recently returned from a two week educational journey to Egypt sponsored by the Assocaition for the Study of Classical African Civilization, WEAA Radio, National Public Radio and the Afro-American Newspapers.**