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POWER OF THE PRESS

By CHARLES V. STANTON

C. C. Chapman, editor of the *Oregon Voter* does not agree with our pre-election recommendation concerning the Boys Camp bill and delivers a mild slap on the wrist in a recent issue of his magazine as follows:

Influence of the press was strikingly demonstrated by the editorial support given to the Boys Camp bill in the *Roseburg News-Review* by Editor Stanton, an enthusiast over the notable record made by CCC camps. Stanton let his enthusiasm blind him to the faults of the state measure, so it carried Douglas County two to one. Yes, if that vote had been reversed, as it was in some other counties where newspapers put out more thorough analysis of the measure itself, the bill would not have been carried in the state and a sad mistake could have been avoided. Prestige, such as that which Editor Stanton and his paper have earned through the years, carries responsibilities with it. Enthusiasm, unless corrected by accurate information, is too likely to misdirect.

We have no apologies to make for our recommendation on the Boys Camp bill. Editor Chapman, who vigorously and ably opposed the measure, is entitled to his right to criticize and we are glad to aid him in speaking his mind freely to our readers. The thing we are interested in is Editor Chapman's mention of the "influence of the press."

We were trained in newspaper work in the days when the press frequently was referred to as the "Moulder of Public Opinion." We're still looking for some evidence that the press, through editorial columns, has any pronounced effect upon the thinking of people as a whole. In fact, a few months ago we participated in an editorial roundtable discussion at a meeting attended by some of the state's foremost editors where the topic, half seriously and half facetiously proposed, was: "Why Are Editors Always Wrong?"

Why did Oregon voters pass the old-age pension bill, unanimously opposed by Oregon newspapers, and at the same time reject the transfer of funds from income tax surplus to operating deficit, a proposal unanimously endorsed by newspapers?

The majority of this country's newspapers fought the New Deal and Brain Trust experiments from the start of that new ideology in government, yet the New Deal still is in the saddle. President Truman won the recent presidential election although the nation's press, including many of the leading Democratic journals, largely supported Dewey.

Why are editors always wrong? The discussion of that question at our roundtable led to no conclusive answers, but we believe that the reason evidence of editorial influence is so generally negative is found in the fact that editors, for the most part, are less inclined to be extremists than is population as a whole. Editors are aware—keenly aware—of their responsibility to provide information; not information fitting their beliefs alone, but information on both sides of any controversial matter. They normally are aware of trends in thinking. They also are aware that their words may carry some weight. Consequently, the very responsibility they bear tends to make them cautious—less extreme perhaps than their personal beliefs and opinions might warrant.

We believe the press has more influence than is in evidence. It is our opinion that the press acts as a brake on trends to extremes; that if it were not for cautionary admonition from the press our political pendulum would be much more extremely agitated.

We hear widespread criticism of the press from critics who denounce it as the tool of special interests. Yet that criticism is very obviously refuted in any analysis of the press.

With but few exceptions, newspapers endeavor to give information on both sides of any issue regardless of editorial opinions. Editors are not always in agreement among themselves. Prior to the recent election, we scanned exchanges very carefully for editorial opinion on the various candidates and measures. We found few of them in complete agreement. And the only two measures on which nearly all were in accord went exactly opposite to editorial recommendation. In the face of that record who can claim a "subsidized press" or profound influence?

We only wish we could believe we have as much influence as Editor Chapman so kindly ascribes to us.

Higher Postal Rates To Be Asked of Congress

WASHINGTON, Dec. 8.—(AP)—

Postmaster Donaldson announced he will ask the new Congress to boost rates on all mail except first class.

Donaldson told newsmen that higher rates "will have to come on all low revenue-producing mail."

He said increases will be asked for second class mail, newspapers and magazines; third class, circulars and advertising; fourth class, parcel post; and special services, such as money orders.

Donaldson told reporters the Post Office department will have an all-time record deficit of \$550,000,000 at the close of this fiscal year next June 30.

Money Saved for Burial Costs Goes Out Window

PHILADELPHIA, Dec. 8.—(AP)—

For 25 years Morris Shub and his wife, Marsha, saved toward their eventual burial expenses.

When Morris became ill last Wednesday, they had \$2,000 tucked away in the folds of a blanket

which Mrs. Shub had stored in a chest.

Morris complained of a chill and his wife went to the chest to get him another blanket. Before placing it on his bed, she shook the blanket out of the window to rid it of camphor flakes.

On Thursday Morris was taken to a hospital and Mrs. Shub decided she would have to use some of their savings for the hospital expenses. She looked in the chest but the money was gone—apparently, she said, when she shook that blanket out of the window. Morris died Sunday.

Supplement for Panama Canal to be Surveyed

HALBOA, Canal Zone, Dec. 8.—(AP)—A small group of engineers started Monday to survey a proposed inter-ocean canal through Northern Colombia to supplement the Panama Canal.

The territory under study for a new sea-level waterway is known as the Atrato-Truando route. It is roughly 200 miles southeast of the Panama Canal and would connect the gulf of Uraba on the Atlantic with Humboldt Bay on the Pacific.

OUT OUR WAY

By J. R. Williams



When the time came to write a Scrap for Pearl Harbor Day, so many thoughts welled up in my heart as I thought about that day in 1941—up until midlife I was still tossing crumpled up Scraps into the fire. (But the News-Review has a few for "any day"—just in case.)

But I go right on thinking about that day. Not about the look in EJ's eyes as he came from a grocery where we had stopped on the way home from a drive through the harbor, and said in a queer, choked voice that shook with anger and shock: "The Japs attacked Pearl Harbor." Not about the way I took a firmer grip on that mental life-belt which every mother uses in times when Life's seas seem stormy—prayer, with work! Not about the three weeks in which we waited for some word about our Ernest who was in Pearl Harbor that day. Nor about our other lad, also. Seventeen—still in the Naval Station in San Diego... no, I think about today. This day—can it possibly be seven years later?—when factors for Peace and War are so delicately balanced in the scales of international relations that only by the greatest dependence upon Divine guidance can our leaders entrusted with the responsibility of this

task find the way. Surely, surely, we can find the way to work things out this time without War? Let us be thankful for the United Nations idea, and not be so quick to speak disappointedly of its early efforts! Think how many centuries it has taken this world, this company of nations, to get around to the try-out of such a plan! Shall we complain if it has to progress slowly by trial and error, even as we individually so often do in our small affairs? Rather let us hold up its hands by our prayerful support, our active encouragement, our confidence.

A young sailor said to his mother, one day, when he had made a long trip home that would give him just one hour there before his leaving on the return trip:

"Mom, I was thinking..." there was the difference of the younger generation in his voice, a difference to cover deep feeling. "If a fellow gives his life for his country—oh, I expect to come back, Mom, don't go getting funny ideas about that—he's sort of well it's a little like laying down his life for his friend. A good kind of way to go—if one has to."

The fruitage of thousands of such sacrifices cannot be another war!

Editorial Comment

From The Oregon Press

THE CLOCK TICKS

(The Oregon Journal)

"By seeing how traffic victims die, you may learn how to live."

The arresting line which we have just quoted is contained in as graphic a presentation as Oregon people have ever seen. It is the Oregon, 1948, Traffic Annual published by the traffic safety division of Secretary of State Earl Newberry.

In charts and text are the proof of a statement made more than once on this page—traffic safety becomes important when it is personal, and usually after an accident.

As setting, let us repeat that motor accidents dropped to their all-time low during the war years. This was doubtless due to restrictions on speed which were, in over-all traffic movement, effective, although, with this admission, one is not going to forget the reckless, fender-smashing, race, morning and evening, to and from the shipyards.

After the war, accidents multiplied. In 1946 came "the all-time peak slaughter of 482 persons."

Then something happened. Last year the number of persons killed for each 100 million miles of travel dropped to the lowest point on record, although motorizing as fast as jet propulsion.

What makes people get hurt and some die, and smash their cars, on Oregon's highways and streets? We consult again the excellent traffic annual.

Collisions between cars cause two thirds of the injuries, one third of the deaths. But the chance of death is greatest when pedestrians tangle with cars.

And close by in destruction of life and of cars are the smash-ups that result from speed often coupled with disregard for the condition of the road.

Where is driving most dangerous, in the town or in the country?

This is surprising. There were 45,676 accidents in the cities to 17,914 in rural areas.

But there were 347 traffic deaths in rural areas to 92 in the cities (the figures are 1947).

We still think the younger drivers are the more dangerous because more reckless, despite figures which show that the greatest number of accidents are

credited to drivers between the ages of 30 and 39, and on their heels the drivers 19 to 24.

We're sure the difference is accounted for by the greater number of drivers in the older age brackets. And the traffic annual adds ominously:

"The accidents of teen-age drivers are more likely to be fatal than those of any other age group."

Drivers 55 to 59 "are least likely to be involved in a death crash." Fatalities among drivers more than 60 begin to climb again.

More men will say—in a variety of stinging and sarcastic ways—that women are the peril of the highways. But the official record shows, for the last year, that "women girls" found 40 per cent (4765) of the casualties but only 28 per cent (124) of the deaths. Men suffered 60 per cent (7124) of the casualties and 72 per cent (315) of the deaths.

Make safety personal. That's the final answer in Oregon where the inexorable clock ticks away an accident every 8 minutes, an injury every 46 minutes and a death every 20 hours.

Boys Follow Girls In Death From Gas Poison

VERNONIA, Ore., Dec. 8.—(AP)—

The "Lovers Lane" tragedy has claimed the lives of the two boy friends of a girl found dead in their arms early Sunday.

Robert J. Phillips, 21, Mayger, and Allen Jurvakainen, 22, Clatskanie, succumbed Monday night in a Portland hospital to carbon monoxide poisoning. They had never regained consciousness since removal from the fumes-filled coupe.

The girls, Bernadine King and Mary Lou Wolf, both 16, from Vernonia, were dead when the parked automobile was noticed by a funeral parlor worker. He had driven to the cemetery near where the two couples were parked.

State police said a piece of tire innertube had fallen through a hole in the rear compartment floor, catching on the exhaust pipe and diverting the fumes into the car.

German Girl In Male Disguise As Miner Is Jailed

KIEL, Germany.—(AP)—No German law forbids women from working in mines—but a girl who tried it in male disguise landed in jail for three months.

A poster of the German Ruhr Coal Mines Administration calling on the homeless German youth to come to work, gave her the idea. She decided to become a miner. The American and British-sponsored enlistment program provided for better living conditions—clothing, better and higher food rations, tobacco and liquor rations.

Ursula and her old ailing mother had not had any of this since they had fled from their hometown of Koenigsberg in East Prussia, now Kalliningrad in Soviet Russia. For two years they had lived in a slum-like refugee quarter in a small Schleswig-Holstein village. Coffee, cocoa, bacon and an adequate wage with which she could support her mother and provide medical treatment for her made her decide quickly, she told the judges.

She put on slacks, cut her hair, bandaged her breasts and enlisted at the labor office for the Ruhr coal mines as Peter Klenkles.

None of her "buddies" down in the pit recognized Peter as a member of the weaker sex. She worked four months, but fell ill and had to leave her job.

When she returned to her mother, the police got wind of "Peter" and summoned her to court, on charges of "document forgery and illegal name change."

A three-months' jail sentence was the lowest punishment the court could find for the offense.

Radiation Injury Fears Declared Unwarranted

SAN FRANCISCO, Dec. 8.—(AP)—People are developing unwarranted fears about the danger of radiation injury in an area that has been blasted by an atom bomb, Col. J. P. Cooney, an Army expert on the subject, asserted here.

Radiation remaining after an atomic bomb burst is "insignificant," Col. Cooney, asserted in a paper prepared for delivery to the Radiological Society of North America.

The only "significant" radiation, he said, lasts a small fraction of a second after the explosion and never extends more than 2,000 yards from the spot directed toward the blast.

It is unlikely that fission products or other material from an atom bomb could poison a city's water system, Col. Cooney stated. "All the evidence at hand at present indicates," he added, "that after passing through a modern filtration plant the water at the tap would be fit to drink."

George I. King of England for three years, could neither speak nor write the English language.

Japanese People Trying to Forget Pearl Harbor Day

TOKYO, Dec. 8.—(AP)—A bridge of years leads back to Pearl Harbor today—and the day the Japanese would like to forget.

Seven years ago crowds of Japanese stood in amazement on street corners while newspapers flashed news of the attack. (The attack on Pearl Harbor was on the Dec. 7 U. S. date, but Dec. 8 Tokyo time.)

Many Japanese were hysterically proud the "holy war" had come at last. Some were sad. Others resigned.

The rutted streets of Tokyo were crowded again today. The people had a new surprise to discuss amid their talk of high living costs—the Supreme Court of the United States had decided to consider whether to hear appeals of their warlords.

Last night hundreds of Americans attended a special charity show to raise funds to buy milk for Japanese children.

Businessmen in patched overcoats today eagerly discussed the decision of the Far Eastern Commission in Washington to let them expand foreign trade—if they can produce the goods to sell.

There was no special recollection of Pearl Harbor Day—except in individual memory—even among American combat veterans still sprinkled in occupation forces. There are no monuments in Japan to that day—except for the war maidens on the streets.

Some Japanese are ashamed of that day and want to forget it. Others believe it was mistaken strategy and that an empire could have been won more cleverly.

All Japanese, looking at their ruined buildings and exaggerating their troubles, know it was a failure. In their code, failure is a cardinal sin. And they have done their best to forget this one.

Degrees to College Grads Set Record

NEW YORK.—(AP)—A record breaking number of degrees were earned by college graduates during the year 1947-48.

According to Robert C. Story, Educational Statistician, U. S. Office of Education, approximately 314,000 degrees were conferred during this period. This exceeds the previous record, set in 1933-34, by almost 100,000.

Of the group, 173,000 men and 95,000 women received the bachelor's degree and 46,000 advanced degrees.

On the bachelor's level most degrees were conferred in business and commerce; in engineering and in education. The leading fields of study on the master's level were education, engineering, and business and commerce in the order named.

The universities granting the largest numbers of degrees included: New York University, 7,590; University of Minnesota, 6,359; University of California, 6,307; University of Michigan, 5,801; University of Illinois, 5,797; University of Wisconsin, 4,731.

English was the subject in which the greatest number of institutions conferred bachelor's degrees. Other leading subjects were: History, chemistry, education, mathematics and biology.

DRIVER EXAMS DATED

A driver's license examiner will be on duty in Roseburg at the City Hall between the hours of 9 a.m. and 5 p.m. Thursday and Friday, Dec. 9 and 10.

The rhea, found only in South America, is a small ostrich. Its feathers have considerable market value, but the bird does not have the fine plumes of its larger relative.



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