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HOW TO BUILD A BAND

By CHARLES V. STANTON

This column made inquiry last June 30 as to why Roseburg could not support a larger municipal band. Lem Bitner, who has been directing the band for the last four years, has written us a letter answering our questions and dumping the problems into the laps of the people of Roseburg.

We believe Lem's letter deserves equal presentation with our questions, so we are using it today as a guest editorial.

Lem writes:
 In answer to your editorial regarding what has happened to the Roseburg Municipal band, as band leader for the last four years, I would like to try to explain what has happened and is happening to our band.

We have the musicians, the instruments and the music to have a wonderful band, one that could be invited to participate in any state function. But the vital spark that makes a band is missing. That little spark is in reality a big bonfire when properly used and it is nothing more or less than civic pride.

I am not a pessimist, nor do I avoid complaints and criticism when due, but I would like to state a few facts as I know them and have seen them since 1942.

When I first joined the band I received a cap and nice looking uniform that had so many moth holes in it I nearly had to wear black underwear to keep the holes from showing. Needless to say, none of the members wore uniforms except at concerts. Since that season the moths have finished their work. I doubt if you could find a whole uniform in the city.

A nice uniform that will last two or three years with care will cost about \$45. The band cannot afford to buy uniforms with the money allotted to it.

Since 1925 the highest band budget allowed was \$600 per year. (This was all I could find, so could possibly be mistaken a few dollars one way or the other.) For two years it was cut to \$365 or \$1 per day.

In the last three years we have been paying members of the band \$1 per rehearsal and \$1 per concert during the concert season, which ordinarily runs eight or nine weeks through the summer months.

A twenty-five piece band, paid \$1 each for one rehearsal and one concert per week, costs \$50 per week and \$200 per month, or four times the amount of money allotted us each month. Last year we played nine concerts and our band had enough members to cost us \$759 or \$159 more than a year's allotment.

Many times we played some really good concerts in Library park and never had more than 75 in the audience. Lack of civic pride?

The firemen and the police—all of them good fellows—go out of town for music for their dances, thereby sending out of town several hundreds of dollars that could have been better spent here. We have just as good musicians here, but there isn't enough of that kind of playing to warrant the expense of organizing and maintaining an orchestra. The high schools, who have some darned good musicians in their bands, send out of town for music for their dances. All of these things reflect lack of civic pride in what we have right here on our own doorstep.

Surely we have in this city twenty or more businesses each willing to hire a musician, hold a job for him, allot his working hours so he can attend rehearsals and concerts and the few civic affairs that the city would like to have a band play for.

We would like to have a marching band, but when there is only about ten or twelve, you have to keep them close together on a truck or they wouldn't sound as good as they do.

Our band is composed of about ten steady, dependable men who meet and play for the pleasure of playing and, depending on the time, are ready to play anytime for money, marbles or chalk. During the summer we pick up a few high school musicians, and some of the boys returning from college. Without these boys we would not be able to put on concerts, other than circus style ballyhoo.

Give me 20 jobs at livable wages and I'll fill them with the type of musicians who can make a band and, at the same time, hold down their jobs as well as anyone else.

To have a good band—one that will attract musicians as well as interest—I feel that we should do three things, and the present band will help in any capacity it can:

1—Appropriate money or provide some way to buy good uniforms.

2—Supply enough jobs at livable wage to entice good band members here.

3—Show enough civic pride to turn out when our band is playing a concert.

Right now I would like to thank our chief of police for the right of way on Rose street for our concerts and the park department for cleaning our band shell, fixing benches and cutting the grass.

LEM BITNER, Conductor.

Local News

Visitor Here — Mrs. Fay Simmons of Monterey Park, Calif., is in Roseburg visiting her son and daughter-in-law, Mr. and Mrs. Harry Oliver.

Return Home — Mrs. Joan Filottown of La Grange has returned home following a short visit with Judge and Mrs. Carl E. Whitehead of Roseburg.

From New York — Mr. and Mrs. M. McErmott have returned to their home in Roseburg following a week's vacation at Lake Tahoe, Calif.

Berries Home — Mr. and Mrs. Owen Berrie of Roseburg have returned to their home from a combined business and vacation trip to Winchester Bay and other coast points.

Fulton Lewis Jr. WASHINGTON REPORT

(Copyright, 1951, King Features Syndicate, Inc.)

WASHINGTON — Every time a congressman tries to shove a million dollars or so off an appropriation bill, pressure and insults from big spending advocates leave him feeling like a drunken father caught with his hand in junior's piggy bank.

We've gone beyond the point of trying to figure out why a \$5,400-a-year bureaucrat gets a thrill out of spending \$200,000,000 more this year than the year before. What is disturbing, however, is to find the virus infecting newspapers, especially editorial writers and cartoonists.

In Washington recently the Evening Star made a big joke out of the fact that Senator Paul Douglas of Illinois, and Senator Homer Ferguson of Michigan, were trying to knock off a few millions from the record \$71 billion budget. For the life of me I can't work up a laugh over anybody trying to save us taxpayers that much money.

What is so funny about saving \$1,000,000? That's a whole lot more than most of us will ever see in our lifetime. Let alone save. Nowadays, in fact, if we can save a few bucks to buy bread and butter in our old age we'll be lucky. And if you think I'm stretching a point, wait until they start collecting the new \$7,000,000,000 tax bill that is on the way.

Practically everybody in the U. S. must be convinced by this time that big government is here to stay, whether we like it or not. But how big shall we let it grow? That seems to be worrying a lot of sensible citizens, including members of 21 state legislatures. These 21 legislative bodies have passed resolutions calling for a limit on federal taxing power of 25 percent of personal and corporate income. That would shakele the growth of big government in Washington, but good.

The current defense emergency is soaking up a lot of dollars; so long as it is spent wisely few of us will complain. The tragedy is, however, that instead of curtailing their demands the normal peacetime agencies are continually asking for more cash.

Let's see if this makes sense to you. Since World War II the federal security agency budget request has increased 132 percent; interior department 123 percent; housing and home finance agencies, 150 percent; general services administration, 185 percent; TVA, 98 percent, NLRB, 96 percent. Some wartime agencies have been liquidated; several including the Veterans administration are spending less today than during the war. But not the old line bureaucrats, who are wallowing in a quagmire of government tax collection.

In fiscal 1947, for instance, the FSA spent \$928,977,000. For fiscal 1952 it is asking for \$2,154,483,001. Oscar Ewing, administrator of the FSA, might consider it had taste to ask what we are getting for that kind of money, but I think it is a legitimate question. What does the FSA do for you? What does it do for any neighbor you know? Do you know of any poll or election in which the American people have demanded a 123 percent increase in size for the FSA? I don't.

Representative John Phillips, Republican of California, recently balked at voting for the \$7,000,000,000 increase in taxes. One of the reasons is that the congressman doesn't see much sense in continually appropriating more money just to make a roster full of federal agencies bigger than they are. He wants to choke off the cash at the source and let the bureaucrats

tale I have about driving to Mexico City — the weird and rugged roads, the vast distances between stopping places, the bandits that will "git you if yo' don't watch out." The absence of garages, and so on.

Les just laughs, and points to the 2½ comfortable days it took them to get to El Paso. You won't find a motel every hundred yards, of course, he says. But, especially in the bigger towns, there are plenty of accommodations.

"In Chihuahua, for instance, a suite for the five of them in a very nice hotel cost \$6.

One common tale he does confirm — the one about the Mexico City drivers. They're fantastic, he says. The way they can hop lanes on a six-lane highway and still stay alive is something to see, he reports.

Here comes the very nicest part of it: Throughout Mexico (he travels widely as a part of his job) Americans are liked and respected. It wasn't always that way, you know. We've had some nasty spots with our neighbor across the Rio Grande. If you've read your history carefully and tolerantly, you'll have to admit that we deliberately provoked the Mexican war as a war of conquest — not only it with a lot of booty — not only Texas, but California, Arizona, New Mexico, Nevada, Utah, and quite a chunk of Colorado. We've been smug. We've called the Mexicans "treasurers." And so on through a long list of unfriendly actions.

But reports, all that is being forgotten and relations between Americans and the people of Mexico are getting onto a basis of friendliness and mutual respect. That's certainly something that we can hail as progress.

How to get there? Well, Mr. and Mrs. Stebbins and their three children drove from Mexico City to El Paso in two and a half comfortable days. The road is paved all the way and is in fine condition.

You've probably heard the same

Panic Potentialities Seen In Display Crowd

ROSEBURG — I attended your fireworks display July 4 and saw a grand display and also something else perhaps others did not notice.

First I climbed up near the top under the roof. Those up there did not see the display very well. Some of it we did not see at all—the explosions and bursts of various kinds which are most beautiful high above the ground. We did not see the airplane stunts at all, only lead it above the roof.

I have never seen such a crowd at a similar July 4 celebration, nor such a awful congestion, both in the stand and the parking area. I have never in my lifetime anywhere observed such an ideal setting for a panic or stampede with all its tragic consequences than that I saw Wednesday night.

There was such a crowd that it was difficult to move about when people were orderly. It took us 30 minutes to get to our car. Then we sat in the car 15 minutes before we could get in line. Then, by the clock, we were 11 minutes in making the Melrose highway, a distance of one and one-half miles.

No panic or stampede may ever occur. But what if one did occur?

Heppner, Oregon, did not figure on being washed away by a flood in a matter of minutes. But the flood did come without warning. Here in your grandstand it would not take much to cause panic. A fire, a terrific wind, or lightning bolt, or even if some thoughtless person should yell "fire," or start an undue excitement below or outside the grandstand. Many things can start a stampede in a building like that. There is hardly any way of rapid exit. As I saw it, it would be a horrible jam at best. No imagination is needed to picture the consequent result of a stampede under such conditions. I shudder at the thought of it.

Sure there may never in a lifetime be anything to start a panic at the place, but the conditions are only too favorable. The crowd in the stands would be helpless. If we could only move at a snail's pace under normal and sane conditions at best, what would it be like during panic? Certainly it cannot be dismissed as to consider the matter.

Next year, if I desire to see anything at the fairgrounds, I will see it from outside the grandstand.

I have attended the St. Paul, Ore., rodeo, July 4, several times, and while the crowd was as large as the one here, there seemed more room to get about quickly and we simply got in our car and was on our way in 10 minutes.

We enjoyed the show you had. It was well worth the coming to see.

BEN FRAMES
 Elgarose Rd.
 Roseburg, Ore.

STRIKE GRIPS GREECE
 ATHENS, Greece — (AP)—The strike of 100,000 Greek civil servants went into its sixth day today with no signs of an early settlement. The strikers are demanding a 30 percent wage hike to meet inflated living costs.

The strike has thrown state machinery out of gear and paralyzed the country's economic life.

MENDING BASKET

Scraps From the Vahnett Martin P.O. Box 874 Drain, Or.

The new heading on this column was a nice surprise when I opened Tuesday's News-Review. The Drain chamber of commerce shouldn't mind a little extra publicity for Drain?

It doesn't seem possible that The Mending Basket begins its fourth year here in Oregon on July 13. After we had been in Douglas county a while it dawned on us that we knew very little about what was going on in our own county, so we subscribed to the News-Review because it was published in Douglas county. Then the idea occurred to me to hunt up some old clippings and send them to the News-Review editor with a query about using the column. (When I dropped it I was convinced I was "never going to write anything any more"—but Oregon and life here in the woods changed all that.)

Well, when Mr. Stanton directed me to begin sending copy we had company from Texas. But company or no, I started pecking out copy. Then one day J. W. (he is E.J.'s brother, with the same notion about using only his initials) brought in the mail, and discovered his sister-in-law's picture on the front page, with the nice introduction to the readers of the News-Review. Well, a good time was had by all, even if we had burned pie as a result.

The first word from a reader was from another Martin, Mrs. Mary Martin of Roseburg who said she liked the allusions to the Bible; had a radio program Good News; and closed with: "May God bless you and inspire you as you continue. . . ." I kept that card. Other letters came, and how much I have appreciated them all.

After all, a column is a two-way affair. What would it amount to

without friendly suggestions, encouragement and inspiration from its readers! (Perhaps I should say "thank you" more often than I do. You can't hear a silent thank you, no matter how often I think it!)

I appreciate your tolerance of such things as maverick pronouns. I know your agile mind can rope the right pronoun to the right antecedent, even if, taken as grammar dictates, the literal linking of some of my "he's" might change the number of legs from two to four, or vice versa. But I warn you, you can expect worse the next few weeks. Moving day is ahead of me. If you can't figure out what I mean, just know I'm either packing, unpacking—or just going around in circles.

PRESTON Idaho — (AP)—Two-year-old Coleen Cherrington fell into an irrigation stream near her home here. In her arms she held a 23-inch long rubber doll.

A neighbor found the child 80 feet down stream, still clutching the doll. He said the girl likely would have drowned if she had not had the doll. Its buoyancy kept the child afloat.

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