

Laws Add 'Teeth' To Traffic Safety

Many people were unhappy with the showing of the 1963 session of the state legislature, but one group feels it could have asked for little more.

It is the Oregon Traffic Safety Commission. The legislature approved the vehicle equipment and driver license compacts which allows exchange of out-of-state traffic conviction reports between states and allows greater uniformity in state laws regulating vehicle equipment.

In addition the legislature approved a measure to extend police authority in arresting drunken drivers and other major traffic offenders on basis of more reasonable grounds. It increased state aid for driver education. It allowed the state to require seat belts in front seats of new motor vehicles beginning in November 1964. And it stiffened the penalties for those who attempt to flee a police officer.

Of course the commission didn't get all it asked. It failed to gain approval on the proposed "implied consent" which would make it possible to give chemical tests to all drivers arrested for drunken driving.

The legislature also tabled a maximum speed law.

These approved and proposed restrictions may seem to indicate the state is trying to make it tough on the motorist.

Of course, that isn't the idea at all. The continual harping from press, radio, television and many safety councils to be careful on the highways doesn't appear to be cutting accidents appreciably.

Example: This May was the worst on record for traffic deaths in Oregon. Fifty-one lives were lost to top the previous record of 44 in May 1948. At the end of May, Oregon's death toll was running 24 per cent higher than 1962.

Example: During the last two years,

motor vehicle accidents injured almost five million people in the United States each year.

Example: Douglas County, which had reason to be proud of its traffic death total with only two fatalities through the middle of May, suddenly lost its magic touch. In less than a month and a half, eight more have died on the county's highways.

These grisly statistics indicate strongly that pleas for motorists to drive carefully needed to be supplemented with something stronger. The legislature recognized that need.

Probably one of the biggest reasons more legislation has not come sooner is that both legislators and the public have been wary that police authority might be abused. They apparently now have confidence that the officers now patrolling the state's highways and roads are primarily interested in protecting the public against traffic offenders.

The Oregon Traffic Speaker, published monthly by the Traffic Safety Division of the Department of Motor Vehicles, notes particularly the new law which allows arrest on "probable cause" as signifying law enforcement "is coming of age in Oregon."

Despite the new laws, however, the chief "governor" on traffic slaughter and mayhem will rest with the driver himself. That it was against the law to cause an accident is of little value to persons hurt or killed in it.

This time of the year is when caution and "defensive driving" are more needed than ever. More cars are on the highways, and the accident toll annually rises with that increase. Last year, 30 per cent of the state's traffic death toll occurred during June, July and August.

"The Last One We Brought Into the House Had Long Whiskers!"



The Editor's Corner  
By Charles V. Stanton

Return Of Crayfish Bodes Well For Salmon Recovery

A Fact Sheet from Oregon State University, reporting cooperative extension work in agriculture and home economics, contains a very interesting article entitled "Catching and Cooking Crayfish."

Most of us yokels more often call them "crawfish." But who'd expect a university to use such a common term? They used to be most abundant in our Umpqua River system. But, when fish population dropped, the population of crayfish was most seriously affected. They now are returning, which gives reason to believe that the North Fork, at least, is returning to a former degree of greatness as a fishing stream. We have hopes for the South Fork, if we ever can get some water back in the summer time.

In former years our Umpqua River and its tributaries had an abundant run of salmon. These salmon spawned and died. Their carcasses were to be found throughout the whole system. Crayfish fed on the disintegrating carcasses. Then, in turn, they became food for steelhead and cutthroat trout.

When we stopped the migration of salmon, as was done at Rock Creek in the North Fork for many years by the Fish Commission, and ruined salmon migration in the South Umpqua by abuse of water, crayfish suffered an epidemic and almost disappeared. More recently, however, the number has been increasing quite rapidly.

The bulletin tells how to catch crayfish. It is suggested that the easiest way is through use of arm-pit waders and a long-handled net. More rugged individuals will use their hands, catching them by a quick grab behind the claws. If the fisherman misses, he gets pinched for his failure.

Personally I would deviate somewhat from this recipe. I'll admit that all those spices probably would disguise the mess so it would be palatable. But I'd double the recipe for Burgundy. Save it until last. At the cold water stage throw the whole thing in the garbage can and drink the Burgundy.

Death Penalty Act In N.Y. Is Flawed

By ROBERT C. RUARK

There are two serious flaws in the abandonment of the mandatory death penalty for New York, its new particulars to be invoked on July 1.

Gov. Rockefeller recently signed the bill, which permits a death penalty only if a second-stage, or reviewing jury, recommends execution. Otherwise the directed penalty for first-degree murder or kidnapping is an automatic life sentence unless the second-stage jury rises up and clamors for blood.

The other important change of time-old crime-and-punishment is the new law permitting the court to accept a guilty plea from first-degree murderers or kidnapers, also with an automatic life sentence. Formerly, and until July 1, any capital-charged prisoner was mandatorily directed by the court for jury trial.

The burden of punishment then rested squarely on the law, as represented by the judge, who was bound by legal precedent to render sentence. The jury was discharged, and went home to a beer, aware of the fact that it had only offered an opinion of guilt.

Now, with a reviewing, second-stage jury, the whole burden has switched to the shoulders of simple decent law-abiding citizens, who did not ask to be called on jury duty in the first place. They had been carefully "quizzed" for prelude by both defense and prosecution; they had been directed by the bench to preserve an open mind, and weigh only evidence as produced in court. But now things are suddenly changed.

A life sentence is not forever. Nathan Leopold is out for some years now, and he made life PLUS one hundred years for co-killing Bobby Franks. History shows some alarming releases of long-termers, who emerge to kill and rape and rob again. With an ever-increasing softness toward lawbreakers, and the possibility of remodeling the laws to fit individual cases, sentencing a man to "life" is no guarantee he'll serve more than a portion of his time.

The prisoner has been adjudged guilty. His crime is proven. Now the jury is asked to become both judge and jurisdicator. Now the jury holds life in its hand. And unless that jury is composed entirely of a prejudiced group — which is generally unlikely, unless it's a racial rape-murder action in the South — that jury is not going to say: "Burn him." That jury is going to shrug its shoulders and duck the personal responsibility for whether some creep gets freed.

And there is some human vermin that deserves to be exterminated — the child rapist-killers, the cold kidnapers who kill the victim when the ransom arrangements fall through, the paid gunmen and the young thrill-killers. The man who kills in the act of armed robbery or burglary deserves no second chance.

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THE LIGHTER SIDE:  
Numerical Morass Engulfing Nation

By DICK WEST

WASHINGTON (UPI) — As a red-blooded, 100 per cent, multi-digit Arabic number, I tip my hat (75th) to Pross T. Cross, president of the Lathrop, Mo., telephone company.

According to press reports, Cross is resisting pressure from the state public service commission to convert the phones in Lathrop to the dial system. I'm with him all the way.

The telephone service maintained by Cross's company is the exact antithesis of the all-digit dialing system that the somewhat larger American Telephone & Telegraph Co. is forcing upon its subscribers.

In Lathrop, you don't have to use a number at all. You can just turn the handle, tell the operator who you're calling and she'll connect you. Wonderful!

Why hadn't someone thought of that before?

Shows The Way

Now that Cross has shown the way, let us hope that AT&T will abandon its program of discarding telephone exchange names and adopt the Lathrop system instead.

While they're at it, I'd like to see AT&T install a system like the one we used to have in my home town in Texas.

If you didn't get an answer, the operator would inform you that the party you were calling had gone to the store for a dozen eggs, or was out in the yard and couldn't hear the phone ringing.

I got quite a shock a few nights ago, however, when I tried to call my father. Ever since Hector was a pup, my father's phone number has been 38.

But on this occasion, when the Washington operator finally reached the operator in my home town, apparently making connection by way of Telstar II, the operator there said the number had been changed. She said my father's new number was 9285015.

From 38 to 9285015. What is the world coming to?

More Numbers

Well, for one thing, it's coming to "Zip Codes." Beginning July 1, Postmaster General J. Edward Day would like us all to start putting five-digit Zip Codes on the letters we mail. As far as I'm concerned, Day can go butt a stump.

I'm all in favor of improving the postal service, but I haven't got room in my head for another single number. The saturation point was reached a few months ago when my bank made me start putting 67-80-083 on my checks and deposit slips.

Last week, the savings institution that mother-hens my nest egg sent me a form to fill out so it could designate me as 458-05-8881. I haven't been able to face up to that either.

We need strong men like Pross Cross of Lathrop, Mo., to rescue us from the numerical morass into which we are sinking. Down with dialing!

Reader Opinions

Reforms Of Divorce Law Needed To Aid Marriage

To The Editor:

The News-Review, on June 18, published a fine editorial on the divorce problem. An interesting letter by Mr. Harold O. Canyon was published June 22. We should have more of the same. I am glad there now is an organization trying to bring some reform to our divorce laws.

It is in the divorce court that many of our social problems originate and fester. Much crime, delinquency and public welfare originate in the court room.

Divorce Unjust

From an economic standpoint divorce often is unjust to people not involved in divorce. The high cost of public assistance, aid to dependent children, foster home care, care for the aged are largely related to divorce. Why should children care for their aged parents when the parents neglected them and deprived them of a happy home life?

Many wives believe if they get a divorce they can get a job and with support money from the father of their children, they will get along better. More often it ends with the mother and children supported by public welfare assistance.

A friend of mine met a girl at a dance. Within two weeks they were married. The marriage lasted about 30 days. Soon the bills started to come; \$600 for a fur coat and other clothing charged to his account. The poor guy has had to pay the divorce costs and also alimony. There was no escape for him. He must pay or else go to jail. One alimony martyr has been in the Woodland, Calif. jail for several years.

Although men and women are equal in their personal dignity they are nevertheless different. "Equal" does not mean "identical." When women enter the divorce court they are still considered the "weaker sex" and the court gives them a more privileged position.

Preparation Small

People are more careful in selecting a house or an automobile than they are in selecting a marriage partner. It takes years of preparation to enter a profession, but people will enter marriage with but little preparation. Girls in their early teens and boys not old enough to vote will marry. We witness young mothers with two or three children, divorced and living on public aid, perhaps for many years. The taxpayer pays for this.

We need more than reform in our divorce laws. We need moral reform, education and preparation for the responsibilities of marriage. Otherwise marriage will be a failure. Divorce becomes a "track-et" that exploits the innocent party and the taxpayer.

Frank Lining  
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Thieves Make Direct Approach To Nullifying Petition Efforts

OLYMPIA, Wash. (UPI) — Police today were looking for two men — one tall and the other short — who were believed to be the thieves who stole 75 pounds of petitions which had been intended to nullify the state's new "tolerance policy" gambling law.

The petitions, which contained 82,955 names of persons who wanted the act to be submitted to the voters in a referendum, were stolen from a vault in the State Capitol Building.

"It was planned like a bank job," John Kenderesi, a State Patrol detective, said. "It was the work of professionals."

Gov. Albert D. Rosellini called the theft "an outrage."

State Elections Supt. Kenneth N. Gilbert said the petitions apparently were stolen Friday afternoon but the loss was not discovered until late Monday.

He said Mrs. Ethel Burkhardt of Tenino, a night janitor in the Capitol, apparently saw the thieves just after they had removed the petitions. But she did not realize the significance of what she had seen until Monday when she reported it, Gilbert said.

Gilbert said the men got away with every one of the petitions.



Dear Abby!  
All A Bad Dream!

By ABIGAIL VANBUREN

DEAR ABBY: I have an uncle who is absolutely nutty. He's not bad enough to be locked up, but he embarrasses me every time I see him. About a year ago he told me he dreamed I borrowed \$200 from him. We both laughed about it and I took it as a joke. Every time I see him now he asks me when I am going to pay something on that \$200 I owe him. He actually believes I owe him \$200. And I am NOT kidding.

PLEMENIK

DEAR PLEMIK: The next time he brings it up, tell him you DREAMED you paid it back.

DEAR ABBY: I've been married 40 years and have four married children. Eight years ago I took a job to keep busy and earn a little extra money. Every cent I have made has gone into our home. I work seven hours a day, five days a week, but I'm home every evening before my husband gets there. My housekeeping hasn't suffered and my meals are all well prepared. My husband told me that beginning August first, either I pay \$100 a month room and board or I can get out. What should I do?

BOSTONIAN

DEAR BOSTONIAN: If you've lived with this man for 40 years, you don't need me to tell you how to live with him. He obviously respects your working. So quit your job, let him support you and you won't have to worry about getting the gate.

DEAR ABBY: Several years ago, twelve to be exact, I arranged some flowers from my own garden in one of my prettiest vases and took it to my neighbor (her mother, who was living with her at the time, had suffered a stroke and was very ill). Well, the mother died that summer and my vase was never returned to me. I have seen it used in my neighbor's house many times. I'm sure she knows it's mine. Should I ask her for it? Or do you suppose she is under the impression that I gave her the vase along with the flowers?

MRS. A.

DEAR MRS. A.: Your neighbor probably assumes you gave her the vase along with the flowers. Unless the vase is an heirloom or has great sentimental value, pretend you gave it to her and forget it.

DEAR ABBY: "Arthur's Idiot" is not alone. I, too, have broken up with laughter at some very solemn moments. Once, at the funeral of a loved one, it suddenly struck me that the minister, who was reciting the eulogy looked like a frog. I exploded into laughter, and couldn't stop. Everyone looked at me with contempt and disgust. Believe me, Abby, my love and respect for the deceased were deep and my grief was very real, but I couldn't control this unfortunate fit of laughter. Many years later a doctor explained it to me, and I understood.

"FELLOW IDIOT"

For Abby's booklet, "How To Have A Lovely Wedding," send 50c to Abby, Box 3363, Beverly Hills, Calif.

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