

How'd They Do It?

The solution to the Case of the Nightly Prowler, as presented on the front page of Tuesday morning's Oregonian, was very satisfactory.

The dread nocturnal stroller who had caused so much excitement in a Portland suburban area turned out to be a harmless old gentleman. (We got the impression that he sipped a glass of sherry before his fireplace every night at bedtime.) He merely was following his many-year-long habit of an evening walk.

Trouble was, many of the neighbors — they were mostly veteran students—were new to the community. They hadn't learned of the old gentleman's harmless habit.

But—in solving this mystery, the Oregonian posed and left unsolved another case: The Case of the Fatigued Veteran.

Said the Oregonian in the last paragraph of the story: "Another cause for the excitement was bound to stem from the exaggerated reports. A veteran said to be suffering from strain of his duties, was found responsible for some of the difficulty, but his case was straightened out and the officers left, with everyone satisfied."

So they straightened out his case and left everyone satisfied. Now, how did the police accomplish this immediate and happy result?

Did the city offer the vet a pre-paid term's rest in a sanitarium? Did officers burn his books and convince him to be a plumber's helper? Could Dotty Do-Good have provided him with ponies to pass his exams with? Or perhaps local merchants came to his aid with free samples of Serutan, Dr. Mile's Nervine and Lydia Pinkham's remedy.

Somehow, though, none of the above solutions seems likely to produce immediate and enduring results, from what we've seen of study fatigue cases.

So please, Oregonian, you pillar of the Northwest, unravel this tangled web. The suspense, on top of our typewriter nerves and study fatigue, is getting us down.—B.H.

A Guest Editorial

Better Student Government

By Art Johnson
ASUO President-Elect

One of the most unique organizations that I know of is the Pacific Student Presidents Association. In serving the member schools it makes no resolutions of policy or opinion committing or binding them. The only requirements for membership are geographical. It is entirely student-run, without even the advice, except on request, of faculty personnel.

This organization is made up of the student body presidents of all the schools of higher education in the eleven western states plus British Columbia and Hawaii. The last conference held a week ago in Sun Valley, was attended by nearly sixty schools. The purpose is to educate, advise and acquaint the incoming student presidents so that they can serve their own school better and have increased cooperation between the schools.

This year's convention, which I attended, was typical. The host school, Idaho State College, took care of the administrative details such as securing the location, obtaining guest speakers, and providing entertainment. The discussion topics, selected by the student presidents, included student-faculty relations, school spirit, freshman orientation, school finances, student unions, athletics, inter-collegiate relations and more specific items such as NSA and WSSF. Yet enough time is reserved for informal activities for representatives to become well acquainted with each other. In fact, the most valuable material is often obtained in informal "bull sessions" which go on continually.

It is hard to weigh the value of an individual or a school gets from such conventions. Obviously it varies from year to year. But I believe it is a wise policy that the organization follows in keeping itself restricted. In contrast, the National Students Association attempts to do big things and to swing its weight and is suffering because of it. I hope that Oregon will continue to support PSPA and in return will have increasingly better student government.

Great Men--

Why Do They Kill Themselves

By Hal Boyle

NEW YORK—(AP)—More people take their own lives in a cold war than a hot war.

This truth of history is emphasized by the death of the nation's first secretary of defense — James Forrestal.

He is the third major statesman in the post-war world to kill himself. The others were John G. Winant, former ambassador to Britain, and Jan Masaryk of Czechoslovakia.

Forrestal . . . Winant . . . Masaryk . . . why did they do it?

It is always a ripple on the commonplace when men in high places destroy themselves.

Why did they kill themselves? All were well-to-do, respected, and seemingly had much to live for. They were three men with three different philosophies of life. They all traveled different roads, but the roads ended up at the same blank wall.

Forrestal was an investment banker and a realist. Masaryk was a cultured and cosmopolitan sophisticate. Winant was an

idealist.

But the realist, the sophisticate and the idealist all turned to suicide as the only way out of their problems.

In the cases of Winant and Forrestal their deaths were officially blamed on overwork. Masaryk is thought to have killed himself when he realized he and his country were prisoners of a foreign power. And some believe, of course, that Masaryk didn't go out his castle window under his own power. They think he was pushed.

Traditionally, statesmen and generals commit suicide for only one reason—to avoid disgrace or to escape punishment. This was as true in ancient Rome as it is in modern Germany and Japan.

In many countries the cornered leader has chosen self-destruction rather than submit to capture. He hopes in this way to stay a hero in his people's eyes. So Brutus impaled himself on his sword, Adolf Hitler shot himself, or is supposed to have, and Tojo put a bullet where he thought his heart was—but it wasn't. An American rope finished Tojo.

But Forrestal, Masaryk and Winant chose suicide in peacetime, after surviving the strains of war. None was in disgrace. None was hungry.

Then why?

The probable answer is unbearable personal tension, a feeling that life was no longer worth the struggle.

And it is an odd fact that the tension of everyday living is greater in peace than it is in war. Danger excites, tension destroys.

In a world at peace no one is trying to take your life. In wartime the enemy is. And the more he seeks your life the more you want to keep it—if only through pure stubbornness. The mere fact he is after it makes you put a higher value on it.

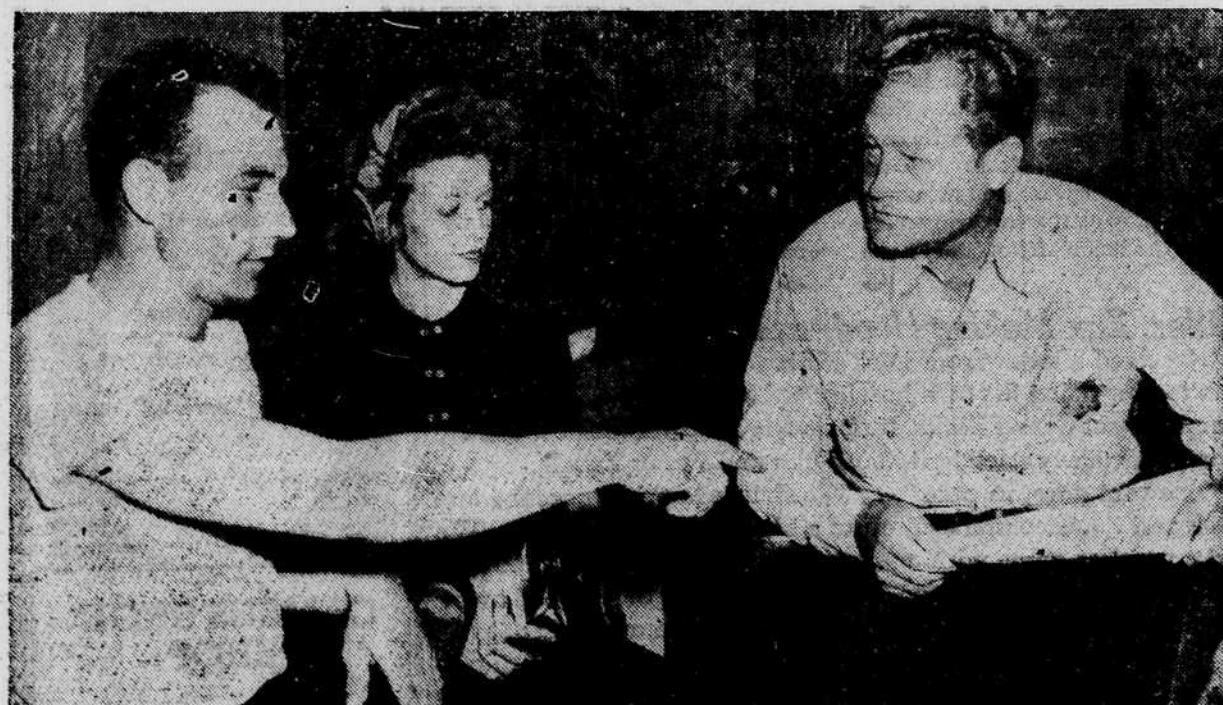
Another reason fewer people commit suicide in wartime is that life has a common aim, and people have more of a we-are-all-together feeling. They are also more unselfish.

Long ago Henry Thoreau wrote that most men "lead lives of quiet desperation." But as long as they know they are needed and wanted, they go on living, desperate or not.

Any goal or faith gives life a purpose. This is why deeply religious people are less likely to kill themselves than those less religious. And it perhaps explains why fewer women commit suicide than men. Women know their purpose in life better than men.



President Truman congratulates James W. Simons, right, of Newhall, Calif., after he received the American Forest Fire Foundation medal from Secretary of Agriculture Charles Brannan in Washington, D. C. Simons, a bulldozer operator for Department of Los Angeles County Forester, is credited with having halted a forest fire last Nov. 4 in California's Malibu mountains. (AP Wirephoto)



Tragic circumstances surrounding the fatal shooting of their infant daughter are told Las Vegas Police Chief Roy K. Parrish (right) by Cpl. Charlie Dean Allen (left), a military policeman and his wife Kuni Agnes Allen. The baby was struck in the forehead by a .45 caliber slub fired from a gun the father was holding in his hands. (AP Wirephoto)

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