

Wall of Silence

The sudden wall of silence that has gone up around an incident of several weeks ago at Beta Theta Pi fraternity is an example of the unfortunate faith of too many people in the protective powers of the words "no comment."

Now, we know whatever activity enlivened some recent evening in the vicinity of 1009 Patterson was something more than the usual post-bull session release of energy. It takes a little something more than a midnight football game or a bottle of beer to result in a police raid of a fraternity—unless the Betas were singled out for unfair treatment.

But to explain that social probation has been meted out for "unruly behavior from the use of alcohol . . . not representative of the fraternity system"—to let it go at that and leave the reader to draw his own conclusions is unwise. We can think of a number of types of behavior—sometimes unruly and sometimes even resulting from the use of alcohol—which are still representative of a fraternity system. And we imagine that readers can think of even more types of behavior—probably even worse types than we can think up.

"Details of such cases," we're informed, "do not help the fraternity system as a whole." So the reader is left to draw his own conclusions about the activity at the Beta house. And after surveying the list of reasons why officials feel he shouldn't know about this activity, he is pretty likely to draw some really wild conclusions—all of

which will help the fraternity system even less.

If the Betas' little celebration got out of hand to the extent that neighbors called police to stop the noise and bottle-throwing, then this is what should be said. We fail to see that admitting this will hurt the fraternity in correcting the situation as much as hiding the details and letting the readers make their own inferences.

All the reader can do now is guess what happened from what little has been made public and from rumor—which always contributes more to an imagination-loaded incident. And the cooperation in the silence by the Betas' neighbors—who supposedly called the police and now claim either "we heard nothing" or "no comment"—this sort of silence certainly helps the reader guess.

We don't believe that the Beta activity was of the orgy proportions which can easily be imagined from the "details" made available. But we—and the readers—have no way of getting an accurate picture of what went on because of the wall of silence erected jointly by the Eugene police, the administration officials, the Inter-fraternity Council and the Beta house neighborhood.

It is certainly not our intention to play up whatever did happen. We are as concerned about hurting the fraternity system—and the University community—as any of the wall builders. But we feel that the impetus to imagination in this "no comment" response is far more damaging than a two-paragraph description of the reason for Beta Theta Pi's social probation.

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No Cinch

The "Golden Bear" has lost a little of his gilt in recent years. It used to be, back when "Pappy" Waldorf was in his prime, that a California football team was a force to be reckoned with by every team in the country. But lately, and especially this year the Bears have found touchdowns harder to come by than twenty-dollar gold pieces.

At least, that's the picture we get from looking at the record books. California has won only one game this year, and that against USC, a team that hasn't beaten anybody. So why all the commotion? Why don't we just send out our second string Saturday afternoon and walk all over them? After all, isn't Oregon leading the conference? Isn't the Rose Bowl a dead-sure cinch?

In a word, No.

We can't send in the second string because on this Saturday California's first string is likely to be as good or better than Oregon's first string. Anybody who's watched an underdog like Oregon for any length of time should know that past performances don't mean anything on the football field. And, as Oregon State found out last week, the higher you ride the farther it is to the ground.

And this is just the first of five crucial games, of which Oregon must win at least four if Pasadena is going to figure in anybody's vacation travel plans. Starting tomorrow, anyone who misses any of the remaining games (excluding the USC game), or who doesn't scream his lungs out when he's there, just doesn't have a thing to complain about if (yes, it could happen) Oregon doesn't play any post-season games.

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Pete and His Boys?



State Politics Far Different 10 Years After Accident

By PAUL W. HARVEY Jr.

SALEM (AP)—Three top Oregon officials plunged to death 10 years ago next Sunday. It was the first of a series of events in the developing revolution in Oregon politics.

The three men—Gov. Earl Snell, Secretary of State Robert S. Farrell Jr. and Senate President Marshall Cornett—were on a hunting trip when their plane crashed in a Lake County forest Oct. 28, 1947.

All were Republicans with promising political careers.

At that time, Republicans were firmly in the saddle of state government. Today, the Democrats are running things, and almost all of the present state leaders were unheard of 10 years ago.

Ten years ago, the Republicans controlled the House, 58 to 2, but now the Democrats run it, 36 to 24. Then, the Republicans had a 25 to 5 margin in the Senate, while now it's a 15-15 tie.

When the fatal accident occurred, there were 300,000 Republicans and 280,000 Democrats in the state. Registration now is 451,000 Democrats and 413,000 Republicans.

Gov. Robert D. Holmes, the first Democrat elected governor since 1936, was a Republican 10 years ago. A radio station manager, he changed to a Democrat early in 1948 and was elected State Senator.

The way was paved for Holmes to run for the Senate by another death—that of Sen. Merle Chessman (R-Astoria) who owned the radio station of which Holmes was manager.

Secretary of State Mark Hatfield, a Republican, was studying at Stanford University for his master's degree. State Treasurer Sig Unander, also a Republican, was not yet in politics, being busy with management of his family's estate.

Senate President Boyd R. Overhulse (D, Madras) was rounding out 14 years of service as Jefferson County district attorney when the plane crash occurred.

And House Speaker Pat Dooley (D, Portland) was a student at Northwestern College of Law.

Walter J. Pearson (D, Portland) was, as he now is, a State Senator. However, he was to be elected state treasurer in 1948, and served four years. Now he's the Democratic leader in the Senate.

Sen. Warren Gill, Lebanon,

now the Republican leader in the upper house, was practicing law. He was elected to the Legislature as a state representative a year after Snell, Farrell and Cornett died.

A striking example of how the government has been overturned is the fact that a man who has served in only four legislative sessions is the dean of the House. This man with the longest legislative experience in the House is Rep. Robert A. Bennett (R) of Portland.

In recent years, the dean of the House had served in 10, 11 or 12 sessions.

In the Senate, where the turnover is less drastic, the dean is Sen. Howard C. Belton (R, Canby), who served in the Senate when the plane crash shook Oregon politics. He has served in 11 sessions.

Other members of the 1947 Senate included Sen. Douglas McKay (R, Salem), later to become the Secretary of the Interior in the Eisenhower cabinet. There was Sen. Paul Patterson (R, Hillsboro), who became governor when McKay resigned to go to Washington. Patterson later died in office.

And there was a young Democratic Senator from Albany, Orval Thompson. Now he's legal adviser to Gov. Holmes.

The Speaker of the House in 1947 was John Hall (R, Portland). He automatically became governor after the plane crash but was defeated in his bid for election to the office. He is not active in politics.

The deaths of those three popular political figures plunged the Capitol into gloom.

They were given a joint funeral in the House of Representatives, which was banked high with floral tributes.

Things have changed greatly since that day 10 years ago. New hands have taken over.

Our Contemporaries

The Rocky Mountain Collegian shows us how Shakespeare fits into college life:

Studying in the Library: "More light, you knaves; and turn the tables up, and quench the fire, the room is grown too hot."

Cramming at 3 a.m.: "How weary, flat, stale and unprofitable seems to be all the uses of the world."

Fountain pen leaks: "Out, damned spot! Out, I say."