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The Saga of the Special Edition



By WES SHERMAN

Perhaps it would be better not to dwell on the Special Edition. But the response has been so appreciative—so overwhelming—that we would be remiss not to acknowledge it. At the same time because of this unusual interest, we think that the public might want to enjoy a laugh or two with us in regard to our experiences in publishing The Special, as we came to call it through the throes of its production.

It seems like a year ago, although it was less than three weeks, when the low point came. Printer Joe Hartie, Arnold Raymond, our linotype operator and shop foreman, and the writer had worked all night to get the first section of the Welcome Edition ready to take to Woodburn for printing on a press that we expect to install here later this year.

The sun was shining brightly and the birds were chirping their early morning song when we wearily started to load our heavy "chases" (the forms that contain the type) on Arnold's 1-ton '47 Ford truck. Those not in the printing business may not know that these chases have no bottoms; the thousands of pieces of type and metal are merely locked in by pressure from quoins on the sides.

We used plywood under the chases to carry them out, but we ran out of plywood except for a piece of light quarter-inch. This was used as dubious support for a "double truck" (a form composed of two pages) and Arnold and the ed started out the door with it, just as we hit the sidewalk, the form buckled and the straining plywood bent way down with the weight. It looked for a moment as if The Special Edition might end right there in an inglorious heap on the sidewalk. Arnold, grunting under his end of the load, looked helplessly at me; I, panting under the weight of my side, looked helplessly back at him. Should we drop the whole thing right there in a heap on the sidewalk after a weary night, forget the Special Edition and go to bed?

We didn't. Somehow we managed to hunch it on the truck bed and numbly fitted the pieces back together in the chase. (After the edition was published our good new friend, Dr. A. D. McMurdo, was profuse in praise of the paper, "It was almost a miracle!" said he. Arnold and I thought it a miracle that we ever got those two pages on that truck when it looked as if we had a pile of pied type on our hands).

We can laugh about it now. This was the bottom in the production of The Special, but there were others nearly as bad. We went through the ceremonies of going to bed after this incident of going to bed after this incident, but only to get up in an hour to take off for Woodburn. Arnold's truck, virtues of which he extolled in proud terms, didn't seem to like the idea of this long run to Woodburn. By the time we reached Arlington on a repovingly hot day, the temperature needle was striving desperately to push past the pin that stops it at the extremity on the right, and great gurgling sounds came from the bowels of the cooling system. A flush job would cure all, we thought, and a service station man did his best. Ten miles later, though the truck was objecting strenuously again. Another service station man at Biggs exclaimed with triumph when he located the "trouble," a loose hose. It didn't sound right, but he bet the price of his work that our troubles were over, and we struck out once more.

From that time on, the trip to Portland was a succession of steaming emergency stops, but our 12 pages of Welcome were bouncing along merrily on the bed of the truck. By the time we reached Bandfield expressway, the '47 was raging. Oil on the motor was burning and filling the cab with smoke; the radiator fumed and frothed with the torment of Hades. Arnold grabbed his canteen, scurried across the freeway, vaulted a fence and appealed to a Good Neighbor working in his yard. Two trips of cool water quieted the truck until we made a service station on Union Avenue to regroup our forces.

In the process of the heating and hectic confusion of time in this Great State of Oregon, the writer missed a wedding about which he previously reported.

But finally we limped into Woodburn and started the press run. Expecting to spend part of the night in slumber, we rented a nice motel room and told the proprietor we would be in late. That was not true. We were in early—the next morning. Dawn blossomed over the valley before we drove past the milkmen making their rounds and headed for the motel.

We pulled back the covers of the fine beds of the Plaza Motel at Woodburn (a good place to stay), but we had scarcely warmed the beds until we arous-

ed at 8 and headed back east to put out the June 22 edition of the Gazette-Times. The man at Biggs was sympathetic when we stopped on our return trip but he didn't refund the price of the radiator job.

In Gene Stoller at Woodburn we found a real friend. He stayed up all night with us to help run the press and folder and never said a sarcastic word nor in hospitable phrase. At 4:30 a. m. he went back to relieve Arnold on the press because he was afraid the G-T printer would fall asleep despite his extended will power and topple into the automatic feeder of the No. 3 Miehle.

We vowed we would never ask Gene to extend his courtesy so much again, but on the second section, the following week-end, it was worse. We smoothed out our operation of loading the chases for Section 2, and Arnold had his radiator fixed once and for all, so the trip over had little of the previous week's horrors, although we were concerned because the mysterious noise in the motor might be a rod going out from the overheating the previous week.

Some 30 miles from Woodburn our fears seemed justified when a stop at a service station revealed that the oil didn't even show on the stick. Arnold arose to the occasion and put in 50 weight oil. This seemed to be the ticket and the truck performed like a champion from there on out. (I don't know if he put the oil in with a spoon or a paddle!).

Had it not been for the fact that some supply house sent us some short grain newsprint (short grain is the bane of some presses—it won't feed properly. Paper, oddly enough, has "grain" just as wood does), the Special night have been completed without further unpleasant incident. The automatic feeder of the Miehle functioned perfectly until it hit this short grain, then

it started to bunch up. Gene started to make corrections. He took a screwdriver to a delicate but indispensable part—a "tongue" that grabs the paper just before it goes around the cylinder. Alas! the tongue broke! The time: 2:30 a. m., daylight. The setting: a disarrayed newspaper plant in Woodburn. The characters: Three numb and miserable newspapermen. The plot: Tragedy! Was this again the inglorious end of a month's hard work?

The writer had fed many thousands of sheets of paper through the Miehle when it was at The Itemizer-Observer in Dallas. We proposed taking off the big Rube Goldberg contraption-type feeder and going at it by hand, but Gene thought he could make a part to work. We did both. We uncoupled the feeder, took off the connections and rolled it back. I started to hand-feed the press; Gene grabbed angle iron to make a new tongue.

Here we learned that Mr. Stoller is a near genius. About 1½ hours later he had a new tongue fashioned out of that piece of iron, and it looked as if it came right out of the Miehle parts catalog. About 4 a. m. we were operational again, and then came the wearying process of finishing the 4000 run, and folding the whole wad—"Baling hay" as we sometimes call it in the business.

Arnold and I again had rented the motel room. We had intended to be in it by midnight, but we chugged out of the Independent with our truckload of papers and type just as the Woodburn crew was coming to work. A man started out a motel window at us goggle-eyed as we came in with our load, each covered with printer's ink and grime, at 8 a. m., daylight. We took showers then rested a few minutes be-

fore going out for breakfast and heading home. We both felt guilty for musing up the beds for such a short time.

Driving home on the warm day was not an easy job. Neither of us could stay awake. Our salvation was little daughter Cathy Jo whom we picked up after a week's stay at her grandma's house. Her innocent running prattle helped keep our eyes open, and we traded off driving chores often to make it back.

Back at home, Joe had burned the midnight oil virtually every night for two weeks putting ads and getting The Special Edition together. He, too, became a stranger to his family during his month of June. But his good wife, together with Mrs. Sherman and our son Bill, played important parts on the Special Edition.

So we got it out as we told the Chamber of Commerce committee we would. Sometime during the process, I had remarked to Ed Coman, co-owner of the Independent, that after nearly 20 years work on weeklies, I was still enthused about the weekly newspaper business. After the first night's ordeal over there, he sidled up to me and murmured, "Isn't your enthusiasm waning just a little bit?"

He caught me at a bad moment. I didn't answer and don't know how I would have answered, had I been pressed. Now, after the edition has "gone to bed" there would be no equivocation. Our enthusiasm has not waned.

We knew that there were omissions in this paper. We wanted to say more about such things as the Morrow County Creamery and its colorful owners, Mr. and Mrs. Claude Cox; we had pictures of Herb Ekstrom and his champion Herefords; we wanted more on lodges of the county; more on its recreation; and a good story from Ralph Richards on

Soil Conservation was left out. We had nearly a page of pictures ready to go that we couldn't use—couldn't get in.

Early in the planning when Elmer Schmidt first talked to us about it, the initial idea was to have four or eight pages. We thought it might "snowball" as the people of the county caught the idea. We stopped at 22 pages and realize that there could have been much more.

Through this Special, we have learned that the people of Morrow county have a right to be proud. This is a happy land.

We sincerely thank the many who have been so profuse in their praise of this work, and we feel for any who may have been slighted by omissions or shortcomings.

Chamber Backing on Parks Timely

At a recent Heppner-Morrow County Chamber of Commerce meeting, it was agreed that this organization should do all in its power to promote development of parks in Morrow county. This was brought to the group's attention by Jim Farley of the Development Committee.

This action is timely and needed, and it is to be hoped that efforts are organized and developed. This might be extended by setting up a county parks commission as other counties have done with fruitful results. Marion county has made excellent progress towards a park system because of the diligent work of its parks commission.

Certain officials, such as County Judge Oscar Peterson, have been aware of the need and have been working individually, but a commission solely dedicated to development of parks might accomplish some additional results.

Although the State of Oregon has dozens of fine parks, Morrow county is not among the counties favored by them. The Boardman Oasis roadside on highway 30 is the only thing approaching a state park in this county.

The new state park at Hat Rock is finding favor from many seeking recreation and outings, but, located in Umatilla county, it is a long distance to go for Morrow residents, particularly those living in the southern part. Already it is overtaxed on warm days, looking like Umatilla county's Coney Island.

Cutsforth park, a beautiful place and enjoyed by the public because of the generosity and foresight of one family, provides a fine retreat for many Morrow residents. If state help could be obtained this could be developed even more and provide for ever-growing recreational and leisure needs.

There are many sites in the Blue Mountains to the south that could be developed as parks. The Bull Prairie Reservoir is now under way, but it is only the beginning of possibilities.

The Columbia river in the Boardman-Irrigon area should have some real sports. This, of course, must wait until the John Day dam is completed because the river frontage will be changed by waters backed from the dam.

It has been said that the state is not interested in developing areas not served by state highways. We do not know if this is true, but the chamber is looking into it. The organization is making an effort to encourage any state help.

Certainly if more people are coming to the county, they will be seeking recreation. It is something that needs prime consideration.

Breathing Room and Shapely Trees

On an outing up Willow Creek on a recent warm evening we found a wonderful spot. Grassy meadows were flanked by a variety of evergreen trees, and Willow Creek tinkled merrily down through the setting. A thoughtful camper had left a crude but efficient table, a small rock fireplace and even dug a pit for garbage.

We couldn't help but notice, however, how sharply the evergreens were—so full and well-balanced. We mused on this subject and remembered that last Christmas in the North Santiam country we had hunted a long time to find a shapely tree, one that had limbs well rounded.

Then it occurred that the reason is obvious. The trees are not so crowded here. They have room to grow and develop in their own full shapes.

The thought comes that this may also apply to humans. Perhaps those who grow up in more sparsely settled areas may have opportunity to develop more fully in their own natural way without being so influenced by the environment of dense populations.

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