

Horse sense

By

ERNEST V. JOHNER



• This is National Newspaper Week, an event not calculated to bring you out of your seat with whoops of joy unrefined. It is a time when newspapers can, without appearing immodest, blow their own horns. We are admonished to support the public's right to know what is going on in government and elsewhere; to remind you that a free press is the people's first line of defense against its Watergaters, real and potential; and that the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution states plainly that Congress shall make no laws abridging the freedom of the press.

• But Congress is always busy making laws that abridge the freedom of the press. So are state legislatures. So are city councils. The laws of libel abridge the freedom of the press, however needed they may be. The law that prevents newspapers from publishing accounts of juvenile crime is an abridgement of press freedom and a restriction on the public's right to know. A free press is restricted when by law it cannot accept want-ads for a boy to mow a lawn, a girl to dance in a chorus line, or a man to drive a taxi. By law the ad must state that a "person" is needed to mow the lawn, dance in the line, or drive a taxi. The free press is restricted when government bodies hold "executive sessions" from which the press is barred. Each year, in Congress and in 50 state legislatures, additional restrictions are piled on news media in spite of the First Amendment. For our own good, of course! Would one say that the federal law banning tobacco advertising on television is a restriction on the news media? Or that if Congress can ban advertising of one legal and legitimate business it cannot also extend the ban to cover other commodities?

• Fields for regulation of the press are legion. The legislative minds are forever finding new restrictions to place upon it. It is argued, and argued well, that legal controls on the press serve as a "protection to the press" as an institution. "The press," according to Dr. Frank Thayer, distinguished professor of journalism and member of the Illinois Bar, "needs the protection established through these controls in order to function as a private business for the public interest." I agree. But that is not the point here. The point here is that, regardless of the desirability of press controls, they do violate the letter and spirit of the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution. To believe that we have a constitutional guarantee of a free press, but knowing that we do not, is inconsistent and hypocritical.

• The nation is well aware of President Nixon's regard for the press. It has handled him poorly from his viewpoint. But it has handled him well as far as the American people are concerned. Witness Watergate, where Nixon loses but the public achieved its right to know. In retaliation I suspect, the law now is that newsmen must be forced to reveal their sources of information to grand juries and court judges, except in states that have adopted a "shield law" to protect newsmen. Such a law would make it near impossible to ever find out what is going on in the government. Which is precisely what government wants.

• There is another area where the federal government is bringing newspapers under control, and that is in the matter of postal regulations. Papers like the Gazette-Times depend upon the postal service for distribution of its product. The best way to control or abolish newspapers is to hit them in the pocketbook. Which is what is happening. Time Magazine was forced out of publication by increased postal rates. Newspapers have just been handed a rate increase of 125 per cent over a five-year period. On Jan. 6 there will be an additional 38.6 per cent increase. We have been promised more raises to come.

• So there is little to brag about this National Newspaper Week, from our own standpoint or from yours. Except we will continue to fight further inroads upon a newspaper's constitutional right to remain free. The public could help, and should, considering it has much more to lose from government control of the press than we do. We only lose our business; you lose your freedom.

• This is a good time to restate our policy concerning letters to the Mail Pouch. We want these letters. They can deal with any subject. But they should be held to 300 words (one and one-half typewritten pages). The editor reserves the right to edit these letters and to accept or reject them on the basis of good taste. Where there are a number of letters received on a single subject we will choose representative ones representing opposing views of the subject. This avoids repetition of the same ideas. It also conserves newsprint, which is in short supply. And, please sign all letters. If you have written a letter that has not been published, it is because of one or more of these reasons.

• We do pay attention to legitimate complaints from readers. For example, we have been criticized for printing the classified ads in small type. From now on they will appear in larger type. Readers also have asked that we use more "personal items," like who had dinner with whom last week. Fine. We want more of these items, and hope you will phone or write when you have news briefs of this nature.

• The Terror of Willow Creek has it all figured out. Nixon resigns and Agnew is automatically sworn in as the president. Agnew then names Nixon as his vice-president. Agnew is impeached, whereupon Nixon is automatically sworn in as president. Then Nixon appoints Agnew to fill the vacant vice-president post. Everybody has been vindicated. Everybody is home safe. The administration has yielded its pound of flesh. The national honor is restored. And I'm going out for a drink.

Nominees listed for co-op board

The Nominating Committee of the Columbia Basin Electric Cooperative met Sept. 27, and selected nominees for the Columbia Basin Board to appear on the ballot to be voted on at the annual meeting at Condon, Nov. 1.

The following nominations were made: City of Fossil, Herb Wright and Bob Boyles; Rural Zone 3, territory served east of Morrow - Gilliam County line and north of Willamette Meridian, Dick Krebs and Art Lindstrom; Rural Zone 4, territory served east of the Morrow - Gilliam

line, south of Willamette Meridian, north to Gilliam - Morrow County line, west of range line between range 24 east and 25 east, Elmer Palmer and Milt Morgan; Rural Zone at large, Entire system, Van Rietmann and Fritz Cutsforth.

In addition to nominations by the committee any 15 or more members may make nominations by their signatures and have this posted at least 15 days prior to the meeting at the Heppner office.



Welcome mat

The mail pouch

EDITOR:

I wonder if those who seek to put a road through the homes of those who happen to live on the side of the hill below the proposed dam really know what they want to do.

Do they realize that at one time the hillside was a sand pile fit only for child's play? I'm wondering if it would hold the heavy traffic and the logging trucks that would grind up and down it. Sure, it's a parking lot now but not a main highway. Have they considered that the people who live here are not people who move every year or two. They are people who have spent most of their adult life there and planned to spend their remaining days; that they paid for their land, they pay their taxes and they have put so much into improving their homes and grounds.

Do you know what it means to plant a small tree and live there to watch it grow tall and beautiful? If it were your home would you feel the pittance paid for it would be compensation enough?

I don't know how many homes are involved, but none I'll bet belongs to the Corps of Engineers, the planning commission or the newspaper.

MRS. N.B. GRIFFIN,
Beaverton, Ore.

EDITOR:

I wish to tell as many people as possible how I feel about the young people of this county.

In recent meetings in the county I have heard many parents and concerned citizens publicly and privately speaking out against the behavior and attitude of a few of the teen-agers in the area. I am afraid our concern for the teens and our awareness of the potential drug problem has caused an exaggerated fear and suspiciousness on the part of many. I confess I have misunderstood the comments of others and have been misunderstood about my genuine concern for young people.

I feel we have a very fine group of young people in the area. I am very impressed with their maturity, sensitivity and sense of responsibility as growing young adults and I feel they deserve to be commended. The teens need our love and support to fortify them as they face the difficult alternatives before them.

DAVIDE MITCHUM,
Heppner.

Drug education programs held

Carolyn Davis, Morrow County Juvenile Director, brought a timely educational experience to Heppner and Boardman by offering drug awareness programs in each community recently.

The programs were attended by concerned parents and future parents Dick Harp, criminal investigator of the Oregon State Police, Hermiston, brought a display of drugs and drug-using accessories with him and gave information concerning various drugs, their effects, and changing uses.

After Harp's presentation, a citizen panel continued discussion of this problem and its impact on Morrow County communities. On Oct. 5, Oregon's new law on the possession of one ounce of marijuana became effective. This law reduces the penalty for possession of one ounce from \$1,000 and one year in jail to just \$100.

Oregon has thus become one of the most lenient states in respect to marijuana use, and the results of the new law are being observed and studied by officials everywhere.

Guns are stolen

Kevoak Alexanian, Boardman, has reported the theft of several shotguns and rifles to the sheriff's department.

Stolen from his home were a 20-ga. single shot shotgun, one 20-ga. pump shotgun, one 22-caliber rifle with scope, a 7-mm Magnum with case, two

antique shotguns, a 12-ga. single shot and a 12-ga. pump gun made by J.C. Higgins.

Paul Proudfoot, Ione, has also reported the theft of a 30-30 rifle from his pickup parked along the road north of Ione, Oct. 3.

Where to write

Sen. Mark Hatfield, 463 Old Senate Office Bldg., Washington, D.C. 20510. D.C.

Sen. Robert Pack, 603, 6227 New Senate Office Bldg., Washington, D.C. 20510.

Rep. Al Ullman, 2410 Rayburn House Office Bldg., Washington, D.C. 20515.

Rep. Wendell Wyatt, 414 Cannon House Office Bldg., Washington, D.C. 20515.

EDITOR:

Regards to Willow Creek Dam, I never thought I would live long enough to see it go in, but I guess they are to start next spring.

It won't be much of a dam. It will go just above Terry Thompson's ranch house, and won't be as big as Penland Lake. It will not be for irrigation or for recreation; I would call it a frog pond. I don't think there are enough people in Heppner to pay to put in a frog pond.

I will go along with Terry Thompson. People in Heppner should look into it and see what they are getting into. You displace families that have put half of their lives in building a home, garden, yard, terrace, trees and a good lawn. Some people in Heppner don't think this amounts to much, and means nothing to lose a home. If the house could be moved, where would they live while they were moving it, and where would they relocate the house?

Bill Weatherford thinks losing a home doesn't amount to much to him. Him and the editor get together and gets a few shots of bourbon and blow off steam. What would they think if a man took a dozer and started to push their places of business over in the creek? They would yell so loud you would hear them for four miles, and raise more hell than the 8-hour law.

They make it sound so good, 385 men working by the end of three years. What kind of equipment are going to use to build this frog pond, a wheelbarrow or a hand shovel?

BEN COX,
Heppner.

EDITOR:

Please renew our subscription. We enjoy reading your paper.

MR. & MRS. FRANCIS REA,
Portland.

EDITOR:

Your column on swearing was most interesting; however, I thought you were in error on the origin of one of the words, as it had always been my impression that it came from the early custom of repairing pots by the tinker who then threw away the useless bit of clay he had used as a dam and thus came the "don't give a tinker's dam" later abbreviated still further.

Your assertion that swearing needs proper "orchestration" was interesting, but it seemed to me that using it in print against a faceless group or individual whose viewpoint differed from yours, was not very good orchestration. Now, if you wanted to set the might cymbals clashing and the drums rolling, use that term on a specific person downtown some morning! To avoid bloodshed, you could carry a list of literary greats who've used the words and pummel the guy to the ground with it.

Being a "fightin' country editor" must have its drawbacks, but you seem to have the spirit for it and the new life in the Gazette is much appreciated. The pictures, style, format, all make for interesting reading. However, at the risk of being hopelessly backwoods, I would really like a few more squibs that tell who had who to dinner, and who went to Pendleton to pick up who that is visiting for a week. It isn't earth shaking, but it is the stuff a community is made of, and though long away from it, I like to share in the everyday happenings of the people I see much too seldom.

RUTH McCABLE,
Portland.

COW POKES

By Ace Reid



"Tell 'em the reason we've got this meat out here and not cold storage is 'cause we're concerned about the engery crisis."

Mayor of Hardman

DEAR MISTER EDITOR:

While the electorage is debatin the fate of the Mayor of Hardman, I am constrained (like them cultured folks always say) to make mention of the pet situation, which is made out of hand.

Is there any critter in the world that folks won't take for a pet? Zeke Grubb told the fellers at the country store Saturday night that not only is there a heap more pets in this country than people, the pets is eating better. Zeke said he told his old lady jest the other day that he wished he could get treated like a dog around his house.

Zeke's old lady said she had to look after the dog cause he was a pore dumb animal that couldn't take care of hisself. Zeke said it was jest like he allus had heard, the dog adopts the family instead of the other way around, and it looks to him like the dog is dumb like a fox.

But actual, went on Zeke, he had saw where they is only 50 million American dogs, and that don't make but one fer ever four people. Trouble is, Zeke allowed, dogs is jest a drop in our bucket of pets.

General speaking, the fellers was agreed with Zeke that folks in this country probably is supporting enuff pet animals to feed another United States, and we got no call to poke fun at folks in India that let all that beef walk around and eat up all the grain they can beg from us. Clem Webster said he had saw by the papers where Americans bought 100 million goldfish last year.

Ed Doolittle, that will jump into any conversation except politics these days, said he had saw a piece in the papers where this feller had a collection of 35 snakes in his house, and they went from a foot long to one that was nine feet long now and would hit 18 feet when it is full grown. The item didn't say if this feller had a old lady around the house, Ed said, but chances are he ain't and he ain't got any poker playing buddies that drop around at night neither. Ed said he couldn't speak fer the next man, but as fer him, he never met a snake he really liked.

Old Bill Weatherford came over from his wash house in time to final up the discussion by pointin out that there is a legend amongst snakes that there was a mama and a papa snake in the Garden of Eden and they wuz corrupted by humans. Bill has been known to pull a leg now and then.

Practical speaking, went on Ed, the pet business might work to keep nature balanced. He said pet shops do a big business selling mice and rats for folks to feed to snakes, and somebody is busy catching or raising them mice for the pet shops. Farthermore, Ed said, snakes that don't have to get out and look fer supper can't be much of a snake anyhow. What he's waiting to see, declared Ed, is that Lock Ness monster the Japanese is looking fer in Scotland. If they find that thing, what country is going to git to make a pet out of it, Ed wanted to know.

Mister Editor, I figger people got a right to pet what they please. As fer feeding em, folks general feed one kind of animal to another, so it probably evens out.

Yours truly,

MAYOR ROY.



Zeigler's
worship-as-
weapon

By
LESTER KINSOLVING

On Sept. 12 the New York Daily News reported my question during a White House press briefing, as to what happened to those White House Sunday religious services.

In my capacity as a newly accredited White House correspondent I had greatly looked forward to reviewing one of these services. I was more than surprised, therefore, to discover that the last one was on April 15, and, as of this writing, none had been scheduled. The replies to my question only confirmed my fears.

Deputy Press Secretary Gerald Warren answered, somewhat taken aback, that these services are scheduled according to "no regular pattern," and added that Nixon "will continue to have them."

The Daily News went on to report regarding President Nixon's Press Secretary Ron Zeigler that:

"Zeigler made the same point in his chat with reporters, adding that a worship service might be scheduled shortly - just to keep Kinsolving off balance."

As a reporter and syndicated columnist, I have received a few kudos along with assorted fusillades of negative fan mail.

But what can one say when Presidential Press Secretary announces to one's colleagues of the Fourth Estate that the possible purpose of a potential White House service could be: "Just to keep Kinsolving off balance."

In gratitude for such an unusual distinction, this column is happy to provide suggestions for Mr. Zeigler's KKOB (Keep Kinsolving Off Balance) Campaign.

Mr. Zeigler ought to contemplate the fact that while the House and the Senate both have official chaplains, the White House has none.

For the post of White House Chaplain, this column would like to nominate not a fellow clergyman, but rather that leading layman and close friend of both the President and Vice-President, Frank Sinatra.

Mr. Sinatra, it should be remembered, was once seriously considered by one Hollywood producer to play the role of St. Paul. (I remember this fact well, for I can recall suggesting in my parish bulletin that this same producer should consider giving the role of the Virgin Mary to Zsa Zsa Gabor.)

It is true, admittedly, that some of Mr. Sinatra's public pronouncements have been somewhat salty. But since the most celebrated of these was directed towards a lady writer for The Washington Post, the Nixon Administration should have no grounds to disqualify his appointment.

Moreover, there are some who regard Mr. Sinatra as attractively earthy, and besides he could double as both preacher and soloist.

Chaplain Sinatra might even surpass the beneficence of frequent White House preacher Norman Vincent Peale, who said recently:

"There's nothing wrong with the political leaders of this country. They are doing a good job."

THE GAZETTE-TIMES

MORROW COUNTY'S NEWSPAPER

Address: Heppner, Ore. 97344. Tel. 474-9226. P.O. Box 337.

The Heppner Gazette was established March 30, 1883. The Heppner Times established Nov. 18, 1917. Consolidated Feb. 15, 1919.

Member: National Newspaper Assn., Oregon Newspaper Publishers Assn.

Ernest V. Johner, Publisher

Ernie Ceresa, Photography-Sports

SUBSCRIPTION RATES: \$5 per year in Oregon, \$6 elsewhere. Single copy, 15 cents. Mailed single copy, 25 cents. Minimum billing, \$1.