

Horse sense



By ERNEST V. JOINER

● If one wants to know what's happening, he listens. He listens to people talking in bars, and restaurants, at public gatherings, on street corners, over coffee cups— wherever people get together. Unfortunately, official government sources are generally poor places to get the truth people need to understand how their business is being conducted. Government offices, from city to federal government, are more interested in withholding information than giving it. But these offices have employees who visit restaurants, bars and attend tongue-loosening cocktail parties. There they often drop an off-hand remark that to a trained reporter's ear provides the basis of a story that may never be "officially" revealed. This is what made Drew Pearson a thorn in the side of government bureaucrats who prefer to run their public offices as private fiefdoms, and why his successor, Jack Anderson, is equally feared by government officials. Newsmen are seldom given any official government information except the kind that will reflect creditably upon that agency.

● The situation is similar in Morrow County. Getting the answers to many questions of public interest direct from officials has been difficult for this newspaper. It has been necessary in one instance to threaten to secure a court order just to look at public records. Mostly, the news is suppressed simply by silence. "We don't know." "You'll have to see so-and-so." "That news can't be released." They chase our tails off from one office to another until the reporter finally comes full circle, and empty handed. Then he goes into the bars and restaurants and listens to the conversations. The "facts" he gets may be distorted, but it is a beginning point in forcing confirmation or denial from the official who should have provided the news in the first place.

● My father once gave me a piece of advice. "Son," he said, "when you're talking you ain't learning anything." So I have become a good listener over the years. By listening, I now am able to report on reasons why the serial levy for Pioneer Memorial Hospital failed 496 to 703 in last week's election, and why the serial levy for county roads failed 2 to 1.

● It is not true (as County Judge Paul Jones has speculated) that the negative vote indicates Morrow County residents do not want a hospital. They do. The dissatisfaction lies in the fact that, although the hospital is supported by taxation, taxpayers who provide the money do not feel a part of that operation except when more money is needed. Generally speaking, few people know how the hospital operates, what it costs, what it buys, what services are available, how important it is to the community or how to understand its budget. These people feel that if the hospital is indeed "their hospital" they are entitled to know more about it. This indicates a lack of public relations programs to inform the people. I voted against the hospital levy, although I am strongly pro-hospital. The reason for my negative vote is that this newspaper has not been provided with the facts regarding hospital affairs. It is upon such facts that a vote is determined. Seldom has it been possible for us to even find out by calling the hospital whether a patient has been admitted for treatment. The stock reply is that all information must come from the doctor. On one occasion we followed an ambulance to the hospital emergency ward. The girl at the desk declined to state whether the man had been admitted, although it had been done before our very eyes. What was the man's name? "We are not permitted to give out that information," the girl replied. We recognize, of course, that any statement as to the diagnosis and condition of a patient should come from the attending physician, but simple questions as to a person's presence there, or whether he's alive or dead, is carrying secrecy in a public institution too far.

● As to the roads. What people are saying is that it is the duty of some pretty highly paid county commissioners to oversee repair of county roads. People are saying that if the commissioner is responsible for the roads in his district, why must there be more than one high-salaried foreman? People are saying that in the road department there are too many chiefs and too few Indians. They are saying that the increase in tax money earmarked for roads will not go onto the battered roads of Morrow County, but mostly into the pockets of administrative and supervisory personnel. They still want to know why the commissioner's salary is buried down in the road department budget. They say they don't like it when the court meets more than once a month, or when they troop off at lunchtime for a good meal and send the bill to the county. They say \$880,000 (\$220,000 a year for four years) would be fine—if it went into actual labor and materials to fix up roads instead of paying for top-heavy administration, travel, lunches, \$1,200 for conventions and other items not directly connected with road repair and construction.

● At the time the road and hospital serial levies were planned, Judge Paul Jones recommended money be appropriated to conduct a public information advertising campaign to inform residents of Morrow County of the need for the additional monies, which would have explained both proposals fully and urge their adoption. The court turned him down. We think Judge Jones was right. This newspaper published the facts regarding both issues. That is not enough. People must be sold and re-sold where this kind of money is involved. In serial levies in the past, a public information campaign has been conducted. This time it was not.

● Supt. Ron Daniels knows the value of an informed public. Before any official board meeting or any program needing citizen support, he sends the press a complete agenda, an explanation of items on the agenda, supportive material to allow newsmen to understand what is going to happen. Then he makes himself available for questions. He seeks out the media. He doesn't sit in his office and wait for reporters to find him. And a reporter doesn't have to drag every piece of information out of him as if one were pulling teeth. If the reporter doesn't go after Ron, Ron goes after the reporter. An official of Blue Mountain Community College told me Tuesday that Ron's extraordinary success in keeping public confidence by keeping the public informed was a big factor in his selection as the second president of the college Monday night. Some close-mouthed officials could take a lesson from Ron Daniels in getting things done by getting people informed.



...So Nice To Come Home To...

Others say . . .

"The general public has been brainwashed by the fear tactics that have been used by these extremists (environmentalists) in press, television and radio. It is my contention that not until there is no heat for our homes, and when the lights go out will the general public belatedly recognize the 'over-kill' that has resulted from permitting the valuable environmentalist movement to be captured and taken over by a few vociferous extremists."—Dr. Norman E. Borlaug, Nobel Laureate, food and nutrition.

● Right or wrong, these are things people are saying. People want the hospital and they want the roads. What they do not want is to vote yes on an unexplained budget or on a proposition they do not understand. They want to be convinced that the money requested is actually needed and how that money will help him and his neighbors. They want to know that some budget items are genuine and not a device to get money that couldn't be gotten otherwise. Voters have had it up to their earlobes in voting tax money without being convinced of the need for it, and not knowing what they get in return for their money.

● This newspaper can do a good job in helping get this information to the public. As much space as is necessary to do that job is available without charge to any tax-supported institution. Readers must be "leveled with." There should be no coverups, no withholding or skipping over important information. The good should be laid out alongside the bad. No office operates without error, but how long since you've heard a public official publicly admit, "I goofed. I made this expensive mistake, but it won't happen again." More likely they insist no error occurred. Or they bury it in an unmarked grave.

● Not all this lack of communication between voter and official is the fault of public officials. It can be argued that if this newspaper covered all the meetings of each office (as it should) there would be no basis for our complaint of lack of cooperation in matters of news. We would be there, and being there it would be our responsibility to obtain and publish the proceedings. But we cannot be there. We have two people available to cover two dozen regularly scheduled meetings. So we have to rely on officials to either call us or give us the results of their meetings when we call. No weekly newspaper has the budget to hire a dozen reporters. The East Oregonian hasn't got that much money. The New York Times can't do it. So there must be a spirit of cooperation between the newspaper and the various offices if the public is to be informed, and an informed public is the name of the game. With just a little more cooperation than we're getting now, we can do twice as good a job of informing people as to how their business is being run.

● It may also be argued that citizens should attend meetings of the city council, county court, hospital board and a dozen other such agencies as a matter of becoming knowledgeable in civic affairs. True. But after a man puts in a day's work it isn't likely he's going to spend three hours at a city council meeting only to discover that Joe Blow has been given a variance for a trailer house. And he is not going to multiply this by 25 in order to attend 25 organizational meetings, most of which occur on the same night. He would have no time to work or to devote to his family. But he can pick up the newspaper and in six seconds he gets the information a reporter may have sat through hours of argument to bring him. Therefore, the newspaper is the logical medium whereby news of public interest is disseminated. This newspaper goes into nearly every home in Morrow County, and presumably read. Any agency with a desire to inform the public has no better medium of communicating with Morrow County, unless it chooses to launch a direct mail program. People are not going to attend all these meetings; they are going to rely on the newspaper to tell them what's happening at the local level. When we don't get the information, neither does the public.

● I am a betting man. So I'll bet even money that if both the hospital and road levies were presented to Morrow County voters again, after a full disclosure of their real need, the levies would pass. But it would take a public relations campaign. All the questions would have to be answered, all the bases covered, and thoroughly. There would be speeches, with question and answer periods, and the books and records would be made available to the news media for analysis and publication, along with the comments of responsible officials. I am convinced that when people know the facts, they respond affirmatively. Right now, they don't know whether they have the facts or not.

Crossroads Report

It is being said by some hare-brains that the FBI and the police used "excessive force" in that Los Angeles shootout.

The claim is that 500 lawmen against six SLA terrorists is unsportsmanlike conduct, which is to say that murder, kidnapping and bank robbing are now considered sports, like football, baseball, crapshooting, etc.

But even in the Los Angeles contest, the odds were much fairer than in the other new sport of President-baiting, where the odds must be getting better than a million to one by now.

D.E. SCOTT.

Quote/Unquote

"It was once suggested that the public welfare could be improved if the Congress would appropriate money to pay the Army Corps of Engineers not to build dams. It has also been suggested—by the junior Senator from Michigan, if I recall—that the number of employees at the Department of Agriculture be required by law not to exceed the number of farmers in the United States."—Lewis A. Engman, Chairman, Federal Trade Commission, speech, May 1, 1974.

The mail pouch

EDITOR:

My name is Bill Buckendorf. I will be teaching in Heppner next year. I need to find housing and I thought your paper might help me.

BILL BUCKENDORF, Buhl, Idaho

(ED NOTE—Anyone with a house to rent may contact Mr. Buckendorf at Box 521, Buhl, Idaho 83316.)

EDITOR:

Mary and I acquired the habit of reading your column in the Sebastopol Times and have continued the activity by subscribing to your Heppner newspaper. We enjoy your writing even though we disagree, which isn't very often.

Referring to your column in Jan. 17, 1974, the third paragraph is in regard to misleading statistics and drunk drivers. Very amusing, and it caused us to think of some statistics we read elsewhere, namely: "All persons who ate tomatoes prior to 1600 are now dead." (This, of course, was mentioned because at one time, I am sure you know, tomatoes were believed to be poisonous.) By the way, you must be familiar with the book, "How To Lie With Statistics."

By all means continue "upward" but not "onward." Also, this advice, "Nihil prohibuit carborundum." Very poor Latin. I admit, but apropos when translated into pidgin English.

NOEL C. STEVENSON, Los Angeles

EDITOR:

The Mike Boylen family of Pendleton wishes to thank the many thoughtful people of Heppner and the surrounding area for their love, concern and encouragement the past eight months.

The prayers, fund donations, gifts, letters, cards, and fund-raising projects were deeply appreciated as a sincere gesture of love for Michael and our family from kind neighbors.

This total effort of everyone sustained us, and we will never forget your kindness and concern.

THE MIKE BOYLEN FAMILY, PENDLETON

EDITOR:

Please extend my congratulations to Heppner High's 440-yard relay team and Teresa Peck for their excellent performances at the state track meet.

You can imagine my surprise when I read my name in the same story. However, I would like to point out that it was my cousin, Gary Connor, who won the discus event in 1952, instead of his brother Keith, who was also a fine athlete for Heppner.

WENDELL CONNOR, Forest Grove



"Melvin Called Me An 'Expletive Deletion!'"

Mayor of Hardman

DEAR MISTER EDITOR:

The fellers at the country store Saturday night was wondering whatever come of that big metal ball that was found in Florida a couple of months back. The ball was studied by all kinds of scientists and all they could agree on was that it was mysterious.

Ed Gonty, on furlow from his duties as the Terror of Willow Crick, said what made the ball a puzzle was that it was so simple. It was a plain steel ball, no colors, no marks, no buzzing sounds, just a smooth round ball. It worried them scientists so much they wanted to saw it in two and soak it in acid to find out why it was a plain steel ball.

Ed said he hopes the ball is locked up safe from scientists to remind the world that there still is things like a simple steel ball around.

For onct, Clem Webster was agreed with Ed. Clem said we've got to get away from this idea that everything has to be complicated. We have got to the point where when somebody says "good morning" we wonder what he meant by it, was Clem's words. The kind of laws we're passing is one sure way of keeping up with our outlook, allowed Clem, and he was in favor of laws to get rid of laws.

Clem said he was thinking of a law passed a few weeks ago in Deerfield Beach, Florida that says cats has got to wear bells. It seems the cats is sneaking up on the birds and taking unfair advantage by not warning em, Clem said, so the town fathers wants to bell cats so the birds can hear em coming. Cat owners that don't bell their cats is subject to a \$25 fine.

The Deerfield Beach police chief said he can't suit the bird lovers and the cat lovers, and he can't enforce the law cause cats running around ringing their bells after 10 o'clock at night is agin the town anti-noise law.

General speaking, broke in Bill Weatherford who stomped in from his wash house and took over the floor, we figger no problem is so big it can't be fixed with a new law. Bill is still smarting because Heppner's city charter classifies his wash house as an offensive occupation, and that law still stands while the city fathers debate if the classification ought to be changed, along with the law that says a kid can't bounce a ball on Main St.

Bill has heard of a law in Florence, South Carolina that is agin men walking the public streets with their shirt tails hanging out. He was wondering if Florence has amended that law to say men has got to wear pants for their shirt tails not to hang out of.

It just goes to show, Bill declared, that we have a habit in this country of throwing the baby out with the bath water ever time we try to clean him up. Bill gets carried away frequent.

Speaking of laws, Bug Hookum reported where this gal was fired in Rock Island, Illinois cause she was so pritty the men couldn't git their work done fer looking at her. Bug said if that comes to a law saying wimmen can't use their looks to take unfair advantage of men and other wimmen, ever woman in the world can be arrested fer false advertising.

Yours truly, MAYOR ROY.



The Korean satyr who seized Nixon

By LESTER KINSOLVING

When the president recently visited Phoenix, there were more than 3,000 anti-Nixon demonstrators outside the Coliseum.

Nearby, however, was a rival rally conducted by some 100 members of a group called the National Prayer and Fast For The Watergate Crisis, who distributed pennants saying "God Loves Nixon."

This very same group showed up at Oklahoma State University one week later, when only 500 anti-Nixon demonstrators held a rally protesting the president's visit (a rally whose impact was almost entirely neutralized by the infiltration of a band of full-voiced, banner-bearing Jesus Freaks).

This traveling band of pro-Nixon prayer-and-fasters were actually members of the Unification Church of Korean evangelist Sun Myong Moon.

Last January they staged another rally, in Lafayette Square, across from the White House. It was so vivid and so rare, being pro-Nixon, that it was joined by Tricia Nixon Cox, who made a speech.

The very next morning, the Rev. Mr. Moon was ushered into the presence of the President of the United States—whom he proceeded, quite suddenly, to embrace.

The Secret Service, and no doubt Mr. Nixon himself, would have been infinitely more startled at this abrupt avalanche of emotion—had they but known something of the colorful background of the Rev. Mr. Moon.

Once a ruling elder in the Korean Presbyterian Church, Moon was excommunicated in 1948 because he started his own competing church, complete with several new wild and exotically erotic beliefs.

One of these beliefs caused the Rev. Mr. Moon's arrest on July 4, 1955, after he was expelled from the campus of Ewa Women's Technical University in Seoul, and booked and jailed on a morals charge.

Mr. Moon's followers ("Moonies") vehemently claim that this was all a frameup by one of his former wives—and that he was later acquitted.

But there are those who claim that his comparatively early release from incarceration was due to a disease. And the Korean press (which was at that time relatively free) exposed in titillating detail his Unification Church's bizarre initiatory rite called "picarume" or "blood separation."

This poignant ritual consisted of "purification" via sexual intercourse. For female initiates, this process took place with the "perfect and pure emissary of God." (Guess who.)

Moon's claim to be the Second Christ was based upon his report that in 1936 the first Christ (who failed because he did not marry before being crucified) appeared to him on a Korean hillside. A more recent Moon revelation:

"At this moment in history, God has chosen Richard Nixon to be President of the United States." (No comment regarding the choice of Spiro Agnew.)

The Rev. Mr. Moon refuses to grant interviews with the press—and he makes sure that his cult's financial records are kept concealed. For any open accounting, as in most denominations, might reveal the full extent to which this cult is being used and financed by the South Korean dictatorship of President Park Chung Hee, (who has just sentenced six Methodist and Presbyterian clergy to 10-15 year prison terms for daring to criticize the government.)

It is known, however, that much of the money is sent through Moon's constant companion and translator, Lt. Col. Bo Hi Pak of the South Korean Army.

Pak was assigned to Moon by request of South Korea's former Ambassador to the United States, You Yang.

Ambassador Yang's diplomatic ploy was really quite clever. For it keeps the sexually amazing Mr. Moon out of Korea, where he can leap literally into the arms of the President of the United States—instead of impressionable Korean coeds.

The Rev. Mr. Moon also derives extensive income from the several industries he owns, including an aphrodisiac factory—which makes an alleged potency-stimulating tea, called Tongil Gin Sing.

THE GAZETTE-TIMES
MORROW COUNTY'S NEWSPAPER
Address: Box 227, Heppner, Ore. 97531, Ph. 635-1728

The Heppner Gazette was established March 26, 1862. The Heppner Times established Nov. 18, 1897. Consolidated Feb. 15, 1912. MEMBER: National Newspaper Assn., Oregon Newspaper Publishers Assn.

SUBSCRIPTION RATES: \$1.00 per year in Oregon. 34 elsewhere. Single copy, 15c. Mailed single copy, 25c. Minimum billing, 11.

Ernest V. Joiner, Publisher

The Gazette-Times assumes no financial responsibility for errors in advertisement. If it is, however, reprint without charge or cancel the charge for the portion of an advertisement which is in error if The Gazette-Times is at fault.