

Horse sense

By ERNEST V. JOINER



● Murder most foul was done in the halls of Congress Friday. The Willow Creek Dam project was killed, permanently. It was done in the Public Utilities Committee of the House of Representatives. Ironically, it met death at the hands of the Office of Budget Management and an recommendation of the U.S. Corps of Engineers. For the past 40 years the Corps of Engineers had supported the Willow Creek Dam. A year ago the Corps testified before a Congressional committee, favoring the project. Why did the Corps reverse itself? The reason, coming late from the office of Cong. Al Ullman, is that the two agencies testifying against the dam found it "economically unfeasible." In short, it wouldn't pay for itself. But for 40 years the object of the dam was to pay for itself, but to save human lives and property. All of a sudden, human life and property are of no consequence if a number of fishermen can't take a number of fish out of the lake at a number of dollars a head, to hell with it.

● Last year the Corps got \$400,000 of our tax money to make a study (for the 30th time) of the damsite. The Corps has just finished digging enough holes up Willow Creek to catch all the grain we gave to Russia. The federal government has, over the past 40 years, spent more money on surveys and studies than the lousy dam would have cost—12 million. That's all down the drain—or on its way to bribe Fidel Castro into letting us like his bloody boots. On the promise of the Corps of Engineers that the government would build the dam and pay for the relocation of roads and reservoir, citizens of Heppner were induced to pass a \$450,000 bond issue to modernize the city water supply. Relying on the promise of the Corps that it would build a million-gallon reservoir to replace the present one, the city got up with the interminable delay, overlapping "studies" and bureaucratic horseplay. Relying on the promised support of Cong. Al Ullman, the city expected a better shake than it got Friday.

● But the city fathers were not putting all their faith in the political windbags to whom promises mean so little. Mayor Jerry Sweeney and the council went right ahead and made a request for a \$380,000 federal grant from the Farm Home Administration and the Department of Environmental Quality, and that request is still pending. It may be that this grant will come in time to save local taxpayers from having to pass up the \$350,000 additional money our political leaders and the Corps promised the government would furnish to finish up the reservoir.

● Cong. Ullman's office told Mayor Sweeney Monday that one reason the dam didn't win approval was that it "stood alone." In political skull-duggery jargon, a bill that stands alone is one that has no riders attached, or it is a bill that is not attached to and made a part of a bigger and more important bill. If the dam issue had been attached as a rider to a bill that would provide a million dollars a head to every person of black, brown, yellow or chartreuse skin color, it would have sailed through with a 21-gun salute and to the music of popping champagne corks. But it wasn't tied to anything sweetening to minorities, and it never had a chance in spite of what our fearless leaders said.

● One astute political observer (who shall remain nameless because he might get calls from the FBI, Internal Revenue Service or the CIA) has a theory about why the dam never got off the carpet. It was a political trade-out, he said. "If Boeing gives up its lease on land in the northern part of the county, or if the Navy decides to move off the bombing range within the next six months to a year, you will know that Al Ullman traded Willow Creek Dam to Sen. Henry Jackson, yielding to pressure from Portland General Electric." That's an interesting speculation. Let's see if it happens. If it does, we know who sold us out.

● Now that \$400,000 of our money has been shot in preliminary damsite work, and the project has been killed, it is reasonable to assume that the Corps of Engineers crew that has been making tests and surveys for the dam the past several months would stop the work and go home. But no. According to the owner of the motel where the crew is staying, the men plan to be here another two months to complete test drillings for the dam along Baldo Fork and on the Thompson property. It's like flugging a dead horse, of course, but maybe there's some of that \$400,000 left and it would be out of character for any unmythical part of it to be returned to the taxpayer.

● President Ford has gone out on a limb to make specific recommendations designed to cure inflation in this nation. First, he wants every housewife to list all the food and energy saving tips she has discovered, then share them with all her friends and neighbors. This, of course, has been going on for years. The Department of Agriculture has been at it for years, spending billions of dollars telling American housewives how to save money and cut costs in the home-making process. For all of the 30 years I have been in the newspaper business I have sifted through miles and miles of press releases from extension services, state universities and county agents telling housewives how to save money and cut costs. Just about every family magazine (Good Housekeeping, McCall's, Reader's Digest, Sunset, etc.) devotes tremendous amounts of space each year to informing housewives how to save money and cut costs. The 4-H program stresses how to save money and cut costs even before its members have a chance to become housewives. Every food manufacturer maintains expensive staff to conduct research into the business of saving money and cutting costs for the housewife. You can't sit down to a decent cup of coffee these days without somebody telling you how to prepare some food inexpensively or how to cook a 10-course dinner on a Bunsen burner. By using President Ford's rationale, there should never have been any inflation in the first place, if spreading the gospel of food and energy conservation had a cotton-picking thing to do with the evil in the first place.

● Second, President Ford's ace-in-the-hole in the fight against inflation has got to be as big a winner. He is listening to advisers who recommend adding an additional 10-cent a gallon tax on gasoline that is already costing us 60 cents a gallon. This, he reasons, will make people consume less fuel and will, somehow, reduce the cost of living. Stripped of academic and bureaucratic garbage, what he is saying is that by raising the cost of essential consumer goods he can lower the cost of consumer goods. Translated another way, the best way to bring down the cost of new automobiles is to double the cost of new automobiles. In short, if you want to sober up a drunk, give him more booze. Or, to put out a fire, throw some gasoline on it. If I were out in the middle of a lake and my boat capsized and I was in danger of being drowned, I wouldn't want Gerald Ford to come to my rescue. More than likely he would solve my dilemma by offering me a glass of water. Well, we can't say the president isn't struggling with this matter of inflation. But if he keeps up this kind of a fight we're whipped.



"Fire! Fire!"

The mail pouch

EDITOR:

I wish to reply to Mr. Charles Spear of Sherman, Texas, who on Aug. 29 responded to a letter I had sent you relative to your editorial dealing with doctors and specifically your not having a doctor in Heppner, Oregon.

Mr. Spear took issue with my stating that the annual average income for doctors in the past few years was about \$20,000, and according to him, he states they are clearing \$20,000 per year and \$140,000 is not considered unusual. Well, by coincidence, Mr. Spear, shortly after both you and I wrote, there was a recent national survey report which indicated the average physician's income to be about \$42,000. Unfortunately, it did not indicate whether this was gross or net, but in either case I think you will agree it comes to where near the figures you portrayed or the figures one would anticipate after the many years of training in preparation and the overwhelming number of hours put in by the average, practicing physician.

You made mention of "an altruistic doctor who charged \$300 for removing a tiny little fish bone from your wife's throat." Mr. Spear, that little fish bone had the potential of perforating your wife's esophagus (swallowing tube) and then causing a fatal infection in her chest cavity. It probably took that doctor about 15 years to learn how to get that little fish bone out of there safely and I think you ought to be grateful that such a physician was somewhere near you. People like you, Mr. Spear, remind me of a poem to which I was exposed a number of years ago, and unfortunately I cannot quote the poem. It goes as follows:

God and the doctor we alike adore
Only when in trouble—never before
When trouble is o'er all is required
God is forgotten and the doctor is slighted.

THEO. S. STASHAK, M.D., Santa Rosa, Ca.

EDITOR:

What is so terrible about trading a mule?

Almost two thousand years ago Mary rode an ass to Bethlehem and that night she was delivered of a child who became the most famous man the world has ever known.

Some people ride 'em, others just make use out of themselves.

FLOY M. PRIVETT, Heppner.

EDITOR:

With interest and amusement, I read the letter to the editor signed by Mr. Roy Stewart of Medford, Oregon.

I wonder why he thought it necessary to inform the people of Morrow County of the qualification and outstanding abilities of our present assessor?

Doesn't he know she has lived here many years and has been quite active in social and community affairs, that she has worked in the assessor's office nine years and has probably met about all the people in the county?

Doesn't he know the people of Morrow County are quite capable of choosing their candidate and electing them to office?

I too, would look with caution and even hesitate to ask the advice of one who is apparently so uninformed.

EVERETT HARSHMAN, Heppner.

Election notice

Oct. 5 is the last day to register for the general election, according to Sadie Parrish, county clerk. Her office will be open from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. on that date to accommodate late registrants.

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CROSSROADS REPORT

DEAR EDITOR:

I see where statisticians say about 10 per cent of Americans over 16 years old are "functional illiterates," meaning they can't read or write worth a hoot.

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And there is some argument about whether to blame this on school teachers, under-funding of schools, or upper story under-furnishing of pupils.

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Many millions of people have learned to read and write well without phonics, flash cards, palatial schoolhouses, Ph.D. ed teachers, or swarms of school buses. Just brains.

D. E. SCOTT, Crossroads, U.S.A.

quote/unquote

"Liberty lies in the hearts of men and women; when it dies there, no constitution, no law, no court can save it; no constitution, no law, no court can even do much to help it. While it lies there it needs no constitution, no law, no court, to save it."—Frederick, S.D., Brown County News

Mayor of Hardman

DEAR MISTER EDITOR:

Clem Webster was speaking in parables again Saturday night at the country store.

He opened the meeting by telling the fellows about the time his Ma and Pa rode their buggy for two days to visit his Pa's old friend that he hadn't seen afore either one got married. As Clem's Pa told the story, the two old buddies got to talking about the times they had and the gals they courted. Clem's Ma was use to hearing them tales, but the other feller's old lady wasn't and she got hot under the collar. So when bedtime come, she give her guests a quilt apiece and told em they could sleep on the floor by the fire, cause they didn't have any extra beds.

That was a mighty hard floor and a mighty thin quilt, Clem's Pa would say, and Ma fell to grumbling about the sleeping arrangements. Final, Pa told his old lady to dry up, cause "anybody can sleep in hell one night!"

The next morning early, Clem's Pa and Ma got in their buggy and drove two days back home. The moral of the story, Clem said, is that anybody can make a big mistake and get himself in a fix, but it's getting out of the fix that separates the men from the boys.

The parable of the quilts, as Zeke Grubb called it, sets off a long discussion. Zeke said Clem's Pa was telling it like it was, but not like it is. They ain't no limit to what people in this country will put up with this day and time, Zeke declared, and they don't seem to be no end to the jams we keep getting in.

Ever time you hear a politician say so and so ain't going to happen "cause the country won't stand for it," it happens and the folks swell it and hope for the best, was Zeke's words.

General speaking, Mister Editor, the fellers was agreed that the country has fell on hard times, and some of the facts is hard to face. But Ed Gony was of a mind that this democracy is put together like a self-cleaning oven, the hotter it gets the better it cleans. Ed said he wasn't ready yet to give judgment on President Ford's move to pardon Mr. Nixon in advance for everything he might be accused of, but Ed said he is convinced that the events that made Ford President come about cause the country had stood for all it would. And Ed reminded the fellers that no other nation in the world could go through such a upsurge and come through in as good a shape as we have.

It was Bug Hookum that come up with the idea of the evening. Bug said he had saw where some big companies now is hiring actors to come in and work in offices and pretend to sweat. The boss is in on the act, so he "catches" the "cheat," gives him a blessing out and fires him in front of everybody. This is suppose to scare the workers into honesty.

Bug said wouldn't it be somefun if we got politician actors that is seeing how much the country will stand for.

Yours truly, MAYOR ROY.

UNLIKELY LETTERS

Lovely Hearts Column

Dear Madam:

Why all the fuss about the long hair on men? I wear my hair long and in fact think it is a lucky omen and the reason that I always win my battles.

Yours truly,

George (Goldie) Carter

The more he makes, the less he has

The U.S. Chamber of Commerce tells about an ordinary guy. Let's call him Joe. He looks like a lot of other Joes. You would think that Joe was a lucky man. For the last 10 years he has had pay increases to match every increase in the cost of living. But Joe is still unhappy. His paycheck does not go as far as it used to.

Economists of the Chamber of Commerce of the United States can explain the chagrin of ordinary U.S. citizen Joe. They tell his story this way. In 1964 Joe went to work at a pay of \$10,000 a year. That year, his income tax was \$1,200; his social security tax was \$174; his take-home pay was \$8,626; his taxes took 13.7 per cent of his gross earnings.

Now, 10 years later, with a long string of cost-of-living pay increases added to his paycheck, Joe earns \$15,400 a year. His income tax will be \$1,908. His social security tax will be \$771. His take-home will be \$12,755. His taxes will take 17.3 per cent of his gross earnings.

Meanwhile, inflation has eroded the value of the U.S. dollar—by 60 per cent since the end of World War II and by approximately 10 per cent in the last year.

The \$12,755 Joe will take home in 1974 really is worth \$529 less than the \$8,626 he took home 10 years ago. So take it from Joe. In 20 years, if inflation keeps rising at the 10 per cent rate, Joe will need to earn \$113,000 a year to keep pace. Meanwhile, he will be paying out half his earnings in taxes.

And his take home pay of \$57,300 will really be worth only \$7,800 of today's dollars. Sorry Joe.



Gerald Ford's moral guide

By LESTER KINSOLVING

WASHINGTON—God was cited four times and his conscience mentioned three on the Sunday morning that President Ford announced his explosively controversial decision to pardon Richard Nixon.

Earlier that morning, the president had attended the 8 a. m. service of Holy Communion (no sermon) at the "Church of the Presidents," St. John's Episcopal Church, Lafayette Square, just across the park from the White House.

At 11:06 a. m. Ford delivered what is now known in many quarters as "The Sunday Punch"—the immunity-in-advance extended to his predecessor in San Clemente.

Ford's Episcopal rector, the Rev. William Dols of Immanuel-On-The-Hill in Alexandria, Va., was as surprised as almost everyone else in the nation—excepting the person who may well be the new president's number one moral guide.

Philip Buchen, Ford's life-long friend and now White House counselor who has been elevated to cabinet rank, spent Labor Day weekend in top secret legal investigations to determine, at his client's request, any possible precedence for presidential pardon prior to indictment.

In Grand Rapids, Dr. Duncan Littlefair, Buchen's pastor at the Fountain Street (non-denominational) church was quoted by the New York Post in describing Buchen as:

"One of the most influential members—one of the leaders in the church's philosophical search for world-wide humanism... he could sit down with any Ph.D. and deal with him on his own level on morality, politics, religion and social concerns."

Other parishioners of this church agree with this impressive assessment of Buchen's philosophical and theological process.

But Counselor Buchen, despite these credentials, lamented: "I wish I were a better student of the ethics for morality of mercy" when he was asked during a press conference about the morality of Ford's pardoning of Nixon.

"I don't think an act of mercy can ever be untimely," replied Buchen, when asked about the fact that Ford—only 10 days earlier—told the press conference that just such a pardon would be "unwise and untimely." (Earlier, when Ford was a nominee for vice-president, he told the Senate when asked about such a Nixon pardon: "I don't think the public would stand for it.")

Hence I asked Buchen: "Was the president NOT merciful 10 days ago when he said this was untimely? Was the president lacking in mercy when he told the committee that the American people wouldn't stand for it? What caused him to be so suddenly merciful?"

Buchen: "I wish you could come up here and explain the theory of mercy. You can probably do a much better job than I can." He added that he didn't believe that Ford knew he could pardon-in-advance until after his first presidential press conference.

Had this "wish" of Mr. Buchen's been more than apparently rhetorical (as part of the old technique of turning a question back on the questioner), there might well have ensued a discussion of such considerations as:

Jesus' parable of the servant who was forgiven a great debt—who promptly had thrown into debtor's prison a neighbor who owed him a far smaller amount (St. Matthew, Chapter 18)—plus "Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy"—these in the light of repeated and rigid Nixon refusals to consider amnesty regarding the Vietnamese war.

The Hebrew ideal of justice, which motivated a young woman in Nazareth to rejoice: "He hath put down the mighty from their seat and hath exalted the humble and meek"—this in the light of co-conspirator Nixon on his San Clemente estate (with \$850,000 from the treasury during 1975 proposed by Ford)—this while Watergate burglars and others are in or scheduled for prison.

Has Mr. Nixon yet illustrated the most universal religious virtue of repentance and acknowledgment of guilt? Understandably, President Ford did not claim to be extending mercy to a sick man. For only days previously, Nixon's son-in-law David Eisenhower brightly announced to the press that his father-in-law is "a great natural resource" who should be "in the Senate."

