

MEDFORD MAIL TRIBUNE

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Slow Progress

Long ago we heard a story about an old Quaker farmer who said to his wife something like this: "I think all the world is daft but me and thee. And sometimes I think even thee is, a little."

Probably everyone, at some time or other, has agreed with the old Quaker that everyone else is a little "off."

According to recent statistics, this isn't too far wrong. As medical science has progressed, mental illness has been increasingly recognized for what it is—the most prevalent disease of the 20th century.

AND, despite the many, many stale old jokes about those who are mad, or half-mad, mental illness is no laughing matter.

More than half the hospital beds in the United States are occupied by patients with mental illness. The costs, both to individuals and to society at large, are fantastic. They are not only dollars-and-cents costs, either, but costs in suffering, dismay, human degradation and waste.

Although medical science has made giant strides in the past century, it has barely scratched the surface of the proper care and healing of mental illness. Much remains to be learned. But even with present knowledge, cures can be effected in considerably more than half the cases, provided proper care and treatment are given.

THEREIN is the rub. For proper care and treatment are not, unhappily, available to all. There are not enough trained psychiatrists, therapists, social workers, and the others who are gradually learning the techniques of treatment.

There are not enough hospitals, and those there are, are overcrowded with staffs oftentimes too pressed for time and space to do more than offer custody, without treatment. Too often the custody is sub-standard.

There are not enough of the so-called community clinics, where those with mental illness and disturbances can go for help.

All in all, it's a bleak picture.

NONETHELESS, progress has been, and is being, made. Increased public attention to the problem has done much to increase the number, and standards, of mental hospitals.

Perhaps the most important thing that aroused public interest has been done is to create a new awareness of the problem itself, and of the fact that mental illness is not incurable, nor is it something to be hidden away as if it were something shameful.

Frank and open discussion of what needs to be done, and what can be done, will add to this understanding, and to the eventual betterment of the present conditions.

THIS is Mental Health week, proclaimed for just the purposes listed above.

This is a good time to point out that facilities in this area for assistance to those with mental difficulties are far more ample, though still circumscribed, than ever before. An increasing awareness of these resources, and use of them when necessary, will do much to ease the suffering caused by mental illness.

A call to the public health department can provide the information needed to obtain the help which is available. — E. A.

Meet the Candidates

The May 18 primary election is only about 2 1/2 weeks away. It is time for voters to begin making up their minds about the candidates for whom they will vote.

If your mind is unsettled on the matter, or if you have a question about some of the local vote-seekers, we commend to you the annual candidates' night of the League of Women Voters.

THE EVENT will be this Friday, May 4, at 8 p.m. in the Hedrick Junior High school. All or most of the candidates for local office will be on hand to tell why they should be elected, and there may be a few aspirants for state and national office.

It is as good a time as any, and better than most, to learn a bit about the people we are going to name as our representatives and administrators for the coming terms. The league is to be thanked for its service in making the opportunity possible. — E. A.

War Baby

It was 15 years ago yesterday that the first U. S. defense savings bond was sold. The purchaser was Franklin D. Roosevelt.

In the ensuing years, "war bonds" and the succeeding savings bonds have become the best advertised, the best known, and the most widely held securities ever offered.

THE STORY of the bond program and how it developed, how it is an important factor in the national economy and money-management programs, how it is a stabilizing influence and a source of security to millions of people — all these are well known, and need not be recorded here.

What we do want to point out is that the financial planning which raised the money to fight the war is now a well-integrated, thoroughly-accepted, and vital part of the nation's fiscal operations.

The war baby has grown up. — E. A.

Flight o' Time

Medford and Jackson County History from the files of The Mail Tribune 10, 20, 30 and 40 years ago.

10 YEARS AGO

Medford water is scheduled to flow to Central Point mains late tonight or early tomorrow.

20 YEARS AGO

The Medford Gleemen will meet with the Teachers' chorus for rehearsal at the Holly theater this afternoon at 2:30.

30 YEARS AGO

F. H. Rogers will supervise construction of projects for Paul's Electric store, of Medford, according to H. V. Scheffel of Paul's Electric store.

40 YEARS AGO

Terah T. Maroney, the aviator, has written the Mail Tribune stating that he wishes to give a flight in the valley this summer and would like to hear from anyone interested.

As a result of an effort started by Ben Sheldon nearly two years ago, the State Editorial Association of Oregon will hold its annual convention in Medford in August.

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