

--- CHIT CHAT ---

By JOE COWLEY
Mail Tribune Farm Editor

We met him at a railroad passenger depot (something which SP is rapidly making extinct in southern Oregon) and through him Christmas meant much more to us.

Looking for a story one cold, rainy day before Christmas in a Pacific Northwest town we glanced into the passenger depot. He was sitting there with his "bottle" tied up in a red bandana handkerchief beside him. It's always warm in the depot and many hobos and other transients wander in to warm up. However, he seemed a little different.

Unlike so many "knights of the road," he was clean-shaven, his overalls were clean and neatly mended. He wore a Levi jacket of faded but clean blue. A light brown, western style hat was tilted back on his head.

We were curious and he was friendly. His steel blue eyes seemed to squint into the distance and cover the miles he had travelled as he told of his life and hopes.

Some years later a special committee would be appointed to study the case of this man and several like him who are often labelled by the fancy title, "transient laborer." Probably volumes of reports will roll out of the government presses before the federal government and administrations of various states near a solution of his problems. And he will never be understood by those who have wandered no further than from office to easy chair and back again.

The hobo, or transient worker, told us he started his wandering after World War I when he became used to moving around in the army. Since then he had worked in the wheat fields of the Dakotas under blazing blue skies, picked apples in Washington and oranges in Florida. He even spent some time in logging camps watching axes and saws bite into live wood and send the timber crashing to the forest floor.

Like many of his kind he travelled alone because he felt "He who travels alone travels fastest." And it was safer. On the road, he told us, you never know who your friend or enemy is. The middle-aged traveler knew all the hobo jungles along the main rail routes. He knew some of the chain gangs, too, and a quiet expression came into his eyes as he told of being picked up as a vagrant down south and hustled off to a road work gang. (This might be one way to get some of the county roads improved if the budget doesn't permit.)

This well-seasoned traveler had been around the world twice and across the United States many times. Now, he was going home to visit his sister in a little settlement up in the tall timber country. He showed us his bus ticket. A small package in plain brown wrapping paper was for his younger sister's child which he had never seen. If such a man who had seen much and experienced even more thought Christmas was important enough to come home from thousands of miles away than Christmas must have a special magic of its own.

It also seemed only fitting that he should be taking a gift to a small child as three wisemen also did centuries ago. Then it was to be stable. On this dreary Christmas Eve it was a small cabin up in the woods.

We noticed in Washington state those persons planning to have Christmas turkeys are warned to check the birds they buy to be sure they receive the quality they are paying for. This warning came from Joe Dwyer, Washington state agriculture director. He said most stores specify Grade A prime turkeys in their advertisements.

However, he warned that many lower grade birds are on the market. Grade A turkeys, he said, are top quality and "an excellent value at today's prices." Lower grade turkeys may have blemishes, broken skin or lack of good conformation or plumpness, he warned. As far as we know there is nothing to prevent sale of lower grade birds as Grade A turkeys here so to be forewarned is to be forearmed.

A nation-wide contest to select the nation's four outstanding young farmers of 1958 is getting underway. According to a story in another paper the Mount Angel Junior Chamber of Commerce has entered the contest. The winner will receive a plaque and be sent with his wife to Bend next spring where the three highest winners in the state will be selected. The top state winner is scheduled to go to Cedar Rapids, Iowa, for the national contest.

Outside of the annual "Town and Country breakfast" and a few activities sponsored by farm organizations in this county the farmer receives little recognition. And this is basically an agricultural community. We would like to suggest that the various Jaycee organizations combine their efforts this year and set up a good slate of candidates from the ample number available in this county.

When we read about it the idea of a community dairy farm sounded like a good one - at least on paper. The plan basically is this - A group of dairy farmers pool their resources and use the facilities of one of their number. They either drive their herds in for milking or leave them at the farm and take turns doing the milking. This, according to those boosting the plan, allows the dairy farmer to have more time for other things and gives him more facilities at a lower cost.

However, we checked our old reliable "cold water on hot ideas" department and were informed that this idea is not practical at all. It was tried in the Rogue Valley a couple of years ago, our informant told us, and it didn't work. Dairy farmers who have sizeable investments in milking machines and other farm equipment don't want to abandon their investments to try something new. Also, it raises the overhead costs instead of lowering them, this man told us.

This should interest a few of the beef men around the county. "Despite the uneasy feeling in the beef cattle industry, cattlemen are approaching a long period of high prosperity," the current Kiplinger Agricultural letter predicts.

Cattle experts say the pattern of the industry will smooth out, the letter explained. This will eliminate soaring beef prices when production slumps, followed by runaway production that brings lowered beef prices. "The experts think we are moving to a time of heavier but not surplus production, lower but not ruinous prices. They are counting on ample supplies of cheap feed and more efficiency by cattlemen to make it possible," the letter states.

Lower prices of beef and the expanding population will shoot up the demand for beef, the letter predicts further. The cattle industry is heading for an era of smaller unit profit, but a vastly expanded volume of business with higher total returns to the cattle industry, the letter stated.

Optimists among cattlemen think the strong demand for cattle by farmers who feed and fatten them for market may tend to curb too rapid expansion of breeding herds and stabilize the industry, the letter concludes.

Speaking of feeding costs, Stephen Marks, extension agricultural economist makes the following report dated Dec. 19 - Trading in Pacific Northwest feed grains was generally slow this week. Corn prices dropped 50 cents a ton from the previous week. Oats and barley unchanged. Eastern shipment No. 2 yellow corn was offered at \$54.25 to \$54.75 a ton on track at the cost. Dealer bids on No. 2, 45 pound corn ranged from \$50.50 to \$51 a ton but most sales were reported at the top of the quoted range. No. 2, two-rowed corn was bid at \$50 to \$51 a ton with full transit privileges. The same grade Willamette Valley White and Gray oats were quoted at \$49.50 to \$50 a ton on track at Portland.

No change was seen in alfalfa hay prices, according to the Dec. 19 report. Redmond area growers sold top quality hay at \$25 a ton and some held for \$27 a ton. Lower quality hay moved at \$18 to \$20. In the Klamath district good quality hay sold at \$22 to \$25 a ton from storage and \$17 to \$20 from the stacks.

Farm and Garden

Mistletoe Holds No Romance For Tree Farmers In State

From American Forest Products Industries.

The friendly, romantic mistletoe which hangs as a Christmas decoration in homes this month may serve as inspiration for many a Yuletide kiss.

Its forest cousin, however, a dwarf species, is a far cry from this "kissin' mistletoe." It is giving the kiss of death to millions of board feet of timber throughout Oregon, and tree farmers don't like it.

Tree farm foresters know this slow tree killer as a parasite that stunts and weakens pine and fir trees that are growing tomorrow's wood supply. They say it sinks root-like filaments into the branches or trunk of its victim, then feeds on the cambium layer - the thin layer of tissue under the bark - thus starving its host to death.

The tree attacked by this pest slows up in growth, its top dies and becomes a bare "spike," and often a tumorous "witches broom" or clump of tangled twigs and needles develops below the spike top. These "brooms" retard overall growth, reduce lumber quality and slowly weaken the tree. Many trees that are not killed outright by dwarf mistletoe are made vulnerable

to insects and other diseases.

To make the forester's job more difficult, the plant reproduces itself in an ingenious fashion by literally "shooting" its way into a new victim.

When ripe, its berries explode and shoot seed in all directions, sometimes for a distance of 30 feet. The seeds are covered with a sticky film and attach themselves to the bark of new trees which they may hit. They may also stick to the feet of birds and animals who then carry the parasite to trees not yet infested.

Timber Lost Here
In some areas, such as on the Rogue River National Forest in southern Oregon, more timber is lost annually as a result of dwarf mistletoe than is lost to insects, other diseases, storm or fire. H. C. Hopkins, the forest's staff officer at Medford, puts the loss at 45 million board feet annually on three of the forest's ranger districts.

Research foresters say that in one recent year 863 million board feet of timber were lost in the western states because of dwarf mistletoe - a figure roughly half that of the annual harvest by forest industries and tree farmers in Oregon's western pine region.

In addition to attacking ponderosa pine and Douglas fir, the parasite is found in such other commercial species as hemlock, white fir, larch and lodgepole pine.

E. L. Kolbe of Western Pine Assn., chairman of the Northwest Pest Action Council, said his group is giving increased attention to the dwarf mistletoe problem, both in research and in woods programs.

"Field foresters on both public and private lands are hunting out and marking infested trees - usually the older ones - for removal," he said. "This is having a telling effect in preventing the spread of the pest. Once we get rid of these infested sources, the spread of mistletoe will be greatly reduced."

Pruning Saving Measure
Tree farmers may save particularly valuable trees from

a mistletoe attack by pruning away infested limbs. But two or three prunings at two-year intervals may be necessary, for mistletoe seed can lie dormant for three to five years.

If the trunk of a tree is attacked, the tree must usually be cut.

Because pruning is slow and expensive, harvest of infested trees is currently the most practical large-scale control method. Research efforts are being directed toward developing techniques for fighting the pest with chemicals, biological agents and genetics.

Dwarf mistletoe likes a dry climate and attacks trees growing on dry sites. It is not often seen west of the Cascades, although it has infested some old-growth western hemlock in the Douglas fir region.

The dwarf mistletoe has great bunches of tiny, green berries, whereas the better-known "kissin' mistletoe" has larger white berries. The latter is found on junipers in eastern Oregon and on oaks on the west side from Wilsonville south.

Researchers point out that the dwarf mistletoe really has greater potential as a festive Yule decoration because it has so many more berries than its more popular cousin - sometimes over 400 in a bunch. After all, they point out, you get a kiss for every berry.

Butte Falls Farm Misses 4 Steers

Salem - Thirty-five strayed or stolen cattle from a dozen Oregon locations were reported Dec. 1 in the November estray bulletin issued by the Department of Agriculture's supervising livestock officer, Henry A. Matschner.

Eighteen steers, three heifers, three cows, seven calves, three horses, and one bull made up the list of animals reported missing. Largest single loss was registered by Delbert P. Ray, Chillicothe, who said he has missed seven calves bearing his brand since Nov. 13, from the Modoc Point area.

Mrs. Adita Carlon, Riley, reported the loss of six steers missing since Sept. 15. Mr. O. C. Boyd, Butte Falls, missing four steers; Don Corcoran, Burns, missing five steers.

Other losses reported: A. B. Lipinsky, Eugene, one Guernsey bull; J. L. Richartz, Milton-Freewater, one steer; Coos-Curry livestock auction, Bandon, three heifers and one cow; B. Walton, Long Creek, two bay geldings; Clara Carey, Prineville, one steer; Charles Hilkey, Gold Hill, one steer calf and one cow; L. M. Mauer, Cave Junction, one cow; and Bonita Ashenbrenner, Aloha, one black mare.

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Midwest Grain Influx Heavy

Salem - Between 3,000 to 4,000 carloads of Milo - not a kernel of which was grown in Oregon - is presently in terminal storage in Portland awaiting world-wide shipment, the State Department of Agriculture reported Friday.

Almost entirely from the Great Plains, these thousands of tons of milo, a grain sorghum, are being stored in Oregon under U.S. government direction for further transfer.

Almost equaling Oregon's wheat inspection, the division of grain inspection of the state department of agriculture reports 3,053, 286 bushels of milo inspected in November as compared with 3,505,251 bushels of wheat for the same period.

Other grains inspected in November include: barley, 2,323,321 bu.; oats, 67,955 bu.; corn, 76,160 bu.; and rye, 4,143 bushels.

Heavy movement under the government grain program was the big factor in setting new shipping records for Oregon in 1957, when 81.6 million bushels of wheat and barely

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4-H Club News

Sewing Basketeers
The third meeting of the 4-H Sewing Basketeers club was held at Mrs. Cox's home on Dec. 9. The meeting was called to order by the president, Susan Cox. Club members discussed many subjects and the possibility of getting a 4-H flag, how to make a needle and thread projects. Cookies were served for refreshments.

Sue Hunter, Reporter.

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Milk Production Reverses Trend, Economist Says

Corvallis - The downward trend in national milk production appears to be reversed, according to Stephen C. Marks, extension agricultural economist at Oregon State college.

Oregon's November output continued to lag behind a year earlier, Marks stated. Government owned stocks of dairy products are way down from a year ago.

Milk production in this country last month topped a year earlier for the second month in a row. November's flow showed the largest gain for any month since January. Several factors contributed to the increased output. Supplies of feed grains are at an all-time record level. Except for a year earlier, milk-feed price ratios last month were the most favorable in about 50 years of record, according to United States Department of Agriculture reports.

Feed Ratio Up
The butterfat-feed price ratio was up slightly from November, 1957 and equalled the same date in 1949 but otherwise it was the highest for the month since 1946. These favorable dairy product-feed price ratios encouraged dairymen to feed their milking herds record amounts of grains and concentrates.

Here in Oregon, the November milk flow totaled 75 million pounds - one million pounds less than last year and 7 per cent less than the November average for the past ten years. It was the lowest output for the month going back to 1940. Milk and butterfat-feed prices ratios were slightly less favorable than in November 1957, and Oregon dairymen fed slightly less grain.

November production figures on manufactured dairy products show national cheese output was up rather sharply over the same month last year. At the same time creameries churned moderately less butter.

Butter Production Down
Weekly butter production last month ran 50 per cent under the output of a year earlier in the south and north Atlantic states. The west churned about 15 per cent less butter while other regions held even with a year ago.

However, all regions made more cheese except the western states. Consumption of cheese per person is at a record high.

Meanwhile, government purchases under the dairy price support program dropped way below a year ago, Marks said. Not a single pound of cheese was purchased by the CCC in October and November. This, plus continued heavy movement of remaining cheese stocks from CCC warehouses into various outlets brought the United States Department of Agriculture cheese inventory down to zero for the first time since late 1952. As December started, uncommitted supplies of cheese, butter and dry milk still in the hands of the CCC were only 35 per cent as large as a year earlier. Non-fat dried milk made up the bulk of the surplus.

Soils Program Set For Area

A soils short course will be offered to farmers and other interested persons in southern Oregon starting Jan. 10, 1959, according to C. B. Cordy, county extension agent.

The course is sponsored by the general extension division and soils specialists of Oregon State college, Cordy said. It is designed to appeal to both those with no training in soils and those who have been studying soils in college, he explained. The course was recommended by the Jackson County Agriculture council and the county agent's office.

The course will make a study of basic soils more than the influence of fertilizers on crops, Cordy explained. Through the course the grower will get a background on basic types so he may know better how to apply the fertilizers, the county agent said.

Six Diseased Cows Condemned

Salem - Six head of cattle were condemned in Portland this week, according to Dr. William L. Searless, state department of agriculture supervisor of meat inspection.

Diseased animals will not get through the retail channels, Dr. Searless warned ranchers.

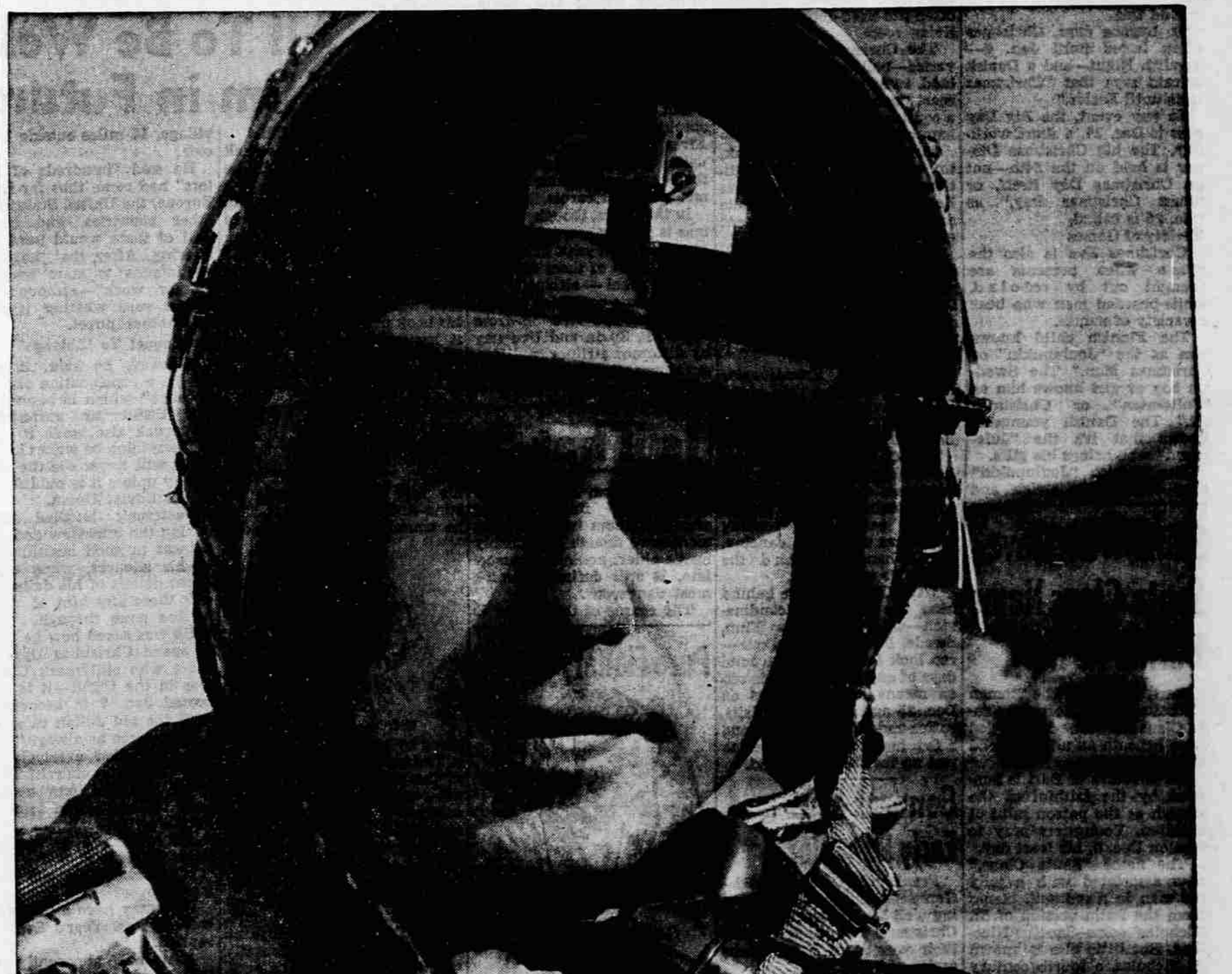
The animals were first detected in a Salem slaughter house by a state meat hired veterinarian. They were not allowed to be slaughtered. These animals were sold three times before arriving at a federally-inspected plant in Portland. This continuous follow-up of the diseased animals was made in cooperation with department livestock officers.

Before the new meat inspection regulations became effective in August, 1957, this type of animal was allowed to be sold by retail, Dr. Searless noted.

HOME OF THE FEE

Chicago - (UPI) - Domestic Relations Judge John Hershenston told John S. Fronzak, 34, Tuesday that he not only had to pay reasonable costs of his wife's Christmas gift buying, but also baby-sitter fees for their two young sons while she shops.

FORMS CABINET
Reykjavik, Iceland - (UPI) - Parliamentary President Emil Jonnsson formed a Social Democratic cabinet Tuesday.



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