

Two States, Institutions Have One Goal

SOC, Bar O Ranch Develop Plan of 'Group Dynamics'

By WILLIAM M. BLACK JR.

Half hidden in the pines is a small, one-room, red schoolhouse used as a part of the Bar O Ranch for boys.

Through the past year students and faculty of Southern Oregon college and the staff and boys of the Bar O Ranch in California, 14 miles south of the state line on Highway 199, have enjoyed and profited from their warm relations and together have worked toward a mutual goal of thinking citizens.

Many visits have been paid to the Bar O by faculty and students from SOC and several contributions of skulls and other specimens have been made to the science department of SOC from the boys of the Bar O.

Gene Post, superintendent of the Bar O Ranch, visited SOC in September, 1958, and obtained the part time services of Student Bennett B. Kilpack, a social science major. Post and Kilpack had worked together previously as probation officers in San Mateo county, California.

Program Started
Shortly after Kilpack was employed, an internship program in "Group Dynamics" was started with the cooperation of Dr. Frederick J. Trost, SOC associate professor of social science.

At the request of Mrs. Eris Gatlin, chief probation officer of Del Norte county, California, Dr. Trost served as screening officer for the project. Social science students from SOC will serve as in-training supervisors on week ends and holidays.

Supported by the counties from which the boys are sent by court order, and with additional subsidy by the state of California the Bar O Ranch is concerned primarily with juveniles ranging in age from 13 to 18 years. The boys are in custody for a period of not less than seven months and additional time may be earned for anti-social behavior while at the ranch. Furloughs may be earned by the boys if their conduct is up to the standards of the ranch.

Effectiveness Apparent
The effectiveness of the therapeutic community created at the ranch was readily apparent in the attitude of the boys toward Dr. Verne Blue when we arrived one Saturday morning.

The boys displayed a warm sincere interest in college and in college people. This has been nurtured through the efforts of the social science department of the college, Chairman Dr. Arthur S. Taylor, the science department with the cooperation of James R. Dawson and Dr. Franklin W. Sturges, and the student body that has made it possible for a student variety show to visit the ranch and entertain the boys.

Many visits from the faculty have been enjoyed by the boys. Visitors include Dr. Trost, Dr. and Mrs. Alva W. Graham, Dr. Blue, and Dr. Sturges.

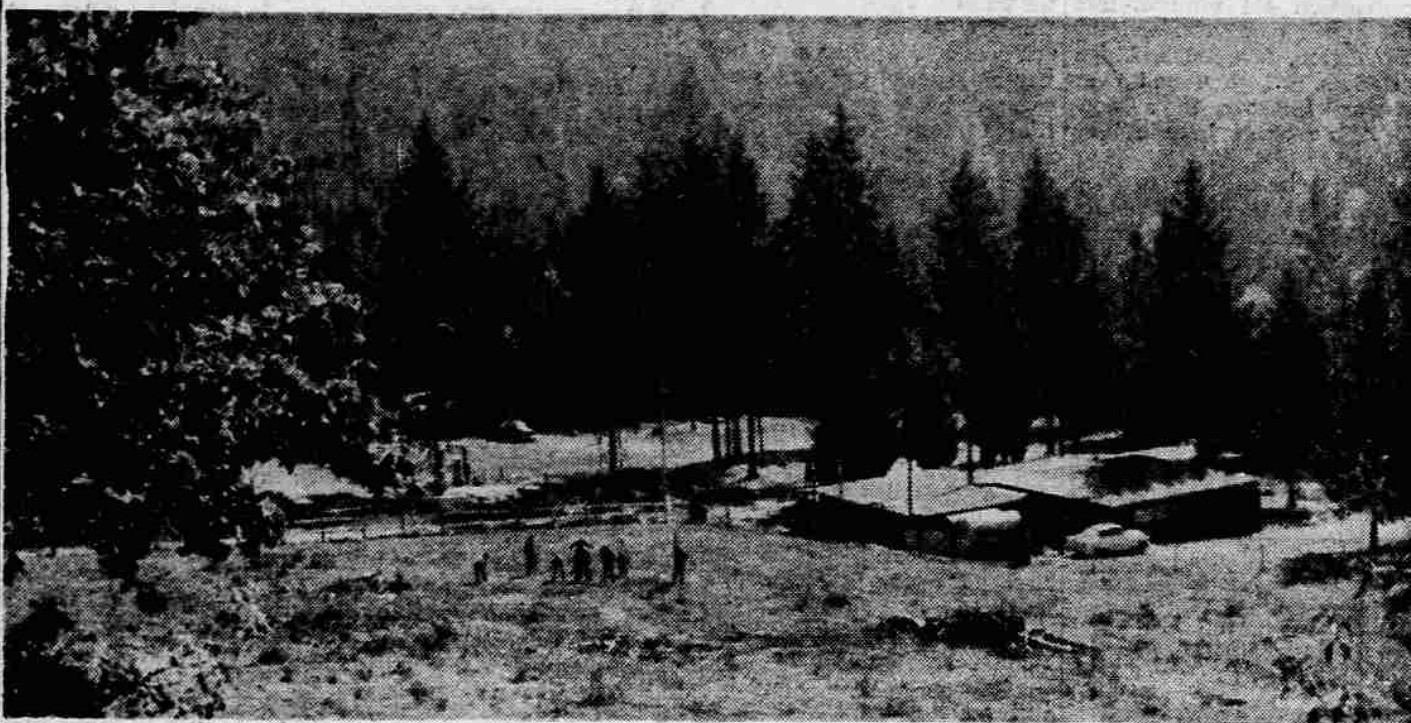
As a stranger I was immediately aware of the positive approach taken by the staff in dealing with the boys. It was fascinating to observe the flexibility of the staff: at one time the superintendent was cooking, the assistant superintendent was working on the diesel generator, and the supervisors teach and the teachers supervise.

Wives Share Program

The wives all share in the program and have equal authority with the men. Mrs. Larry Hoover has charge of the laundry. Mrs. Earnest Bachelor and Mrs. Fred McConnell the kitchen. Mrs. Gene Post the bookkeeping, and they all assist in the evening program for the boys.

Sharing lunch family style with the boys and staff I could feel, hear, and see many manifestations of the therapeutic community; the quiet grace with eager volunteers for the privilege of saying the grace, the unobtrusive warmth of the conversation between the boys and staff, which included the visitors.

At a nearby table, Carol McKewon, who was revisiting the ranch, was unintentionally creating a meal problem. Boy next to Kilpack at our table asked quietly, "Are all the coeds at SOC like that?" Kilpack answered, "No, not really." There was a moment of silent meditation and then



RANCH—Above is part of the Bar O Ranch along Highway 199 south of Cave Junction, showing the ranch's setting. The boys in the field in the foreground who live at the ranch through court order, are practicing football. The

ranch is for boys between 13 and 18 years old. Southern Oregon college and the state of California, along with staffs at SOC and the ranch are cooperating in bringing a "Group Dynamics" program to the boys.

the boy solemnly announced, "I still think I'll go to Southern Oregon college."

Following lunch the boys all crowded around the chart hung on the dining hall bulletin while the supervisors jotted down the points earned during the morning activities. One of the instructors explained the system of awarding so many points for attitude, efficiency (allowing for individual differences), conduct, personal grooming, school attitude and behavior, and performance of work details.

Remain in Barracks

If a boy does not gain the standard, which is a reasonable number of points, he has not earned the right to participate in the evening activities but must remain in the barracks under supervision. The boy who earns the highest number of points for the week has the privilege of being "Boy of the Week" and choosing a special dessert for one of the evening meals.

During the afternoon half-day recreation period, the boys spent their time conducting me around the camp, describing and boasting of the construction projects which they built during their regular half-day work program. Monday through Friday are divided with four hours of school and four hours of work details.

There was some discussion about which we should visit first—the animals or the swimming pool, the swimming pool won out. The pool is less than a quarter mile from the ranch proper.

Virgin Timber

The trail sloped gently through the still virgin timber and underbrush except for the last 50 yards when we descended the winding, limb banistered, dirt carved steps leading to a deep pool of crystal-clear water of the Smith river.

One of the boys proudly informed me that the entire trail, and crude staircase had been constructed by two boys as their personal work detail. The same boys also constructed the diving platform and steps leading up from the water. A group project was the construction of a cement foundation for the diving platform.

The remainder of the afternoon was devoted to a visit to the animal area where the boys and Dr. Sturges discussed trapping, plant life and animal husbandry.

Before dinner the boys returned to their barracks for shower time and personal grooming. During this period there was a lively discussion of the movies which they would attend that night. It was decided with the final vote by the supervisor that they would go to Crescent City.

Ingredients of Success

The acceptance of the boys by Oregon and California communities is one of the ingredients in the success of the ranch. In fact people in both Crescent City and Cave Junction have said, "The boys from the Bar O Ranch are better behaved in the movies or other community functions than some of the local boys."

After dinner there was much care and preparation made by the boys as they changed from the levis, worn at the camp, into their best clothes prior to boarding the bus for Crescent City. As they boarded the bus I couldn't help thinking that these boys looked "sharp."

While the boys were away at the show with one of the supervisors the rest of the staff held an informal meeting to discuss several cases and to review the week's program. The remainder of the evening was devoted to a



GENERATOR—Boys at the Bar O Ranch are shown getting a new diesel generator in place at the ranch. Those at the right have poured concrete for a base, while others move the diesel generator into location. Boys constructed the site, installed the power poles, and will build the enclosure for the generator. The generator will furnish electricity for the ranch.



REVIEW HISTORY—Boys at Bar O Ranch and visitors review the history of George Washington, a miner who lived on the ranch site for some 40 years, at the grave of Washington. From left to right facing the camera are Dr. Franklin Sturges, of the science department at Southern Oregon college; Mr. and Mrs. Harry Hoover, supervisors at the ranch; Dr. Verne Blue; Miss Carol McKewon, Bennett Kilpack, all of Southern Oregon college; and Fred McConnell, supervisor at the ranch.



GROUP DISCUSSION—Dr. Verne Blue, professor emeritus of Southern Oregon college, the University of Hawaii and the University of Oregon, is shown in one of the

question and answer session.

In answer to a question about the prime factor in the success of the ranch, Post said: "One of the most important things in the setting of the ranch is the size of the camp. The limited size of the camp enables the staff to obtain and maintain a close positive relationship with the boys."

Better Understanding

"This in turn," Post continued, "enables them to better understand the boys and their problems; and provides an atmosphere conducive to self-analysis so that when the boy leaves the ranch he is better prepared to fit into society in a positive way. The basic ingredients we like to have in a supervisor is warmth and friendliness and, in addition, an ability to be firm in his position of authority, and the stamina to work 60-70 hours a week."

Post added, "Most of the boys we get in the camp setting have serious problems but the profes, of learning

ships. They have never been able to adequately relate with authority. Their parents were often not the proper, firm, loving authority figures and were unable to give them enough consistent discipline which would enable them to maintain a satisfactory level of getting along with their peers and abide by society's rules and mores."

"But the qualities," Post said, "we want the staff to have, we feel, will assist the boy in achieving a positive relation with a mature adult figure which will enable him when he goes home, to relate adequately with other adults."

Shares in Care

Kilpack defined a therapeutic community, for the purposes of this program as "... a correctional setting where the total staff share in the care, observation and the beginning stages of treatment of the boys. By treatment I do not mean psychotherapy but the profes, of learning

decent manners, and aiding the boy to develop a wholesome attitude and set goals with alternate goals."

"The therapeutic community cannot exist," Kilpack continued, "without a staff that is prepared to share equally in all phases of this 'group-living' situation."

"For example, when we held a staffing at San Mateo it was to discuss a particular boy, or girl, in the San Mateo county juvenile hall, every available staff member was present. Many times a cook, custodian, or housekeeper had a view and insight that the supervised staff was lacking. We exchanged methods of handling a given case. This same approach is utilized by the ranch. There is no caste system among the staff."

'Duke System'
Post broke in to add, "In many institutions the boys in essence run the institution. In the profession this is called the 'Duke system.' When the ratio of boys to staff members is too great there is no alter-

native but to adopt the 'Duke system.' The mentally and physically strongest boys are the 'Dukes.' They run the show and allow the staff to appear in charge."

"We do feel," Post continued, "that if this is going on, nothing of a therapeutic nature can take place. One of the reasons we have such close supervision is to prevent such a 'Duke system.' One of the main differences that is readily seen and felt between a 'Duke system' and a therapeutic community situation, which we have in the Bar O Ranch, is if you were to visit one of each you would find, if you could stay long enough, these differences: the 'Duke system' fosters a tense, anxious, delinquent atmosphere; the therapeutic community allows a warm, relaxed, secure atmosphere."

Police Ranch

Sunday morning the boys busied themselves with the usual tasks of policing the ranch area and caring for the animals. These jobs finished, most of the boys followed Dr. Blue into the fields where he held a group discussion.

Group discussion is a variation of "Group Dynamics." Both are a process through which the boy may obtain a better understanding of himself, the group and the world around him by a structured discussion led by a competent instructor. This process has been utilized in San Mateo, Ashland, and will be presented this academic year in the Medford High school.

Through the general extension division, Oregon state system of higher education, and with the cooperation of Southern Oregon college, a course titled SSc 407, Seminar: Group Dynamics, will be offered in Medford. Kilpack will instruct the course under the supervision of Dr. Trost. There is a strong possibility that the same course will be offered this winter at Brookings.

Early Experiences

Upon termination of the group discussion, Dr. Blue led the group to the grave of George Washington. Blue talked to them of his early experiences in what is now the Bar O Ranch.

Blue came to the area in the spring of 1903 when the area was the mining claim or possibly squatter's property of George Washington, a Civil War veteran. This territory was one of the wildest in the west in the 1890s when Washington first came to this area. It was a region given over to miners, principally placer miners.

Washington enjoyed the hunting, trapping and fishing in an area inhabited, besides the random miners, by mountain lions, bear, deer, smaller animals like bobcats, foxes and rodents.

In the course of his remarks, Dr. Blue said, "As a most important afterthought, which should have been put at the very beginning, George Washington's grave is in a sunny corner of this small mountain meadow where he lived for some 30 or 40 years. It is still cared for surrounded by a white picket fence marked by a headstone giving his age, his service in the Civil War in the Ohio company in which he served."

'Would Be Pleased'

"I should like to think," Blue said, "that George Washington would be pleased to see what has developed from his isolated, personal mining property into the home that it is at present and the purpose which it is serving."

While the boys returned to the barracks for a quiet hour of reading, letter writing and recreations, Post discussed the future of the Bar O Ranch. Post credited the far-sighted board of supervisors for much of the ranch's progress.

The future is seemingly bright due to the efforts of Senator Collier from Yreka who represents Del Norte county in the state legislature and successfully sponsored a bill making it possible for the Bar O Ranch and similar institutions to construct buildings with "boy labor" with unlimited financial ceilings.

This clears the way for the

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proposed building program to provide better facilities at the Bar O Ranch.

Another agency which has helped in the past and has benefited by the efforts of the ranch is the U.S. forest service. During the past year the boys at the Bar O planted 9,000 Ponderosa pines and cleared 10 miles of trail.

Post said, "We are particularly fortunate in having the student internship program and the positive relationship with SOC. The camp committee has set aside from their budget an amount sufficient to partially reimburse the students for their travel from the Ashland area to the Bar O Ranch."

As we prepared to leave the Bar O Ranch the boys surrounded the car and peppered us with friendly good-byes and invitations to visit them again. There were a few last minute requests for information on rock hunting, and catalogues from various colleges.

14 MAIL TRIBUNE, Medford, Or. Sunday, Oct. 11, 1959



IN CLASSROOM—Jack Webb, teacher at Bar O Ranch, is shown in the classroom. Half the boys attend school in the morning, and the other half in the afternoon. The half not in school work on the ranch. The boy's day is equally divided between the classroom and work.

Public Hearing Set On Boundary Shift

A public hearing on the petition to shift the Harry White property on the Rogue river from school district 6C to district 35 has been called for Nov. 3.

County Judge Earl M. Miller, a member of the Jackson County School District Boundary board before which the hearing will be held, said the board agreed last Wednesday to call it on that date.

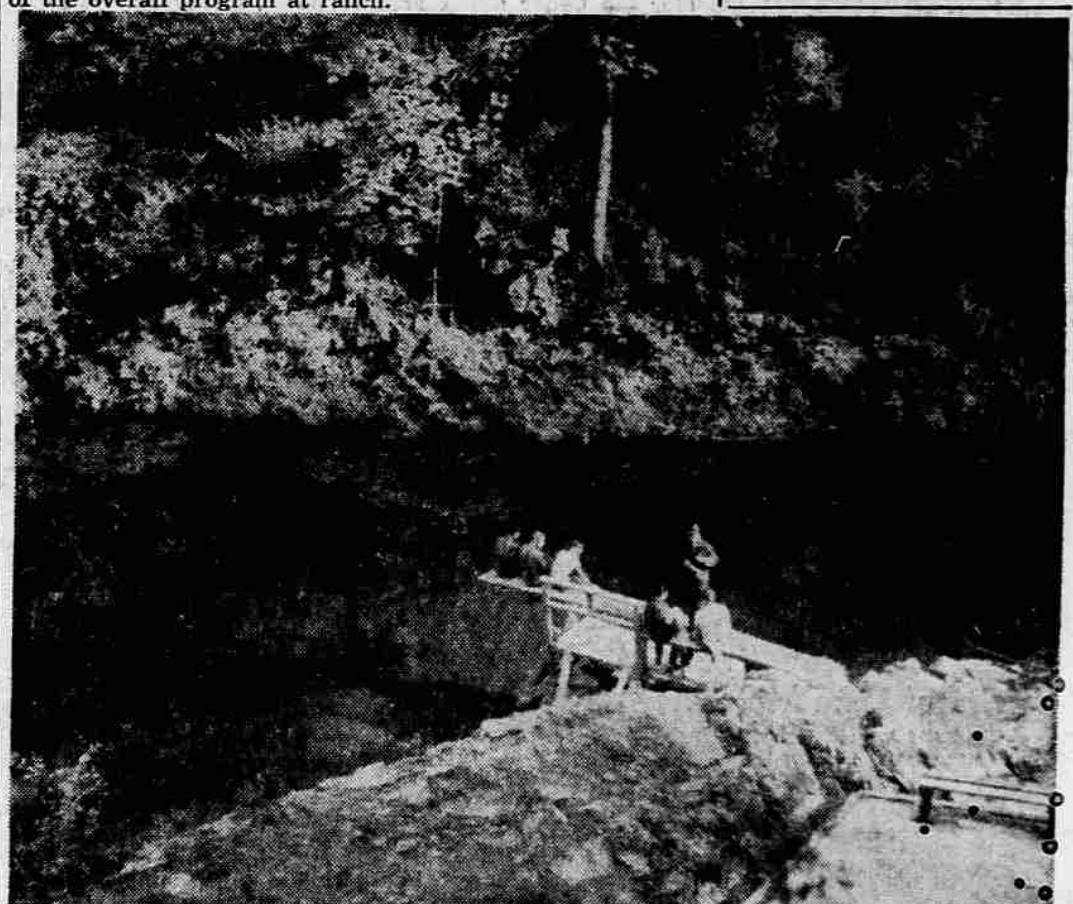
A part of the White property is under consideration as a possible state park site. Judge Miller said he was taking steps to see if this project would be possible.

The petition, initiated by the Jackson County School District Reorganization committee, has been under consideration for some time.

The Whites, it is understood, oppose the shift.



COUNSELLING—Jack Webb, staff member at the ranch who also teaches, is shown in an individual counselling session with one of the boys. Individual counselling is one phase of the overall program at ranch.



SWIMMING POOL—Boys at the Bar O Ranch are shown at the swimming hole on the Smith river, where they constructed the concrete platform for the diving board, the board itself and the trail leading to the pool. Across the river and to the south of the rustic ladder visible through the brush, the boys man trap lines.

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