

Seven Letter Writers Interested In the Past, Present and Future

What are they like, these people who write letters to the editor?

In answer to this question The Mail Tribune today presents pictures and sketches of six of the most frequent contributors to the Communications column. A seventh, who lives in California, answered a letter and apologized for not having a photograph on hand.

Albert Kissinger, who often writes of outdoor life and mining, has lived in this area since 1912. Of his early life and interest in writing, Mr. Kissinger reported:

I came to the Rogue river country in June 1912, by boat from Los Angeles, to San Francisco, then by train from the old Ferry building at the foot of Market street. I was traveling with a friend who was returning to Woodville, Ore., where he had been the year previous when the name was changed to Rogue River. While living at Los Angeles, I worked part time in the "stuffing" department of the Los Angeles Daily Times. Between jobs, I read a great deal, especially western stories from Jack London, author of outdoor books and short stories written about Walter (Death valley) Scotty, then a famous character who thrilled his listeners throughout all the west.

After getting employment for the summer, I moved on a homestead two miles from the town of Rogue River in September 1912. By that time I was living near neighbors and getting acquainted with many gold prospectors and miners from Gold Hill to Grants Pass, including old Alaska "sourdoughs".

The gold mining industry lasted up to the time of the beginning of World War I. In the meantime I had done some placer mining on upper Grave creek, as well as learning to trace colors for "pockets" and do some hard rock mining.

Around 1916 I wrote a front page mining story for the Gold Hill News about using the old pack trail over the Pleasant creek and Slate creek divide to Grave creek and meeting many old placer miners of a former era when gold dust and nuggets were all cashed as legal tender at

all banks. In the years from 1912 to 1917 such mines as the North Pole at Rogue River, the Braden quartz mine at Gold Hill, and the Millionaire quartz mine on Blackwell hill were all operating and producing various amounts of gold.

Another promising quartz gold mine was the Nellie Wright mine near the foot of Blackwell hill that became flooded with water; it remained idle from then on. A mine on Sardine creek named Lucky Bart was one of the well known producers for a number of years, too, as well as the Sylvanite gold mine on the river three miles from Gold Hill. I could go on and on describing the numerous smaller "one man" mines worked. Just by a rough estimate I would say, that the gold pockets found in the western half of Jackson county out numbered the gold quartz mines five to one.

The placer mines were in order next, rating third place. I would say my first writing exploits started back in Kansas before finishing the eighth grade when literary and debating societies were all the rage through the long winter months. Before finishing the twelfth grade, I wrote country correspondence for a weekly newspaper, then afterwards I spent one summer slinging type by hand for the same small town weekly newspaper as well as writing a short story occasionally.

The lure of the mountains took me to the Rocky mountains of Colorado where I got my first real experience in minerals and "roughing it" in Boulder county before going out to the Pacific coast a few years later.

Since coming to Oregon a lot of water has gone by the mill. At one time I met and talked with scores of miners and prospectors of the several mining districts of Southern Oregon. Today - well I still know of several of them left that recall the happy-go-lucky attitude of mind that prompted each of us to seek for the "golden fleece" we never found. As a closing word I will venture to say there is even more gold in the ground yet, than has ever been taken out. As we ponder over the

ever enchanting hills, a vivid recollection of familiar scenes calls to us to keep on searching as of yore.

A serious interest in politics and government prompts Ray O. DeMarrs to write letters to the editor. Mr. DeMarrs, a barber, says he believes that more subscribers read the Communications column than any other section of the paper.

"I feel that there are many of us that do not keep up with every day political events," the letter-writer said. "In fact, we have the attitude that I need not be interested because what can I do about it and I will leave it to some one else to take care of. I try to be informative for those who can do something at voting time.

"I believe in the rights of individual freedom, and the Constitution of the United States. I have had to fight to retain the rights to these beliefs. Thus, I do not take them for granted." Mr. DeMarrs is married and has a son and two daughters; the family home is at 708 West Second street.

Pearl F. Spackman says she "tomboyed" through her childhood and this quality still pervades her letters to the editor and her outlook on life. Mrs. Spackman, who admits to being in her 70's, beats a willing and rhythmic drum in the little orchestra which rehearses at the Senior Activity center and is one of the most vocal supporters of the Medford Fifty Plus club.

Mrs. Spackman, a native New Yorker, reports that she was adopted as a child into a family which did considerable traveling and that she learned to fish, boat, ski, hunt and climb mountains. Now that life is less filled with physical activity, Mrs. Spack-

Installation Set By Relief Corps

Central Point - Installation of officers will be held at a meeting of William Harrison post, Women's Relief Corps, to be held Tuesday, January 19, at the home of Mrs. Wallace McDowell, 321 North Third street.

Three Chapters To Hold Sessions

Three chapters of PEO Sisterhood will hold meetings this week.

Chapter BE will meet Tuesday, January 19, at the home of Mrs. W. E. Hercher, 1608 Stratford avenue, at 7:30 p.m. Miss Dorothy Wilson will be assistant hostess.

Mrs. Allan F. Perry will present the program.

Chapter CP will meet Wednesday, January 20, at 12:30 p.m. at the home of Mrs. S. V. McQueen, 2136 Hillcrest drive. Mrs. George Roseberry and Mrs. Allen Smith will assist.

Also meeting Wednesday is Chapter CG, which will meet for luncheon at 1 p.m. at the home of Mrs. R. C. Beatty, 1798 Myers lane. Mrs. C. E. Chamberlain and Mrs. J. A. Grigsby will be co-hostesses.

Mrs. Fletcher Fish, state corresponding secretary, will be a guest.

man plays the harmonica and drum, sketches, writes and reads to fill her hours.

The Spackmans live in Jacksonville and Mrs. Spackman says that the Oregon hills remind her of her native state. She came here from San Antonio, Tex., where one of her activities was teaching Sunday schools. This lively writer of letters to the editor ended her sketch by saying that she is growing old - ungracefully.

Long Writing Career
F. J. Clifford's writing career dates back to about 1925 when he lived in the Portland area and contributed to magazines, newspapers and trade journals. This lover of the outdoors came west from Michigan in 1901 because he could not resist the stories of the wide open spaces, the big rivers and lakes and "the sweet scent of the pines."

Mr. Clifford knows that there is much to be learned from nature if man but knows how and is proud of the fact that he was the first person to put on recording tape "the talk of the buffalo." He visited Montana and Wyoming several years ago and made his recordings on the Flathead Bison preserve. He firmly believes that the bison communicate quite efficiently with one another through their "language of grunts."

The Medford man is also interested in the trumpeter swans and made recordings of their calls on the Malheur bird refuge in central Oregon.

Keenly interested in every day happenings, Mr. Clifford grew an Oregon Centennial beard last year and is still wearing it. Dressed as Indians, he and Mrs. Clifford went to Cave Junction for a Centennial celebration staged there and came back with a blue ribbon won for their costuming. Both enjoy music and Mr. Clifford recently helped to organize a vocal quartet and reports that the membership represents all ages since "the man on the opposite end from me is only 22."

Mr. Clifford believes that in opening its columns to letters from its subscribers, the Mail Tribune is performing a real civic service. He commented that the paper is most generous with space, even though "some letters hit the waste basket" and added "I appreciate very much the indulgence of the editor in printing so many letters from readers." Although the communications often air views on controversial matters, the letters also "soften animosities," he said, and "keep a finger on the public pulse."

Writes in Verse
"You ask me why I write," responded Mrs. Delbert Casey. "I enjoy writing and have ever since I was in grade school. I used to go to the Howard school and they printed a paper about once a month and I always tried to have a poem to be published in it. I always was happy when the mothers would tell me how much they enjoyed them. If I happened to be sick, and missed having one in a publication, it gave me real pleasure to hear how much my poems were missed. I have a book of poems that I wrote as a child."

"I took a big chance at sending my first verse to the Mail Tribune. I do not consider them my best, as they usually go along with the

news of the day.

"My husband and I have been in church work for 13 years. He built the church here in 1949 and I named it The Church in the Pines as it is surrounded by many tall pine trees. My husband was ordained in 1947 and I in 1951. Our church in non-denominational, and independent."

Ashland Resident

Everett Acklin, a long-time Ashland resident, operated the first taxi in that town and still recalls "that old Reo" with affection. He recalls that about 200,000 passengers rode in the Reo and his other early model cars - people from every state of the union and many foreign countries. Mr. Acklin believes that he must have driven two or three million miles since the first learned how to operate a car.

The Ashland man now works as a house painter, and often weaves his letters to the editor around some incident brought to mind by his work. He adopts "the light touch" in his letters and leaves some of his readers with the impression that his "krazy monkeys" have more sense than the men who inhabit the earth.

Californian Writes

An out-of-state contributor to The Tribune's Communications department is C. M. Goethe of Sacramento, Calif. Asked for a picture and a background sketch, Mr. Goethe wrote "A bald-headed elderly man of 85 is hardly as photogenic as a glamorous Hollywood starlet."

Interested in ecology, national parks and the outdoors in general, Mr. Goethe covers these subjects in his letters to the editor. He credits much of his interest in these and other subject to his mother, who was a northwest pioneer.

"My mother pioneered in the Pacific Northwest when she visited her sister in the days when there were no railroad - in fact, no roads," he wrote. "She travelled by Indian canoe. Through the years the impact of her stories to me as a wee laddie have been tremendously deepened. There is so much about Oregon, your beautiful country - Medford, Crater Lake Na-

tional park, the university at Eugene and the nearby fossil flora (there is a ginkgo now) perweight on my desk now) the group at Corvallis with which I have been working in eugenics and the building for a better family life - that have continuously deepened my respect for the way in which The Medford Mail Tribune molds Oregon public opinion. Its influence has been tremendous and has been always for the good. Perhaps a man up a tree or at a distance senses this with exceptional clarity. I have an exalted opinion of the work you are accomplishing year after year with the Medford Mail Tribune."

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