

Contests Staged by Big Firms Said Growing in Popularity

By HENRY J. BECHTOLD
UPI Financial Editor

New York (UPI)—What are people doing to fill the vacuum created by the absence of television quizzes? Many are entering contests, a hobby that is second only to stamp collecting.

Contests have been big business for 20 years and are getting bigger every day, according to Stanley Arnold, president of a sales and marketing consulting firm bearing his name.

This year alone dozens of blue-chip companies will hand out prizes totaling \$100 million. It is estimated that 20 million Americans attempt at least one contest every year. One of the biggest individual takes to date is \$375,000, won by a 48-year-old California housewife.

All-Time Champs Arnold noted, however, that with the number of corporations staging large-scale national contests with local tie-ins on the increase, no one merchandiser can expect the mammoth responses of a few years ago.

"Live the Life of Riley" and Borden's "Name the Twins of Elsie the Cow" contests, with 2.3 million and 2.9 million entrants, respectively, broke all records. But with so many sponsors competing for competitors now, 500,000 for any single contest is considered good.

Despite diminished returns to the individual manufacturer, this form of sales and merchandising stimulator continues to attract more and more national promotions. In 1959, the last full year for which figures are available, there were some 650 major national contests. Counting all sizes, national and local, there are about 5,000 every year.

There is no way of closely estimating what the 1961 total will be because details are kept very secret during the planning stage, according to Arnold, a veteran contest-creator himself. Often this is carried to the point where even within a company contest plans will be known by a code name so that as few people as possible will know about them.

Arnold claims that 1961 will be bigger than ever because sales goals are bigger and competition is tougher. Contests are most common when goods are plentiful and competition keen, he said. Expenditures in 1958 were up

25 per cent, in 1959 up some 20 per cent, and 1960 appears to have increased in about the same proportion.

Reward for Ingenuity

There will be a greater premium on ingenuity this year, less emphasis on cold cash, Arnold stated, adding that prizes that are too lavish may even defeat themselves. "Too much of anything, even money, is poor taste," he declared.

Total expenditures, nevertheless, will be huge. Some experts believe that no national contest can be successful on less than \$100,000 for advertising alone. A major firm may spend up to \$3 million for advertising, promotion and prizes.

These investments are worth it though, according to Arnold. He noted that in the first year of Piel's "Treasure Island" contest, supermarket sales rose 27 per cent, and in the second year there was a further increase of 23 per cent.

More Soap Contests

About 60 per cent of the contests apply to items sold in supermarkets—food, drugs, tobacco, household products. There are more soap company contests than any other, Procter & Gamble alone have run more than 150.

Beyond 1961, Arnold sees



WATER EXPLODES—This is how UPI photographer George Biley and his glass of water reacted to an explosion which shook buildings and rattled windows throughout Boston, Mass. Police switchboards were swamped with calls from frantic residents. Evidence pointed to a "sonic boom" blast caused by a jet plane. (UPI Telephoto)

Area Jaycees May Sponsor Pageant

A proposal for joint-sponsoring a Miss Rogue Valley Pageant is being presented to area Jaycees by members of the Medford Junior Chamber of Commerce.

Three Medford Jaycees—Ted Litchfield, Michael Smith, and Douglas Peters—presented the proposal to the Eagle Point Jaycees last week. The four Jaycee clubs contacted in reference to sponsoring the pageant would be Ashland, Medford, Eagle Point, and Grants Pass. They report that most clubs have indicated interest in the project.

Litchfield said the co-sponsoring would give more girls

an opportunity to compete in the beauty contest. The winner of the Miss Rogue Valley competition would compete at Seaside for the Miss Oregon title.

Medford Jaycees also reported that six members of the Grants Pass club were recently initiated by several Medford Jaycees at special ceremonies held at a Grants Pass drive-in restaurant.

Initiated were Bob Oden, Dick Ross, Paul Allie, Dennis Chriss, Roger Blomberg, and Marvin Boyd. Participating from Medford were Everett Peyton, Ted Litchfield, Bill Tope, and Douglas Peters.

About 45 persons attended the ceremonies.

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PROPELLER CHECKED—Arnold Otto, left, and John Beckett make a check at Sunnyvale, Calif., on the propeller of the ram-jet hot air machine Beckett has invented to drive frost off of orchards and truck crops. The tank is 38 feet long and holds 1,000 gallons of fuel for two jet engines which whirl the blades and creates hot air. Beckett spent seven years perfecting the machine and plans to license construction and sales of the machine in the future. The ram-jet engines have no working parts. (UPI Telephoto)

FISHING BOAT CAPSIZES
Yokohama, Japan (UPI)—Ten fishermen still were missing today after their boat overturned Sunday about 100 miles south of here in the Pacific. The Japanese Maritime Safety

agency said a patrol boat was searching for the missing crew members of the 135-ton vessel "Azuma Maru." Fifteen members of its 25-man crew were picked up by another fishing vessel.

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