

A Lesson

When the Harold Smith family moved to town 13 months ago, they had a mixed reception. Some people, at first, tried to make life miserable for them.

Others went out of their way to try to be kind and helpful. The fact that the Smiths are Negroes accounted for all the fuss.

Now, after 13 months, all the fuss and disturbance and excited and sometimes venomous talk, seem almost laughable, in retrospect.

They are leaving town this week, and there are many, surely, who will miss them. Mr. Smith's colleagues at the weather bureau, where he compiled an excellent record, and made many friends, will miss him.

Mrs. Smith's friends in their church, where she was active in the choir, will miss them. So will those who worked with the children's story hour at the library, in which Mrs. Smith participated.

So will the neighbors, who found the Smith family to be good citizens, fine people, and warm friends. Little Robin, aged 4, was herself responsible for a lot of this friendly neighborhood feeling.

At first, some of the neighbors allowed themselves to be scared by the old wives tales about property values declining, and so on and so on—all the old, familiar, hateful stories that are based on the discredited theory that one man is better than another because of the color of his skin.

But they learned differently. And the latter part of the family's stay here was marked with little more than the calm and friendly acceptance which is brought about by familiarity and understanding.

The asinities of racial prejudice die hard, sometimes. But they do die, if people keep their heads and hearts.

Our good wishes go with the Smiths. They will soon be arriving in Kingston, Jamaica, British West Indies, where Mr. Smith has been assigned to a highly responsible position as the sole U. S. weather bureau representative.

He will handle some technical training duties, inter-governmental liaison, administration, and other chores, with the imposing title of supervisory meteorological technician.

It is a challenging job he faces, one he has earned through his own ability, and we wish him well.

Thus is a lesson learned. Medford for long had a reputation as a town where Negroes are "not accepted"; as a "sundown" town, where colored people are "moved along."

Perhaps we are beginning to grow out of this ante-bellum provincialism. Perhaps a few more of us are ready to accept people for what they are, in heart and soul and mind, rather than by the color of skin or hair.

Let us hope so, at any rate. For, with the shifting tides of population it is inevitable that people of races and colors other than Caucasian will become our neighbors over the months and years ahead.

Let us hope that, in addition to being neighbors, we can also learn to look on them as friends.

Simplifying Taxation

One of the editorial writers on the Eugene Register-Guard comes up with an excellent question. Why, he asks, should we continue to measure our property tax liability in mills, when it would be far more understandable to do so in simple percentages?

A mill, he points out, is one-tenth of a cent, but probably fewer than 1 person in 10 understands that a 1-mill change in his property tax is the same as a change of one-tenth of 1 per cent—or that a tax rate of 100 mills is the same thing as a 10 per cent tax on the assessed value of his property.

It is confusing, to say the least. (We still remember, with discomfort, one time when a decimal got shifted one digit the wrong way, and a tax story came out 10 per cent off in its figures.)

The Guard writer adds: "Why don't we do here in Oregon as some other states have already done? Why don't we measure our property tax rates in terms of percentage? Why not go a bit further and make these rates applicable against market values rather than some arbitrarily selected fraction (the "assessed valuation") of those values?"

"Adoption of simpler tax computation systems would have one important effect, we're sure. Citizens hollering about their taxes would then have a fairly good idea of what they were hollering about. There might be less hollering, as many of them came to realize that they were paying less, in valid percentage terms, than they thought they were paying under big two-figure or even three-figure millage rates."

There may be some valid reason why property taxation should be clothed in complicated obfuscation, involving millages and assessed valuations—instead of simple percentages of true value.

But if there are, we don't know what they are. And we join with the Guard in feeling that anything which makes taxation simpler, less complex, and easier for all of us to understand, is all to the good.—E.A.

Dennis the Menace



...AN THEN YA LOOK UP AT THE SKY AN' YELL 'OH, NO!'

Communications

Letters to the Editor must bear the name and address of the writer, although under certain circumstances the use of a pen name or initials for publication is permissible. The Mail Tribune reserves the right to edit all letters with a view to clarification and condensation. Letters submitted for publication must not exceed 400 words. The letters printed in his column do not necessarily represent the views of the paper, in fact the contrary is often the case.

The Cost of Poetry To the Editor: Noted a recent article in the Tribune, announcing an adult evening school class teaching poetry. This is a fine hobby, and it is spring when the rash breaks out. But to teach it at the taxpayers' expense lacks pertinence—taking for granted there is a cost. Surely a more important study could be found, even for adults—better yet, direct this effort to youngsters who need extra instruction.

Gene Malby, 4069 Pacific Highway So. Medford. Editor's note: This class is not taught at taxpayers' expense. It is financed by tuition fees charged those taking the course. The same is true of other courses in the adult education program. If any class lacks enough members to support it financially, it is dropped from the curriculum.

Speak Out To the Editor: It is my opinion that if the press of this nation (including the Mail Tribune) would speak out against communism as vehemently as it has against such anti-Communist groups as the House Un-American Activities Committee and the John Birch Society, the people of the Free World would be more assured of their chances of remaining free.

Glenn A. Archibald 534 DeBarr ave, Medford. Proud of Footlights To the Editor: Recalling that we did not enjoy the movie version of "Glass Menagerie" some years ago, we were reluctant to attend the recent Footlights play. Then, overcome by curiosity as to what a little theater group could do with such a psychological drama, we attended and were unduly impressed.

Cheryl Bulger's interpretation of the shy, crippled daughter was outstanding. In her scenes with the mother, her voice, glance, twisting hands, all gave that impression of half-fear and half-love she felt for this overly dominant force in her life. The performance was sensitive to a fine degree.

The monologues, tying the scenes together, were very effectively done by Alvin Reiss. The taxing role of the mother was well done by Betty Lu Foster.

The warmth and outgoing nature of the "gentleman caller" was well expressed by Dr. Laurence Ware. Glen G. Foster, the director, did an excellent job of this and I think the people of this area can be proud of our Footlights.

Mrs. Elizabeth E. Miller, Trail, Ore. Pear Blossom Parade To the Editor: As the marshal of the recently staged 1961 Pear Blossom Parade, I would appreciate the use of your letters column to express a word of sincere thanks, not only to the financing bodies that made the parade a possibility and to the hundreds of participants, but also to the Medford Police Department for their assistance and cooperation; the members of the Junior Chamber of Commerce who so ably assisted in the lineup and marching progress of the many units; to the volunteers from the Rogue River Council 1584, Knights of Columbus, who patrolled the parade route to lend a hand if necessary called, and most especially to the bands.

The young people who comprise the bands from Central Point, Medford, Talent and Phoenix deserve the largest round of applause. They added the zest that every parade requires to make it a parade.

Overheard many many compliments ranging from comments on uniforms; costumes for the occasion; their deportment; their stirring marches and extraordinary performances and for the fact that they took their time on a school holiday to bring that added color to our parade. To their directors and to every young man and young lady in each of the bands we give a rousing cheer.

My job in this year's festival did not bring me in contact with every phase of the operation but we certainly do feel obligated and thankful to each and every one who helped to make 1961 an outstanding Pear Blossom Parade year.

Lastly, to the Mail Tribune, and in the boldest of type, THANKS for an advertising job well done. Bill Dugan Medford.

Taxes To the Editor: A lady's remarks concerning taxes in Communications a short time ago brought to mind the following poem in the scrap book which shows that taxes were a popular topic 50 or so years ago:

Tax the people, tax with care, To help the multi-millionaire. Tax the farmer, tax his fowl, Tax the dog and tax his hovel. Tax his hen, and tax her egg, And let the bloomin' mudsill beg.

Tax his pig and tax his squeal, Tax his boots, run down at heel. Tax his horses, tax his lands, Tax the blisters on his hands. Tax his plow, and tax his clothes, Tax the rag that wipes his nose.

Tax his house and tax his bed, Tax the bald spot on his head. Tax the ox, and tax the ass, Tax his 'Henry', tax his gas. Tax the road that he must pass, And make him travel o'er the grass.

Tax his cow, and tax his calf, Tax him if he dares to laugh. He is but a common man, so Tax the cuss just all you can. Tax the lab'r, but be discreet Tax him for walking on the street. Tax his bread, and tax his meat, Tax the shoes clean off his feet.

Tax the payroll, tax the sale, Tax the hard earned paper kale; Tax his pipe, and tax his smoke, Teach him gov'ment is no joke. Tax their coffins, tax their shrouds, Tax their souls beyond the clouds. Tax all business, tax the shop, Tax their incomes, tax their stocks. Tax the living, tax the dead, Tax the unborn, 'ere they're fed. Tax the water, tax the air, Tax the sunlight if you dare. Tax them all, and tax them well. Tax them to the gates of hell. But close your eyes, so you can't see, The coupon clipper go tax free. (Don Lupton, Denver Post) Nellie Rose, Route 2, Box 103 Jacksonville, Ore.

BUYS FAMOUS SIGN New York (UPI)—The nearly 300-year-old signature of Button Gwinnett, a Georgia signer of the Declaration of Independence, sold for \$6,000 Tuesday. The signature, which appeared on a colonial deed dated March 11, 1773, was purchased by the Carnegie book store here.

Laotian Soldier Dislikes Death; Wishes Both Sides Would 'Take War Elsewhere'

By PHIL NEWSOM UPI Foreign News Analyst The Laotian soldier has shown a marked distaste for violent death.

In this, he displays a characteristic common to most intelligent men. But in a nation wracked by civil war, with great issues between two bitterly opposed philosophies, he also shows no great desire to inflict punishment on or to subdue his enemies.

In the administrative capital of Vientiane, along the muddy Mekong River, life goes on as if there were no war less than 40 miles to the north.

Despite reports of fierce clashes, the war itself seems a haphazard affair involving a few pieces of artillery, some outmoded airplanes and sporadic clashes over such unlikely places as Van Vieng, Phnom and the Plain of Jars.

In Vientiane, the saffron robes of hundreds of Buddhist monks mingle with the drab uniforms of Laotian soldiers.

Along the banks of the Mekong, meandering now among sandbags in the dry season, Chinese merchants pull back their metal grills just before the city dozes again in the hot midday sun.

There is no confusion, no soaring prices, no black market. In this there seem significance.

Except for a minority on either side, neither the Western democracies nor the Communist have been able to export their opposing philosophies successfully to Laos.

The Communists would like it by conquest, using as their instrument the hard-core native Pathet Lao.

United States aid to Laos over the last few years now hovers around the billion dollar mark.

Its purpose has been twofold: First, to supply arms and training to the Laotians to permit them to defend themselves against aggressive communism; second, to build a free society which of its own accord would choose to align itself with the democracies.

But to build a free, self-governed and ordered society takes time, and that time, in Laos and many other of the world's underdeveloped lands, is not yet here.

The Communist nations realized years ago the value of propaganda and infiltration among peoples whose freedom still was far in the future. That is why, when the freedom did come to nations of Asia and Africa, trained, native Communist leaders were ready for their assignments.

As for the native of Laos, he just wishes both sides would take their war elsewhere.

Poll of G.O.P. Delegates Finds Majority Against School Aid

By LYLE C. WILSON Washington (UPI)—There is a long and fact-filled letter in Republican National Committee files that would help Republic a n members of Congress make up their minds on party policy toward President Kennedy's school aid bill.

It would help them make up their minds that the Republican party is against it. The letter was written to Sen. Thurston B. Morton, R-Ky., in his capacity as party chairman. The author was Dr. Ernest L. Wilkinson, president of Utah's Brigham Young University.

Dr. Wilkinson was vice chairman of a resolutions subcommittee which considered federal aid to schools during the Republican national convention last July. Sen. Gordon Allott, R-Colo., was chairman of the subcommittee.

Wilkinson reminded Morton that the subcommittee voted 7-4 against any federal aid. He implied that the subcommittee's point of view was denied a fair hearing before the full resolutions committee and by the convention itself.

Moreover, Dr. Wilkinson, himself an educator, holds that federal aid to schools is dangerous and useless nonsense. He offers facts and figures in support of his point of view. These seem to be sufficiently solid to warrant discussion, refutation or proof by interested members of Congress.

So distressed were Dr. Wilkinson and some other members of his subcommittee by the maneuvers of Allott and others to commit the Republican party to federal aid, that they decided to poll all convention delegates. Dr. Wilkinson reported to Morton the poll results.

Of the 1,331 delegates to the Republican national convention, 840 responded to the poll, more than 63 per cent. Dr. Wilkinson wrote to Morton:

"These (840) replies show that only 3 per cent favored and 98 per cent were against federal aid to school teachers' salaries (1 per cent not voting). Of even greater significance is the fact that the majority of responding delegates in every state voted decisively against both federal aid for teachers' salaries and school construction."

Dr. Wilkinson said the ballots were intact and were available for inspection and audit. He alleged two basic objections to the Kennedy administration program:

—Neither schools nor teachers need federal aid because local communities can deal with the diminishing problems.

—The federal treasury cannot afford the proposed spending.

We have been trying to work up a proper degree of concern and indignation about the John Birch Society, and have not so far made the grade.

The Society may well be the menace it is being painted to be. We remember a fellow who laughed at Joe McCarthy.

But the Republic has stood off the Soviet Union since 1945 and, with considerable help, whipped two sets of Fascists plus Mussolini's Legions more or less simultaneously in the period immediately preceding.

It lived through the Know-Nothings, the Klan, the Silver Shirts, and the aforementioned McCarthy, and will, from all indications, also survive the Citizens Councils.

We are experienced, as a nation, with crackpots and authoritarians. If the John Birch Society is not about the nearest to impotent of the lot we are, as a newspaper, a good way wide of the mark.

It has been alleged that the John Birch Society is a hate group, hence dangerous. Certainly it is made up of people who know how to hate, and who enjoy the sport. But they are also, and more profoundly, people shaken to their being by fear.

Whether the founder (who girded for his present large responsibilities in his brother's candy factory) knows it or not, the John Birch Society is built upon the proposition that mankind is doomed, and that there is now time only for a desperate rear-guard action.

The Society is convinced that all forces of change are exclusively in the service of the Kremlin, and that they threaten the civilized world at every point of contact.

What we have here is a fellowship of fear. In its articles of faith, the Society resembles nothing so much as one of those sects which have from time to time taken to the baseless and sealed up the cracks around the door in the conviction that the world would end at 5:27 a.m. a week from Thursday.

Consider the men and things which the John Birchers or their founder have already conceded to the Communists: They include the President and his predecessor; the Supreme Court; the nation's city managers; the urban renewal advocates; the proponents of fluoridation; the United Nations.

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Editorial Comment

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These people don't need

condemnation. They need help.

They need, each of them, a quick course in American history, a heart-to-heart talk with a trustworthy friend and then, perhaps, a good long rest.

The evidence is that John Birchism is incurable, but we can try.

Nor does John Birchism seem to us to be contagious. The presumption on which the organization has been viewed so generally with alarm is that it is a virus likely to infect innocent people.

All of the evidence we've seen indicates that the people already had the virus, and have simply gotten together to share its miseries.

We suppose that there may be people in meaningful numbers willing to take the oath of allegiance to an outfit which is willing to forfeit the American system of government for something the John Birchers call, quite gratuitously, "the American way of life."

But we doubt that there are many men of sound mind willing to accept the collateral dictum that Dwight Eisenhower is a Communist.

To the extent that they have done anything, except to each other and to themselves, the John Birchers seem to us to have performed a substantial public service.

They have elicited their fellow Americans to the existence on the far, far right of the political spectrum of people every bit as confused, troubled and willing to be led around by the nose as their opposite numbers on the far, far left.

The Society also has provided an interesting litmus test for some of our noisier politicians. Senator Eastland, for example, has just spoken well of them.

Until they move beyond their present activities, which appear to consist pretty exclusively of whipping up each others' hysteria and of occasionally slandering men so eminent as to be substantially invulnerable to such attacks, we think the John Birchers more a nuisance than a peril.

If we must have people willing to believe in the things the Society stands for, we may as well have the Society.

The existence of such a group is bound to cut down on the number of Birchists running around unencumbered by the label, and thus likely to be mistaken for responsible citizens.—Pine Bluff (Ark.) Commercial.

Try and Stop Me

By BENNETT CERF

ZSA ZSA GABOR, the maverick of the TV circuit, was asked if it was the proper thing for a girl to return the ring after she broke an engagement. "Definitely," pronounced Zsa Zsa without hesitation. "She should return the ring immediately, but keep the diamond, of course."

Goody Ace, probably the highest paid script writer in TV (something like \$8500 a week), once loked for peanuts in a network's radio department—and was overpaid at that, because they seldom accepted a line he had written. "If ever an atom bomb falls on this town," he blurted suddenly, "it's me for the 15th floor of that outfit. That's one place there's never any radioactivity!"

Goody, who likes horse racing, once named the warm weather months as June, July, August and Aqueduct. Persuaded to bet one day on a hopeless long shot, he told his wife Jane later, "I got a tip this nag would walk in, and I must say he tried to."

Joe E. Lewis ran into an old punch-drunk fighter pal who's struck it rich. He now can afford to wash his ears with Hollandaise sauce.

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