



# Small Worlds Around Us

By LYNN M. WATKINS

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### 'Violet Night Queen' Heron Stranger To Most of Us

Salt water splashed against the side of the canoe as it nosed its way among the tangled roots of the mangrove trees. There, on a bush just ahead, was a common but seldom seen water bird—the yellow crowned night heron.

He was an adult bird attempting to balance himself on the very top of a mangrove tree whose upper branches were much too limber to support his weight. He kept up the silly balancing act so long it must have been a source of amusement to him. He probably didn't even actually intend to come to rest on the small twig. He kept his wings going constantly; he was getting plenty of exercise without really going anywhere.

He was so intent on his gymnastics he paid no attention to our close approach. Because of the isolated nature of the place, he was unaccustomed to human presence. He showed no fear even at the gentle click of the camera shutter as we snapped several pictures.

**Plenty of Company**  
Neither was he alone in this wild place, as far as other herons were concerned. Nearly every other tree held one or more of the birds, all more or less intent on whatever it is herons amuse themselves with during their leisure time. Their period of fishing was still several hours away for, true to their name, night herons do all their fishing after the day-feeding birds have retired for the night.

Mixed in plentifully with the yellow and black crowned herons were many other members of the clan. There were little snowy egrets, the taller and larger American egret and several varieties of smaller herons. All knew this isolated

region as home. The casual visitor to the beach, or even to the wilder areas of swamp, river or bay-side, is familiar with many members of the heron family. Nearly everyone knows the little snowy egret—the one said to wear "golden slippers" because its feet and legs are bright yellow—and the American egret with its black legs. And frequently, one sees, too, the largest of them all, the great blue heron. But the night herons are strangers to most of us.

**Conspicuous Members**  
There are two conspicuous members in this group, the black crowned and the yellow crowned. The yellow crowned is the more beautiful. The male has two perky feathers attached to the top of the head and pointed backward, and a bright yellow dash or bar—on even round spot—just back of each eye.

When disturbed, or when informing some other heron member of its presence during the darkness, the crowned heron utters a peculiar call—a call exactly similar to what many people call the bird: "quawk." And "quawk" is exactly what it cries. The heron utters this peculiar call, at times while in flight, usually only once and once only. People in seaside homes or in locations where night herons live often hear this call in the night, and in some instances attribute it to some mysterious creature calling in the darkness. It is a strange bird which calls but once, and is then silent.

As we watched this interesting bird balancing itself on the tree-top, it was pleasant to remember that someone with a flair for the romantic named the yellow crowned night heron "the violet night queen."

### Unique Requests Made of Manager

New York —UPI—A hotel manager learns never to be startled by odd requests.

A woman guest asked Joseph J. Van, manager of the Edison hotel, if it would be okay for her to clean her own room and make her own bed. She explained she'd never traveled before and would feel more at home if she, rather than a chambermaid, would do those chores.

# Try and Stop Me

By BENNETT CERF

IN KANSAS, they seem to relish the story of a small town wife who accompanied her husband to Topeka for a cattlemen's convention. She wore a home-made blouse of which she was inordinately proud, for on it she had embroidered every cattle brand she knew.



A politician named T. Fenning Dodswoth once was foolishly enough to pick a fight with London's brilliant critic and essayist, Sir Max Beerbohm. Sir Max destroyed him with a piece that concluded, "Mr. Dodswoth now has stood for Parliament in every sort of constituency, but fortunately, for everybody but himself, escaped, every time, the evil of election."

Later this same Dodswoth wrote a series of articles for a London weekly. The relentless Beerbohm commented, "Its circulation is plummeting by leaps and bounds."

Tony Randall tells about a teacher in Las Vegas who informed an 8-year-old student, "I gave you 100 this week in arithmetic, my boy." "Great," enthused the student. "And what do you say we let it all ride on the next test?"

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# The Family Council

Editor's note: The Family Council consists of a judge, a psychiatrist, three clergymen, three editors and a women's editor. Each article is a summary of a family disagreement presented to the Council. The Council deals with problems, major and minor, encountered by guidance counselors and social workers. Edited by Mrs. Alma Denny. (Copyright by General Features Syndicate)

**Jane Y.** — Now that I've found a place in the suburbs, he's backing out.

**Edgar Y.** — We have no children and I don't want to have to pay school taxes.

**Jane Y.** — We've been married 22 years and it's about time we settled down. Ed is a sales manager and wherever his territory was, that's where we pitched our tent, or rather our furnished rooms. But now he's a vice president in charge of sales and has a permanent desk in New York. So we agreed to sink our roots in a charming Westchester village, and I've just found a cozy split-level cottage, with a garden and even a small brook on the property.

The price is right, it needs no repairs, and we get a headstart on furnishings because broadloom carpeting and draperies are included. Ed is wavering, however, because he's heard of new assessments coming up. So what? They'll make our property more valuable. I want to close the deal now.

**Edgar Y.** — I like everything about the house Jane selected except the town. And it's not the people, it's the building program. We seem to have hit the worst timing from the tax viewpoint. They are just starting on a major renewal program and a big hike in real estate taxes is in the works. I'm sure we can find something just as attractive in a location which has its big improvement drive behind it already. Give me a neighborhood where the new schools and playgrounds were put up a few years ago, so I know where I stand. In this place, surprises — unpleasant financially — are likely to be sprung on me every year. And I'm selfish enough to reason that since we have no children we won't be getting any benefit from the fancy schools.

**The Council:** To paraphrase Sir Walter Scott's lines in "The Lay of the Last Minstrel," breathes there, the home-owner who won't see red when taxes go up on the old homestead?

Resign yourself, Ed. That Utopia you seek with "its big improvement drive behind it" doesn't exist. Ever hear of "obsolescence"? It used to mean a gradual wearing out, a slow falling into disuse. Neighborhoods could remain unchanged for generations, but these restless times insist on speed-up. Roads get detoured into highways and freeways. Ball parks become sports arenas. The village green turns into a botanical garden. No matter where you settle, renovation and innovation will be in the wind, and the burghers will pay up. As a taxpayer, the most you can hope for is a voice in decisions and a fair return in enjoyment and enhancement of your holdings.

Assume you find a locale all "schooled up." Won't they be needing a new hospital, new mental health clinics, a

new jail perhaps? Even though your own children, Ed, won't be using the school, the young folks who are growing up around you will. Always there's the hope that by forking out funds for the youngest citizens, we won't have to spend as much later for correctional and remedial institutions.

Buy your house, Mr. and Mrs. Y. And be glad that your tax dollar is going into buildings that "build," like schools. Both the structure and the young folks they shelter can add to the beauty of your surroundings.

### Showdown Talks Called in Strike

New York —UPI— Federal mediators today called for a showdown meeting with publishers and printers in the two-week-old newspaper strike.

If the talks scheduled for today fail to produce significant changes on deadlocked issues, the mediation sessions probably will be called off until January, according to the chief mediator in the dispute which has shut down nine dailies.

Stephen I. Schlossberg, special assistant to the director of the Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service, said Thursday he will propose an indefinite recess unless there is "some change of attitude" today.

Both sides denied responsibility for the lack of progress. There has been little change in position since the walkout began Dec. 8. The printers' demands amount to a package of \$38 over a two-year period against the publishers' offer of a \$9.20 package. The strike has idled 20,000 employees and taken 5.7 million papers a day from readers.

### Reward Offered in Racial Dynamiting

Birmingham, Ala. —UPI—Gov. John Patterson has offered a maximum state reward of \$1,000 for the conviction of persons who threw a dynamite bomb into a Negro residential area from a moving car.

Other donations from the city's two newspapers, a civic group and a private citizen, boosted the total reward to \$5,000.

The dynamite damaged the Bethel Baptist church and four homes last Friday night and showered glass and plaster on a group of children practicing a play in the church basement but no one was seriously hurt.

### Science Foundation Grants Go To Reed

Portland —UPI— Reed college has received three grants totaling \$188,300 from the National Science Foundation. The money will be used to finance summer institutes in mathematics, chemistry and experimental psychology for high school teachers.

### Religion in America

# Many Arduous Christmas Tasks Have No Part in Savior's Birth

By LOUIS CASSELS

UPI Correspondent

Keeping Christ in Christmas is uphill work. Even the most devoted Christian is apt to find himself caught up at this time of year in costly and time-consuming activities which seem to have nothing to do with the birth of a Savior.

He may feel that it would be far more appropriate to spend this season in quiet and reverent reflection on God's wondrous gift.

But as a member of human society, he is involved willy-nilly in its customs. He cannot ignore the card-sending, gift giving and other secular trimmings of Christmas without hurting the feelings of his family and friends.

What can he do about it? Short of withdrawing into a monastery, the only solution may be to do what the church did when it initiated the celebration of Christmas, about 16 centuries ago.

**Date of Festival**  
At that time, Dec. 25 was a pagan holiday widely observed in the Roman empire as the festival of the sun god. It was then, as now, an occasion for gift-giving, feasting and general revelry.

The church "Christianized" the holiday by inaugurating a special observance called "Christ's Mass" in honor of the birth of Jesus. No one knew then, nor knows now, the actual month and day of Jesus' birth, so the church was free to choose an arbitrary

date for the celebration.

Many of the customs which grew up around Christmas during the ensuing centuries were, like the holiday itself, pagan traditions invested with a new Christian significance.

Thus evergreen wreaths which now symbolize the Christian hope of eternal life were taken over from Britain's Druids who used to deck their halls with boughs of holly to provide shelter for woodland sprites threatened by wintry frosts.

**Teutonic Origin**  
Decorating Christmas trees in honor of the Christ child is a legacy from the Teutonic tribes of northern Europe, who worshiped sacred oaks before they were converted to Christianity in the 8th century.

If the modern Christmas has become "paganized" again, the obvious remedy is to repeat the historic process of Christianizing the folk customs of the season.

Take gift-giving, for example. As practiced between the relatives, friends and business associates, it may be nothing more than a selfish and ostentatious exchange of luxuries. But gifts can also be given as an act of love, in the spirit of Him who said, "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these My children, ye have done it unto Me."

**Can Be Chore**  
By the same token Christmas cards can be a annual

chore, grudgingly undertaken to avoid social ostracization. Or they can be a way of touching hands with old friends across the miles and years. It all depends on why they are sent — and how much love they convey.

Christmas hospitality, like gifts and cards, can be extended to those whom we count on to reply in kind. But it is also possible to share our Christmas feasts with the poor, the lonely, the unloved. "Behold, I make all things new," said the King of Kings (Rev. 21:5). Any human activity — even the modern Christmas — can be transformed by the spirit of Christ into something good and beautiful.

### SATELLITE DEAD

Washington —UPI— The Navy's new Transit 5A navigational satellite has gone dead, apparently because of trouble in its power supply, the Defense Department announced Thursday. The satellite was launched Tuesday from Point Arguello, Calif.

### MAIL TRY FAILS

Racine, Wis. —UPI— Because he has been in the United States from China only a few days, Hank Lem, 19, wasn't sure how to mail a letter — but he tried. He went to a street corner, pulled the lever on a box and 10 fire trucks roared to the scene.

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### PP&L Employees Honored at Dinner

Two employees of Pacific Power and Light company were honored for several years of service at a dinner at Kim's restaurant this week. Honored were S. E. Ditsworth, who will retire Jan. 1, and O. C. Silver, who will go on a leave of absence Jan. 1, prior to his retirement later in the year.

About 175 co-workers, retired employees and guests attended the dinner. Ditsworth was first employed by the company in 1923 in the Prospect area. Fifteen years ago he was transferred to Medford as lineman foreman. He has been with the company for 39 years. Silver was first employed by the company in 1930. He has served as superintendent of the central stores department for the past 24 years, completing 32 years of service.

### City Employee Hit By Car Early Today

A Medford city employee, Earl Cooper Moore, 69, of 26 Hawthorne st., was struck by a car early this morning at Sixth and Front sts., according to city police.

Moore was examined for possible injuries at Rogue Valley hospital and released. Driver of the car which struck him was Frank Charles Woolley, 20, Ashland. Woolley was cited for failure to yield the right of way to a pedestrian.

When the accident occurred about 7:05 o'clock this morning, Moore was in the process of collecting coins from city parking meters. He was taken to the hospital in a police patrol car.

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