

Betancourt, Due in Washington Tuesday, Veteran of Political Strife

Caracas, Venezuela — (UPI) — When President Romulo Betancourt of Venezuela lands on the White House lawn in a helicopter Tuesday, he will have reached Washington the hard way.

En route, he has tamed a political volcano and done it in his own way, in his own time. Few presidents anywhere have survived the combination of forces and stresses which have hammered Betancourt in four years of struggle to make democracy work in Venezuela.

First Trip Abroad
Betancourt has triumphed largely on the strength of his own wit and will, without succumbing to the temptations of iron-handed rule.

Betancourt's trip to the U.S. — the first leg of a

state tour that will also take him to Mexico and the Dominican Republic — marks the first time he has strayed beyond Venezuela's borders since taking office on Feb. 13, 1959.

His visit to Washington returns one President Kennedy made to Venezuela in December, 1961. Kennedy received at that time what was up to then the biggest public reception of his political career.

The simple fact that Betancourt can leave his own country, perhaps one of the United States' most strategic and psychologically important "cold war" allies, is proof of his confidence in the strength of the democratic foundation he has laid.

Betancourt was elected to office by trade unions and peasant groups. He since has

welded them into a potent and militant political force of 1.2-million members. Their support has enabled him time and again to ride out political storms in four years of efforts by the right and the left to oust him.

Not Tool of Military
He has governed with the support of the armed forces, but not at any time allowed himself to become a tool of the military.

It is for labor and the peasantry, traditionally ignored in 150 years of independence during which Venezuela was ruled almost constantly by dictators, that Betancourt has done the most.

Fortified lately, although not at the start, by nearly \$13 million in U.S. alliance for progress program funds, Betancourt has initiated an

ambitious land reform project that so far has given nearly four million acres of land to 53,000 peasant farmers.

In his government the number of persons attending schools has risen by 44 per cent, the number of teachers

by 47 per cent. His regime has built 1,322 schools, nearly double the total built in the preceding 54 years.

Through the first years of his regime were marked by economic recession — unemployment reached 12 per cent and the nation's economic growth slowed to less than one per cent a year — the economy now is showing signs of recovering.

Annual Growth Rate Seen
A recently announced four-year development plan foresees an annual growth rate of seven per cent and the reduction of unemployment to four per cent.

At the same time, Betancourt has taken steps to diversify the economy. During his reign the country's first steel mill — Latin America's second largest — has been put into operation.

Agricultural production is

up nine per cent from a year ago and is expected shortly to take a larger role in national income.

All of this is "insurance" against the day, if it ever comes, that Venezuela's oil riches fade away. The country is today the free world's No. 1 oil exporter.

Survived Four Revolts
What Betancourt has done and is doing has been accomplished despite tenacious efforts to unseat him. He has survived four major military revolts in four years. He also

has been subjected to heavy pressure from outside. In June, 1960, the late Dominican strongman, Generalissimo Rafael L. Trujillo, engineered a plot to assassinate him. Betancourt escaped with his life, but he bears the scars of the plot on his face and hands.

More recently, Betancourt has seen Cuban Premier Fidel Castro try repeatedly to topple him through subversion and even through actual training of anti-Betancourt underground terrorists.

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A Lo-Fi Fellow

Attractive Girl Assembling Hi-Fi Kit Depresses Dick West

By DICK WEST
Washington — (UPI) — One of the most depressing things that has happened to me recently was

meeting an attractive young girl named Sharon Henderson. Ordinarily, I do not find attractive young girls depressing.

Under certain circumstances I might even find them stimulating. But Miss Henderson is different.

Miss Henderson is building her own hi-fi system. Better she should spend her time making opium pipes or in some other comparatively harmless pursuit.

I was introduced to Miss

Henderson by a representative of Harman-Kardon, Inc., one of those electronics firms that market hi-fi kits for assembly at home.

Harman-Kardon selected Miss Henderson to demonstrate its point that women can put together a hi-fi kit as well as men. Miss Henderson told me she is getting along beautifully with her kit.

"There's nothing to it," she said. "Just follow the book and you can't miss."

I suppose the nearest I ever came to a nervous breakdown was the time I purchased a kit that purported to contain the components of a stereo amplifier.

There were about 5,000 loose parts that theoretically fitted inside a metal cabinet scarcely larger than a cigar box. I finally abandoned the

project after discovering that I had soldered a rheostat to my wristwatch.

This experience automatically made me resent Miss Henderson's competence, but that was not what caused my depression. The broader implications of her hobby were what I found disturbing.

I am referring to the sinister possibility that hi-fi addiction, which already has transistorized a large segment of the male population, will now become prevalent in the previously immune female of the species.

If so, civilization as we have known it is dead.

Already, it is nearly impossible to attend a party that isn't dominated by a bunch of sound system buffs wooing about their tweeters.

This customarily leads to a demonstration of the host's machine, particularly the prowess of its volume. The true test seems to be whether it can shatter a flower pot in the adjoining room.

For a lo-fi fellow like me, the only refuge is to join in conversation with the ladies. And if Harman-Kardon and Miss Henderson establish a trend, even that escape hatch will be closed.



Small Worlds Around Us

By LYNN M. WATKINS
(Register and Tribune Syndicate, 1963)

Nothing Could Look Worse Than Last Year's Bird Nest

Few things, or even people, could look much worse for wear than a last year's bird nest. This expression represents just about as low a point of decrepitude as could be imagined.

Over the years we have coined many expressions that speak poignantly of an unkept or run-down-at-the-heel condition. We say an object, or a person is "coming apart at the seams," "coming unglued or unhooked," or looks like the "breaking up of a hard winter."

But few things, even at their worst, could really look as messy as an unmade bed or a last year's bird nest.

The overwhelming majority of people probably have never seen a newly built bird nest for these objects are carefully obscured by leaves, or hidden in some out-of-the-way place. Once the nesting season is past, and the concealing foliage has fallen, the nest becomes visible. Then the analogy between the messiness of an unmade bed and the abandoned nest becomes glaringly evident.

A Little Pathetic
There is a great deal that is more than a little pathetic about these now untidy objects of grasses, sticks, strips of bark, straw and mud. Once, for a single season, in the golden days of summer, it was the birthplace of a little family; a few tiny bird-children that were very dear to a feathered couple were born in that structure.

Like a very old house that is now abandoned and in a sorry state of repair, whose family has long since departed, the bird's nest, too, was once inhabited; around it, and in the fabric of its form, are woven many memories. Like

the old house, the bird's nest, too, was where the children were born; joys and troubles were shared there, inside those now crumbling walls.

Sadder, too, if possible, is a last year's bird nest, on the bare branch of a tree after a snowfall, its untidiness hidden; it now becomes a small mound of white. That melting snow will later cause a soggy mess in the old nest.

Reduced to Dust
The mud will drip away; the small sticks will detach themselves, fall away and become lost and brittle on the earth. All the elements of Nature will align themselves against this now useless object. The rain will come, the frosts of last winter and the winds will tug at the loose nest. Time itself will work to reduce this small structure to dust.

Like the "breaking up of a hard winter," the nest, or the very old house, will fall to wrack and ruin. Those who were born there, or those who loved it and shared its shelter, are gone; maybe they have forgotten it, too.

The old nest has served its purpose. Last year's bird nest was intended to be a passing thing, a nursery for a single season. The parent birds did not build it for the ages. Man really doesn't build for the ages, either, in spite of the boast that he does. All his efforts, too, are in vain.

In a relatively short space of time in Nature's calendar, a few decades at best, his most magnificent structures will fall to wrack and ruin. In but a little time, as time is measured by the hand of time, his buildings will look but a little better than a last year's bird nest looks the second year.

Condemned Slayer Shipley Granted Stay To Appeal Case

Salem — (UPI) — Condemned slayer Larry Shipley, 21, Friday was granted a stay of his Feb. 28 execution date by the Oregon Supreme Court.

The stay was granted to allow Shipley's appeal to the U. S. Supreme Court. Shipley was convicted of slaying a 16-year-old girl.

The American Civil Liberties Union had announced earlier that it was appealing Shipley's case.

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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 Corp.)

Harry U. — I'm finished handing out gifts to that bunch.

Nettie R. — Don't be hard on them. They're thoughtless kids.

Harry U. — This does it. Here it is February and not a word of thanks from my Connecticut cousin for the Christmas present I sent. Out of the 30 out of town friends and relations I mailed packages to, he and his wife are the only ones who haven't bothered to acknowledge theirs. I know they received it, because I have the return receipt. And this isn't the first time they've shown no appreciation for my pains. They ignored my wedding gift to them and a birthday token for Mal.

Now that a baby is due I've decided to show them how I feel about their carelessness. There'll be no contribution from me, even though this will be the first baby in the next generation. Too bad its parents have no manners.

Nettie R. — I know my brother is particularly hurt by Mal's silence, because he and Mal were best friends as kids and he still feels the old affection for him. Maybe it's because I don't mind getting the same treatment. I figure that's their way. They're really nice kids. But either they don't follow the rules of etiquette, or else each one thinks the other sent the card. I know that sometimes happens with me and my husband. We wouldn't want anyone to drop us because of that.

I won't let Mal's oversight stop me from giving them a baby present. I'm sure there's a good explanation. Eventually we'll hear from them.

The Council: As Nettie says, there's surely a good explanation for such cavalier behavior on the part of this young couple. A blunt, if cynical, one would be that this is their way of saying, "Go ahead and give. If you want to be a sucker. But if you insist on a thank-you, we'd rather not have you give us anything."

Since there seem to be no occasions when these cousins can meet face-to-face for a verbal acknowledgement, a written note from Mr. and Mrs. Mal is a must. It can be as brief as one word: thanks. But it should go off promptly

through the same post office that brought the gift. This dictum comes whole-hog out of the etiquette books, as well as out of a normal person's sense of decency. In flouting it, Mal and his wife (particularly the latter, since social correspondence is a traditional duty of the distaff side) are making their feelings eloquently clear. Their silence speaks loud. It says, "Dear cousins, Please get lost!"

In sending this pair presents repeatedly, despite their failure to notify him of their receipt or of reaction to same, Harry has given them "over-time" benefit of the doubt. His next, and final, package should be a big gift-wrapped box of nothing. He won't mind getting no thanks for that! Strangely, however, it may evoke his first thank-you note from Mal. It will read, "Thank you for nothing!"

It's true that one doesn't bestow presents for the sake of thanks. A gift is a symbol of friendship. One uses it to say I like you and I hope this brings you some pleasure. But if there's no response at the other end, where is the friendship? It takes two, just like in a tennis game. Here Harry kept on serving, long after Mal walked off the court.

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