

The Medical Roundup

by *Walter Alvarez*

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The Hospitalized Child

I am pleased with an article by Dr. Willis J. Potts, pediatric surgeon of the Children's Memorial Hospital in Chicago, in which he objects to the thoughtless cruel treatment of little children in hospitals because of a too strict attention to rules and regulations. Dr. Potts tells of a boy of four who, one night, had to be rushed to a hospital for an emergency operation. As he says, "For some ghastly reason, the doctor refused to let either of the parents stay with the child" during the next few days. The doctor maintained that the boy would be better off if left alone, and this in spite of the fact that the mother had been a trained nurse. She begged to be allowed to stay and help care for the child, but she was refused. Worse yet, she was allowed to be with the boy for only two hours a day.

What happened was that this sensitive child cried himself into exhaustion every day and every night, and as a result, he left the hospital emotionally injured. Dr. Potts says that today, four years after this terrible experience, he still has nightmares, and cries out in his sleep. He will not go to bed unless someone is in the room with him; he refuses ever to be separated from his parents; and he is haunted by a growing fear of being left alone.

Many a child has had this sort of experience, in many hospitals all over this country. It would indicate that in some institutions, rules that have come down through the years mean everything, and a little kindness and understanding to a frightened child seem to mean nothing.

Period Extended

Dr. Potts says that for years, hospital visiting hours have been limited to one hour a day, and this still holds for many children's wards. Fortunately, in the hospital in which Dr. Potts works, the period has been extended to from 10 in the morning to 7 at night. This permits mothers to stay a while, and it allows fathers to visit their children after their return from work, and this the children love.

It used to be the attitude that if mothers were allowed in a hospital, they would "clutter up the place," and would interfere with the nurses' work; but this turned out not to be true. Actually, the nurses found it was rather handy to have a mother around to help bathe the

child; to feed him and perhaps to change his diapers. But Dr. Potts says that in many places, it is still going to take some time to break down the old prejudices of superintendents and head nurses against adequate visiting hours.

Many and many a time I have been distressed when patients of mine have told me that when their child was operated on, he had to go up to the operating room all by himself. Neither parent was allowed to go with him, or to stay with him until he was under anesthesia. Such unkindness to children is unnecessary.

I can imagine that many medical people will say, "But you can't have a non-medical person in an operating room where everything has to be kept sterile." My answer is, "You could start the child's anesthetic in his bedroom, or better yet, you could give him a dose of some strong barbiturate that would cause him to fall asleep quietly and without fear. Or you could let the mother go up with the child to the operating - room floor and there have the anesthetic started in a room reserved for this purpose. There, the mother could hold the child's hand."

No Memory
Actually, two years ago when I had a big operation, I was given so big a dose of a barbiturate when I was in my room that I now have no memory of going up to the operating room, and I have no memory of being given an anesthetic.

The great trouble, as I have found it in this world, is that people generally want to cling to some old method of doing things. They are extremely distrustful of ideas that are new, even if one can show them that it will make their work much easier and more satisfactory.

Thank goodness that now in many hospitals, kindly superintendents and head nurses have taken charge - people who are kindly and eager to earn the good will and gratitude of all the sick people and their relatives who come into the place. They want good public relations, and they are getting them.

Many persons have a tendency toward migraine without ever having had a severe attack. You may learn a great deal about how to recognize and avoid migraine headaches by reading Dr. Alvarez' booklet on the subject. You may send for it by enclosing 25 cents and a self-addressed, stamped envelope with your request for it to Dr. Walter C. Alvarez, Dept. MMT, Box 957, Des Moines 4, Iowa.

Major Legislation in Congress

Washington - (UPI) - Status of major legislation in Congress:

Income taxes - President asking rate reductions and some income-tax boosting revisions to give a net cut of \$10.3 billion in individual and corporate rates over three years. House - hearings completed. Ways and Means committee considering at closed door sessions. Senate - awaiting House action.

Mass transit - Kennedy proposed \$500 million in subsidies to improve city rail, bus and subway services. House - Banking committee approved bill, awaiting Rules committee clearance. Senate - Approved \$375 million program.

Education - Kennedy requested \$5.3 billion across-the-board school aid program. House - Education committee approved \$1.2 billion building aid program limited to colleges and graduate schools; hearings under way on other aid proposals. Senate - Hearings in progress on omnibus bill.

Health insurance - President wants hospitalization program for persons 65 and older financed through social security. House - Ways and Means committee hearings expected this summer. Senate - Awaiting House action.

Foreign aid - Administration is asking \$4.5 billion. House - Foreign Affairs committee hearings under way. Senate - Nothing scheduled yet.

Medical schools - Administration asked long range construction aid for medical-dental schools, loans to students. House - Passed three-year program that would cost \$236

million. Senate - Nothing scheduled.

Military pay - Administration asked \$1.2 billion annual pay and benefit boost for all servicemen, reservists and retirees. House - Passed modified version to cost \$15 million less and providing no increase for 832,000 draftees and enlistees in their first two years of service. House included controversial \$30.5 million "recomputation" feature for those retired before 1958. Senate - Hearings not yet scheduled.

Youth employment - Kennedy asking new \$100 million youth conservation corps for outdoor work in forests and parks; home town youth corps for local civic projects. House - Education committee has approved, awaiting Rules committee clearance. Senate - Passed.

Domestic peace corps - President asking for new organization of 1,000 to 5,000 skilled volunteers to carry out work in this country similar to Peace Corps projects abroad. First year cost, \$5 million. House - Education and Labor subcommittee hearings start this week. Senate - Nothing scheduled.

Mental health - Administration wants long-range, \$717 million program for community health centers; research on and treatment of mental retardation. House - Commerce committee hearings completed. Senate - Labor and Public Welfare subcommittee approved with revisions.

Civil rights - President asking speedup in voting suits, more protection of Negro voting rights, extension of civil rights commission. House - Judiciary committee hearings under way. Senate - Hearings scheduled on commission extension today or Thursday.

Cotton - House Democratic leaders have developed a compromise version of administration's subsidy plan for providing cheaper cotton to U. S. textile mills; the compromise includes lower support prices and potential relaxation of planting restrictions for large-scale farmers. House - Agricultural Committee plans to vote this week. Senate - Cotton hearings start this week.

Women workers - Administration - backed bill would require equal pay for women workers who do the same work as male employees; new rule would apply to workers covered by minimum wage - hour law (about one-half of non-farm work force). Senate - Passed. House - Education and Labor Committee approved, awaiting Rules Committee clearance.

Silver - To combat shortage of silver for coins administration asked authority to

replace existing silver-backed \$1 bills with gold-backed \$1 bills. House - Passed. Senate - Banking Committee approved.

Wilderness - President wants to establish a national program to preserve public lands in their natural state. Senate - Passed, with provision covering 8 million acres immediately and possibly up to 35 million acres eventually. House - No hearings set.

Nation debt - Administration - backed legislation would boost legal limit on the debt to \$307 billion through June 30 and to \$309 billion during July and August. The temporary limit now is \$305 billion. House - Passed. Senate - Finance Committee expected to vote Thursday.

Feed grains - Kennedy wants to continue the program of paying farmers to hold down surplus corn and other feed grain production. Congress approved two-year extension. President expected to sign bill this week.

Draft - Kennedy asked four-year extension of selective service and doctor draft. Congress approved; bill signed into law.

Try and Stop Me

By BENNETT CERF

PLAY PRODUCER Josh Logan's mother Susan, who comes from the deep South and reveres its every tradition, was taken aback a bit when, early in World War II, the son of a fine old family she knew was drafted. She rallied, however, when she heard that he was receiving his basic training in Fort Bragg, North Carolina. "How nice for him to be in that part of North Carolina," she nodded, "at rhododendron time!"



John Straley tells of a perpetually hungry couple on a cross-country motor trip who stopped at an inviting inn, stuffed themselves to the gills, and then drove over for a look at the Grand Canyon. "That certainly was a marvelous gorge," said the husband as they backed away from the rim. "That's right," agreed his wife, "but between you and me, I wish I'd had room for one more portion of that delicious pie a la mode."

Charles Chaplin, in an unusually mellow mood in Switzerland, told an interviewer, "A comedian must never let his audience feel that he himself thinks he's being amusing. The audience is PEEKING at him. He's got to play his part seriously and honestly—or he'll soon be forgotten."

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Light Plane Flown Over North Pole

Kapovik, Barter Island, Alaska - (UPI) - A young Swedish pilot and his employer believe they have become the first men in history to fly nonstop over the magnetic north pole from Norway to the United States in a small single-engine plane.

Sigurd S. Hallstrom and Olaf Ringstad, both of Stockholm, landed at this village on a tiny Arctic coast island at 6:13 p.m. (pd) Sunday after flying nonstop from Bodo in northern Norway. The men, traveling in a 250-horsepower Piper Comanche, were in the air 21 hours.

They appeared to be in good spirits but were tired. Both of them viewed the feat with "casual modesty."

A SCOOPFUL
New York - (UPI) - Americans will consume 500 million gallons of ice cream in 1963, one maker of ice cream containers predicts.

MODERN-DAY RUSTLERS

Fort Worth, Tex. - (UPI) - Joe Keeton and Jesse B. Rhodes faced two-year probation sentences today. They pleaded guilty to rustling dairy cows and selling them to a slaughter house. The court specified the men must pay for the cows they stole.

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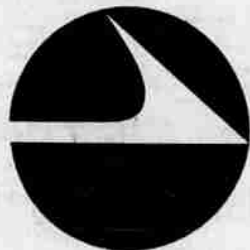
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