

Salem Scene

by Everett E. Cutter

SIGN TARGET PRACTICE COSTLY AND DANGEROUS
Perhaps vandalism is universal and unsolvable, or perhaps some quirky desire to preserve a "woolly west" image is responsible for the bullet holes we are accustomed to seeing in our highway signs.

Either way, with hunting season upon us, the State Highway Department here is geared up to replace thousands of signs mutilated by target practice again this year. And no matter what the motivation, sign shooting is both costly and dangerous to Oregon citizens.

Those who cry for "economy in government" might consider the following:

On Oregon's 7,500 miles of state highways alone there are 100,000 signs of warning, direction and guidance, each of which is designed to last for seven years. Because of vandalism, of all types, average life of these signs is half that.

About 30,000 signs must be replaced every year, but 17 crews of two to four men each. The annual cost, according to the Highway Department's sign division, is \$100,000. The cost, double what it could be if signs were allowed full life expectancy, comes from gasoline tax revenues.

"If we didn't have to spend the money here, it could be put into improving highways or many other better places," one sign division spokesman says.

Paint and other defacing agents are a big problem, he says, but one bullet hole will junk a sign which otherwise might be refaced and saved. Most are made of aluminum, with reflectorizing paint for night driving safety.

Why people shoot at road signs defies logic of the maintenance people. Signs get shot up even on main highways, not just back roads, sometimes by passing motorists and sometimes by neighborhood plunkers.

"The aluminum signs make a nice, big clang when they are hit," says the sign division man. "Maybe frustrated hunters pick on them when they can't find any game."

He cites an instance of one sign being installed just outside a small southern Oregon community. It was removed eight days later because it already had 148 bullet holes in it.

More important than the cost, however, is the danger factor. Where do shells go after passing through the signs? Bullet holes have been found in signs in downtown Portland.

Even out on the road there are blind spots, or cars around corners or nearby inhabited areas. Furthermore, a sign obliterated by too much abuse—a shotgun blast, say—can become an unreadable driving hazard.

It is illegal, of course, to discharge any firearm on a highway right-of-way. Conviction for a first offense can result in a \$100 fine or up to 10 days in jail. The penalty is doubled for a second offense, and a third conviction within a year can cost a violator \$500 and up to six months in the municipal jail.

Ironically, a litterbug in Oregon now can be fined up to \$500 for his first offense in a far less deliberate and hazardous act even though the practice is offensive and punishment is just.

It should be stated that this writer is strongly opposed to

anti-gun legislation and registration of private firearms. There should, perhaps, be some brain registration program for those who would use their sporting arms for senseless acts of destruction of public property.

And the people of Oregon should realize what such carelessness is costing and threatening, and the legislature should take steps to bring penalties into line with those for littering, at the very least.

Santiam Ripples

By Becky Earhart

Spirits are high as Homecoming draws near. Homecoming princesses were announced Friday, Oct. 17. They are as follows: Senior Marge Ruby, escorted by Doug Cline; Junior Rita Whitney, escorted by Bruce Beyers; Sophomore Lynn Chance, escorted by Lynn Cutsforth; and Freshman Jeri Jo Parker, escorted by Rodney Luke. The queen will be announced during the halftime of the football game between the Santiam Wolverines and the Chemawa Braves, Oct. 24. Following this game the annual Homecoming Dance will be held in the high school balcony. This year's Homecoming theme is "Homecoming Ecstasy."

Class meetings were held on Friday, October 17 during the first part of activity period. The Senior class made plans for Spirit Week, which began on Monday, Oct. 20 and continues on through the week. Seniors also discussed topics such as the concession stand, the magazine sale, and other money-making ideas. The Freshmen class was given information and advice concerning Spirit Week activities.

A pep assembly was held



GULF COAST DISASTER AREA—When vicious Hurricane Camille tore into the Mississippi and Louisiana Gulf Coast, thousands found shelter, food, and clothing in hundreds of Red Cross shelters such as this. Designated the official disaster agency for the nation, the American Red Cross will be providing emergency care and long-term assistance for all those who need it. Red Cross hopes to raise a minimum of \$15,000,000 for Gulf hurricane relief. More fortunate Americans can aid Red Cross in this gigantic humanitarian task by sending their contributions, small or large, to the nearest Red Cross chapter.

during the last part of activity period. This pep assembly featured two skits put on by the cheerleaders. Sophomores won the Spirit Stick for their enthusiasm and support.

G.A.A. and F.T.A. held meetings on Thursday, Oct. 16. G.A.A. met after school to discuss plans for Homecoming. Committee reports concerning the Homecoming dance, halftime entertainment for the Oct. 24 football game, escorts for the princesses, and Spirit Week activities were given at this meeting. It was decided to have a G.A.A. workday on Saturday, Oct. 18.

F.T.A. met on Thursday night. The main purpose of this meeting was to induct new members, who are as follows: Shirley Stone, Susan Crowther, Twyla Fultz, Barbara Etzel, Linda Hampton, Ken Goforth, and Larry Moberg. Following the induction, the club discussed the F.T.A. State Convention to be held at Oregon

State, November 7 and 8. Mrs. Sheythe, the advisor, spoke on special education areas, such as the Peace Corps, Vista, etc. As a special service, F.T.A. has decided to serve refreshments at the school board meetings, which are held on the 2nd Thursday of each month.



HARRY M. MOMBERT

Funeral services were held in Salem at the Virgil T. Golden Mortuary Monday at 10:30 a. m. for Harry Merle Mombert, who died Friday in a Eugene hospital apparently of cancer.

Mr. Mombert, who was 67 years of age was born in Mill City and later lived in Pen-

dleton, California and Salem before moving to Eugene about 3 years ago. During World War II he was employed as an electrician in California. In Salem he was a maintenance worker for the State Forestry department.

Surviving are the widow, Oda C. Mombert of Eugene; son, Dale Mombert of Eugene; daughter, Mrs. Ramona Blasingame of Manteca, Calif.; and three grandchildren. A brother, Harold, died earlier this year.

Graveside services were held at 1 p. m. Monday at Fairview Cemetery, Gates.

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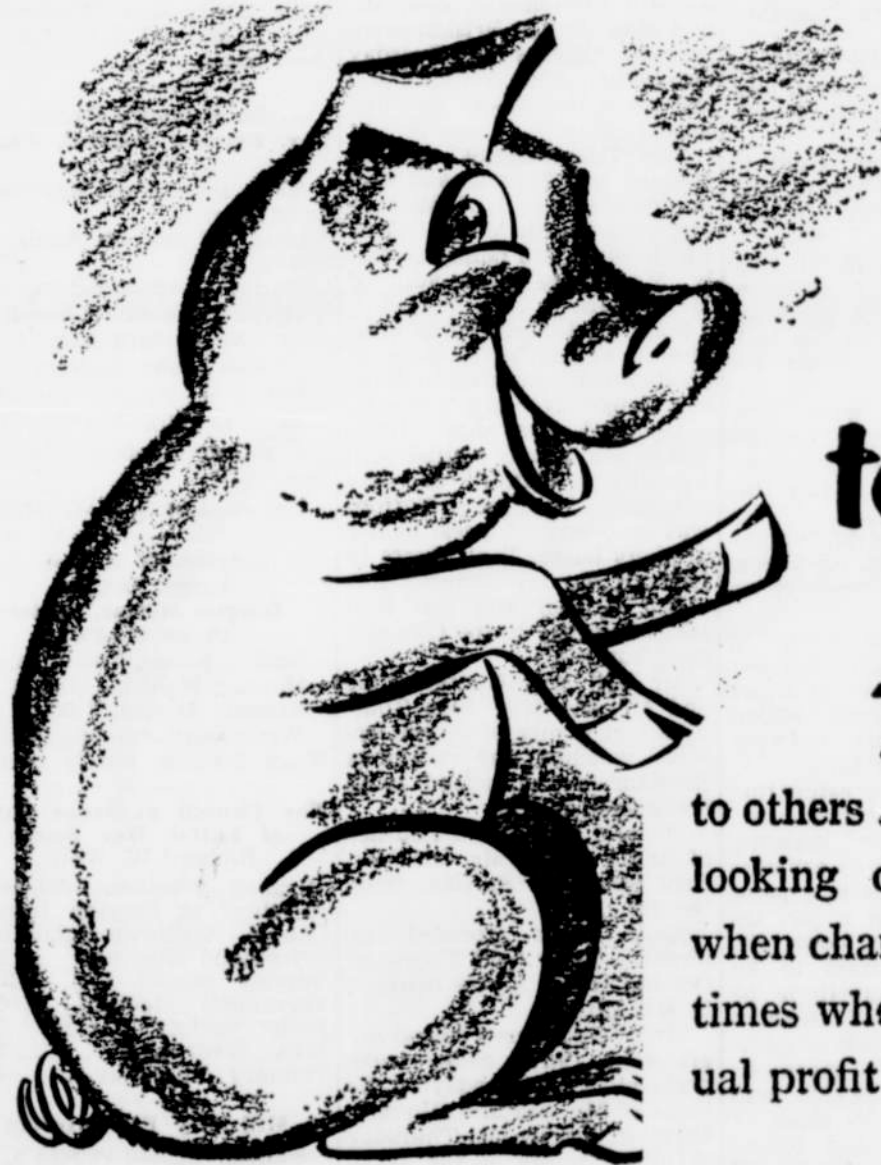


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