

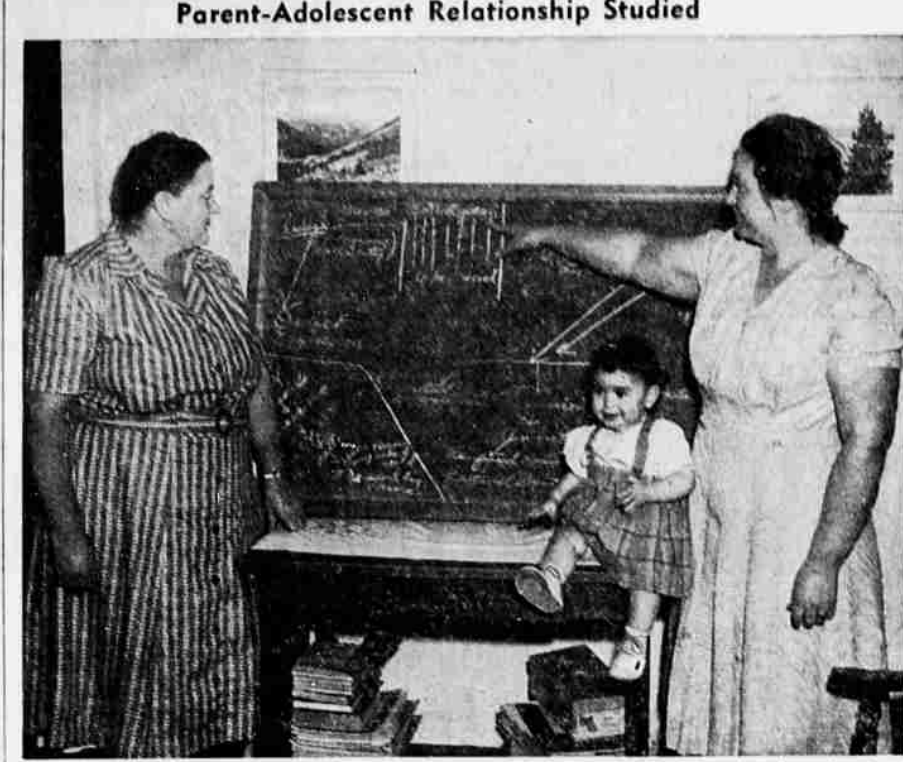
Telling The Editor

Letters printed here must not be longer than 300 words, must be written legibly on ONE SIDE of the paper, and must be signed by the writer. NAME AND ADDRESS of the writer. Contributions following these rules are warmly welcomed.

More About Labor Costs
KLAMATH FALLS, Ore. (To the Editor) — You seem to be very determined to stick your chin out. Twice now you have taken a rap at labor, first in your editorial on "Building Cost" and secondly when you said you were answered from a source unexpectedly. Of course you knew that organized labor wouldn't take it "laying down" but since you ask for it I suppose it will be necessary to go over all the national statistics that can be secured from the bureau of labor and a 1901 other government agencies whose functions are to dig up scandals and request investigating committees to again review all the previous statistics and republish the same old scandals, all of which are without foundation of facts. There may be some case of inefficiency and, yes, even sabotage on construction projects, where the workman doesn't earn his money, yet in the "overall" picture the workman delivers a far greater percentage of his costs to the project than does any other contributing factor. While wage increases may reach sixty, eighty or even a hundred per cent of the former standard (although I'm not sure what is considered standard, considering that during the depression of the early 30's a wage scale set up by the WPA of \$1.10 per hour for carpenters) the \$2.00 per hour received today hardly represents a very great increase, in fact it actually represents a decrease in purchasing power.

However the question brought up by your editorial isn't what the cost of living is nor how much the wages of carpenter or other building tradesmen should be — but "how much of the increased cost of building a home is the fault of the workman through inefficient workmanship and deliberate 'laying down' on the job." My answer is "none." In fact the contractor who builds the homes is operating a great deal more efficiently today than ever before. First by means of skill saws, power tools of various sorts. In the day when I personally used the tools of the trade it was a lot of manual labor to cut and square the ends of all the heavy joists, rafters, studs, etc. with a hand saw. We also had to rip lumber by hand. Today it's nearly all power saw work, and secondly, the fact that the contractor today specializes his crews in order to get the greatest amount of efficiency from each man—such as concrete form men, framing crews and finish crews. No, Mac, there just isn't any truth to the statement you hear that labor costs holds the building industry back.

Ralph A. Gamble, member of congress, from the 28th district, New York, as chairman of the "joint committee on housing," has recently published a pamphlet on the hearing held in Washington, D. C., January 14, 1948. (I am surprised you didn't get a copy—will loan you mine if interested) in which he quoted some of the percentage of increased costs from the bureau of labor statistics. Labor rose from 100 in June 1939 to 147.3 in July 1948, but building materials as a whole went up 207.1 and he specified several classifications as follows: Brick 161.2; lumber 317.1 (it should be noted here that lumber being the largest individual commodity in a normal home reflects a greater percentage than any other factor); paints and paint materials 195.5; plumbing and heating 171.7. Now after reading these figures from the congressional records taken from the hearings held by a congressional committee, surely no one should believe that labor is receiving any more than its just share of the cost of a building. As you and I both know, it does cost a lot to buy a home, but it isn't all labor. Let me tell you a few things that help make the home cost a poor 60 nearly double what it used to cost 8 or 10 years ago, most of which is charged to labor, assuming that there are only two costs to a house, namely: "materials" and "labor" — leaving the increased cost of land out of it. We have the architect's services in drafting plans, about 6 to 8 per cent of the total cost (and it's necessary to have these plans because the financing agencies will



Mrs. Eula Prough, left, hostess to the Bonanza home extension unit March 9, gives her attention to the chart as Mrs. Fred Fernlund points to the diagram showing the social pattern while granddaughter Jean, 17-month-old, balances herself on the table edge, unconcerned with adolescent problems. Helen P. Stine, home demonstration agent, led the discussion which was the March project for the unit.

not make loans without them); then the contractor must maintain a complete office force of timekeepers, bookkeepers, because of the government requirements on such as income tax reports, financial statements, unemployment tax collections, state tax collections and industrial accident insurance, all of which are good but must be charged against labor since it is not "material." This generally is charged to the job in form of contractor's commissions if on a cost plus project, or as his profit if on a direct contract.

Then we have such things as sub-contracts that are charged to labor, for instance, plumbing and heating. A plumbing firm bidding on a project figures his cost of labor (at \$2.25 per hour locally) plus his overhead of operating his shop (including his cost of filling out tax blanks, insurance, etc.) plus his percentage, and which incidentally is again figured by the general contractor as percentage of the total cost. This goes on and on through the electrical, painting, plastering and other sub-contracts, and last but not least, the promoter of the tract or area in which the home is being built. The real estate agent who handles the "sale," and don't forget the "financier" who must have his cut all charged to the working man as "labor"—not "material."

Seems to me Mac that the person who spreads propaganda such as this never thinks twice. "On the site" labor is very probably less than 30 per cent of the cost of a new home, and it is no more inefficient than it was in the good old days. Sure, there are some carpenters (war babies) who aren't as good as some of the old timers, but they don't work on construction jobs of this sort very long.

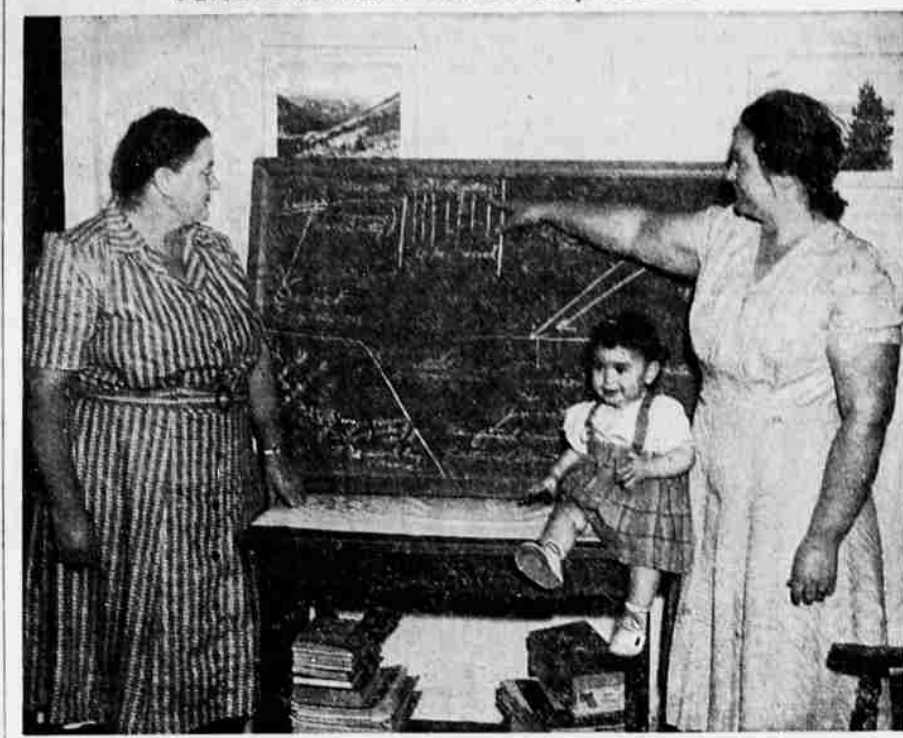
Mr. Pinner told you of his crew, and I dare say that if the other local contractors spoke out, they too would compliment the men they hire. What are these so-called Big Shots waiting on? Building is really cheaper than buying butter and eggs in comparison with prices in general.

Sincerely yours,
C. D. LONG, Secretary,
Carpenters Local 190,
American Federation of Labor.

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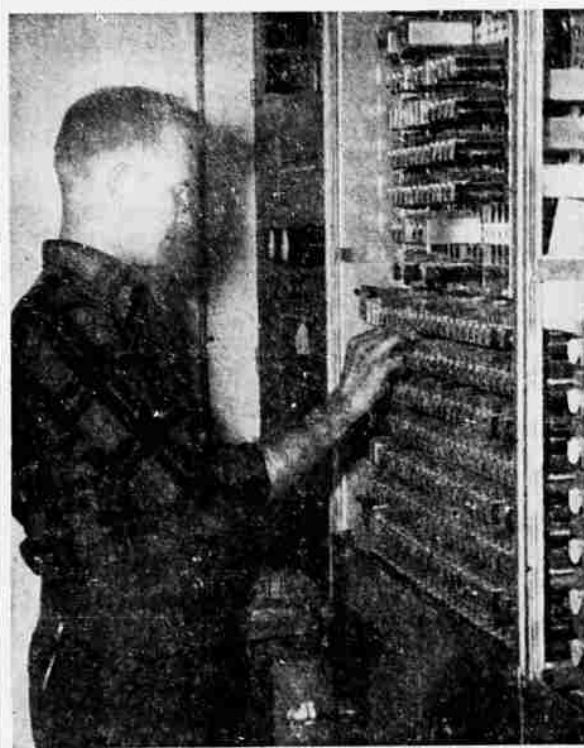
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Parent-Adolescent Relationship Studied



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Home Of Bonanza's Dial Phones



J. M. Kirby, local manager for Columbia Utilities company, is installing equipment in the new telephone building in Bonanza. Service will start May 1, with 50 phones in Bonanza and 30 in Lorella. The fireproof building is made of pumice blocks and steel. There will be no operators as all equipment is automatic. Four-figure phone numbers will be used. Kirby has charge of Bonanza, Lorella, Merrill and Malin telephone districts.

This Father Was Well Prepared

DETROIT, March 15 (AP)—Robert C. Gasco is the resuscitation expert of suburban Berkley's fire department.

A call for help sent him racing to his own home Sunday to find

his three-year-old son, Roger, strangling on a penny balloon.

The efforts of both Gasco and a physician, were fruitless.

"I've handled hundreds of such cases and this is the first one I've lost," said the heart-broken father.

There were 319 active combatant vessels in the United States navy

on January 1, 1947.

Contributing Charge Made

Jack McNies, 39, is awaiting a hearing in justice court today on a charge of contributing to the delinquency of a minor, the charge growing out of revelations made Saturday morning in circuit court by Samuel John Pool, 18, who was up for sentence.

Pool told the court that McNies had bought beer for him and 17-year-old Leonard Lee Brown during an armory dance February 26.

McNies was arrested on a felony warrant Saturday afternoon by Deputy Sheriff Marion Barnes. The complaint against him charged that he provided beer for a minor, young Brown, and the paper was signed by Pool as informant.

The Pool boy and Brown, along with Donald Willard Cox, 21, had been arrested for burglary and the beer found in their possession.

Cox Saturday was sentenced to two years in prison and Pool, after divulging the name of the man he said bought them the beer, was put on probation for five years. Leonard Lee Brown has yet to come into circuit court.

Bail for McNies was set at \$2500.

Construction Fund Proposal Outlined

NEWPORT, March 15 (AP)—A \$1,449,000 construction budget for the next three years—if voters approve a projected \$700,000 bond issue—is planned by the Central Lincoln PUD.

The program would include a new substation at Toledo, new building at Newport, cable crossing on the Yaquina Bay bridge, and numerous extension lines.

The bond issue will come up in the May primary.

One Killed In Automobile Wreck

SALEM, March 15 (AP)—One man was killed and two persons were injured Saturday night when an automobile crashed into the side of a freight train during a heavy rainstorm.

Sifney A. Smith, 49, was killed. John Schukart, driver of the car, was seriously injured, and Mrs. Smith received minor injuries. All are from Salem.

May Buy 'PM'



Clinton D. McKinnon (above), former publisher of the San Diego, Calif., Journal, is a prospective buyer of the New York newspaper PM. Marshall Field III is present publisher.—AP wirephoto.

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Palace Tied Up By Strikes

LONDON, March 15 (AP)—Strikes hit Buckingham palace, parliament and government buildings today.

Building maintenance workers walked out, depriving the occupants of heat and hot water. Elevator men later joined them.

Fourteen stokers failed to report for work at the palace. The king,

queen and Princess Margaret spent the week-end at Windsor and were to reach Buckingham palace later in the day.

A total of 1200 engineering attendants, stokers, ventilator men and storemen struck. They demanded wage increases from the equivalent of \$19.50 a week to \$22. Their unions were not supporting the strike.

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