

THE GATE CITY JOURNAL

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A Lesson in Civics

Webster defines civics as "the study of the duties, rights, and privileges of citizens." This is a rather broad definition and can mean little to us unless we learn just what our DUTIES are, what RIGHTS we are given by law, and the resultant privileges that accompany these rights.

These objects apply to the various forms of government that we Americans have here in the U.S., but the one we want you to think about is our city form of government. It appears to us that some people have a mistaken notion about it.

In Nyssa we have a governing body consisting of a mayor and six councilmen, all elected by the voters, in a city-wide election. In turn they hire a city manager, under a plan previously approved by the voters, who acts for them in supervising the various departments of the city.

The city manager is given authority to hire and fire personnel as he sees fit. The department heads are directly responsible to the city manager for all their actions in an official capacity and the city council does not interfere as long as they believe he is doing the job properly.

So when anything occurs within the jurisdiction of the city, such as the recent violent death on Main street, it is not the direct responsibility of the city council. Members of the council cannot go out and make arrests, they cannot call for an inquest, they are frequently as unfamiliar with the details as any other citizen. Since this is true there is no reason for pressure being placed on them to act where they have no capacity or authority.

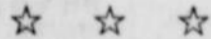
But by the same authority voters gave them when they elected councilmen as representatives in this city government, they cannot be considered as separate and distinct, and disassociate themselves from the problems arising in the various city departments. If citizens desire to meet in peaceable assembly and petition the city council for some particular action to be taken, councilmen will hear the plea, whether it be for vacating a certain alley, the establishment of a stop sign, or to ask that all city ordinances be enforced as written.

Recently the American Legion voted to authorize a committee to meet with the city council to inform the members that they desired to have all laws enforced impartially, whether minor or major laws, and that the Legion offered its full support in doing this. This action was not a criticism for events that had occurred in the past, but an effort to control factors that might be conducive to the same thing reoccurring. The city manager let it be known that he did not approve of this and as a result the committee met with him instead of the council.

We believe this is wrong... not from a moral standpoint, but from a "civics" point of view. The committee had been authorized to go to the council—not the city manager—and the matter was not taken officially on to the council. There is a place on the agenda for people to be heard at council meetings. If citizens have a complaint about merchandise sold by some store, they naturally go to the "boss" and not necessarily to the clerk.

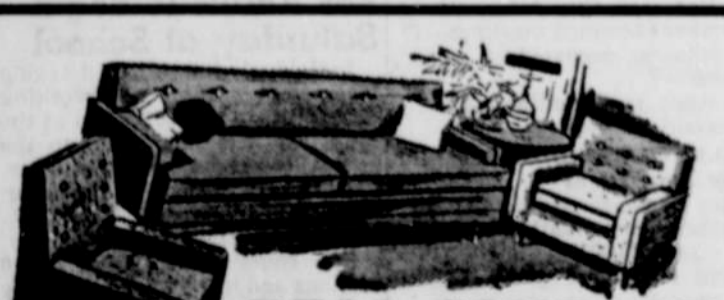
Suppose some of the departments of the city under the supervision of the city manager were grossly inefficient, the condition had been that way for some time, the city manager was aware of it but had done nothing to correct it, should the citizens carry their cause of action to the council or to the city manager?

This is not meant as a personal matter with the city manager; as a man we like him, and as a whole we think he is doing a good job, but we do think he's wrong in this matter and we also feel that he is failing to let the public know all they are entitled to know about the city affairs. A well-informed public is our best protection for our present form of democratic government.



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From This Corner...

By T.M.B.

According to a Gallup poll, as reported in the Jan. 5 issue of Look magazine, people are more concerned with peace than any other problem. In second place comes the unions of the nation, with 41 percent of those polled thinking they have too much power and offer a bigger threat to the country than either big business or big government. It seems to us that they demonstrated in the recent steel strike settlement that they were much bigger than either... and it came to a point where government virtually said, "We can't whip you, so we'll join you."

At one time government was the servant of the people but with all the bureaucratic agencies being given law-making authority, we wonder if that is still true. Support of national, state and local governments takes a third of all the nation produces.

The U.S. Commerce department defines big business as those employing over 500 people and a small business employing fewer than 500. Where only two or three are employed would it refer to the business as MINUTE, and see it only with the use of a microscope!

The Old Timer says, "Many a boy is the kind of kid his mother wouldn't want him to play with."

When you feel dog-tired at night, it may be because you've growled all day.

J. Edgar Hoover of the FBI said that law enforcement was no better than the training of the officers and only through modern training can we keep abreast of the times in the increasing fight against lawlessness.

Speaking of law enforcement... the Ontario Argus-Observer of Jan. 18, 1960, quoted Chief Frank Williams of the Ontario city police as saying that in a one-month period 122 persons were arrested there for "being under the influence." Nyssa's record for 1959 shows 138 arrests for public intoxication. A man who would try to prove his point by using Bible quotations might show that their drunkenness was many times worse than ours, since Ontario is approximately twice the size

of Nyssa. (But few of us would believe it.)

The best guardian of liberty is a well-informed public, and we are thoroughly convinced that the best method of informing citizens is through the local paper. It is read by a higher percentage of people, is retained longer, and must be much surer of its facts than TV and radio, where the message is oral and soon forgotten.

With county elections not too many months away it is not too early for us to begin studying the office seekers and their programs. More poor public officials have been elected by those potential voters who stayed at home on election day than those who went to the polls.

A recent editorial of the Statesman, speaking of a recent outbreak of burglaries in Boise, said, "The persons most concerned are not the townfolk or the owners of the places of business that have been visited by burglars. The real concern is in the police department and it won't rest on the established laurels." (Can you feature a policeman being more concerned than the man who lost the property, or a politician being more interested in giving you good government than in winning the office???)

Putting a few cents in the collection plate does not make one a philanthropist. Going to church does not make one a Christian but it will do no harm... and it will give Christians a better whack at you to become one.

The harassed teacher was tugging away to get a pair of overshoes on one of the children. Succeeding, she remarked, "My, but those were hard to get on." Yeth, said the little boy, "that's because they aren't mine." The exasperated teacher pulled the overshoes off. "Well," said the little boy, "they aren't mine; they're my brothers but I have to wear them."

It's hard for us to remember how important this snow is to our area... The old hometown paper reported 57.66 inches of rainfall there in 1959, with 9.05 in May and 7.83 in October. January was the driest month with 1.75 inches of precipitation.

Health Dept. Says Flu Shots Needed

You'd better get your annual flu shots and take special care of your health during the next few weeks.

The was the advice Friday of the state board of health after the department's disease control experts had finished reviewing influenza reports from Oregon and the rest of the nation.

Although reported Oregon influenza increased 28.5 percent last week, from 617 to 793 cases, the disease still is "about at normal seasonal levels," according to the health board.

None of the reports so far indicated that the epidemic which has struck an estimated half-million persons in the Los Angeles area the past few days has yet moved into Oregon.

However, Dr. Richard H. Wilcox, state health officer, warned that there is "a strong possibility" that the disease could become epidemic here within the next few weeks. Flu outbreaks have been noted recently in several other parts of the country, and Dr. Wilcox said the flu virus could be transported quickly to all parts of Oregon by travelers.

(The U.S. Public Health service already has attributed several of the outbreaks to Asian influenza, the same disease given most of the blame for Oregon's epidemic of more than 47,000 cases two years ago.)

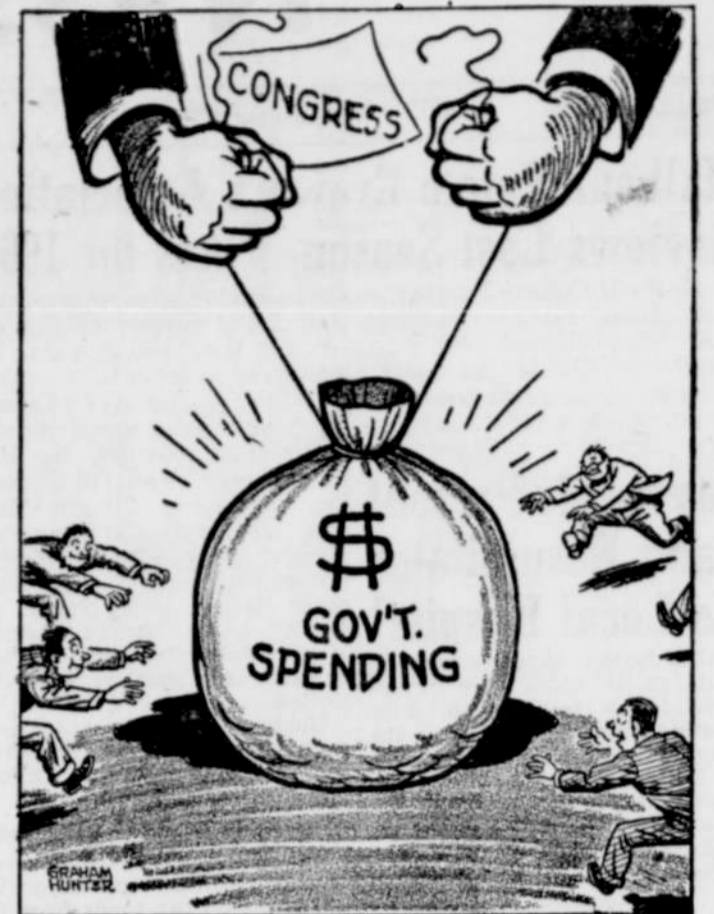
Flu shots were recommended as the best defense against the disease, and Dr. Wilcox especially urged them for the very young or old persons, pregnant women, or persons already weakened by some other illness.

One shot gives protection to most older children and adults, although the health officer recommended a second shot three to four months after the first. The immunity does not carry over from one year to another, and the shots do not become effective until 10 to 14 days after vaccination.

Dr. Wilcox also recommended maintenance of good personal health habits, including plenty of rest, a well-balanced diet, cleanliness and avoidance of fatigue and chilling.

Because influenza is dangerous chiefly as a result of secondary

HOLD THAT LINE!



infections such as pneumonia, the health officer urged that anyone becoming ill with suspected flu call a physician promptly.

Symptoms of Asian flu are the same as those of other types. They include sudden onset of illness, often similar to a severe cold, fever up to 104 degrees, chills, sore throat, cough and muscular aches and pains.

Danger signals might include:

- 1. A sudden rise in temperature after the fourth or fifth day.
2. Severe chest pain, especially during deep breathing.
3. Coughing which brings up a great deal of yellowish or greenish mucous material.
4. Heavy, deep, difficult breathing.
5. Unusual drowsiness or stupor.
6. Excessive muscular pain or stiff neck.
7. A sore throat not relieved

by aspirin or simple home remedies.

The state health board laboratory has received "only a few" specimens for flu examination in recent weeks, Dr. Wilcox said, so it is considered possible many of the Oregon cases being reported as influenza actually may be some other disease. The next group of tests is expected to be completed by the laboratory early next week.

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