

# Press-Herald

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## A Dangerous Sign

A political fact which has bothered many people for some time has been touched on recently by two Press-Herald readers in letters. The most recent writer is George W. Brewster, a member of the city's Planning Commission, whose letter below speaks of apathy of people for the doings of their government.

His conclusion many of our citizens have abrogated their rights and responsibilities was pointed up in a report last week that more than 40 per cent of the persons who could vote for a presidential candidate do not cast a ballot in the nation's most important election.

And, the election of a President draws the largest number of voters to the polls. If slightly more than half of those who could cast ballots in a presidential election are the only ones who can muster enough energy to vote, it surely follows that election of lesser officials would draw even less interest.

We know this to be true in the matter of local and "off-year" elections. In some local elections, the percentages of those voting have sometimes fallen to a shameful 10 or 15 per cent of those registered, and the registration sometimes includes only pitifully small percentages of those who could become eligible voters.

It is reflected in the interest shown in the happenings of city, county, state, and federal government proceedings.

"I don't know anything about politics," is a frequent plaint.

It's time to learn. Our freedoms and the position of world leadership enjoyed by the United States can be traced to an awareness of "politics" by the citizens of this fledgling nation, and a continuing awareness is needed to assure the continuance of those enviable positions.

An awareness starts at the town hall or the village green. The roots of democracy lie with the individual and his immediate representative.

Anything less is dangerous . . . very dangerous.

## Fair Moon, Farewell

Probably a lot of people, like us, are still thinking about that Ranger picture-taking expedition to the moon. To a layman, the photographs are fascinating. To trained scientists they are spectacular mines of information. They can find practically everything in them but green cheese.

One thing bothers us, however. The closer we get to familiarity with the moon the sooner that old friend of warm summer evenings and frosty nights will lose its romantic appeal. No longer will it be Ben Johnson's "Queen and huntress, chaste and fair," John Gray's "fair regent of the night." Just a big hunk of pock-marked lava and dust and minerals, plus some busted-up hardware from the space age.

## Mailbox

Editor, Press-Herald:  
Reader Linda Howe, in her letter printed in the Press-Herald on Wednesday, Aug. 19, expressed certain personal opinions about the Planning Commission of the City of Torrance with particular reference to the procedures and members of that Commission. While I obviously take exception to many of the opinions stated therein, reader Howe did express certain thoughts with which I concur.

I refer to those portions of the Howe letter which urge the good citizens of Torrance to abandon any lackadaisical attitudes they hold toward participation or interest in the proceedings of local government. However, I would go further than reader Howe, who encouraged such interest solely in the event unfolding before the Planning Commission.

For instance, almost any night of the week one can observe in public session at City Hall at least one of the numerous arms of the city's government, each considering some program or action bearing in some way upon the daily lives of the citizens of the community. These include not only the City Council, but such Commissions as Library, Airport, Youth Welfare, Civil Service, Traffic and Traffic Safety Council, Parks and Recreation, Water, Torrance Beautiful, and so on.

In addition, the Board of Education of the Torrance

Unified School District is in public session at least two Monday evenings each month. This body makes policy and other decisions of the administration of a \$15,000,000-plus budget and a sizeable portion of the tax burden of each property owner in the city, not to mention the educational preparation of our children for assumption of adult citizenship in tomorrow's community.

It is appalling how many of our citizens live in this community without knowledge of how their local government is structured, who their Councilmen are, what the economic base is, etc., and without exercising their God-given right to participate and to vote in ALL elections. This lack of knowledge and involvement is not the result of a lack of opportunity.

This lack of knowledge and involvement is the result of an apparent abrogation of democratic rights and responsibilities by many of our citizens. I believe it is this type of attitude that reader Howe warns against. In this regard, I fully concur with her and applaud the example she has set in accepting the challenges of good citizenship and in exercising her right to speak out and to participate, and in encouraging others to do so.

GEORGE W. BREWSTER  
Member,  
Planning Commission

## Modern Surgical Miracle



## HERE AND THERE by Royce Brier

### De Gaulle's Views on Southeast Asia Aired

Let us consider Charles de Gaulle's view of Southeast Asia as revealed in a recent Elysee Palace interview. He said some things about Vietnam most Americans have forgotten. He said the Indochinese seemed genuinely anxious for the peace posed by the 1954 Geneva agreement, but "everything conspired to bring (Vietnam) back to the troubled situation from which it had just emerged." When Communist Vietnam appeared, the Americans appeared. "The United States considered itself as being invested throughout the world with the burden of defense against communism." He calls this "a sort of vocation," and said that under it the Americans sponsored the Diem government, and Diem placed himself "in the orbit of Washington."

current Khanh regime is equally in the Washington orbit . . . hardly startling, since the recent report we are to raise our advisory staff there from 16,000 to 21,000. De Gaulle believes the Viet Cong insurgents have made headway, and the Saigon regime has stood still, because "the populations, whatever their opinion of communism, are less and less inclined to support a cause and an authority intermingled with those of a foreign state." The Americans can gain a military victory in the area, he says, but not by present techniques, and he does not "assume they wish to take the tremendous risk of a generalized conflict."

The United States took exception to this de Gaulle judgment. But American spokesmen did not offer a counter-plan for victory which would demolish de Gaulle's logic of a negotiated peace. Hence, many thoughtful Americans believe that while de Gaulle might be over-optimistic, his plan should be tried. He advocates a return to the 1954 formula. He said France, Red China, the Soviet Union, and the United States had the primary responsibility in a hands-off policy in Indochina if a new neutrality agreement can be written. There should then be massive economic and technical aid for all Indochina. He pledged France to meet the conditions he posed. The United States has so far refused to consider neutralization on a return to the 1954 formula on the somewhat dubious, a priori ground of another failure.

## BOOKS by William Hogan

### Paul Horgan Sparks in Short Tales of Boyhood

Within the week two above-average American writers have published collections of short stories concerned mainly with boyhood. This period of awakening has become a classic theme — even a boring one in the case of James Gould Cozzens' "Children and Others." Now Paul Horgan, one of the most accomplished and versatile novelists and historians among us ("The Fault of Angeles"; "Great River") goes back to the century's early years to recall some delights and crises of childhood in "Things As They Are" (Farrar, Straus; 239 pp., \$4.50). Projecting an elusive quality, a blend of grace and melancholy, Horgan's book is a work of art, where Cozzens' struck me as little more than efficient literary carpentry. In an author's note, Horgan explains that only one of the 10 pieces here reflects in its central event a direct experience of his own life. A reader suspects, however, that a little unconscious autobiography has crept into these sensitive, haunting vignettes. "Richard, Richard," they said to me in childhood, "when will you begin to see things as they are?" That is Horgan's first line, and it sets the general ethereal tone of the book.

or more ago. The family concerned is Roman Catholic. Horgan's stories deal with a gradual peeling away of innocence. There are no pyrotechnics, in the John Updike, or J. D. Salinger sense. Like Cozzens' book, this is nothing for the literary hipster. Yet Horgan's Everyboy and the confusing audit forces around him become a reading experience to remember. Horgan makes a case, in this age of literary extremism, for the literary status quo — Cozzens, in "Children and Others," failed to do this. In a recent notice of "Mark Twain in Virginia City," I mentioned that Dan de Quille was the prominent journalist up there at the time but now is a forgotten scribbler. Kenneth Lamott, among others, reminds me that his "The Big Bonanza" is still one of the best descriptions of Virginia City during the Comstock Lode excitement and, far from being forgotten, was reissued by Knopf in 1947.

More from "Contemporary Quotations," compiled by James B. Simpson (Crowell) which we discussed recently: "Our national flower is the concrete cloverleaf." —Lewis Mumford. "In Israel," said David Ben Gurion, "in order to be a realist you must believe in miracles." "Venice is like eating an entire box of choco-

## Quote

"Can world peace ever exist when a whim of a single man can totally reverse the policy of an entire nation?" —M. R. ESTER, San Leandro, on De Gaulle.  
"The Great White Father gives only after he has taken." —GEO. C. MCNUTT, Oakland, on federal aid.  
"Barry Goldwater left the University of Arizona in his first year. Now we know what happens to dropouts." —A. A. McCUE, S. F.  
"It is time we quit believing that the roads were made for me, the road signs for you." —MRS. PAT COIL, Whittier, on highway safety.  
"Sitting on a comfortable retirement shelf, watching life from a remote distance, is pretty futile and frustrating." —JOHN H. CURRAN, 80, chairman, S. F. business counseling board.  
"Please, I'm not a candidate!"

## My Neighbors



## TRAVEL by Stan Delaplane

### Travel Expert Has Data On Bike Tour of Europe

"My mother would not let me take a bike trip in Europe this year. But she says maybe next year. So please print all information . . ." Too long here. But a friend of mine has just bicycled for four months in France. I've put his suggestions on paper. I'll send it to anyone free. Send me the address—and a stamp. Some of his suggestions: "Duocloth long underwear is best for riding. It is light, warm—has airspace in it. You can take it off if it gets too warm." "Ship clothing ahead by train. Plan your next day's run with Michelin maps. They mark the steepness of grades with a little arrow system. This way you can avoid pumping the steeper hills."

you'll drift to the right by habit. After two days, the left-hand becomes automatic. European driving laws are pretty much like our own. Main difference is use of lights. In cities you drive with parking lights only. I've made all kinds of mistakes and been pulled down by police. But they were awfully nice about it. "Would like to know about any short cruises in the Pacific as I do not have time for the long ones." Write Matson Navigation Co., 533 W. 6th St., Los Angeles for information on the 15-day Makahiki cruise on the Lurline (Oct. 30). Makes island stops at Honolulu, Hilo, Lahaina, and Nawiliwili. This is a fine warm weather cruise. And Matson ships serve the best

food I ever had at sea. This cruise costs \$575. Repeats around Christmas time. "We are two secretaries. We planned our vacation around Christmas. Not too much money, so—Mexico? Virgin Islands? Austria? (Though we don't ski)." Austria. And I think your loveliest towns will be Kitzbuhel and St. Anton. Airlines are cheapest at this time of year. Most have a package plan of transportation plus hotels. The ski resorts are full of young men. You can sit all evening over a 10-cent glass of white wine. With music. You meet everybody at community tables. Next in order, Virgin Islands. Two girls in Mexico always seem to be wandering and trying to find something to do.

## Our Man Hoppe

### Good Leaders Are Worthless

By Arthur Hoppe  
In a brilliant political maneuver Mr. Lyndon Johnson has proved his worth. And it was good news to Democrats everywhere. For he proved he wasn't worth nearly as much as most people thought. It certainly looked bad for a while. There was Mr. Johnson, a poor Texas boy who started without a bean and dedicated himself to the public weal and the common good. So after a lifetime of selfless service to his country, Life Magazine estimates he is now worth \$14 million. This was naturally a little embarrassing to Democrats. "Well," they'd say defensively, "his wife works." Or: "It just goes to show you how much you can save turning off lights around the house." But Mr. Johnson was understandably riled by the implication he'd become a multi-millionaire on the salary of humble Congressman. So he sternly ordered a thorough family audit by a team of Certified Public Accountants. And, sure enough, it turns out he's worth merely—heavens be praised!—\$3.4 million. So he's only a measly multi-millionaire. You can see how this took the wind out of Mr. Goldwater's sails. Just the other day, Mr. Goldwater revealed he was worth but a paltry \$1.7 million. Which makes him just a common old millionaire. And you could tell he was getting ready to whack Mr. Johnson as a multi-millionaire. But now all he can say is: "Don't vote for Johnson—he's worth twice as much as I am." Which doesn't sound too appealing. Besides, now that Mr. Johnson's wealth has shrunk from \$14 million to \$3.4 million, I expect it to dwindle down to next to nothing by November. You know how it is when politicians start talking poor-mouth. Indeed, you can envision the Great Television Debate along about the end of October:

MR. JOHNSON: I'm proud to reveal to you folks out there tonight that a firm of Certified Public Accountants has issued a report proving I get 21 shaves from every (beep-beep) razor blade I buy.  
MR. GOLDWATER: (suspiciously): I'd like to read a copy of that report. I'd like to, that is, if only I could afford lenses for my glasses. But as a poor, penniless . . .  
MR. JOHNSON: . . . scion of inherited wealth.  
MR. GOLDWATER: Scion! You mean the store? Oh, business is terrible. Peggy was just saying she didn't know where our next meal was coming from if I didn't get a decent job . . .  
MR. JOHNSON: Actually, Lady Bird worries most about our tads. She always takes a Bowser Bag along to State Department dinners. But they're getting kind of puny and sickly living off able scraps and if I'm out of work . . .  
Well, that's the way it is with politicians. They're always bragging about how richly endowed they are in everything. In everything but money. Yes sir, there's no asset in a close race like personal poverty. The poorer the better.  
For if there's one outstanding quality we voters look for in a candidate when we go to choose the next Chief Executive of our great American free enterprise system, it's that he be an abject financial failure.

## Opinions of Others

"I converted an empty pickle jar into a miniature aquarium last February. The little four inch fish bowl was complete with gravel, plants, and last, a single guppy. . . I unscrewed the jar lid for the first time in five months and put the little fish back in the community aquarium. He flipped his tale, swam about six inches and a big fish caught him. Freedom wasn't all he had expected to be. . . Freedom means only that you have left the security of your place in society and are willing to work for a better place—or to fall into a lower spot. It means simply that you are prepared to face the world and to accept the rewards brought and bought by the sweat of your brow and the ability of your thinking." —Pemberville (Ohio) Leader.

## The Old Timer

