

EDITORIALS

Ghostly Bird of Prey

For nearly a decade now, nearly every spring and summer, a strange and ghostly bird of prey has flown out of nowhere to cast its shadow across Los Angeles county.

Again, this past year, like some ruthless migratory bird, polio has made its seasonal appearance—in such a degree as to cause a state of emergency to be proclaimed by our county health officer—leaving a spoor of twisted bodies behind.

Polio's movements are capricious, seemingly without any rational pattern. A family of five is stricken in one home across the fence is spared. Today, it is our small community, tomorrow Altadena, or Pomona, or Santa Monica, or the teeming heart of Los Angeles.

By its very unpredictability, polio used to bring terror in its wake. But knowledge dissipates terror. Men of science at Cal Tech, SC, UCLA and institutions all over America have been ceaselessly searching for the answer. All have contributed something to the fight.

Too, we know that no polio patient will be helpless or alone, because every patient who requires it will receive aid, through the March of Dimes.

Today we have a hopeful vaccine. Everything points to its effectiveness. It is in the process of being thoroughly tested by private universities and government agencies. We'll know the answer this spring. If it is favorable, this dreadful disease may be wiped out forever.

But hundreds and hundreds of polio patients in this county must be cared for still—as well as the hundreds who will be stricken in 1955 for whom the vaccine will come too late. We cannot forget them.

From Here to There

During January the California Motor Vehicle Department expects to collect \$100 million in automobile license and registration fees. On the basis of 6,000,000 motor vehicles, the average fee will be slightly over \$16.

What has happened during the last half century? In 1905, there were 6,500 automobiles registered in California for which the state collected \$13,000 at the \$2 annual fee. The few roads then existing were abominable. It took about a week to drive from Los Angeles to San Francisco. The trip was no pleasure jaunt. It was an exploring expedition.

Fifty years ago, automobiles were ponderous and heavy. When they broke down, which was often, a garage was seldom available. In any event, mechanical trouble frequently meant a waitover of days, sometimes weeks, while parts were being secured. Filling stations, as we know them, had not yet appeared. When gasoline was low, the unhappy motorist kept his fingers crossed while he looked for a rocery store or livery stable.

A half century ago, automobiles were so expensive that the average American could not afford to own one. The cheapest car (and this will floor you) was the Cadillac. A 1903 Cadillac sold for \$750, f. o. b. factory. A model Ford, affectionately known as the "Tin Lizzie," cost \$1,050 complete with 30 x 3 1/2 high pressure tires and oil lamps. A 4-cylinder Oldsmobile was tagged at \$3,400, and it took \$5,000 to buy a 6-cylinder model. And all that was real money in those days.

What will happen in the next 50 years? Traffic engineers point to the phenomenal increase in automobiles and say that if this continues at its present rate our highways will be pitifully inadequate. Automobiles have practically pushed bicycles and pedestrians off the roads. Now automobiles threaten, in the near future, to push themselves off the roads.

How will we get from here to there? Traffic prophets come up with a number of ideas including revolutionary jets, family-size helicopters, atomic-propelled planes and highway systems underground and overhead. Engineers agree that today's automobiles, despite their sleek beauty, smoothness and speed, are notoriously inefficient. The fuel is mostly wasted, passing through as exhaust gases, instead of delivering motive power.

There are big days in transportation just beyond the next curve. Let's stick around and see.

STOP POLIO!



The SQUIRREL CAGE

By REID BUNDY

The recent cold snap which had Torrance residents digging into cedar chests for sweaters and scarves, forced Jerry Whitcomb to get out his heavy tweed suit, a suit he hadn't worn for almost a year.

Jerry had put on a little weight in the meantime—in fact, he couldn't button up the old suit any more.

All of this prompted him to tell us of his Uncle Pete who lived in the heart of California's lettuce industry in Salinas.

Like Jerry, his uncle tried to put on a suit a couple of years ago and found it too small.

"It's a diet for you," Pete's wife said. And, living in an area where an abundance of lettuce is grown, he switched to lettuce for his meals—three times a day. While downtown at noon he would order a half a head of lettuce and a cup of coffee—black.

For dinner he'd have a heaping lettuce salad, with just a touch of dressing. For breakfast he would munch on a few leaves of the stuff and drink more coffee—still black.

When the next cold spell came around, Uncle Pete was able to put on his heavy suit. In fact, it fit just a wee bit loose.

On his way to work, wearing his heavy suit for the first time since the previous winter, Uncle Pete was run over by a huge truck.

The truck was loaded to the brim with . . . lettuce.

CLIPPED: The Dallas Morning News thinks the Chicago gangster who was described as an expert bridge player, must be especially good on take-out bids. . . . The Atlanta Journal raises an editorial eyebrow over a news story recently about a baby being born in Mexico with three lungs. Must be able to get a lot of floor-walking mileage out of a baby equipped with two lungs and a spare. . . . In times like these, it is best to live only one day at a time, says the Cincinnati Enquirer. Some of us can hardly afford that. . . . And the Chicago Tribune has come up with the notion that love begins when she sinks in his arms, and ends with her arms in his sink.

When Marvin Goetsch, of Mayfair Creamery told Councilman Albert Isen yesterday that he was looking for a way to get more milk from cows, Isen replied, "That's an utter impossibility." (Wow!)

OF ALL THINGS

By Robert B. Martin

One of the most perplexing problems ever to confront the average man comes at this time each year. . . . what to do with the Christmas tree?

Yellowed and dry and nearly denuded of its needles, it has, in little more than a week, outlived its use as a living room display piece.

The tinsel and baubles have been returned to their boxes, the delicate bells and lights are nestled safely in their tinselled containers and the silver angel has folded her wings and will rest for another year on her springy bed of exotism.

And now . . . the once-prized tree that was cut from its mountainside home to lift its branches in regal splendor amidst shouts of joy and Yuletide carols. . . . the tree that played its part so well has become a heartless Frankenstein, a spindly monster that must, in some manner, be removed to oblivion.

Of course if you employ a regular trash pick-up service, no more, for you don't have a problem at all.

But for those who do not enjoy this luxury, you might entertain the idea of setting it up in your backyard and throw up a piece of burning newspaper at it.

The trick is to escape, because a dry tree goes up like a flashbulb.

We know a man who can't run very fast, and they are still grafting skin on the place where he sits down.

Another method is to cut it into three or four large pieces and jamming it into the incinerator. This has definite merit, but do not blow at the awfully smug spark. Singed eyebrows can detract from anyone's appearance.

You can try burying it, but that is a hard and thankless task.

People who have fireplaces . . . the usable kind here in Southern California . . . often try bending the tree in two and stuffing it in. The result is flashy, brief and violent. Insurance agents sometimes dream of clients doing this and they sit, bolt upright in bed, trying to blot out the picture with clammy hands.

In most cases, the flash takes care of the mantle, its ornaments and a wall of the house.

More often, the conflagration spreads, to the rug and at least one piece of furniture.

Call it freakish, but we heard of one instance where the tree jerked spasmodically and flew like a burning arrow across the living room to crash through a picture window.

Now for three methods which we hesitate to suggest or condone:

No. 1: You can cut it up, box it and mail it to someone.

No. 2: Shred or dice it and send it down the garbage disposal.

No. 3: Wait until four o'clock in the morning, then throw it into the neighbor's yard.

The letter of all methods, is most preferable. Well, if you're anything like this writer, you'll probably end up by doing exactly what we did:

Wrap it in tin foil, stuff it into the deepfreeze, and save the darned thing for next year!

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Reynolds Knight

Rubber, Glass Manufacturers See Good 1955

This is the time of year when business and industrial leaders come out "in front of the scenes" and give their views on the state of the Union's economy. Here are some of the expert observations:

Total consumption of new rubber in the United States during 1955 should approximate 280,000 long tons, an increase of about five per cent over 1954, says the president of a large tire manufacturing company.

He suggests that the anticipated upturn of production and sales in the rubber industry during 1955 may be slightly greater than the increase predicted for general business.

Mounting automobile registrations and expectations of high production levels for new cars and trucks account for this optimism.

Tire sales for replacement and original equipment will probably exceed 1954 totals by 4,000,000 units. Overall industry sales amounted to about \$5,000,000 in 1954. Sales of replacement passenger car tires may be about 2,000,000 more than the 47,500,000 sold during 1954, and total passenger car tire sales, replacement plus original equipment, may increase the 79,300,000 from 1954's sales of about 76,250,000.

Adoption of tubeless tires by automobile manufacturers for use on 1955 models is considered by the industrialist to be one of the most significant developments of the year in the rubber industry.

PACKAGING GAINS—One of the oldest of the nation's packaging mediums, the collapsible metal tube, is looking ahead to one of its most successful years.

The improved demand for this type of container during the second half of 1954 is expected to continue, the executive secretary of a trade association reports, and 1955 should find the industry operating at another high level of production.

While final figures are not yet available, the industry's 1954 output will approach and may possibly equal or exceed 1953 production of 682,405 gross cubic feet of billion tubes.

The industry, comprising 16 manufacturers and 20 plants throughout the United States, produces various sizes and types of tubes for the packaging of toothpastes, medicines and pharmaceuticals, shaving cosmetics, household and industrial items and food products.

Increasing recognition of the collapsible metal tube is reflecting in expanded use by producers of domestic and industrial products.

Another factor contributing to the industry's favorable outlook is a smoother flow of orders due to a decrease in packagers' inventories.

Although total production has almost doubled since 1939, the industry has manufacturing facilities on hand to substantially increase volume if the demand warrants.

GAS APPLIANCES—Three factors are expected to give the gas appliance industry its busiest year since 1950 are: the construction of 1,300,000 new homes; record expenditure of \$8,250,000,000 on home modernization; and the nation's natural gas pipeline system during 1955.

"By the end of 1955 at least three major gas appliances will be used in the average home where only one was employed in 1945," H. Leigh Whitelaw, managing director of the Gas Appliance Manufacturers Assn., says.

To meet this demand manufacturers, distributors and dealers are replenishing inventories which have dropped to a near low for the postwar period.

The house-heating division of the gas industry is confident. Comparative records show that sales of gas central heating equipment (boiler burners) this year are running 14 per cent ahead of last year, while the sales of oil burners, their nearest competitor, have fallen 33 per cent behind 1953 figures.

GLASS PROSPECTS—The glass industry is doing better entering 1955. John D. Biggers, chairman, and George P. MacNichol Jr., president of Libbey-Owens-Ford Glass Co., reported the company's glass sales at the close of 1954 were running ahead of those for record-breaking 1953. Orders booked and customer schedules were high for the final month.

During the early part of 1954 imports of window glass under current low tariffs caused the shutdown of several pro-

AFTER HOURS

By JOHN MORLEY

Special note:—These personal "sentences" under my copyrighted title "I Believe," first began to appear in the Rotarian magazine in 1937 and for the past 17 years in the press around the world. H. L. Menckel contracted for their use in his book, "A New Dictionary of Quotations," now published by Alfred A. Knopf, New York. They have also appeared under my name in the Saturday Evening Post, Ladies Home Journal (the latest, Page 155, October 1954), and other national magazines. Also in my book, "I Believe," published originally in 1937 and reprinted after its 21st printing in 1947. A new edition of "I Believe" is scheduled for publication upon my return in September, 1955, from my coming trip around the world—John Morley.

I BELIEVE . . . I believe some people welcome the New Year as though they were afraid to face it. . . . sobriety.

I believe history is piling up so fast that every New Year is the anniversary of something awful.

I believe poverty is sometimes a state of mind created by a neighbor's new shiny 1955 car.

I believe the newest musical innovation to be announced for 1955 is the inclusion of an outboard motor to a jazz band.

I believe during the New Year week-end men will again die with their boots on . . . the accelerator.

I believe the New Year's joker who claims he can drink like a fish and take it . . . doesn't know what a fish drinks.

I believe with every New Year, for generations past; the most famous to the masses are those who drive, throw, kick, swat, or carry . . . a ball.

I believe in 1955 the main reason for most of our headaches and stomachaches will be . . . curiosity.

I believe that most people will believe anything you tell them if you whisper it.

I believe in the New Year men will continue to feed anti-knock to their engines, when they need to feed it to themselves.

I believe many people will believe resolute such thorough preparations for a rainy day that they will block out even the shadow of the sun.

I believe that during 1955 some people will spend money they haven't yet earned, to buy some things that don't need, to impress some people they don't even like.

I believe the parents who spend most of the year worrying how their offspring would turn out, will spend New Year's eve worrying when the offspring would be in college.

I believe next Sunday, as any other Sunday, the bells in the choir will bring more fellows, to church than the bell in the belfry.

As "After Hours" begins its 21st year of publication, it sends warmest greetings to readers around the world, with the prayerful hope that the New Year will bring us closer to that divine road to Peace.

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THE MAIL BOX

(The Torrance Herald welcomes expressions from its readers which can be published on this page. The editor has the right to edit, shorten, or delete letters. Letters should be brief and to the point. The writer's name will be withheld if requested. Opinions expressed in letters here published represent those of the writer and not necessarily those of the Torrance Herald.)

Where Was Torrance? Editor, Torrance Herald: Son after viewing the Rose Parade on my TV set Saturday, I got to wondering why Torrance didn't enter a float, or at least a band, in the wonderful affair. When cities like Inglewood, Monterey Park, Gardena, South Gate and other smaller cities can have entries, it seems odd that Torrance didn't have one.

Things like this are the events that bring attention to your city, and as most know, we sure can stand a little whooping and hollering for our town. Most people in the country don't even know Torrance exists, let alone where it is.

It seems to me that a little money invested by merchants and the city into a project like the Rose Parade would go a long way to helping our city expand.

ROBERT J. TALBOT

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