

On Being Concerned

We were pleased to note during the discussions of the embattled high rise proposal for Torrance beach area property this week that a spokesman for the Riviera Homeowners suggested to City Council members that their deliberations "concern the very well being of the City of Torrance."

We say we are pleased because too often in the past years one could infer that many Rivierans were chiefly concerned that they not be identified too closely with Torrance. They receive their mail through a Redondo Beach mailing address, and many, we fear, had to be reminded that they actually lived in Torrance.

With the statement of concern for the city's welfare coming from one of the area's fine leaders, we're hopeful that it augurs a day in which all the city's residents will be proud to call Torrance their home.

If the Rivierans would take on the city's mailing address, we think it would be a giant step in that direction.

IT'S NEWS TO ME by Herb Caen

Welcome Back To The LOL

BAGATELLE: Our Little Old Lady is back (welcome, LOL). Couple of days ago she wandered into a local bank's History Room—where 25 students from the S.F. Academy of Art were sprawled on the floor getting ready to sketch the stagecoach. "Pardon me," she said to Instructor Barbara Briggs, "but what are you protesting against?"

A LADY SHOPPER, with her young son in tow, walked into a W. T. Grant store the other day and immediately took off the boy's belt and put it into her purse. Unable to contain herself, the store's manager asked "Why?" "Well," shrugged the mother, "when-ever we go into a store, he grabs everything in sight. This way he's too busy holding up his pants."

IN ONE EAR: The entertaining King family of here and thereabouts (the four King Sisters and their 35 relatives) have landed a regular Coast-to-Coast spot on ABC-TV—replacing "Outer Limits" on Jan. 23. Del Courtney, the husband of Yvonne King, will master the ceremonies. If you like family reunions you'll LOVE "The King Family Show!"

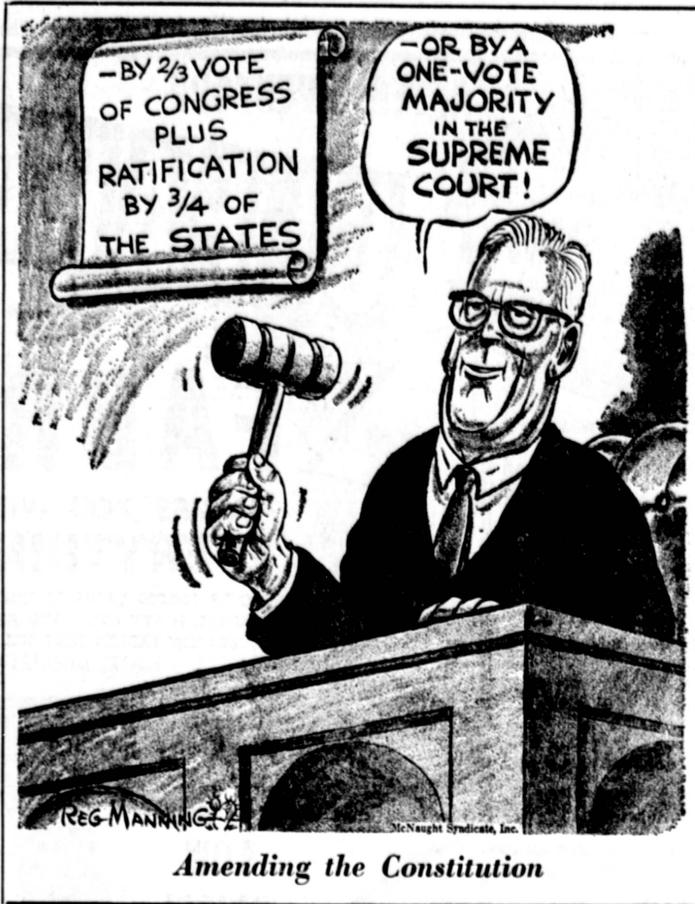
THE PECULIARLY AMERICAN preoccupation with cleanliness (proverbs we can live without: "Cleanliness is next to Godliness") was never more evident than during the recent Univ. of Calif. rumpus. I keep thinking about that respectable clubman who categorized the Free Speechers as "a bunch of unwashed jerks." Clean your fingernails, kids, if you want to be accepted by the washed jerks of the world — neat of mind, suits well-pressed, brains pre-shrunk and wrinkle-proof.

ADD MYSTERIES of the feminine mystique: A girl who is dating several men will invariably refer to them as "this person," or "these people." As: "I was out with this person last night and . . ." or "These people told me that . . ." A woman might call a spade a spade but she has a helluva time calling a man a man, especially to another man.

YES'M, OLD-TIMER, everything's different these days—even the kids who play sandlot football. Bunch of 'em were at it in the park the other day, when suddenly the leader raised his hand and said: "Okay, fellas, time out for a commercial." Whereupon they all plopped on the grass, rested for 60 seconds, and then resumed play.

CAENFETTI: Gov. Pat Brown's closest advisers (and dearest friends) think his overly frank radio interview belongs in the foot-in-the-mouth dept.; quote from one: "Naturally, he wants to be on the Supreme Court, but is that the way to announce it?" . . . Her press agent informs me that Nancy Wilson, the singer, "was paid only \$3,000 a week when she appeared at Off-Broadway last year; now, in Las Vegas, she gets \$25,000 a week." What kinda rags-to-riches story is THAT? . . . The Jolly Cone, a Frosties stand near Placerville, has a paper cup in the window, labeled: "Ernie Ford was here. He drank out of this cup!" Gee willikers. Ol' Ern' is a fine feller, but is he really THAT big? . . . Ah, critics: If you didn't read and like the Ian Fleming books (the early ones, anyway), I guess the James Bond movies are okay — but if you did like the books, the films are played too heavily for gags. This, claim the critics, is as it should be since Fleming wrote the books with tongue-in-cheek — something Fleming didn't know till the critics told him; he meant James Bond to be taken seriously (and Bond, as a movie gag man, just doesn't come off). I guess these are the same critics who thought Terry Southern's "Candy" was a spoof, when it was written as straight pornography.

IT PAYS TO ADVERTISE: So Martin Borenstein, owner of the Able I decor shop here, ran a gag ad a few days ago about a "real tiger sofa" (this being the Year of the Tiger in ads) priced at \$19,542, also a gag. So danged if one Neil Rosenstein of N'York didn't order one. So, with a sigh, Martin is making it. Takes 12 yards of tiger skin and will cost him \$24,000—putting him plenty out of pocket—but that's the way the tiger claws.



Amending the Constitution

HERE AND THERE by Royce Brier

The Venezuelan Ranchos: A Million Miles Away?

In Caracas, Venezuela, they are talking of doing something about the ranchos. In Washington, the President talks of a war on poverty, and a conspicuous manifestation of poverty is bad housing.

But there is no shelter in the United States, nor indeed, in the Western Civilization, comparable to the Caracas ranchos, though these do not differ materially from the shack towns encircling the other great Latin American communities, such as Mexico City or Sao Paulo.

The substantial part of Caracas lies on a flat and narrow valley floor between two ranges of high foothills, mountains behind. Two or three decades ago the ranchos began to climb the foothills in great, blighted clusters, and they now house about 400,000 persons, a fourth of the Caracas population.

There are perhaps 50,000

of these structures for families are large. The families came from the interior, leaving the land for work in the city. But they have not found work, even though Venezuela is probably the most prosperous country in Latin America.

Two years ago the writer took a tour of one rancho area—a walking tour, because few of the cramped, almost vertical streets will take motor vehicles.

The houses, many on shaky stilts, are in some cases plaster over lath, sometimes flattened oil tins. Many are painted bright colors, the only relief from squalor. For they have no running water, sewers or heating (the climate is warm the year around). A very few have electricity, but most of the domestic lighting is by kerosene.

The houses have one room, at most two. Furniture is usually made of

scrap lumber, and the only decoration may be a crucifix. The stench of the whole area is pretty bad, but it doesn't bother the swarms of kids. Not a bicycle stands in the streets, for where would a rancho occupant find \$40? That's half a year's income.

They are kindly people, and strong, because they get plenty of exercise. They are also, as you may guess, prolific. They live on a dole, or as scavengers, some on part-time work. Their economic condition is changeless.

The Betancourt regime tried to help them, but with little success. The Leoni regime will try to move some of them back to the land, but they are reluctant. Most of them would rather eke out their days, and in the dark night look down on the sparkling city, its gleaming river of freeways meandering a mile away—or is it a million miles?

BOOKS by William Hogan

Lewin Captures Old, New Humor of U. S. Politics

The journalist Finley Peter Dunne created an astute political philosopher, Mr. Dooley, in the years before the century's turn. Mr. Dooley was a Chicago Irish barkeep. His brogue was so undiminished that it is often difficult to follow it in this age of the instant joke. Yet once attuned to Dunne's often insane dialect spelling and rhetoric, Mr. Dooley remains an astonishingly wise and pertinent commentator.

In considering "The Negro Problem" in 1900, Mr. Dooley said: "Well, he'll ayther have to be to th' north an' be a subjek race, or stay in th' south an' be an objek lesson. 'Tis a hard time he'll have, anyhow. I'm not sure that I'd not as lave be gently lynched in Mississippi as baten to death in New York . . ."

This seems as contemporary as a Dick Gregory routine. The surprising fact is that much past political humor, most of it anchored in savage satire, can be ap-

plied to the problems, follies and asininity of today. This became evident in "A Treasury of Political Humor," an anthology edited by Leonard C. Lewin. If one has the heart for another helping of political wit, or witty political wisdom, after the recent presidential campaign and election, this is an interesting book. Some 160 short excerpts are here, from sources as widely removed in time as Benjamin Franklin and Arthur Hoppe (selections from his book "The Love Everybody Crusade").

A Lincoln is always a joy, as witness his telegram to General George B. McClellan on Oct. 24, 1862: "I have just read your dispatch about sore-tongued and fatigued horses. Will you pardon me for asking what the horses in your army have done since the battle of Antietam that fatigues anything?"

I don't think the selections from H. L. Mencken exhibit the old thunderer at his most withering. Yet his survey here of the rewards of the Presidency in the year 1931 remains sufficiently sardonic: "The President . . . sees little of the really intelligent and amusing people of the country; most of them, in fact, make it a sort of point of honor to scorn him and avoid him."

Among my own favorites

in this wide-ranging collection included S. J. Perelman's 1935 piece called "The Rover Boys and the Young Radicals." Here a crisis evolves around the storied elms of old Effluvia College. Sounds like a spoof of some recent campus activity?

Tom Rover holds several documents in his hand and declares: "I found out just in the nick of time . . . These sneaking Reds have been plotting a revolution right here in old Effluvia. Certain weak-minded members of the faculty, goaded on by insidious alien doctrines and abetted by unscrupulous students, are preparing to seize power, set up a soviet in the Administration building, and nationalize the girls of Sweetbread Hall . . ."

Strength for These Days (From The Bible)

This is my commandment, that ye love one another.—(John 15:12).

We can deal with almost any situation—even when we encounter those who antagonize us—if we remember God's admonition to show love, at all times, for our fellow beings. This attitude could lead to some remarkable transformations in the feelings of others for us.

TRAVEL by Stan Delaplaine

London Is Theater Town See 'Follies' in Paris

"We will be in London and Paris and would like to know if there are any shows we should see. And how do you get tickets?"

London's the theater town. I don't what's playing now but look at the theater page in the Daily Mail or Daily Express. Shows start about 6:30 and you have supper after the show—a more pleasant arrangement than ours.

You don't have to tip the girl who seats you. But if she brings tea to your seat at intermission, then tip her a shilling. There's also a bar somewhere in the lobby. For tickets, ask the hall porter in your hotel—the uniformed man who hands you your keys, mail, etc. Theater seats are cheap in London.

All Americans in Paris go to the Folies Bergere. Summer business is 40 per cent American so 40 per cent of the jokes are in English. Or worked so you'll understand them. Tickets through the hotel concierge—which is hall porter in French.

If the Folies is "sold out," the concierge is working for (a) a tip, or (b) a little scalping increase. There are ticket agencies along the boulevards. Or go to the Casino de Paris which is much the same thing: It's sort of grandly staged burlesque. Tip the girl who seats you one franc: 20 cents U.S.

Best show in Paris is the nightclub Lido on the Champs Elysees. You must order one bottle of champagne, about \$10 or \$15 for two. Skip the dinner. Go somewhere else before the show.

The very bare shows are in Place Pigalle. Chez Eve, Nouvelle Eve and Naturistes are best known. Add the check yourself. The waiter flunked math.

"Could you suggest a medium-priced hotel in Madrid?"

Try the Wellington or the Velasquez. Should be about \$5 to \$6. If it's summer, find out what the charge is for air-conditioning—if they have it. Sometimes hotels charge you for this even if it isn't working. Hotel rates are set by the Government and they have to do all sorts of things to get around it. You aren't being taken. They really do have to go around corners just to keep operating.

"Would you suggest a hotel in Guatemala City and things to do and shopping?"

The Maya-Excelsior is a junior Hilton type and central. I stay at the older, more Spanish style Palace which is full of banana intrigue types. Rooms at either one will run about \$8. Best restaurant is Hosteria Don Pepe—he makes a great bean dish.

Best shopping is in skirts and blouses in Guatemala designs based on Maya temple carvings. The silver appears to be poor grade. Not as good as Mexico. Don't bother buying those Spanish "pieces-of-eight" from street corner Indians. They're made from molds in a couple of silver shops on Sixth Avenue, the main street. And you can buy them cheaper there anyway.

Weather is pleasanter and the town is more interest-

Mailbox

Editor, Press-Herald:

On behalf of thousands of United Crusade volunteers in this area, may I thank you for the consistent support you and your staff gave this first United Crusade appeal, a combined effort of United Way and the American Red Cross.

Representing the largest public campaign ever attempted, United Crusade raised \$19,422,966 for 300 United Way services and 13 chapters of the American Red Cross. This means that these organizations will be able to continue their vital services to make this a better community in which to live and work.

Again, thanks for your co-operation and assistance.

Cordially,
HARRY M. BARDT
Presiding chairman,
1964 United Crusade

ing if you go over to Antigua about 45 minutes by car. The original capital was abandoned after several earthquakes and floods. But it has fine colonial buildings and several good hotels.

" . . . a bon voyage present for friends going to Europe. They will be driving."

A good tire gauge. European gas stations don't check tires and don't wash windshields. Or, a non-breakable Thermos (or similar type) jug. Good for coffee. Even better to carry bottled water which is usually poorly corked.

"Would you recommend foreign language phrase books for a trip to Europe?"

Pocket-size phrase books are always on sale at the airport where you land and in the big tourist hotels. Run through it first. They might unload a left-over on you. I got one in France once that had phrases like — "Are there any mine fields here? Have you seen any soldiers with strange uniforms?"

"I have heard of getting a discount on buying a watch in Switzerland . . ."

Switzerland is the no discount country of Europe. However, they do give 10 percent discounts to airline people, tour guides and travel agents. (But not to travel writers, alas.) If you know anybody in airline business in Switzerland, they can get it for you.

Our Man Hoppe

A Computer Is Watching You

By Arthur Hoppe

Ah, the joys the New Year brings. Like your income tax forms. And the joyful thing about them this year is the message they bear from our new Commissioner of Internal Revenue, Mr. Sheldon S. Cohen. He sounds admirably hateful.

You may remember his predecessor, Mr. Mortimer M. Caplin. Mr. Caplin did a great job. Except he wanted to be loved. Every year, he'd print a "Personal Letter to Taxpayers" on the front of our tax forms. In it, he'd say things like paying taxes is really lots of fun and he knew we'd like it if we tried it and so forth.

After three years of struggling desperately to be loved, Mr. Caplin gave up tax collecting last May and decided to try his hand at being a book publisher instead. Which just shows you how nice fellows never seem to get a break.

Anyway, our new tax collector, Mr. Cohen, is I'm happy to say, manfully starting off on the wrong foot. Instead of a Personal Letter on our form this year, he's sent us a cold, tough, no-nonsense "Special Message."

In it, he warns us that his Automatic Data Processing system is now watching us in all 50 States. "This system," he says ominously, "is designed to give you better service and more efficient and effective enforcement of the tax laws. Our aim is to make sure everyone pays his share . . ." Or else.

Isn't that admirably hateful? That's the way I like my Government — honestly suspicious, frankly distrustful, coldly watchful. It makes for an ideal rapport between us. Because that's just the way I feel about it.

And now I can only pray that The Cohen Heresy, as I think of it, spreads. Here comes your new draft notice. Does it open with a warm "Greetings"? Does it imply how much you're going to love close order drill at Camp Death Valley? No, it simply says, "Take your choice, Mac: the Army or the bucket."

With luck, The Cohen Heresy may even reach the White House: "Dear Sir, the President has asked me to inform you that he's got more important things to do than read crackpot letters from nuts like you. And while I cannot speak for the President, you may rest assured that your bold concept of combining surplus horseradish with our overabundant marshmallow sauce in order to enrich our school lunch program would make him throw up."

Indeed, we can even envision the day when the lowliest freshman Congressman has the courage to print up a form letter to his constituents: "If you'd stop plaguing me with your hare-brained schemes and idiotic requests, maybe I'd have time to accommodate my prime mission as your elected representative. Name-ly getting more pork barrel projects for our district."

Naturally, such courage takes considerable envisioning. But it's the only way to achieve a truly honest Government. Which, of course, no one could love. And there's no better insurance of a healthy democracy, I say, than a suspicious, distrustful, watchful citizenry.

So hats off to Mr. Cohen for reversing the trend. It takes guts to stand up and be hated, the way a tax collector should. I'm glad he mistrusts me. I'm glad that when it comes to me figuring out my taxes, he's got a system. Likewise, I'm sure.

Morning Report:

Fidel Castro is cutting corners these days. To save on gasoline, he shortened the annual military parade in Havana to 25 minutes. This won't exactly make Cuba prosperous but it's a step in the right direction.

But while cutting the parade to 25 minutes, he extended his speech to two-and-a-half hours. A big Communist country like Russia can afford such oratorical extravaganzas. Castro, however, should let his people cut sugar cane.

There are buyers for sugar but long speeches are a glut on the market. If Fidel will only stop talking, and also chuck that monkey suit, we might get along with him some day.

Abe Mellinkoff



"There are 365 days in a year but more than 3,659 special days are designated for observance."