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School of Journalism: Montana Journalism Review, 1977

Published by ScholarWorks at University of Montana, 2015
Montana Newspaper Hall of Fame

Burley Bowler, publisher of the Scobey Daniels County Leader from 1924 to 1967, typified the fearless, incisive weekly editor who loves a good fight and a good story.

Mr. Bowler was born in 1890 in Dundalk, Ontario, where he worked in a drug store and learned the jeweler’s trade. He moved to Saskatchewan in 1909, married Maud Cryderman, also of Ontario, and arrived in Montana in 1913. He was unable to continue as a jeweler after he suffered burns on his fingers. He had “hung around” the newspaper in Radville, Sask., before the accident, and his interest in journalism led to a job with the Flaxville Democrat and later the Flaxville Hustler.

In 1917 Mr. Bowler bought the Antelope Independent. When the town’s business section burned, he sold the newspaper and went to work for the Scobey Sentinel.

Mr. Bowler bought the Daniels County Leader in 1924 and during the late 1920s and the 1930s engaged in outspoken editorial crusades against Communists, a statewide liquor racket, and New Deal policies. He was an ardent supporter of the La Follette-Wheeler ticket in 1924. He helped organize the first co-ops in Daniels County.

In 1926 arsonists damaged his newspaper plant. The Leader was printed at Wolf Point until the building could be repaired.

Mr. and Mrs. Bowler had a daughter, Gwendolyn, and two sons, Larry, now editor and publisher of the Leader, and Duane, editorial-page editor of the Billings Gazette. Duane Bowler observes that his father was “much more liberal than most people thought. He was more of a populist than anything else. He was a raconteur and he had a splendid sense of humor.” Larry recalls that his father never avoided controversy but cautioned him that “anyone who embarks on a program of vengeance embitters his own soul.”

Mr. Bowler served as president of the Montana Press Association in 1958.

Mr. Bowler died of cancer Dec. 18, 1967, at age 77. Until a few weeks before his death, he had remained active in community affairs and had continued to write his “Publisher’s Column” in the Leader.

Burley Bowler
1890-1967
Twenty-First Member

The Montana Newspaper Hall of Fame, established Aug. 16, 1958, is sponsored by the Montana Press Association and the Montana School of Journalism. A committee comprising six members of the Press Association and the dean of the School of Journalism recommends one person for the Hall of Fame every two years. A candidate may be nominated five years after his death.
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No. 20 1977

The first journalism review in the United States—established 1958.

The Montana Journalism Review is published annually by the Bureau of Press and Broadcasting Research of the School of Journalism, University of Montana, Missoula, Montana.

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Warren J. Brier, Editor
The People’s Voice
The Dream and the Reality

By HARRY BILLINGS

The People’s Voice, a Helena-based weekly that was circulated throughout Montana, displayed prominently the quotation that “the hottest places in Hell are reserved for those who in a time of moral crisis refuse to take a stand.” If that is true, then Harry Billings, editor from 1948 to 1968, and Gretchen Billings, associate editor, need not fear the hereafter, for they consistently took courageous and informed stands during two decades crowded with crises. When they quit in December, 1968, Mr. Billings, a 1933 graduate of the Montana School of Journalism, wrote, “After trying for years to save the world, I have finally decided that maybe the world doesn’t want to be saved.” The first two articles about the People’s Voice are based on speeches given by Mr. and Mrs. Billings at the Dean Stone Night journalism banquet April 20, 1976. The third article, by Suzanne Lagoni MacDonald, was submitted as a research paper in the class History and Principles of Journalism. Mrs. MacDonald, a junior in the School of Journalism, is the fine-arts reviewer for the Missoula (Mont.) Missoulian and for the past two years has produced the children’s programming at the University radio station, KUFM.

Every fledgling journalist soon learns the importance of the five “Ws” in reporting the events of the day — that if any one is missing, his story is not complete. The same applies to speech-writing.

Most of you know that the People’s Voice was published in Helena for three decades and that its first issue appeared in the final month of the turbulent Thirties.

But who were the people who brought it into being? Why did they believe so strongly that there was a need for an independent, statewide newspaper in Montana? What was the role they envisioned for it — the pioneering and ofttimes controversial work involved in building a broadened public knowledge of the problems facing the people of Montana?

The organizers of the Voice and its parent corporation, the Educational Co-operative Publishing Co., were of varying backgrounds. They were farmers, workers, professional people. They were legislators, Democrats, Republicans, Independents. They were in several instances among those who earlier in the decade had launched the Western Progressive in Helena.

The why behind both publications was to have available to the people of Montana a news source that was not owned or controlled by the Anaconda Copper Mining Co. The “copper curtain” the Company press put up to keep the public generally uninformed on state matters is hard to imagine today. Now there is more in-depth reporting by the wire services. The major dailies have capital bureaus. And there is some very good independent reporting by television and radio.

The Progressive was launched in 1932. Its primary purpose was to publicize important Montana affairs that all too frequently were overlooked in the Company press. The Progressive, organized as a straight-line corporation, did much to enliven public
interest with its hard-hitting comments on the ACM's influence in state government, alleged corruption of public officials, and corporate control of the legislature.

As an ordinary stock corporation, the Progressive had a fatal weakness: Concentrated stock ownership could dictate control of editorial policy. This came about in its final year when a liquor broker gained control and turned the publication to his own selfish interests. It died in 1937.

But as narrow in purpose as the Progressive had become, with it gone there was in Helena no statewide news source to keep track of politicians and lobbyists under the Capitol dome.

The 1937 legislature was a corporate-controlled disaster for the people of Montana. Near the end of the session, a dozen or so frustrated legislators and representatives of farm and labor groups met in a Helena cafe and determined that the shameful activities of the corporate lobby never again would be hidden from the public. Wiser from the unfortunate experience of the Progressive, they decided that a publishing company had to be organized as a cooperative, with one-person, one-vote. A young lawyer-legislator from Ravalli County, Lee Metcalf, volunteered his services in preparing the incorporation papers. Others took upon themselves the monumental tasks of selling shares in the cooperative, gaining grassroots support for the proposed publication, obtaining land on which to build a printing office and purchasing a used printing plant.

To the editor-to-be, H.S. (Cap) Bruce, who had been the initial editor of the Progressive, went the tasks of preparing information to be used by stock solicitors, coordinating the entire effort and locating a printing plant. Without him, it is doubtful there ever would have been a Voice.

To digress briefly, I think there's a terrific story in Cap Bruce, for his was a most varied career. He studied engineering at the University of Nebraska but spent little of his life in that profession. Soon after 1900, he became a reporter for the Chicago Inter Ocean. A few years later, he came to Montana and was involved in surveying boundaries of what was to become Glacier National Park in 1910. During the teens, he worked on the newspaper in Roundup. He was a member of the Montana militia and served as adjutant to the colorful Colonel McQuinness. He was a part of the force that drove Pancho Villa back into Mexico in 1916, and he lost his hearing in one ear when a big gun fired prematurely during his service in Europe in World War I. He published a string of weeklies in Texas in the early Twenties. In 1928, he was in charge of publicity for the successful reelection campaign of Sen. Thomas J. Walsh.

The late Thirties were tough years and sales of Co-op Publishing Co. stock did not come easily. Many stockholders bought a $10 voting share on a time-pay basis — $2 a month, with no carrying charges. Others exchanged labor for stock. Building tradesmen often had spare time, and they paid for voting shares and non-voting preferred stock by helping to construct the home for the new publication across the street from the State Capitol.

the first issue

Late in 1938, the publishing company was in business. It had a contract with the Helena Allied Printing Trades unions, and it began doing some commercial work, including the printing of the Montana Farmers Union News, edited by Bruce. But it wasn't until Dec. 6, 1939, when the first issue of the Voice rolled off the press just in time to get deeply involved in the 1940 campaign, with primary emphasis on ousting Gov. Roy Ayers.

Editor Bruce, in Volume 1, Number 1, succinctly stated what he hoped the role of the Voice would be:

That the People's Voice by itself cannot solve the social, economic and political problems which confront the people of the State or remedy directly by its own efforts any of the ills inherent in the present conditions of our economic and political status is clearly understood by all who have been instrumental in launching the Voice. It can only serve as a medium of information concerning these problems and immediate conditions, and leave the decision as to proper actions to be taken to the people of the State. Its responsibility ends when the information is disseminated. The use that is made of it is the responsibility of the readers.

In the decades that followed, the Voice and its limited staff found it had roles to play in many fields. As one proponent put it in urging the Sidney Hillman Foundation to consider the publication and its editors favorably for an award in 1959: “The Voice covers the waterfront in Montana.” Indeed it did.

A quick flashback reveals a breadth of coverage that to this day astounds even those of us who worked for the publication for so many years.

Some of the more important issues:

— It was vigilant in fighting to protect the civil liberties of all, and this included Communists, extreme rightists, Hutterites, Indians and prison inmates, among others.

— It opposed capital punishment, as first symbolized in the successful fight the Voice launched to save a young man from hanging in Shelby in 1951.

— The Voice was a stalwart backer of improved financing of education at all levels, fair salaries for teachers and granting the profession the right to engage in collective bargaining.

— It campaigned for fair taxation, promoting reliance on individual- and corporate-income taxing as the major revenue sources for state government, and it urged reduced property taxation for the elderly. Always, it militantly opposed any form of general sales
taxes, and it was unswervingly against attempts to tax farmer-owned cooperatives punitive.
— Another foremost objective during the Voice's lifetime was maintenance of a quality environment.
— The publication supported development of publicly owned power resources and actively opposed private-utility harassment of people-owned rural electric cooperatives.
— The Voice worked for enactment of occupational-disease-compensation legislation and improvement of workmen's and unemployment-compensation programs, along with enactment of minimum-wage laws. It was a most vigorous opponent of anti-worker proposals such as the so-called "right-to-work" plan.
— It was always in the forefront to gain improved facilities and personnel at the state institutions.
— Justice for our Indian minority and better treatment of all unfortunates who had to depend on public welfare for survival received constant editorial support.
— The Voice strongly supported enactment of Medicare, and Gretchen engaged in debates with doctors in various cities of Montana.
— It actively backed Attorney General Arnold Olsen's successful fight to have slot machines and punchboards banned by the State Supreme Court. (The only times my family and I were threatened with physical violence came during that three-year period, 1949 through 1951. I remember well one anonymous phone call in which I was warned not to sit in front of a window in our home after dark. So, for many months, we dropped the Venetian blinds at dusk. We also received numerous unsigned notes through the mail. In one of these, from Butte, the courageous soul told us: "Lay off the slots, you Communist fink!" I consumed a lot of Tums during that period but fortunately didn't get ulcers.)
— And the Voice was unrelenting in its opposition to both the Korean "police action" and the undeclared war in Vietnam.
We weren't on the winning side on many issues during those years. But possibly the Voice's educational work in the various fields played some small role in helping pave the way for many of those objectives that now are accomplished facts.

a target of epithets

Positions taken by the Voice were not always looked on as "being as American as apple pie" by some of the citizenry. To the contrary, we had numerous epithets hurled our way. The American Legion "brass" objected to our steadfast upholding of constitutionally guaranteed civil liberties. Later on, the Birchers were terribly upset because we published lengthy, documented articles exposing the ultra-reactionary program propounded by Robert Welch and his national JBS council of 26. Yet another time, the president of your favorite investor-owned utility, obviously suffering from an acute attack of dyspepsia, took our measure in a statewide radio broadcast. He was unhappy because we were vehemently objecting to a 58-per-cent increase in natural-gas rates granted his utility by the then three-man Public Service Commission.

From time to time, too, we had some strong differences with the managements of the St. Paul-based regional farm cooperatives and with various leaders of the Montana labor movement. In fact, there were times when we felt we fitted to a T the late John Bonner's definition of an orphan: "No mother, no father, poor little bastard!"

With the corporate-conservative opposition we could cope. They were as predictable as was the Voice, and it wasn't their largess that kept the paper alive. Finally, when many of those we had worked so well with and on behalf of over the years began abandoning ship because of Vietnam, it was more than the always-underfinanced publication could stand. A later generation of the same interests that had sired the Voice was responsible for its death.

It has been said that the Voice was radical. In a sense it was, just as were the Montana farmers who set up elevator co-ops a half century ago to gain a fair price for their product in the marketplace, just as wage earners who have historically found it necessary to organize unions to gain a fair wage, just as thousands of Montanans in recent years and from all walks of life have banded together to gain effective reclamation of strip-mined land and water and air-pollution-control laws.

Whether the publication was radical in the eyes of some was of no nevermind with the Voice. We were firmly wedded to the proposition that controversial discussion is the lifeblood of a government by freemen, that no matter where the chips might fall, there were many issues to be aired and placed before the bar of public opinion for resolution. To us, political harmony was one of the deadliest of opiates because when there was peace and quiet in governmental halls, the corporate termites were very busy and invariably the ordinary citizen got the short end of the stick.

Suffice to say, the Voice in its relentless pounding on issues was in frequent disfavor with many in legislative and executive offices. It was to them a very odorous onion in a petunia bed.

The Voice, in addition to the printed word, was in a sense a communications hub for individuals and groups of similar mind to utilize as a point of contact.

The Voice, above all, was the dream of a desperate but determined group of men and women—a dream that became a reality for 30 years. It was for us a deeply satisfying yet at times terribly frustrating endeavor. It was good to have been an implementer of that dream for more than 22 years of the publication's life.

Montana Journalism Review
Comforting the Afflicted

By GRETCHEN BILLINGS

I asked to make the second presentation tonight because Harry has never stopped being my editor. Since he is no longer in the position to blue pencil my copy, he continues to edit my rhetoric.

Retirement has its rewards. Life with radical emeritus is much less tense than life with radical in residence.

Harry was tenacious and very dedicated to what the Voice was set up to do. He was optimistic about the words in the quote at the top of the editorial column — “the hottest places in Hell are reserved for those who in a time of moral crisis refuse to take a stand.” I’m not sure what communications he had with the reservation clerk, but you could say he kept dialing.

When I left the Voice in 1967, I was given a silver platter on which are engraved the words “Tell the Truth and Run.” I believe the definition of the word truth is in the mind of the beholder, but I had no problem defining the word run.

Harry’s tenure at the Voice began with a baptism of fire — the rise of Joe McCarthy. In 1946 I didn’t give a hoot about the truth. I only wanted to run.

I muffed it and became involved. Perhaps reflecting our different personalities, I like to think of the Voice as afflicting the comfortable and comforting the afflicted. Reflecting on those 20 years and trying to sort out what is most meaningful about the Voice is difficult. As active participants, everything comes out completely subjective. The Voice was many things to many people. No secret.

To Harry it was less complicated. The aims and goals as he has outlined them to you were clear — there was no compromise with a dictate to promote the general welfare and maintain a publication free of “ulterior or clique motive.”

Economic realities, however, loom large in the practice of freedom. Witness the creation of the 1974 campaign-finance law, which has been an attempt (as Time magazine phrases it) “to grapple with basic questions that have always plagued the political process in the U.S., such as how can every political candidate, whatever his wealth or influence, get a fair and equal chance to run for office?”

In any discussion of a Voice-type publication, political candidates, wealth and influence, social and economic and political ideas, communications, freedom of the press, ideas propounded and solutions expounded are all interwoven, all controversial and far from uncomplicated.

The Voice was an effort to present a viewpoint of and for those without wealth, influence and power.

It has been suggested we discuss the need for a Voice-type publication — the need today. I made that speech for 20 years and can conclude only that there is nothing new under the sun.

To free spirits, now and then, there always will be a need for a Voice-type printed medium.

Whether the Voice under Harry’s stewardship met the need of his time — how well he carried out the dictates and purposes intended for it — is history. The future rests with others.

Many elements enter into reasons for launching a Voice-type publication. Harry has outlined the issues he took on over the years. What did those battles entail then? What do they tell us about the need? What was it like to try to do the job?

Times change.

Do the needs that motivated the founder of the Voice in the 1930s exist today?

Certainly, by the time Harry left, questions about need and editorial independence and a galle of economic and political opinion swooped down on him.

To dream of having a Voice-type publication is to dwell in a journalistic euphoria.

We can assume only that those who felt the need 40 years ago envisioned a publication that would challenge the entrenched status quo with a liberal viewpoint and also assure the freedom of the editors to do what they knew they had to do to keep the publication from falling under the control of any special interest, individual or group. Financially it came out everyman’s responsibility, and what is everybody’s business is nobody’s business.

Life would be beautiful if we could insulate ourselves in our euphoric cocoons. But in real life even independent journalism has to have money to survive. I recommend a fairy godmother.

raising funds

If I am inclined to suggest that the financial end of independent journalism be painted black, it is because it became my lot in the division of labor at the Voice to raise money. Somebody got the idea that while I was out in the hustings covering stories, I...
should do something with my spare time. It was a Jekyll-Hyde performance of impossible proportions.

Add the complication that while I was out there in the boondocks, my editor was back in Helena, sequestered in the stucco shack under the shadow of the Capitol Dome, bent on making enemies faster than I could make friends.

It wasn’t the most secure life-style. Sometimes I would be out there plugging along while an issue of the paper was being put together and it would be in the hands of subscribers before I had a chance to see it. I learned to stand back and try to read faces to decide whether to gird for confrontation or pleasantries. It didn’t always work. To this day I will never know if it was a specific grievance or accumulated pent-up emotions that caused a legislative lobbyist in his cups to take a swing at me at a convention I was covering. I did what came naturally — I ducked. For that act of cowardice I was roundly criticized by friends who witnessed the caper. It really isn’t possible to please all the people all the time.

Thus there are two faces to independent journalism. The mundane one of money and the deep joy and satisfaction of freedom of expression.

In trying to put the experience of 20 years into 20 minutes, I come out either falling back on clichés, tortured and arguable, or oversimplification. To learn the specifics of any given battle, you want to listen to Harry’s experiences. If the need for a Voice-type publication rests solely on specific issues, his is the mind and memory you search. He remembers dates, the numbers of bills, sponsors of bills, who won the basketball game between Thompson Falls and Polson in 1920, but for him to remember an everyday anniversary — forget it. Never a silent sufferer, he heard about it when we reached our 39th. The great basketball game that Harry’s basic stands were issue-centered as opposed to organization-oriented often was overlooked. He insisted that if there was a need for the Voice and if he was to follow the purposes laid down when the publication was founded, the general welfare preceded everything else.

The future need for a Voice-type publication was forgotten and abandoned in the emotional battle on Vietnam. It was sheer will power against power and money.

But there were many issues between 1946 and 1969. The Voice served a need to make readers aware of what was involved in many issues, and it was aimed to serve those who cared to be aware. Its unexciting format did not bother those who read it for information. The format, so often decried by the image seekers, was also a strength. It was so easy to file in a corner — no clipping was needed. We still have people who tell us they have copies of the Voice — that material printed all that long ago is still relevant. The Voice helped lots of people do their political homework.

All this background information made issues before the legislature and the legislative process more meaningful to subscribers many miles from the action in Helena. An interesting sidelight: Political friends and antagonists alike tell us the legislature isn’t nearly as exciting since there is no Voice. There is still a need for the spark that stirs political adrenalin.

A Voice-type publication can place in a secondary role the pragmatic approach, granting that at some point in the democratic process it becomes necessary to deal with pragmatic conclusions of others.

Research and pioneering are applauded and encouraged in all scientific endeavors, but in the field of political science — in the market place of ideas — pioneering first must wrestle with the coloration of the term radical, which can be socially, politically and financially uncomfortable and worse. There will always be a need for a vehicle to expose for general debate new and controversial ideas.

There are forces of power and wealth — all deeply institutionalized protectors of the status quo — to be monitored.

The Voice recorded a point of view during a 30-year span, which has become a part of the history of that period. It has become a reference point of issues and people — a history and record that was lacking before and is being left unattended today.

But then, it is easy to glorify the democratic process and the part the First Amendment plays in implementing it. It is much more difficult to cope with it. The printed word can be painful both to the producer and the consumer, but that doesn’t alter the fact that there is a need for Voice-type publications.

This is the speech I made for 20 years. And as I reflect on the agony of finances and the satisfactions of being a part of independent liberal journalism, I still must opt for the need.
The War with the Legion

By SUZANNE LAGONI MacDONALD

We had an intermittent warfare going for years. In fact, every time I had an opportunity to call attention to the peccadillos of those right-wing bastards in the American Legion leadership, I did it with a great deal of glee. . . . We didn’t hesitate to call a spade a spade with some of those buzzards. . . . When people suggested that I soft-pedal our battle, I told them that I was hired to put facts out to the people of Montana. That was exactly what we were going to do.

—Harry L. Billings

Thus, the stage of conflict was set, with the Montana American Legion leadership on one side and Harry and Gretchen Billings and the People’s Voice on the other. The Montana Legion was not unlike many other zealous, patriotic organizations during the late 1940s and early 1950s. They all were seized with the fear that communism was a growing threat to the security of the United States. Anyone who didn’t conform to their right-wing idea of patriotism was branded subversive. The Billingses quickly fell into the Montana Legion’s subversive category.

Looking back on those days, the Billingses recalled numerous confrontations with the “super patriot” leaders of the state Legion. Their lives and the lives of their children were affected by the entire scenario of un-American accusations in Montana. Each collision created a growing personal agony for the Billings family. Harry and Gretchen were threatened professionally, and their sons were threatened physically at school. Throughout the period, however, the Billingses never failed to face the Legion’s threats.

Harry Billings was the second editor of the People’s Voice, succeeding H.S. Bruce in 1948. The Voice was founded in 1939 in Helena as a reaction to the failure of the 1937 Montana Legislature to enact any type of liberal legislation. Harry called the session “a debacle for the people.” The Educational Co-operative Publishing Co., comprising primarily farm and labor organizations, printed and financed the weekly paper.

Together, Harry and Gretchen ran the Voice until 1968. Their departure from the paper was not under happy circumstances. During the sixties, Harry had taken a strong stand against American involvement in Vietnam. The trade unions that contributed financially to the publishing company were angered by his editorials and threatened to withdraw their support if he did not change his viewpoint. Harry refused and, consequently, resigned. After the Billingses left, the paper continued to lose its financial battle and died in 1970. Gretchen explained that it was killed “by its own founders who reached the day they could no longer tolerate or accept the independence that served them so well so long ago when they were victims rather than defenders of the status quo.”

During its 31 years, the Voice was an independent alternative news source for Montanans, whose daily press was largely controlled by the Anaconda Company. The primary concern of the Billingses was to speak out for the protection of civil liberties and human dignity. This made the Voice a perfect forum for their battles against intolerance and red baiting by Legion leaders.

The Voice’s first prominent stand against the American Legion’s campaign to save Montana from the Communists came during the spring of 1948. On April 9, Harry published an editorial that questioned the Legion’s definition of Americanism. The editorial said, in part:

What is Americanism? Who shall define what constitutes being a good American? Has the American Legion or any other group the divine or legal right to pontificate standards for Americanism? Is being a good American

1Interview with Harry and Gretchen Billings, Nov. 8, 1975, Thompson Falls, Mont.
2Ibid.

Montana Journalism Review


*Until 1959, the Anaconda Company owned all major dailies in Montana except the Great Falls Tribune. The Anaconda press was characterized by its lack of coverage of anything controversial. According to Gretchen, the Company “wanted everything to come up roses.” Interview, loc. cit.
determined by how strictly a citizen conforms to the status quo, or is being for peace, brotherhood and understanding any less American than being for war, hate and intolerance?

These are questions that have been on the minds of capital city people for the past week following an outburst of super-patriotism by a dominant minority of Helena’s American Legion post.

This “super-patriotism” was exemplified by the Legion’s Americanism Committee attack on Helena High School for a radio broadcast during Brotherhood Week. On February 4, students presented a KXLJ program that, according to Harry, “was an eloquent plea for racial and religious tolerance here at home; for understanding and cooperation with other nations that peace may be lasting.” The girl who wrote the script was the daughter of a Helena Legionnaire. Portions of the broadcast were highlighted in the editorial. The Americanism Committee, a group of ultra-reactionaries, asserted that because of the views presented by the students, “teachings contrary to the American way of life are being encouraged in our schools.” It proposed to the school board a resolution “that a ‘watchdog’ committee composed of members of various civic and patriotic groups be set up to assure the end of ‘un-Americanism’ in our schools.” Harry charged that the committee was attempting to intimidate the school faculty and that the committee members “are the real transgressors upon our American way of life.”

Harry’s editorial prompted strong community opposition to the Legion action. As a result, a letter to the school board from the Legion post withdrawing its committee proposal appeared on the front page of the April 23 Voice under the banner “Helena Legion Beats a Hasty Retreat”:

Helena, Montana, April 20, 1948

Board of Trustees, School District No. 1
Helena, Montana

The Americanism committee of Lewis & Clark Post No. 2 requests that the resolution heretofore presented to the school board of School District No. 1 of the city of Helena be withdrawn and are very sorry that the matter was brought up. This committee will further recommend that this action be endorsed at the next regular meeting of the Post.

J.D. Higby, Chairman,
Americanism Committee

The Helena branch of the Montana Education Association said it would accept the retraction if the entire Legion membership approved it. However, the MEA stated in the same issue of the Voice that it intended to have an investigator from the National Education Association come to Helena “to see that all persons who have in any way been brought into the light as accused of un-Americanism or subversive activities or teachings are cleared, and that responsibility for such accusation be placed where it belongs. . . .”

Below the letter from the Legion, the Voice reprinted an MEA bulletin that outlined the time devoted in the Helena schools to American Legion programs for the two weeks preceding the April 3 release of the Legion proposal. This was designed to refute Legion allegations that the schools were not spending enough time teaching the American way of life.

On Friday, April 3, a release appeared in the public press intimating “That the fundamentals of spelling, English grammar and composition, and American history are being neglected” in the Helena public schools.

During the two weeks immediately preceding this press release, the Helena High school students submitted 12 compositions for an essay contest sponsored by the American Legion Auxiliary.

During the same two weeks period the entire student body of the Helena high school was excused from classes for a two-hour period to listen to an oratorical contest sponsored by the American Legion. The preparation of Helena’s entrants in this contest had called for approximately forty hours of the working time of an English teacher.

During roughly the same two weeks period an English teacher was given a day’s leave from her duties to attend an oratorical contest in Butte sponsored by the American Legion. Again she was granted another day’s leave to attend another contest in Anaconda sponsored by the American Legion and for a third time she was granted leave — this time for a day and a half — to attend another oratorical contest in Pocatello, Idaho, under the sponsorship of the American Legion.

During the same two weeks period students of the Helena Schools submitted twenty-six posters for a poppy poster contest under the sponsorship of the American Legion Auxiliary.

During the same two weeks period all girls in the junior class of the Helena high school were excused from classes to select three of their number to attend Montana’s Girls State at Billings under the sponsorship of the American Legion Auxiliary.

During the same two weeks period the principals of the Helena schools met with the superintendent to plan machinery for the selection of boys from the junior class of the Helena high school to attend Montana’s Boys State at Dillon sponsored by the American Legion.

The question arises: If “the fundamentals of spelling, English grammar and composition, and American history are being neglected,” might not the time devoted to the above mentioned activities have been better spent on the fundamentals?

The Brotherhood Week incident focused public attention on the People’s Voice and on the Billingses’ attitudes toward organizations like the American Legion. The Billingses strongly believed in civil rights and freedom of expression. They always were prepared to battle any group that presumed to question the loyalty of those who opposed its point of
view. Therefore, charges by the Legion that the Voice and the Billingses were "red" did not come as a surprise. Gretchen recalled that compared to the Anaconda papers "we looked like wild-eyed communists ... we became fair game." This was not the first time, however, that charges had been made against the publication.

**bruce editorial printed**

On April 4, 1947, the Voice featured an editorial in which H.S. Bruce, founder of the paper, attacked Commander Starr, national commander of the Veterans of Foreign Wars, because of comments Starr had made in a Helena speech the previous week. Bruce asserted that Starr, in his position as commander, did not have the authority to speak for the VFW on matters of legislation against communism and for establishment of a police state. Bruce asked, "How does this Bombastos Furioso harmonize his jingoistic claptrap with his job to look after the interests of the overseas veterans who have placed him in the office which he holds?" He ended the editorial by denouncing Starr and proclaiming that he was not a communist as Starr had charged:

...I deplore the type of leadership characterized by Commander Starr; leadership apparently hungry for headlines in the controlled and prostitute press and playing for them with irresponsible and unfounded statements. I hope that we shall be afflicted with few of them in the future. Our times call for a different type of leadership.

For the record I will state that I am not and never have been a member of the communist party meeting, and I challenge anyone, including Commander Starr, to charge me with being a Communist.

Part of the Legion propaganda campaign against the Voice asserted that the paper was listed as a Communist publication by the House Un-American Activities Committee. Following inquiry, however, Harry was told by Congressman Wood, HUAC chairman, that his committee never had discussed Montana's People's Voice. An investigation by the Great Falls Tribune in 1948 discovered that the only People's Voice listed as a Communist sheet was a Polish paper in Detroit.

On Oct. 23, 1950, Harry received a letter from William H. Coburn, executive secretary of the Senate Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs. It further substantiated that the Voice was not under suspicion by federal officials. Coburn wrote: "Upon checking certain files here, we found that there are a couple of other 'People's Voice' newspapers which are considered subversive, but your publication, so far as we can determine, has been given a clean bill." One of the papers to which Coburn referred was the People's Voice edited by Adam Clayton Powell in New York.

But none of this could deter the Legion, which continued its red baiting campaign against the Voice. The second major confrontation came late in 1948. The Legion leaders, still smarting from the Brotherhood Week defeat, were looking for a way to silence Harry and the Voice. To do this, the Legion scheduled a seminar for December 5 to introduce the idea of a Montana investigating body similar to the Tenney Committee in California. Harry knew the group's primary assignment would be to "hang the hide of the People's Voice on the wall ... to destroy it." On November 26, he published an editorial announcing the meeting:

In these days of stress and tension it is indeed reassuring to learn that the commonwealth of Montana henceforth and hereafter shall be eternally free of subversive subversives. No longer will the Communists (all 42 of them) terrorize our fair countryside. No siree! Those days are gone forever.

Who sez so? Why, none other than that organization of super-American patriots; that noble, virtuous, most battle- tried of all veterans' organizations, The American Legion.

Yep, the Legion, through one of its most noble of the noble-ist, Col. Charles Dawley of Great Falls, has announced that on December 5 it will hold a "subversive seminar" right here in the most chaste of all Montana cities — Helena. To implement this "red under every bed" project, the Legion is bringing to Montana two of the ace "red" hunters of the Tenney un-American committee of California, who, according to Dawley "...do not pull their punches and they have facts to back them up."

...It will be interesting to attend this seminar and watch the Legion, to quote Dawley "...do not pull their punches and they have facts to back them up...."

...Communist threats within our state borders operating under the guise of so-called progressive and liberal organizations. ..." Don't forget, the date is December 5, 1 p.m., Consistory Temple, Helena.

Following the seminar, the December 10 People's Voice featured Harry's article "Americanism, Why Not Try Plain Democracy?" He discussed the proposed committee: 'What the Legion 'brass' want, according to their own statements, is a little 'un-American committee' in Montana to investigate 'subversive' activities in the state.' He explained that a similar committee in Washington State "in two years of witch-hunting cost the state ... upwards of $300,000, and smeared the good names of countless Washington citizens."

In a letter to Leslie Claypool of the Los Angeles Daily News two years after the seminar, Harry reiterated his belief that the December 5 meeting was designed to lay the groundwork for un-American-activity legislation in Montana:

Two years ago this coming December, they [the American Legion] had a Sen. Dilworth of the Tenney...
Committee, and a Lawyer Coombs, come up here to conduct a "seminar" on Communism, "subversives," etc. etc.

It is interesting to note that . . . it was part of a concerted drive to set up a committee similar to that in California.

It is also interesting to note that . . . THE PEOPLE'S VOICE and its editor were the principal "pieces de resistance" cited as to the need for such a committee.

. . . I attended their seminar, and, after having had my name and the Voice dragged through the mud for a considerable period, I arose and asked to make a statement. I was promptly told to "sit down and shut up" by the chairman, one Col. Dawley. Their refusal to let a man be heard in his own defense left a very sour taste in the minds of many Legionnaires present.10

Harry also mentioned in his December 10 article that the Voice again was being labeled a Communist publication by the Legion:

One of the California un-American committee hot shots informed the audience that there was a "Communist" publication in their state, but, he could not remember its name. Later on a question from the audience on same was answered by seminar chairman Col. Charles Dawley by his pointing out that The Voice had been declared such by the House un-American committee.

Dawley did not mention that his employer, John Leslie Paper Co., was the primary source of paper for the Voice and that he received a commission on his sales to the Educational Co-operative Publishing Co. Harry stated, "Although the editor of the Voice asked for the privilege of telling those present that the Voice is an absolutely independent publication, subservient to neither corporation, Communist or politician, Colonel Dawley ruled him out of order."

In a December 6 letter to the president of John Leslie Paper Co., Harry objected to Dawley's allegations:

This charge that The People's Voice is Communist is not only absurd, it is an out and out falsehood. I challenge Col. Dawley or any other person to prove that it has at any time been other than an absolutely independent weekly publication, owing allegiance neither to corporation, Communist or politician.

He ended by saying that he would prefer to continue with the company "but surely, as you can well understand, if Col. Dawley persists in attempting to discredit us — for political purposes, I suspect — then we will be forced to turn our business elsewhere."

Later, in a December 31 editorial, Harry described the backgrounds of two of the seminar participants, State Sen. Nelson Dilworth of California and attorney Richard Coombs of the Tenney Committee: "Members of Montana organized labor may be interested to learn more about the two California characters, Dilworth and Coombs, who were recently brought to Helena by the Legion's Commissar on Political Morals, Col. Charles Dawley, to point up the 'red' menace in our peaceful commonwealth."

Dilworth was connected with the Associated Farmers before entering California politics. Harry wrote: "The reader will recall that it was this outfit that was lifted to international infamy as the 'villain' in John Steinbeck's great book 'Grapes of Wrath.' " In the legislature his voting record was generally for big business and against laborers and small farmers. Coombs, a member of the original Tenney Committee, "reputedly is the real brains behind the committee."

Harry concluded the editorial by promising that "the Voice from time to time will publish other fully documented 'biographies' showing the past activities of other leaders in the drive to impose thought control in our state."

opposition statements published

In several issues following the December 10 seminar coverage, the Voice printed statements of opposition by various groups to an un-American committee in Montana. On December 17, the Cascade County Trades and Labor Assembly wrote that it could "not understand why the Montana American Legion is willing to become a pawn in the hands of the selfish interests that place power and control above the misery of the people." It condemned "the creation of any gestapo that will cause the average citizen to live the life of a hunted animal trying to shake off its enemy." On December 24, the Voice published a resolution by the local branch of the International Union of Mine, Mill and Smelterworkers that said "we shall go on record as opposing and actively working to defeat any attempt toward the establishment of a witch-hunting state un-American committee." A similar resolution by the South Valley County Farmers Union appeared January 21.

Even Legion members openly opposed their leaders' proposal. On January 21, a reprint in the Voice from the Great Falls Tribune said "no necessity exists for any investigating committee on un-American affairs in Montana and the creation of such a committee might disturb the peaceful relationship among the state's industries and labor and citizens at large." That statement, by the legislative committee of the Great Falls American Legion, was sent to the state Legion commander, E. F. Naegle.

In the December 17 and 24 issues, the Voice reprinted from the New Republic a long article entitled "Who Runs the Legion . . ." by Justin Grey, former assistant director of the American Legion's Americanism Commission. In an editor's note, Harry explained that the article was presented to help readers "become better informed on the men who actually propagate the Legion 'line.' " He praised Grey's recent book, The Inside Story of the Legion, commenting: "For those of you who would secure a

better understanding of how big business has turned one mass veterans' organization to its own purposes, may we heartily recommend that you read this book.'"

In the article Grey said the national leadership comprised men whose primary interest is big business: "Over the past 30 years, 19 of the 29 men who served as national commanders were directly affiliated with large corporations." He contended that the leaders wanted more government control of unions and less control of big business. The leadership initiated policies contrary to the desires of or without the knowledge of the general membership. He cited decisions that were for the benefit of the National Association of Manufacturers, a group representing 16,500 businesses, rather than for Legion members. Grey did not condemn the Legion as an organization, only the manipulations of the leadership:

The Legion as an organization is not entirely "bad," in a moral sense; its leadership has made it dangerous sociologically, as all extreme reaction is dangerous. Individual Legion posts have performed numerous acts of generosity to the needy. Legion posts and state organizations have helped magnificently in times of floods and similar disasters. Much of the Legion's social-service work is excellent.

Grey's views coincided with H.S. Bruce's opinions in a July 9, 1948, editorial following the annual convention of the Montana American Legion. Bruce asked the rank-and-file Legionnaires to consider the sources of funding for Legion propaganda campaigns. The Montana membership had voted to allocate $2,000 to pay part of the expense of mailing brochures selling the "American way" to the public. Bruce contended that the members did not realize that additional outside funding would be needed and that the Legion's national "Americanism Endowment Fund" probably would pay the balance. This fund was supported and directed by top businessmen, most members of the National Association of Manufacturers. He listed contributors and their business affiliations.

Bruce said Legion membership was predominantly "just ordinary Joes, trying to get along and to get enough to eat, clothes to wear and a house for them and their families to live in." If the "small job holding members of the American Legion think that these leaflets are going to develop more sentiment for the 'American way'" they are "simply deluded; bemused by the blare of the trumpets and roll of the drums and the booming voices of the Legion 'brass.'" He then asked "Joe":

You heard James F. O'Neil, national commander of the Legion, orate at the Great Falls convention. You heard him brag about what?
Did he tell you that the Legion had worked hard to provide for more social security for you and your family?
Did he brag about the Legion driving for better educational opportunities for your kids when they grow up?
Of course he didn't.

He finished with a plea for rational thinking:

Think this through Joe, and talk it over with your fellows.
Get your organization back on the beam where it belongs and let your brass know they'd better hit the ball for your benefit and the welfare of your family — or else.

When the January 21 Voice appeared, Senate Bill 25, an act creating a State Legislative Council, had been introduced at the 1949 Montana Legislature. According to Harry, this was the "little un-American" committee proposed by the American Legion at its December 5 seminar. He stated in his January 21 editorial that while the bill appeared merely to economize the activities of state government between legislative sessions, "there are several subsections, which by the very absence of safeguards leave the door wide open for the damndest 'witchhunt' imaginable." After outlining the offensive sections, he concluded:

After having read this bill over several times, consulted with competent counsel, and discussed the very wide proposed delegation of authority to a 15-man joint legislative committee, I am forced to conclude that this bill is extremely dangerous to the Civil Liberties of every Montanan. In this bill I believe is the implementation for a campaign of character assassination and "trial by press" such as this state has never before seen; for headline (and head) hunting legislators to have a field day the next two years as the reactionaries and their corporate financial angels attempt to again gain complete control of our legislative bodies.

In the January 28 Voice, Harry said he had received from readers numerous demands for public hearings to determine the true intent of SB 25: "While it seems impossible that any bloc of Montana citizens, other than the 'top brass' of the American Legion, would give serious consideration to such legislation, there is definitely merit in demands for such a hearing.

The hearings would acquaint the people of Montana with the 'names of many super Americans' . . . who would nullify the Bill of Rights." He again criticized the Legion for its December 5 attack on the People's Voice:

Likewise, such a hearing could well force leaders of the Montana legion to "put up or shut up" in their irresponsible attacks on other citizens and organizations within the state. To be blunt, such a hearing might well bring out that Legion Security Chairman Col. Charles Dawley, in his eagerness to destroy the reputation of the People's Voice and its editor, either knowingly or unknowingly, was beside the facts when he branded this
publication subversive, at the Legion Seminar, December 5. Whether he and other Legion brass knew it or not, facts are available that knock into a cocked hat the vicious smear perpetrated by the seminar chairman.

Harry believed this was a valid example of the danger of character assassination by the proposed committee. Also in this issue was a Montana Civil Rights Committee petition urging state legislators “to do your utmost to defeat such a program.”

On February 11, Harry reported that the American Legion had succeeded in instituting a “bird dog” committee in the Senate, and he criticized the Legion’s lobbying activities:

To the never-say-die attitude of certain American Legion officials, one must pay a grudging admiration.

Back on December 5 they staged a hum-dinger of a “subversive seminar,” mercilessly assailed one helpless little publication and its editor — and the darn thing, the seminar, that is, flopped . . . .

Rebuffed, but not dismayed, these sincere gentlemen looked under their beds, bided their time, and then had ‘patriots’ of similar stripe down Californy way send up a “form” bill all dressed up as a “State Legislative Council” proposal. At the apparently propitious moment said phony proposition was introduced by four credulous senators, as SB 25. But — something went wrong — the plot behind SB 25 leaked out — and the above mentioned “helpless little publication” gave it a front-page treatment.

Abashed, thwarted, foiled — at least twice — but, were they overly disheartened? No siree, not these valiant legionnaires. Nothing would do but to retire, take another look under the bed, reform their lines, and then, deploy their forces for a surprise attack . . . .

At long last, success was theirs, a senate “bird dog” committee, almost with the speed of sound, has been approved.

The committee was not the one outlined in SB 25, which was defeated. Another proposal for a temporary group to study the need for an un-American committee was passed. A similar proposal in the House was defeated. The March 11 Voice reported that the “bird dog” committee decided “in a most weak-spined, insipid statement, that every senator should constitute himself a ‘committee of one’ to keep a sharp eye out for so-called ‘subversives.’” That ended the threat of a witchhunt by the 1949 Legislature.

to one who sat close to one of its editors in the Montana Senate gallery last Thursday evening the answer is quite clear.

There were several “fellow travelers” in the gallery that evening, apparently more than ordinarily interested when a senate committee made its report urging all members to be on the alert for individuals and groups speaking communist doctrine in the state.

As the session adjourned the editor of the above-mentioned sheet asked an acquaintance what he thought of such a “performance.” The acquaintance said he approved of it and added, “but in your place I might be a little worried.”

“Wait until we get control and we’ll show them something,” the editor replied.

Who did he mean by “we?” Obviously the “we” were the communists mentioned in the Senate resolution.

Next time you receive a copy of the “People’s Voice” it might be well to remember whom it represents; and also remember that no communist ever speaks or acts for the good of America or any state in it.

Every citizen cannot afford to forget what “when we get in control” means. Europe has some excellent examples of what the People’s Voice editor’s remark could mean in America.

Reading that article now, it is difficult to believe that the public would accept such unsubstantiated accusations, which caused the Billingses much professional concern. As Gretchen recalls: “Once you were smeared with the Communist brush, there wasn’t anywhere you could go. The right wing was trying to completely destroy anyone with liberal ideas. We lived in constant fear of our livelihood.”

Harry and Gretchen did not feel that their lives ever actually were threatened. Harry described a typical confrontation with Legion members:

... those hot shot Legionnaires would come goose-stepping into the office and begin throwing their weight around. I’d threaten to call the cops or I’d always keep a nice handy wrench in my desk. . . . Whether those were threats or not, I don’t know.

Gretchen added: “They were frightening, nonetheless.”

The Legion didn’t launch another major attack until the summer of 1950. In August, Ed Gibbons, California publisher of the reactionary Alert magazine, appeared in Helena. He was sponsored by the state American Legion Americanism Committee and the Chamber of Commerce. In his August 25 editorial, Harry charged that the Legion again was importing a Californian, who had worked for the Tenney Committee, expressly to promote legislation for an un-American committee. This campaign was aimed at the 1951 state legislature, which would convene in January. He facetiously accused the Legion of postponing disclosure of subversives in the state:

11Interview, loc. cit.
12Ibid.
13Ibid.
If there be Montanans who are “disloyal,” and, if the Legion brass be the genuine patriots they claim to be, why are they jeopardizing the safety of our state and nation by forestalling exposure until way next January or February? If there be a threat in Montana to our internal security, then, if these Legion leaders be anything more than “shirt cuff” patriots, why aren’t they warning Montana people NOW?

Gibbons evidently was enraged by Harry’s accusation and challenged him to a radio debate. Gretchen reported the confrontation in the September 2 issue under the heading “Legion Leadership vs. The People’s Voice”:

It started in the offices of the publishing company. Mr. Gibbons announced himself and proceeded to accuse us most ungenerously and unkindly, if you please, of every sort of un-American activity. The argument became heated, and La Gibbons challenged the editor of the Voice to a debate over the Air.

It was obvious Mr. Gibbons, a professional propagandist, had the upper hand from the beginning and our “local boy” with a day’s work to finish and only a couple of hours to consider his rash acceptance had to rely purely on his convictions and sense of right and justice for all Americans.

Actually, of course, nothing was settled by the broadcast. It was a continuation of the monotonous dronings of daily press and radio on the one hand and the defense of our vanishing civil liberties on the other.

Gretchen described the basic issues that were debated, then said that Gibbons, like others before him, had accused Harry of being a Communist:

The Editor referred to Un-American Activities Committees as “bird-dog” committees — and that my friends, is communistic — the words, [Gibbons] said, are found in the Daily Worker and he mentioned other publications of pro-Communist nature who use it, too.

She concluded:

While we “sweat out” the hour before the broadcast we knew it would not be nice, the things he would say. We knew that our boys would very likely have to face more of what they faced two years ago. We knew that the lamp of freedom flickers low in America today, but we also knew that tonight we could sleep and tomorrow we could still face the world and our fellow man because we faced the issue square.

Gretchen’s anxiety was evident in her article. Remembering the period, she said: “I had no courage whatsoever. I cried myself to sleep every night over all the underlying frustrations of the thing. . . . I wanted Harry to quit.”

During the confrontations, the Billingses’ sons, Michael, Leon and John, were in their early teens. They were tormented at school by classmates who would throw rocks and shout, “Why don’t you go back to Russia, you dirty little Communists.” Scenes like that made them wonder if their father was indeed, a Communist. Gretchen spent many hours with them discussing Harry’s political beliefs. She would read the Constitution and use it to explain to them what it meant to be a “small ’d’ democrat.” She believes that gave them a sense of security and a basis for understanding their father’s political ideals. Harry says, “It made men out of them, but what a hell of a price to pay in their teen years.”

Although Harry never wrote specifically about his family’s agony, the personal attacks against the Billingses seemed to mark a change in the tone of his editorials. He had used humor and satire to make his point. Now his frustration and anger were evident in his writing. In a September 22 editorial, he said: “. . . the Gibbons . . . and other peddlers of hate, in their insane desire for the headlines, for political advancement, for obscuring and avoiding major domestic issues, have completely confused and warped the thinking of Americans.” On November 3 he again charged the Legion with attempting “to ruin the reputation of this editor and the paper he edits.”

Finally, the Legion in 1951 succeeded in its campaign to establish a Montana Un-American Activities Committee. Gretchen announced the event in her February 16 column: “The House of Representatives of the 32nd legislative assembly showed their lack of faith in their country and state by voting . . . to set up an un-American Committee to investigate the need for an interim committee on un-American Activities.” The committee subsequently determined that such an interim body was necessary and proposed House Resolution No. 2 to form the Montana Un-American Committee (MUC). On March 2, Harry asserted that the primary fault of the HR 2 committee was that citizens appearing before it would not have the right to cross-examine their accusers. This, he stated, was a “contradiction to Article VI of the Bill of Rights.” In the same issue, he described the unfortunate fates of four legislators who had chaired un-American committees in the United States. Included was Jack Tenney, who was removed as chairman when the California Senate learned of his association with Ed Gibbons and Alert. Harry asked: “Who will be the ‘lucky’ one to head up the new Montana un-American Committee? Will his be a similar political fate? Watch this paper closely for future installments of this exciting saga on the ‘new west.’” One veteran legislator jokingly suggested that Harry Billings should be the director, because he knew more about un-American activities than anyone in the state.
voice issues a warning

The first meeting of the MUC was held in May. Rep. R.H. Weidman, a strong supporter of the committee's formation, was chairman. The committee had been allocated $5,000 for the two-year interim period to conduct its investigations. In a May 18 editorial, Harry issued a warning:

... Despite Chairman Weidman's assertions that there are organizations in Montana which have "... definite un-American objectives..." it will behoove the committee to go slow in "putting the finger" willy-nilly on any group, or any individual... Irresponsible name-calling by the committee will arouse righteous public indignation, to say nothing of what may transpire by way of state and federal court actions.

Funding apparently was a greater nemesis to MUC than were all the subversives in the state. On May 24, Harry reported that the "32nd Legislature didn't leave any money in its House appropriation to finance MUC during the interim." In response to Weidman's announcement that the committee would have to come up with its own finances, Harry replied:

Therefore, dear Voice readers, may I suggest you forthwith send some contributions to the chairman at his home in Polson. Any old Confederate bills, Japanese invasion money, or other "odd" change will be most acceptable. No doubt. No doubt.

Nothing more appeared about the MUC until October 26, 1951, when this perfunctory statement was found in a report by the Voice on the voting records of 1951 legislators: "The committee, apparently inactive as of date of publication, is headed by Rep. Weidman, one time city clerk of the Town of Winnett, and of recent years an attorney in Polson." As a final comment on MUC, probably made from relief that the committee never did any damage, Harry wrote a three-line message Oct. 31, 1952:

Speaking of Forgotten Limbos...
Whatever happened to the Weidman committee which was authorized by the 1951 House of Representatives to make a SOUND investigation of "subversion" in Montana?

From the Voice's coverage, we can conclude that MUC died without exposing a single "subversive."

Little mention was made of the American Legion during 1952 until the Voice began election coverage in the fall. Legion leaders were sponsoring a state tour by ex-Communist Harvey Matusow, who was speaking for the Republican party. The Montana Farmers Union, interested in questioning Matusow about charges he was making against the organization, invited him to speak at its October 17 convention. The invitation was contingent on his sponsors assuming financial responsibility for any slanderous statements he might make at the meeting. An alternative suggestion was offered: In case his sponsors would not assume this responsibility, Matusow personally could post a bond of at least $25,000 to cover his speech. When Matusow appeared at the meeting with V.O. Overcash of the Legion, neither Matusow nor the Legion was willing to accept the Farmers Union terms, and he was not allowed to speak. In fact, Overcash contended that the Legion had no association with Matusow.

In an October 24 editorial, Harry questioned who actually was responsible for Matusow's appearances in the state:

It is in order then to ask: By whose invitation is Matusow in Montana? Let's take a look at pertinent parts of a 5 column — 16 inch adv. in the Great Falls Tribune, Tuesday, October 14:

HERE HE IS! ... In Great Falls ...

HARVEY MATUSOW

ENDORSED...

Nationally by Americanism Committee of the American Legion
Locally by American Legion, Junior Chamber of Commerce, and Speakers' Bureau . . .

SPONSORED BY

American Legion, Junior C. of C., Speakers' Bureau

Harry emphasized that this wasn't the first time the Montana Legion had imported reactionary speakers:

They did it in 1948 [Dilworth and Combs]. They did it in 1950 [Gibbons]. They've done it again in 1952. This time it seems to have back-fired, and apparently singed by the heat, proponents of these tactics used by Matusow are now scurrying for cover.

In an Oct. 31, 1952, letter to Vic Reinemer, Harry said that the Legion leaders actually angered the general membership with Matusow's appearances, rather than gain support for their cause:

He [Matusow] isn't the first "joker" the American Legion "brass" have befouled the fair Montana scene with in recent years. . . This time they went too far. They did not confine their efforts to attempting the tarring of only the editor of the PV. This time all the Democratic candidates were expendable as it were. It ended up with the Legion backing away from the pup. . . . In a way I'm kind of tickled about the Demos getting all kinds of red paint splashed their way. As long as it was only old man Billings and his maverick publication that was in the soup, a lot of them figured it of little consequence . . . that we were expendable as it were.

18 Then associate editor of the Charlotte (N.C.) News and now staff director of the Budgeting, Management and Expenditures Subcommittee of the U.S. Senate Committee on Government Operations.
Though the 1952 election was a landslide victory for Republicans at all levels of government, the Montana Legion leadership suffered a great loss of prestige among the members. The smear tactics and hate campaigns had become too much for the average Legionnaire to tolerate. Consequently, fewer and less venomous attacks were made on persons and organizations that the Legion leaders branded subversive, including the People’s Voice and Harry and Gretchen Billings.

Harry and Gretchen were encouraged, because they believed the election would hasten the demise of the Legion menace in Montana. Although strong supporters of Adlai Stevenson, they did see some hope for change in the Republican victory. Finally, there would be an end to the personal anxiety for them and their family.

In her November 7 column, Gretchen expressed disappointment in the election returns, but she showed a determination to continue working for the principles of the ‘small ‘d’ democracy’ that she and Harry steadfastly had supported:

This is the evening after election. I’m glad the day is over. Never, never, have I seen such a consistent line of long faces. Any comments directed toward the idea that it was inevitable; that with the change there will be a definite responsibility for the course of events the next two years, at least, on the national level, and wise words such as “Defeat should never be a source of discouragement, but rather a fresh stimulus”—all were unacceptable today.

But there is always tomorrow, and I shall try again.

Let’s Have a New Deal
By Miles Romney Sr.*

The Anaconda gang, headed by John D. Ryan and Con Kelley of New York, have had things pretty much their own way in Montana, politically and industrially, since the spring of 1909 when they corrupted the Montana legislative assembly and enacted House Bill No. 160, the most sweeping charter or grant of privilege to corporations to become law in any American State.

But eight senators of all the 28 then sitting in the Montana assembly made the last stand against House Bill No. 160 (see Senate Journal, Eleventh Montana Legislative Assembly). These senators were threatened with extinction by the corporation juggernaut, a threat that resulted in the organization by Miles Romney of the People’s Power League and enactment through the initiative and referendum of the direct primary law and workmen’s compensation act.

The senators were John Beilenberg of Powell, Edward Cardwell of Jefferson, William Cowgill of Teton, Thomas M. Everett of Blaine, E.A. Meyer of Carbon, George McConne of Dawson, Miles Romney of Ravalli and E.O. Selway of Beaverhead.

Under the provisions of this iniquitous law the Amalgamated Copper Company was reorganized and domesticated, under the guise of the Anaconda Copper Mining Co., and the Montana Power Company and its several subsidiaries were spawned and have waxed fat from the tribute extorted from “118 Montana Cities.” To consolidate their gains and hold the State in submission so that they might profit through tax evasion and extortionate utility rates, the combination of corporations headed by Ryan, Kelley, Hobkins, et al., purchased and subsidized the daily and weekly newspapers of the state with rare exceptions, thus blinding and bewildering the people of the State, whilst accomplishing their nefarious purposes. Thus all executive positions, including the gubernatorial chair, legislative majorities, Railroad or Public Service Commissioners and the highest of judicial seats were seized and manipulated in the interest of the Corporations.

With the result that the League of Corporations, mining, milling, banking, power, gas, telephone and what not, have milked Montanans dry — conveying their earnings and savings to New York to be squandered in riotous living and speculative orgies.

After 20 years of corporation plundering, during which Montana, the “Treasure State,” was the only State in the Union to lose population, the great Hoover calamity fell upon the people, accentuated in Montana by the drought and the closing of the mines, the latter because the Anaconda gang could reap greater profits from copper produced by the peons of Chile. The poor were called upon to feed the poor by President Hoover and Governor Erickson. Want and misery in the midst of plenty have devastated the State whilst our chosen political and industrial leaders, sick, senile and impotent, but greedy to the last, have fumbled and frittered the time away.

And now the hour is striking; after 23 years the people are awakening and would sweep the Anaconda gang from power. No longer are they disposed to heed the “company” papers, nor listen to the “company” claquers — evidenced by the “ditching” of the local Campbell-Erickson gang in Helena, the Carruth gang in Havre, the old reactionary gang in Miles City on the occasion of the mayoralty elections, and the Anaconda gang in the school election in Butte.

To have a new deal all the voters need do is to sweep the Anaconda gang from power.

Vote in the Primary for a Free Governor.
Vote for Free Legislative Candidates.
Vote for Free State Officers.
Vote for Free Judges.
And last, but not least, vote for Free Railroad and Public Service Commissioners.

Vote against all corporation tools. No official can faithfully serve his state and a privilege-seeking monopoly at the same time.

Let’s have a new deal! A change cannot make matters worse — that is a certainty.

*Reprinted from the Hamilton (Mont.) Western News, July 7, 1932. Mr. Romney, editor and publisher of the Western News, was seeking the Democratic nomination for governor.
Covering Auto Racing

By BOB MINGS

Mr. Mings, a 1959 graduate of the Montana School of Journalism, is a sports writer for the Newport News (Va.) Daily Press. In his 12 years at the newspaper, he has covered high school, college and professional sports. He now covers auto racing, and in this article he describes why his assignment is exciting and challenging.

Much of the thrill in writing about sports is the roar of the crowd. That’s no cliche’, either.

Imagine yourself in Madison Square Garden for the National Invitation (basketball) Tournament, the Orange Bowl stadium for the National Football League’s Super Bowl, Memphis for the Liberty Bowl or in Freedom Hall in Louisville for the now-defunct American Basketball Association All-Star game or playoffs. You get to identify with the reaction of the fans every time there is a break in the game. I know I do.

However, in the summer of 1974 I got hooked on the roar of the engines — mostly stock cars. There is no more exciting moment in sports than the command: “Gentlemen, start your engines.”

If you are at a National Association for Stock Car Auto Racing Grand National race, the excitement builds from the time you arrive at the city to the start of the race. I mean, when that green flag finally signals the start of the race, you’re ready.

In covering other sports, even in the old ABA, I found there are certain events for which you’re “up” and others for which you don’t respond emotionally. At a Grand National race, though, you’re always “up.” If it is a particularly close race, it helps you write a better story.

Naturally, there are problems. One of the most frustrating is the press box at the Daytona International Speedway, otherwise a super track. The press box is right behind the grandstands, and when the fans stand up, the writers in the front row have to do likewise. That prompts the writers in the second and third rows to stand up, and if you’re in the fourth row, forget it.

I had to see the most celebrated spinout and wreck — involving Richard Petty and David Pearson in the Daytona 500 in February, 1976 — on reruns on national television immediately after the race. I could no easier tell you what caused the wreck than someone asleep under a camper in the infield. The post-race interviews didn’t clarify anything, for both Petty and Pearson eventually contradicted themselves.

During a Grand National race, as in other local runs, there always are wrecks and spinouts, bringing out the yellow caution flags. I hate wrecks and cautions, because they not only slow the time or average speed but also bring everything to a standstill.

Of course, the yellow flags allow the leaders to go to the pits for tires and gas or checkups on their cars. This reduces the number of times the drivers will have to pit under the green and perhaps lose a lap or more.

When you see the hood of an auto go up, you know the driver has serious problems — usually. He’ll eventually end up behind the wall (out of the race).

Another problem if you work on a medium-size or small newspaper: You might not get to a race until the day it takes place.

Ideally, a reporter should arrive at Darlington or Daytona three or four days before the event. That allows you to go to the garage area and talk to the drivers and observe their preparations. You can pick up a lot of tidbits, because the drivers usually will mention a possible rule change or something that is wrong with the race or their cars.

All the Grand National drivers are “good ol’ boys,” and after they see you regularly, they are more open.

The racing writers probably are the closest group of reporters competing against each other. It is not
uncommon for one to ask another for quotes so a better pre-race story can be written. The favor always can be returned, and both reporters know it. Usually, it is returned the same season.

Covering racing is a little bit of “walking on the wild side,” since a party always can be found before a race (the nights before, I mean). If you have qualms about accepting gifts or drinking in the press box, don’t cover racing. In addition to the meals, which always are good, some tracks serve beer after a race. And the Winston people always furnish free cigarettes and a gift. Some tracks furnish their own gifts. All the writers love to get them.

After a big meal and talking to the many friends you know in the business, you start figuring out who you think will win the race. Some tracks have contests, and there usually is a pool among the writers.

You don’t have an idea who will win until halfway through the race. That often is determined by timing certain cars and by observing the manner in which pit stops are made.

If you know the leader is ahead by only a slim margin and has to pit late in the race after the second- or third-place car has made its final pit, many times you rule out the leader.

The nice thing about post-race interviews is that the winner always is brought to the press box. An interview can last an hour, with every aspect of the race covered.

local stock-car races

Then there are the stock-car races at the local track. In Hampton, which adjoins Newport News, there is Langley Speedway, a .395-mile oval opposite the west gate of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration grounds. That track has races Saturday nights, and that day is the busiest on my newspaper. So, a teletyper is needed, and in covering the weekly races, I miss a lot of the action because I’m busy transmitting results much of the night.

In a regular 50-lap Late Model Sportsman event, I never worry about interviewing the winner. Usually, the same faces show every Saturday night, and I know I can reach a driver at his shop or home for a midweek feature.

In the long (200 laps) races, it is different. I try to have the winner brought to the press box or try to find him after the race for an angle on the race or a Monday morning follow story.

The long races are the only ones at which I arrive early, so I can visit the pits and talk to the drivers. I know most of them, and the situation at these events is basically the same as at Grand National races. Sometimes I can pick up a particularly strong rumor, then follow it up Sunday night.

Also included in my beat is drag racing in Suffolk, about 25 miles from Newport News across the James River. Because so many cars are racing, I usually don’t bother with results of individual runs down the quarter-mile strip.

I must admit that I find much of drag racing uninteresting, although once I was a big buff. For me, the best way to cover drag racing is to get an interview or two before the races end, return to the office and have the results called in. The track manager is a good friend, as is the manager at Langley.

The Suffolk track manager will tell me if records have been broken or if I have missed items of interest.

I guess the basic thing about covering auto racing is that we’re all in this together.

Censorship in Montana High Schools

I asked Montana high school publications advisers if they censor articles. Forty-four replied yes, 12 no. Of those replying yes, 27 advised newspapers at small schools, 9 at medium-sized schools and 8 at large schools. The no responses were from two advisers at small schools, four at medium-sized schools and six at large schools. An adviser who did not answer the question commented: “To answer would be to admit that it is a simple black-and-white issue.” He said he confers with his staff about censorship and libel, but the decision rests with the staff.

—from an independent-study report by Duella A. Strobbe, newspaper adviser at Wolf Point High School.
The Tiller and Toiler

By JACK ZYGMOND

Mr. Zygmond, a 1953 graduate of the Montana School of Journalism, is publisher of the Tiller and Toiler, the daily newspaper in Larned, Kan. A native of Havre, Mont., he was an Associated Press newsman at Santa Fe, N.M., and Helena, Mont., from 1953 to 1969, when he bought the Tiller and Toiler.

"Is there a possible Montana Journalism Review article in the Tiller and Toiler?" asked the editor of the Montana periodical. "The unusual name suggests an unusual newspaper. And the fact that it is published by an ex-AP man is a bit unusual."

The editor's suspicions, I suspect, are little different from the hundreds we hear annually.

"The Tiller and Toiler? You got to be kidding," people say. "What's that?"

"Larned? Where's that?"

Sometimes we suspect the Kansas Bell System's phone profits grow out of the time spent on the telephone making believers of disbelievers.

Well, what's an ex-AP man from the scenic Big Sky Country and the University of Montana doing publishing a newspaper in Kansas?

Having fun.

Never let it be said, either, that a transplanted Montanan (via New Mexico) won't stand up for much-maligned Kansas. Why, people are what Kansas is all about.

That's what our newspaper is all about. People.

Credibility gap? Not on your life. Not when your readers believe in it and know it's "their newspaper," talk it up to high heaven and can't say enough nice things about it when they're sending in their subscription dollars.

We were a "people newspaper" when we got our start and name back in 1879, and we haven't changed.

So, what about Larned and the Tiller and Toiler?

Larned is a thriving, gleaming little city of about 5,000, serving a large agricultural region of south-central Kansas — some 120 miles west of Wichita.

It is at the confluence of the Arkansas and Pawnee Rivers. Gen. George Custer marched these lands before being directed north to his massacre at the Battle of the Little Big Horn in Montana.

We're rich in wheat and corn and alfalfa. Livestock and feed yards add to the commerce. Center-pivot irrigation systems, drawing on underground water (we sit atop a huge lake), sparkle in the hot sun with their always changing rainbows.

We have a half-dozen colleges within a 60-mile radius, a radio station, a pair of school systems, Larned State Mental Hospital, 178 acres of maintained city parks, lighted swimming pool, tennis courts, ball fields, golf course, and Fort Larned National Historic Site — a quadrangle of sandstone buildings standing since the 1850s.

In many ways, we're a physical miracle: Among the top 10 in Kansas in per-capita income, a sparkling modern business district (salesmen marvel, thinking we're 20,000 or more in population), towering grain elevators, home-crowned hills, streets of red brick that glisten in the sun and frame the towering elms in movie-script-neat residential areas.

Not in all our travels had we seen a town as sparkling clean as this one.

Larned is a miracle of spirit: A new $500,000 Santa Fe Trail Center Museum built by public donations, a huge new library, three new financial institutions and one of the most lavish park and recreation systems in Kansas.

With the newspaper we try to complement that quality.

The Tiller and Toiler came to Larned as the voice of the Populists. W.P. McMahon, a fiery little Irishman,
founded the newspaper at Bluffton, Ind., in 1879. He moved it to Larned in 1892. McMahon divulged the political origin of the paper’s name in a front-page editorial in the April 16, 1892, issue, the first printed under a Larned dateline. Wrote McMahon, an ardent champion of the People’s or Populist party, which was essentially a farmer-labor movement:

“Politically we stand squarely on the great reform platform of the day as advocated by the organization of the tillers and toilers of the nation.”

For many years the Tiller and Toiler was the clarion-voiced organ of the Populist party. The county was a hotbed of Populism. McMahon died of tuberculosis. In August, 1914, Leslie E. Wallace, Sunday editor of the Kansas City Star, became publisher and guided the newspaper until his death in 1940.

It was a weekly then. The daily Tiller and Toiler was started as a tabloid in 1933, published five times weekly. In 1955 the format was changed from tabloid to eight-column.

My association with the newspaper began in September, 1969. I purchased controlling stock from Mrs. Wallace and others. That ended my 15-year association with the Associated Press.

a homecoming

In a sense, our coming here was like a homecoming. Wife Leslie, a granddaughter of the Wallaces, had attended grade school in Larned.

We cranked into motion changes that brought about full conversion to offset printing in 1972. With a staff of 16 employees, 15 country correspondents and as many carriers, we strive for quality reporting, lively writing and pictures, but never forget that people are what Kansas is all about. In pictures, features and portraits, in defending their aims and goals, in leading causes, the Tiller attempts to do what its name suggests. The people love it.

Periodically we publish bound progress editions, which are free to subscribers. Our latest, published in December, is a 144-page bound edition entitled “Progress 200.” These are published on the newspaper’s three-unit Cottrell press. We do our own color separations and even repair our two Photon phototypesetters and other composing equipment.

Few towns of 5,000 population have a daily newspaper. It helps our monthly profit-and-loss statement when we do what’s needed ourselves.

But our name! People never forget. Secretaries for supply houses across the country seem to reserve a special place in their hearts for us. “Oh, The Tiller and Toiler!” said one not too long ago. We never had talked to her, but she remembered Leslie Wallace from some 40 years back and she had us fixed up pronto. How’s that for recall?

Our correspondence is something else. Hardly a day goes by that our name isn’t mauled.

The front-office file includes gems such as the Titter and Tatther, Till and Toil, Tillen and Tailer, Toller and Toller, Oiler and Tarter, Tiller and Tarter, Lyly & Foster, Oiler Tooler, Tidler and Tailer, Tipler and Toiler. Oh, the list goes on.

One letter was addressed Larned Little Toiler, and that’s the one we like best.

Eighty per cent of our news is local and area coverage. Subscribers — 3,200 of them — don’t miss the important state and national news. We’re not that reluctant, not one bit, to rewrite wire-service copy to give it added meaning and impact and to say more with fewer words.

It means we work harder, but that is a part of being “unusual.” Many of our employees have been with us 10, 20 and 30 years. Some of our country correspondents have been with us since they were young women and they’re in their 70s and 80s now.

Some of their writing can be as colorful as that of the Indian writer from Montana’s Blackfeet Reservation, the late John Tatsey.1

We do job printing in sizable volume. We print other publications including shoppers and a weekly newspaper.

As a newspaper, we try to instill in young people the excitement of adventure, of trying. That’s not new for the newspaper. Maybe that’s why this small community has produced a governor of Colorado, the discoverer of the planet Pluto, a president of Eastman-Kodak and, not the least, a Lumen Martin Winter, who today probably is unsurpassed in America in the field of paintings and murals.

The newspaper is unusual too in its efforts to foster community togetherness. That has brought about bequests that have given the community a swimming pool, a modern and large library, a new fire station and the Trail Center Museum, which in a few years will match in style and form the state-supported Montana museum in Helena.

Not too shabby for a town of 5,000.

Where else in America is there a community that awards some $80,000 annually in college scholarships from a bequest that still has some $2 million drawing interest and waiting to sponsor other projects.

Unusual! The Montana Journalism Review editor was right. The Tiller and Toiler is an unusual name and an unusual newspaper. Who would have guessed there was all this?

A Communications Failure

By MARY FENTON

Mary Bukvich Fenton, a 1943 graduate of the Montana School of Journalism, is a partner in Public Relations Associates in Great Falls. She is one of 35 women public-relations counselors accredited by the Public Relations Society of America. This article resulted from her experiences as a member of the Governor’s Blue Ribbon Commission on Postsecondary Education. Mrs. Fenton has worked as a reporter for the Great Falls Tribune and as community coordinator/communications consultant for the creatively gifted children’s program in the Great Falls public schools.

A good communications program should be part of the planning in any effort — a means of fostering mutual understanding through dialog. It should be a positive force — not a negative effort to throw up smoke screens so issues are not understood. It cannot be used as a selling tool.

As a member of the Governor’s Blue Ribbon Commission on Postsecondary Education, I witnessed a graphic example of poor communications. I watched the opposition throw up smoke screens that clouded the real goals of the commission. Without a positive communications program and caught up in political tradeoffs before it got off the ground, the commission never was able to achieve understanding of its real mission.

That mission, of course, was to provide a long-range goal for postsecondary education in the state, examining all the options and dealing with them objectively.

Actually, the commission erred not so much through poor communications as through neglected communications. Failing to provide a good information base from which its recommendations might be evaluated, it jeopardized, I think, the entire content of its report. So open was the commission to listening to others and hearing the other side that it allowed its entire communications to be one-way — directed toward itself.

In assigning the commission’s task early in 1973, through mandate of the Legislature, Gov. Thomas L. Judge asked that the following questions (among others) be considered:

If the state is unable to fund any postsecondary unit adequately, and if quality of programs correspondingly becomes substandard, are we really offering educational opportunity or merely fooling ourselves?

Does it make sense to have five campuses engaged in training elementary and secondary school teachers at a time when the market for such graduates is diminishing?

Given the limited financial capacity of the state, what is the maximum number of institutions we can afford for each of the following: Vocational-technical education, associate degree programs, four-year programs, graduate programs?

Should four-year academic programs be widely distributed as they are now or consolidated at two or three campuses? What are the fiscal and programmatic consequences of each alternative?

Most Montanans probably have the same educational goal for Montana: To provide the finest quality education to the largest possible number of students (of all ages) within the limited financial structure of the state. The problem of postsecondary
education in Montana today is mostly one of finance. The total cost of operating the 14 public colleges and vo-tech schools is about $53 million a year. Of that figure, about $31 million stems from a relatively small tax base. Almost every family in the state is touched somehow by the problem. So, basically, most Montanans and the commission had the same long-term goal for education in the state.

However (too often the case), no real concerted effort ever was made by the commission to speak out and foster understanding of its goals. Specifically, no arrangements were made for fact sheets, interviews or press conferences during the crucial first year — when most Montanans still were concerned with the basic problems of over-all educational quality within the state's means.

At that time still open-minded, Montanans might have been objective about evaluating ways of improving the state's educational situation — had they been provided some of the information being considered by the commission. However, when any goal is allowed to remain in a vacuum, such as the commission's was, active interventionists and self-serving spokesmen are the first to rush into that vacuum, usually destroying good ideas before they can be understood.

That is what happened, I think, to the goals and recommendations of the Blue Ribbon Commission on Postsecondary Education. After the recommendations were released, it was too late to explain, to inform, to educate. By that time the opposition to several of the recommendations (namely the closing of Western Montana College at Dillon and the transition of Montana Tech at Butte to a junior college) was very vocal, very organized and very active... and succeeded in clouding the content of the rest of the report because of those two issues.

As a result, only a minute percentage of Montana citizens knew that 145 recommendations (including numerous steps for achieving those recommendations) were in the draft report. Yet hardly an adult (or student) in the state did not know about recommendation No. 75 — "Western Montana College should be closed" — and that four options should be considered for the Montana College of Mineral Sciences and Technology:

- To make Tech a highly specialized, high quality, technical institute;
- To add programs to train vocational teachers;
- To convert Tech to a four-year branch campus of Montana State University;
- To convert it to a completely state-supported two-year institution — a junior college.

In effect, Tech had been a community college for some time prior to the commission's study. In 1974, 64 per cent of the enrollment was at the freshman/sophomore level, 77 per cent of the freshmen were from Silver Bow and Deer Lodge Counties, and 67 per cent of the undergraduates were from Silver Bow County.

An average of only 31 bachelor of science degrees a year had been granted at Tech during the past seven years.

Dr. Lawrence Pettit, on his appointment as Commissioner of Higher Education, was quoted in an interview in July, 1973: "The postsecondary system is over-extended... utter madness for a state with 700,000 population and limited economic capacity to support 14 units."

Except for coverage of a two-day seminar for the commission in Great Falls soon after it met initially, the Montana media overlooked what was going on with the commission and the commission overlooked the need to communicate what it was learning and doing.

But its members were sated with input — one-way communication directed at them.

The commission received (and most of its members patiently and conscientiously read) the major part of a 27-inch-high stack of printed materials (about 150 sheets per inch) from technical committees; other study commissions; concerned, interested and self-interested groups and individuals; educational articles and books; students, unit presidents, faculty; organizations, and businesses.

We waded through statistics and numerous intra-commission communications. We received staff reports on Montana postsecondary education today, student needs and resources in Montana postsecondary education, goals for Montana higher education as determined through a survey of 12 academic communities, educational plans of Montana high school seniors, a vocational-technical student survey, governance, planning, coordination, Montana's private schools, and the Montana Native American.

We received technical reports on accountability, adult and continuing education, faculty research, fiscal and budgetary information, health-care education, independent higher education, manpower planning, programmatic planning, relations among postsecondary units, relations between secondary and postsecondary education, student enrollments.

In the study phase of our sessions, we held public hearings in Billings, Bozeman, Butte, Glendive, Havre, Helena, Glasgow, Kalispell, Missoula, Dillon and Great Falls. The purpose of those hearings was "to learn from the public, faculty, students and any other interested persons their views on issues pertaining to postsecondary education."

After the first draft report was issued, two more days were devoted to public hearings in Helena in September, 1974, to hear (but not respond to) communications from those who took issue with the
recommendations. We had no opportunity to counteract criticism and dissent. We had no forum for explaining the bases of our recommendations. We were asked not to respond to personal attacks, which were left hanging unchallenged even when untrue.

During the study period, we received from assorted persons a one-inch-thick sheaf of correspondence containing recommendations and advice. We received a similar sheaf after the draft report was disseminated — almost all from Tech and Western supporters — and we deliberated the staff recommendations, amended them to our way of thinking, and attempted to resolve in our minds what the final recommendations should be. At that time, before the pressures, most of us still deliberated about goals for Montana postsecondary education.

We read all 19 (yes, 19!) previous studies on higher education in Montana, all of which had been concerned about the higher echelons of education — the structure, the responsibilities of the various boards, the question of chancellor or no chancellor. But the student was rarely mentioned — until our study. It probably didn’t matter; all the previous studies had been shelved anyway.

Radically contrasting with this influx of materials, correspondence and testimony was the total output from the commission to the public. Stacked together (and including the draft report and original staff recommendations, which accounted for more than two-thirds), the commission’s output was about an inch thick. The few news releases were confined to announcement of commission appointments, selection of staff, naming of the chairman and notices of sessions, when we should have been releasing floods of informational material.

The Associated Press and the Great Falls Tribune provided some thoughtful, objective coverage. The Billings Gazette and the Tribune (publisher Bill Cordingley was a commission member) provided editorial support. (The Gazette: “We ask full consideration for the full report — that it not be shelved or scrapped because of noisy self interests in a couple of communities.”)

opposition to commission

A collection of newspaper clippings was approximately 99 and 44/100-per-cent pure in opposition to the commission. Supporting editorials could be counted on a member’s fingers.

The lone vocal supporter after the staff recommendations were released was Jack Gunderson of Power, chairman of the Education Committee in the Legislature and a cosponsor of the bill creating the commission. He pleaded that the commission be given a chance to be heard before being judged prematurely. (After the commission had hedged on the controversial vocational education, Western Montana and Montana Tech issues, Gunderson became one of its chief critics.)

It is difficult to recall any group that did not officially and vocally oppose the commission — the Anaconda Company, Montana Power Company, Montana Broadcasters Association, MEA, AAUW, Boys State (meeting in Dillon), Butte Local Development Co., Anaconda City Council, Montana League of Cities and Towns (which said the recommendations are “detrimental to the quality education of all students in Montana”), Butte City Council, AFL-CIO, Montana Democratic Women. That summer both political parties deliberated the recommendations and backed away in their educational platforms. Dillon had the SOC (Save Our College) and the WOW (Women of Western).

Most of the opposing resolutions could be traced to the same few, key persons who vociferously constituted the opposition.

Sen. Mike Mansfield and two Congressional antagonists in the Western District spoke out against the commission’s recommendations. In the face of this, Sen. Lee Metcalf’s statement seemed bold: He said the commission should be free of political pressures.

As for Senator Mansfield, I think the commission’s tenuous position stemmed from his stand. Members might have found it easier to avoid compromise had he not on June 3, 1974, publicly opposed any change for Western or Tech — predating release of the recommendations. He condemned their “destructive” content.

In a letter to Governor Judge, he objected to the recommendations on both Western and Montana Tech — emphasizing that he would consider it a personal affront were the governor to allow anything to happen to change the status of either school.

At the commission’s opening session in July, the Governor had entrusted its 30 members with blueprinting higher education in Montana for the next 100 years:

There must be no fragmented interests. We can count on you to apply your experience, intelligence, hard work and homework in making very difficult and sensitive decisions that need to be made in Montana at this point in time. We have faith in your knowledge and judgment, and I am confident of your interests in Montana without regard to personal opinions.

He pleaded with members not to be influenced politically and to have the courage to do what must be done.

But a year later, the political signposts were evident. Pressures from the mining industry, the vociferous Butte and Dillon Chambers of Commerce and from the area politicos were being applied.

A newspaper headline reporting on the staff recom-
recommendations to close Western and “downgrade” Tech put it this way: “Judge shocked at report.”

By that time a political jungle seemed to surround the commission — the inhabitants ready to pounce, ready to exploit any weakness or doubt, and ready to take advantage of the vacuum of indifference (or neutrality) in which the recommendations were received.

The day before the sessions at which final recommendations were to be drafted, the governor named to the commission the chairman of the Committee for the Advancement of Montana Tech.

In the fall the governor sent a supportive message to the Western Day rally to Save-Our-Campus in Dillon.

A news story from Fort Benton stated: “Judge said he fully supported WMC and Montana Tech. He said he plans to introduce legislation in January which would fund the two schools for at least two more years.”

Another story a day later: “Ronald Richards, executive assistant to Judge, said the governor’s budget decision in no way indicates Judge will fight the Blue-Ribbon panel which he named to chart the future course of higher education. Nor does it mean Judge has taken any position on the closing of Western or the proposed changes for Tech. He said Judge will not comment on the Postsecondary Commission until the commission’s final report and recommendations are completed.”

At the Helena hearings in September, a former executive of the Judge Advertising firm presented the resolution of the Montana Broadcasters Association — strongly against the draft-report recommendations.

As a commission member, one of the governor’s former county campaign managers began actively and vocally supporting Dillon’s status quo.

Further complicating the situation, the Montana Commissioner of Higher Education also was a Blue Ribbon Commission member and at that time was the governor’s brother-in-law. Several administrative persons from the University System were commission members. The commission chairman was on the Board of Regents. All were concerned with future university funding.

By the time the commission met again in Helena in October, 1974, to draft the final recommendations for the Legislature, only 12 of its members stayed with the original intent of the recommendations. One at that time voiced concern about “the inadequacies of the recommendations as a whole” — although such a concern had not been voiced at any of the previous sessions. The majority voted for the status quo for Western and Tech. At this writing (March, 1975), Tech is being “revived” and expanded.

In concluding messages to members of the commission, staff director Patrick Callan wrote:

Like most of you, I take some pride in the work of the commission and some disappointments as well. Yet even in those areas where the recommendations are not what I would have preferred, I believe the process of intensive study and data gathering and public debate has been healthy and beneficial for the State of Montana.

And later:

It is no secret that I believe they [Ted James and Larry Pettit] made a serious error in supporting the majority position on the Tech and Western issues — an error which may ultimately be very costly to Montana higher education. However, these are complex issues and reasonable persons should be able to disagree over them without attempting to suppress each other or suggestions that there is room in Montana for only one point of view.

Deputy Director JoEllen Estenson wrote:

Despite a lack of communication and a lax press, despite the headlines that referred to “blackmail,” “sneaky” recommendations on Tech and a “contract out” on Western Montana College, and despite the columns devoted to the views of the opposing forces, the Blue Ribbon Commission did make some discernible gains for postsecondary education in the state, and the final report does constitute some basis for moving ahead.

The study was the first to give priority to the needs of the student (and his family).

A few of the recommended objectives:

— Duplication of courses among the units (vo-tech or university) should be eliminated.

— Credits should be transferable — with equal credit for equivalent courses in the units.

— Unstructured, independent study options should be available to all students at all units.

— An annual inventory of all educational opportunities beyond high school and annual manpower supply-and-demand figures should be made available to school counselors and advisers, with a condensed version for others who are interested.

— A comprehensive, compatible management information system should be developed for Montana postsecondary education.

In a move to open the doors of the postsecondary units as wide as possible, the commission was concerned with the needs of students beyond the traditional ages of 18 to 24.

Many of the recommendations have been implemented through the Board of Regents, the State
Board of Education and the Commissioner of Higher Education.

But because the commission vacillated in its recommendations for vocational education, the controversy among the Vo-Ed advisory board, the Board of Public Education and the State Superintendent of Schools was compounded.

In March, 1976, more than a year after the final report was released, the Board of Public Education issued its own resolution and statement of intentions — resolution and intentions that would mean that Montana law dealing with vo-ed governance will have to undergo some change. Commission members were fearful of any issue dealing with changes in law — even in terms of long-range goals.

Had the commission embarked on a communications program at its inception — a communications program of candor and integrity to anticipate and act on, rather than react to, problems and opportunities — a far-sighted goal for education in Montana might have been achieved. Early in its planning, the commission should have committed itself to providing for two-way communication with the Montana citizenry to foster mutual understanding of its goals.

Christmas Letter

By Henry G. Gay

Greetings to everyone:

It hardly seems like a year since I wrote the last Christmas letter but it must be because the holiday decorations have been up in the discount store for four months and that means it’s December.

It’s been a good year for us. Harold’s plant decided not to move to Bellevue so he still has his job which he wouldn’t have if it had because I wouldn’t live in Bellevue if I had to scrub floors first which, thank goodness, I won’t have to do since we’re staying here.

Probably the big news this year that will save us money in the long run is that both the cat and Harold got spayed. It isn’t really spayed in Harold’s case but it’s that operation men get so they won’t have any more kids even if they don’t take precautions. Harold says he feels like a new man and the doctor says that’s a good attitude to have, especially since the operation didn’t turn out like it was supposed to and the doctor says Harold is now important.

We only had one death in the family this year which was a blessing. Harold’s aunt Edith, who was 84, passed away when a dollar slot machine fell on her in Reno. She was always a strong woman and apparently pulled the handle too hard when she got excited so they’re not going to sue the casino.

We did have sickness, tho, not even counting Harold’s and the cat’s operations. Lucy, our ten-year-old, had the flu for three months, the twins had measles twice and Harold, Jr., had his usual bad attacks of asthma whenever the juvenile officer came to talk to us. I’ve managed to stay healthy — knock on wood — although I did have a cyst in the doctor’s office removed.

Jeff, our college freshman, made the news in a big way when he set a Giniss Book record for going home the most times during a semester. He came home 243 times which is really something since the college is 300 miles from our house. He also just missed the record for most pounds of dirty laundry per trip which he’ll try for next year if Harold decides to let him keep the gas credit card.

Sharon, who decided not to go on to college, is working in an insurance office in the city. The job apparently agrees with her because she isn’t as nervous as she was at home. Jeff says it’s because she spends a lot of time on grass, so I guess outdoor exercise is what she needed. One thing they do have in the city is nice parks.

Harold’s operation in July and the new baby in June took care of our summer vacation trip. For the first time in 20 years we stayed home. But we are getting our money’s worth out of the camper we bought for our planned trip to Barren Hills. Harold now sleeps in the camper and watches TV there. He does eat in the house, tho, and comes in when there is a show he wants to watch in color.

All in all it’s been a good year for us. Harold still has his job, the kids are busy, and I have found a simply tremendous new thing called transcendental meditation. You remember last year I told you I was expanding my personality through Fascinating Womanhood after dropping the yoga lessons I took when I left Weight Watchers. Well, I think I’ve found the thing I’ve been looking for in transcendental meditation. I’ll give you a full report in next year’s letter.

Love to all,
Mildred

Reprinted by permission from the Dec. 23, 1976, Shelton (Wash.) Mason County Journal. Mr. Gay is editor and publisher of the Journal.
An American Journalist in Britain

By RONNENE ANDERSON

The writer, a 1973 graduate of the Montana School of Journalism, has worked as a reporter for the Missoula (Mont.) Missoulian. She served as a Sears Congressional Intern in Washington, D.C., in 1972. In this article she describes her experiences as a sub-editor at the Oxford Times in Britain and provides some observations and opinions about British journalism.

In September, 1974, I became the first American journalist to work on the Oxford (England) Times — so far as anyone knows. Americans usually are not allowed to work in Britain without a work permit, which can be difficult to obtain. But the government makes exceptions for some persons, including the wives and husbands of students attending a British university (my husband was at Oxford). Needless to say, I was pleased to find a job in journalism.

The newspaper served as a rare vantage point from which to view England — the people, the customs, the crises and all those crazy but harmless idiosyncrasies that distinguish Britons from Americans. Above all, it gave me a special insight into the British press.

I was apprehensive during my first weeks at the Oxford Times. The editor, Anthony Price, was helpful and confident. I think he hired me partly to add an exotic foreign touch to the office, but I wasn't sure I could adapt to the British ways. First, I didn't know shorthand, so I couldn't be a reporter. All British journalists must learn shorthand, and my coworkers were dumfounded that I had managed so long without it.

Obviously, the editor had no choice but to make me a sub-editor — which is British for copyreader. I was told I would be working for the chief sub-editor (managing editor), that my hours were nine to five, my lunch break one-and-one-half hours and my vacation a startling five weeks a year.

Each week I received a salary of 43 pounds (about $75), which eventually rose to 57 pounds (about $100) to keep pace, unsuccessfully, with inflation.

I worked with 10 other sub-editors in a new, open-plan building, where six offset newspapers are published by the Oxford Mail and Times. The Mail is a daily, the Times a weekly. Two tabloids and a broadsheet with four regional editions, which served towns around Oxford, also are published weekly. (I worked on the two tabloids as well as the Oxford Times.)

The news they printed was not very different from news in any community-oriented newspaper in America: City-council reports, court stories, weather warnings, human-interest features, flower-show results and charity appeals.

Naturally, there were events that could have happened only in Britain, such as the discovery of an Anglo-Saxon rubbish pit at a building site. Also, the British love of animals surfaced in a preponderance of lost-cat and mistreated-dog stories. At least five cruel attacks on swans were reported in the Oxford Times while I was there.

But most major stories stemmed from two facts: Britain has 55 million persons squeezed in a space about half the size of Montana, and the country was in a wrenching economic crisis.

Week after week, the Oxford Times was crammed full of warnings about the housing shortage, the need for bypasses, the Draconian cuts in education funds, the threats to jobs because of government cutbacks and the anxieties of old people struggling to pay fuel bills.

Oxford has 110,000 residents. It is much more than a college town; in fact, you might fail to realize it has a famous university if you just skim the Oxford Mail.
occasionally. A large section of the population works in the city’s British Leyland car factory, frequently in the news because of strikes.

Most Oxford residents are ordinary people far removed from the extraordinary, formal world of Oxford University, with its sherry parties, annual rowing contests, black-gowned students and hushed, wood-paneled libraries.

Nowhere are British social-class distinctions more prominent than at Oxford, where the upper-class students and the professors retire at night to their Victorian lodgings or renovated 17th Century cottages, while the “working classes” go home to their identical modern duplexes and turn on their televisions.

The Oxford Times, like most of the other 1,141 weekly newspapers in Britain, caters to people somewhere in the middle — those who simply want to know what is happening to whom in their city. It has a circulation of 33,000 and covers most events in the city thoroughly but without much depth.

Investigative reporting, I discovered, is virtually nonexistent at the Oxford Mail and Times. It doesn’t seem to be desired or financially possible, which is unfortunate because Oxford certainly has its share of sin in high places and other unsavory aspects.

Editor Anthony Price told me he thought the Oxford Times should do more investigative reporting, but he said:

There is a great temptation in running a crusading newspaper. I think there is a danger there to become like a duelist; a duelist may fight his first duel to preserve a lady’s honor, but there can come a time when he goes around looking for targets. . . . I like to think we have our crusades — education, health, old people’s welfare — but we pursue them through news and features and occasional editorials rather than by banging the big drum all the time.

Furthermore, crusading takes a lot of resources, Price said. The quality national papers do it, but “they are all running at a loss; for some very unfair reason, I’m expected to run at a profit.”

What the Oxford Times lacks in hard-core investigation, it makes up in the many services it offers readers. Besides news, sports, features and editorials, it publishes a university-news page, a pop-music section, a children’s column, a farm-news page, a nature article, a motoring column, consumer-protection stories, film and television previews, and theater, book and music reviews.

It also fills several columns each week with club notes and village news sent in by villagers. These make dreary reading but are all part of the Oxford Times’ image. Price told me such “grassroots news” helped communities stick together.

**glaring oddities**

Once I became accustomed to the kind of news copy I would be editing, I began to look more closely at the physical appearance of the paper. Initially, I could see only two glaring oddities in the Oxford Times — huge headlines and advertisements on the front page.

The average headline for the main story was 72 points — a size reserved for earthquakes and assassinations in America — and other layout practices were equally as surprising. Splashy tinted arrows, wild borders and white type on black blocks were common in several of the company’s papers but were tame compared with many other British newspaper designs.

One of my jobs as sub-editor was to coax the reader to buy the papers by using these eye-catching gimmicks, while obeying several strict layout rules. Eventually, I learned to admire the emphasis on attractive pages and wished American papers would take a few hints.

The Oxford Times has a clean design — nice blocks of type with no irritating leaps from one leg to another. The wide range of headline sizes and the insistence on many short, snappy stories ensure visual variety.

At first, I was bewildered to see a front page with a dozen news stories, few of which exceeded 12 inches. As a reporter in America, I frequently had let my stories grow into windy treatises, believing the readers deserved every detail and piece of background I could give them. But at the Oxford Times, a long story was considered the easiest way to lose the reader’s attention, and I was expected to edit as viciously as necessary.

This keep’em-short philosophy is certainly given authoritative backing by the editor of the Sunday Times, Harold Evans, in his book Newsman’s English. He criticizes the sloppy habits of American journalists:

> ... all English sub-editors are expected to do more than the American copyreader. The copyreader is more of a reader and less of an editor, and the American press suffers for that. The skills of condensation are but poorly developed in the United States and Canada. If North American reporters wrote concisely it would matter less, but they do not, and the absence of strict editing leads to wasted space and muffled meaning. . . . On American newspapers whole columns could be saved every day and used for news, pictures, or advertising revenue.1

Evans points accusingly at papers that put perforated news-agency tapes straight into typesetting machines. It lowers the standard of journalism, he says, and is one reason “why American newspapers have lost readers to television, radio and magazines.”

He graciously concedes, however, that Americans do provide good background for their running stories and says the British could learn from that. I agree.

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Many times I cursed British news stories that left me guessing about the grievances of strikers, the causes of a civil war, the identity of public figures and the words behind initials and acronyms. Apparently British journalists are not taught that children, foreigners and others are reading the paper for the first time.

The training of journalists is accomplished mainly through on-the-job experience. Young persons who want to join a newspaper after leaving secondary school at 18 must serve as apprentices for three years. Recently established formal programs require trainees to take courses in newspaper practice, journalism law, local government, English usage, sociology and shorthand to 100 words a minute. This classroom training lasts from 12 weeks to one year, and at the end of the apprenticeship the trainees must pass a six-hour exam to become qualified journalists.

Few reporters or sub-editors I met were college graduates. That is not as significant as it sounds; British secondary schools are rigorous, and universities have a limited number of places. But I think it does show the British do not regard journalism as a professional discipline.

Virtually no one in Britain has a journalism degree, because universities don’t offer them. There is one graduate school of journalism, at the University of Wales, Cardiff. It offers a diploma for a one-year program based on American training methods. Founded seven years ago, the school has been successful in finding jobs for graduates.

My own training served me as well as it could in a foreign country. My coworkers thought I had some curious habits, such as editing in pencil instead of pen, but I was such a novelty in the office that they quickly forgave me. Of course, I adapted to their rules. I even joined the National Union of Journalists and plunged into the bitter world of British union-management relations.

Most of the time I simply was known as “the colonial” — the girl who instantly could quote the current pound-dollar exchange rate and who could spell Oklahoma, if asked. My fellow sub-editors indulged me when I rhapsodized about Montana and were sincerely apologetic about making me work on the Fourth of July.

In short, they were tolerant of most of my Yankee quirks — even my jargon — but they wouldn’t let me slip any Americanisms into the paper. Britons guard their language jealously, and that subject deserves a separate chapter.

I formed a love-hate relationship with the British language as soon as I joined the Oxford Times.

My first assignment was to write a headline for a story about residents demonstrating against bad housing conditions in Oxford. I wrote: “Pickets protest Oxford housing.”

That headline was “too American,” I was told. “We know what you mean, but we wouldn’t say it that way,” explained the chief sub-editor, Mike Clarke. My transgression: I had left out a necessary preposition; the headline should have read, “Pickets protest against (or over) Oxford housing.”

I thought the preposition was unnecessary. They insisted I was taking serious grammatical liberties. It was their country, so I lost.

Because most British newspapers use large headlines, I had expected them to treasure any kind of verbal shortcut. In fact, they do employ many devious methods to squeeze the necessary message into three lines of 48-point across two columns.

British headlines can be so precise and punchy that they constitute an art form, but other tricks don’t appeal to me at all. “Kidney girl breaks her vow for love” was the Oxford Times’ headline for the story of a woman who decided to marry despite her struggle against kidney failure.

**nouns as adjectives**

“Kidney girl” horrified me, but I discovered that this method of using a key noun as an adjective is common in British newspapers. It saves space while catching the reader’s interest. The pitfalls, however, can be seen in this headline in the Oxford Mail: “Party man hit by freak shot.” I assumed the man was an ardent politico, until I read the article and learned he was en route by car to his wedding-anniversary party when he was hit by a lead pellet.

My own headline-writing skills often were thwarted by unexpected word differences. I found that my sense of humor and my knowledge of simple idioms and aphorisms were deeply rooted in American experience and had to be used carefully. The English language suddenly had become an obstacle course.

For instance, the British say, “If the cap fits, wear it,” instead of our version with the shoe. They touch wood, never knock on it, for good luck. A freeway is called a dual carriageway, a thumbtack is a drawing pin, a hardware store is an ironmonger’s and a semi-truck is an articulated lorry. Britons say titbit, not tidbit, and their cars career around corners instead of careen.

The longer I worked, the wider the linguistic chasm seemed to grow. I was particularly amazed at the dozens of subtle differences in word usage — differences that acquire great importance when your newspaper insists on consistency of style.

At the Oxford Times, reporters say a decision will be made in six months’ time, not just six months. But they say a man is in hospital, instead of in the hospital. The meeting will be on Tuesday week — meaning the Tuesday after next.

Some words have opposite or very different meanings in our two countries.

The verb “table,” as in “to table an amendment,” means to set aside in the United States. But in Britain it
means to put forward for discussion. A British “public school” is actually a private boarding school, and “homely” can mean pleasant-looking. In America a billion is a thousand millions, but in Britain it is a million millions. A black cat can be a sign of good luck to the British.

Working on a provincial newspaper was undoubtedly the best way to learn local slang and domestic terms. While editing one story, I read the sentence, “Several dirty great tractors stood in the field.” I pondered that awkward combination of “dirty” and “great” and decided to cross out “great” as a superfluous word.

After “dirty tractors” was published, I learned the expression “dirty great” meant “large.” I never heard whether the farmers were upset over the aspersion cast on their machines.

The first time I heard a juvenile delinquent had been “detained during Her Majesty’s pleasure” (meaning indefinite detention), I could hardly restrain a laugh. To my untrained ears, the phrase had hilarious overtones; to my British friends, it was a routine expression far too entrenched in the language to evoke any mirth. “Besides,” my editor exclaimed, “it’s not nearly as ludicrous as your 99-year sentences.” They always had an answer.

Once I asked a coworker why the British said “level crossing” instead of railroad crossing. “Because we’re not bloody Yanks, that’s why,” he replied.

Another idiomatic expression reflects Britain’s low-key attitude toward law enforcement. Whenever a suspect is being held, British newspapers almost universally say, “A man is helping police with their inquiries.” The image of a suspected thief eagerly offering information to kindly police officers is appropriate, if not realistic.

My feminist sensibilities were tested regularly by the Oxford Times’ house style. The use of Mrs., Miss and Mr. was mandatory — on the grounds of common courtesy — and Ms. was forbidden. Chairperson, as I expected, triggered groans of protest.

It was difficult to challenge these rules because my criticisms usually were regarded as the ravings of an unrelenting women’s libber — a reputation I acquired instantly when people learned I had kept my maiden name.

But the Oxford Times’ policy on Ms. changed on April 8, 1975. A beaming Mr. Price strode over to my desk and personally handed me my own copy of the momentous memo, which read:

> Wrapped in all those objections, the decision was a Pyrrhic victory for any feminist. But Mr. Price was waiting expectantly for my reaction, so I swallowed hard and said, yes, it was certainly a significant advance for the Oxford Times.

I must emphasize that the Ms. memo did not represent sexism as much as it reflected the sincere belief that Ms. was a linguistic abomination.

**correct spellings learnt**

British spellings were a snap to learn. Well, almost. I admit to spelling neighbour wrong once, but luckily the error was spotted by proofreaders. Unluckily, my disgraceful version of manoeuvre managed to slip into print; I had put an “er” on the end. A few other spellings surprised me: Baulk, learnt, spoilt, enrol, gipsy, haemorrhage, jewellery, kerb and tyre.

Many language differences between America and Britain are disappearing, and I’m sure American films and television are largely responsible for infiltrating the British vocabulary with “right on, baby” and other American expressions.

But in my newspaper office, the editors were fiercely determined to protect the purity of the English language from American perversions. Perfectly acceptable words in the United States, such as hospitalize and busing, were banned, despite their journalistic advantages. (A person is taken to hospital; the schoolchildren were taken on a bus.)

Yet, phrases such as “pedestrianize a street” and “busing the children” frequently emerged in reporters’ copy at the Oxford Times. One day, as I was deleting yet another “pedestrianize” from a story, I asked why reporters seemed so eager to use those banned foreign corruptions.

“They get them from America,” a fellow sub-editor muttered, as if there were a huge smuggling conspiracy that could not be stopped but should nevertheless be despised and resisted.

She was not alone in her fears. Edwin Newman, author of Strictly Speaking, that erudite assault on the destroyers of the English language, is sharply critical of the British imitation of American language style:

> There is no reason for Americans to feel inferior to the British when it comes to language. The British are as intent on ruining theirs as we are on ruining ours. . . . British English is fed by the stream of American English. The British leap at the trite and banal and make them their own with the same avidity as Americans. You cannot spend a day in Britain without hearing game plan, becoming operative, image, think tank, nitty gritty, rapping, for real and other afflictions that the United States has exported.

> But not everyone recoils at this linguistic cross-fertilization. Tony Cash, producer of a BBC television

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should be grateful for most of the Americanisms embedded in the English language:

We owe hundreds of words and expressions to our transatlantic cousins; the rate at which we adopt them accelerates each year; on balance, the acquisitions are positively useful. . . . How much poorer English would be without expressions like "barking up the wrong tree," "take it easy," "I should worry," "making a song and dance." How could we dispense with words like "boss," "stampede," "streamlined," "highfalutin" and "gobbledygook"? Would the English purist deprive himself of "transistor," "detergents," "telephones" and "cornflakes"?

However, at least one noted lexicographer denies that America has replaced Britain as the source of English. In an interview in the Guardian, the editor of the Oxford English Dictionary, R.W. Burchfield, said the American influence on the language is actually decreasing. He believes that as America's language becomes more and more affected by its immigrants, foreigners speaking English rely more on British English, which has stayed relatively untouched by Britain's own immigrants.5

**shackles and chains**

Libel is the bogey of British newspapers. It seldom makes trouble, but everyone knows it is lurking in the background.

I knew the libel laws were harsh in Britain long before I arrived in the country, but I had no idea they could so thoroughly condition the journalist's mind. As a sub-editor in Britain, I was much more fearful of letting a libelous statement get into print than editing stories badly.

The subject of libel would arise at least once a week at the Oxford Times. A flippant headline, for instance, was tried out on the editor first — just in case it could be misconstrued. Usually there was nothing to worry about, but we always played safe. "If in doubt, leave it out" was the oft-quoted rule.

And if I ever treated the libel danger too lightly, there was always the Great Oxford Times Libel Case to remind me of the awful consequences.

A few years ago, a reporter phoned in a court story about a local bank manager fined for speeding. The secretary typed "stealing" instead of "speeding." The sub-editor failed to question the copy, and the unfortunate defamation was printed.

Although an apology was published, the bank manager threatened to prosecute and the newspaper eventually paid him a large out-of-court settlement.

I took this libel warning gratefully, but I thought to myself: That banker wouldn't have been so lucky in the United States. Under Montana law, for example, he could have recovered only special damages, by proving actual loss, once the paper had printed a retraction. But corrections and apologies are not technically defenses in Britain. They merely tend to reduce the size of the damages awarded, which is not very reassuring.

The traditional defenses available to newspapers threatened with libel suits are the same as in America — truth, privilege and fair comment. But the crucial difference is that the American press has the New York Times vs. Sullivan decision protecting it.

Public figures do not have to prove malice to sue newspapers successfully in Britain. Here are a few sensational libel actions reported in the Guardian last year:

— Vanessa Redgrave accepted substantial damages from the Daily Mail after it falsely alleged she had disrupted production of a film and had angered the director with her political ideas. An apology had been printed.

— Husband and wife stars Robert Wagner and Natalie Wood won libel damages from Reveille Newspapers, which said their remarriage had broken down.

— Private Eye, Britain's only true muckraking periodical, paid conductor Andre Previn a damages award because it had criticized a performance he never gave.

— A total of 34,000 pounds (about $57,000) in damages was awarded to Telly Savalas after the Daily Mail claimed his wild night life interfered with his acting on a film set in Berlin. The paper had failed to print an apology, but the defense argued Savalas had not been damaged and that Kojak ratings still were rising. The headline over this story: "British justice loves ya, baby."

In a case of special interest to provincial newspapers, the leader of the Yorkshire miners' union, Arthur Scargill, won a libel action against the Sheffield Star and was awarded 3,000 pounds (about $5,100). The paper had alleged that Scargill showed preference for one group of miners during a 1974 strike by giving it advantageous picketing assignments. The Star said it had received the information from a union official and had believed it to be true.

Not surprisingly, this warning from the Oxford Times editor was solemnly passed around the office last year: "A great deal of money has been paid out by newspapers recently in libel damages and costs. This will alert people to the possibilities of soaking us and must encourage them to do so. Eternal vigilance please."


4The Guardian is one of several national newspapers sold throughout Britain; provincial newspapers serve towns and regions.


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Politicians also are protected from nasty newspaper slurs. During the past election, a memo circulated in our office said: "The General Election will substantially increase the risk of libel claims." We were reminded of the following points:

— Beware of reporting personal attacks by candidates.
— Politicians often complain of misquotation, so please check all quotes.
— Present all points of view fairly.
— Use the word "Watergate" with utmost care because it "has acquired the imputation of political dishonesty."

According to British newsmen Charles Wintour, author of *Pressures on the Press*, a newspaper may criticize a public figure's position on an issue but gambles if it attacks personalities. He writes:

In fact the law of libel occasionally reduces newspapers to flying signals which have to be interpreted by those in the know, but which may be meaningless to others. Thus just before the Profumo case broke the *Daily Express* carried a prominent story on Mr. Profumo, and next to it a picture of Christine Keeler. On the surface the juxtaposition was accidental. To many MPs and others the signals were perfectly clear. To the general reader it was mystifying.

It is mystifying to me how any public scandal in Britain can be aired with only the aid of a signal corps — and the future looks even more bleak. In early 1977 *Private Eye* was facing prosecution for criminal libel and, heaven forbid, a blasphemous libel action was brought against the magazine *Gay News* for publishing a poem that allegedly maligns Christ.

The first charge is disturbing. It was brought by a London financier, Sir James Goldsmith, after *Private Eye* contended he was part of a plot to hinder police investigations into the "Lucan affair," which included a murder and the disappearance of the Earl of Lucan. Criminal libel actions are rare, even in Britain. The charge is based not so much on what was published but on whether the libel could provoke a breach of the peace. And truth is not a full defense. The fact that the High Court gave Goldsmith leave to bring the peace. And truth is not a full defense. The fact that the High Court gave Goldsmith leave to bring the

Charles Wintour maintains the effects of British libel laws are exaggerated. He says:

An English editor has to live with the libel laws of his country — severe as they are — and it is easy to over-emphasize their restrictive effects. The vast majority of news stories published are free of any fear of libel.

He admits, however, that when local-government corruption occurs, it is "seldom even hinted at unless the police bring an action . . . partly because of the dangers of libel through innuendo. . . ."

British journalists are also more vulnerable to contempt-of-court charges. They must be extremely careful to avoid extraneous comment during judicial proceedings — from an arrest to the trial. Last November, the *Evening Standard* in London was fined 1,000 pounds (about $1,700) for contempt of court after it published a picture of a widely known politician and a caption saying he was to appear in an identity parade as the chief suspect in a bank robbery.

American newspapers have much more latitude because of the First Amendment. The Supreme Court has ruled that press comment during a pending case must present a real danger of interfering with justice — not just a tendency.

**Other Restrictions**

Two other restrictions that seldom affect most journalists but are significant because of recent events are breach of Parliamentary privilege and the Official Secrets Act.

Journalists risk breaching Parliamentary privilege if they attack the dignity and authority of Parliament or its members; if they publish reports of secret Parliamentary sessions or inaccurate stories about debates; or if they prematurely publish committee proceedings or evidence. Offenders usually are reprimanded and must humbly apologize before the Bar of the House of Commons.

But in December last year, two journalists received more than a rebuke. The Committee of Privileges, to which breaches are referred, recommended that the editor of the *Economist* and a free-lance writer for the magazine be banned from Parliament for six months for revealing details of a committee chairman's draft report on the politically controversial wealth tax. The free-lance writer was especially censured for not revealing his source.

According to the *Guardian*, this was the first time in more than 50 years that a specific punishment had been urged for "contempt" of Parliament. The privileges committee wanted to fine the *Economist*, but it had no power to do so. It suggested legislation to permit fines.

The Official Secrets Act, which prohibits disclosure of classified government information, is not directed specifically against journalists. But it has ominous implications for them because it covers more than just publication of secrets.

Fortunately, the government has recommended certain reforms for the act's infamous "section two."

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2. The High Court is a branch of the British Supreme Court. The final court of appeal is the House of Lords.

which is so broad that it makes liable to prosecution anyone who communicates or receives any official information without authorization.

Under the proposed reform, journalists and others would not be committing an offense merely by receiving an unauthorized disclosure. Criminal sanctions also would be lifted from the disclosure of confidential economic information and cabinet and cabinet committee documents. (Other documents, in defense and law-and-order categories, for instance, will still be kept secret.) The reforms should result in fewer persons going to court for divulging state secrets, but some journalists have their doubts.

The government's reluctance to relinquish cabinet information was revealed clearly in the storm over the diaries of Richard Crossman, a former cabinet minister who died in 1974. The attorney general tried to stop publication of Crossman's memoirs on the grounds they would infringe on cabinet confidentiality. Furthermore, he wanted to forbid publication of Crossman's memoirs on the grounds they would infringe on cabinet confidentiality. Furthermore, he wanted to forbid publication of all government policy-making details and slap a 30-year embargo on cabinet memoirs.

The Sunday Times, which wanted to publish excerpts of the diaries, was outraged at this attack on press freedom. In an article in June, 1975, it described the government's penchant for secrecy:

Britain does not have a Vietnam or Watergate. But she has a record of bad decisions secretly arrived at. . . . Concorde, again, is a project which would not have begun if full and informed public debate had preceded the decision.

Many believed the government simply did not want to be embarrassed by Crossman's frank recollections of cabinet maneuvers in the first Wilson government and his criticisms of cabinet ministers. In October, 1975, a High Court judge allowed publication of the diaries.

The secrets act, Parliamentary privilege, and the severe libel and contempt laws are not endured quietly by all Britons. Certainly there are in Britain some committed investigative journalists who are willing to risk breaking the laws — mainly the Official Secrets Act — to expose what they believe is government wrongdoing. Some of them have been inspired by the investigations by American newspapers.

But the British journalists I know accept and defend most of their press restraints, especially libel and contempt.

Sue Roberts, who has worked as a reporter and sub-editor for the Oxford Mail and Times for four years, said she believed the restrictions were good because they served as a "brake on our destructiveness." She admitted the laws could make journalists overcautious, and she said a campaigning newspaper required great courage in Britain. Yet, she would not prefer the more relaxed American laws: "For every shark you debunk, you may ruin some innocent person's life. For me an already heavy responsibility would become an intolerable one."

Anthony Price told me:

Naturally I would like to worry less about the libel laws, but I'm not sure it would be a good thing if the law was relaxed as much as it is in your country. Here it is like the prospect of sudden death — it concentrates the mind wonderfully. If you know that your facts have got to be spot on, and that your only defense is truth, you tend to verify your facts.

In London's Fleet Street, the pressures are even greater. I was fortunate to meet several journalists for the Evening News — a bold tabloid that circulates in the London area — and ask how they coped with the press restrictions.

One blasé chap dismissed the question with, "I eat libel writs for breakfast." His colleagues were more serious.

George Hollingbery, the newspaper's crime reporter for 20 years, said Fleet Street journalists did find libel laws limiting but Americans' freedom went "beyond what I feel is permissible." He added: "We in Fleet Street check and then double-check our facts and even then put our copy through our office lawyer before we publish them."

Mick Page, a sub-editor for 16 years, said the slightest innuendo in a story is deleted by office lawyers. But another Evening News sub-editor, Jim Anderson, told me: "There is very little that doesn't come out in the end." He did not favor the lenient contempt-of-court laws in America, where "you can have trial by newspaper before anybody has been convicted."

Anderson was much more concerned about secrecy in British government. For instance, local councils can go into closed committee at will, then refuse to publish the committee minutes. More important, many public documents are concealed from the public, such as details of national budgets, Anderson said.

I asked Page and Anderson if lack of access to information led to speculative journalism. They responded with a condemnation of the "inspired leak" — the government's way of revealing information unofficially.

"It's a shocking state of affairs," Anderson said, explaining that the government can use this technique to manipulate public reaction to its announcements.

He gave me a hypothetical example: Suppose the government plans to increase the householder's television license fee by five pounds a year. But it leaks a report to a newspaper that the license is expected to go up by 10 pounds. Nationwide outrage follows the publication of the leak. A few months later, the government announces the five-pound rise and says,
aren't we clever — we managed to cut the expected increase by half. That ploy was common, Anderson said.
In addition to the statutory shackles on British newspapers, there is the Press Council to provide guidance and criticism and to "preserve the established freedom of the British Press." 11
The main job of this voluntary council is to consider complaints against the press concerning inaccuracy, suppression, sensationalism, intrusion of privacy, treatment of crime and sex, and controversial pictures and cartoons.
The council, established in 1953, rejects or upholds a complaint, and the judgment usually is published by the newspaper in question. In 1975, for example, the Press Council:
— Rejected a complaint that the Daily Mirror's articles on sexual knowledge were pornographic.
— Told the Daily Mail it should have published a correction to an erroneous caption, which said a woman was applauding the "yes" decision on the Common Market vote in Britain. She actually was cheering an anti-market speech.
— Upheld a complaint concerning Weekend Magazine concerning a sensational story about a mental hospital.
Some journalists dismiss the Press Council as a waste of time and point out that people have recourse to the courts if their complaints are serious enough. But the Oxford Times' editor believes the council leads to a more responsible press: "I would be ashamed if the Press Council condemned me. I would consider it a slur on the newspaper, even though I don't think the Press Council is infallible."
Newsman Charles Wintour said:
Where the council has influenced Fleet Street is in its balanced pursuit of truth. The realization exists at every level in a newspaper office that inaccuracies, half-truths, fakings and distortions will be strongly condemned; that great care must be exercised in inquiries about deaths; that comment columns have joined those once devoted to serious reporting. He acknowledges that British journalists are "aware of being less respected than Americans":

... there is no British equivalent to the American journalist-pundit — Reston, Lippmann, or the Alsops. American newspapers helped to create their democracy, spreading news from coast to coast — in a country without traditional social networks, journalism was crucial. But in Britain, the secretive ruling classes in the eighteenth century had no love of journalism, and it began as an eavesdropping profession, where even parliamentary reports had to be smuggled out. In spite of such eminent journalists as Churchill, Milner or Dickens, journalism has never quite recovered from this backdoor complex. ... In America journalism is apt to be regarded as an extension of history, in Britain as an extension of conversation. 14

British journalists I have met tend to look upon the American press with a mixture of envy and contempt. They are jealous of our freedom but disdainful of what they see as our abuse of that freedom. Both the Times and the Guardian have exhibited those feelings in news stories.
The Guardian criticized the two Washington, D.C., dailies last year when they revealed that FBI director Clarence Kelley had $250 worth of woodwork done free in his apartment by FBI employees. The Washington correspondent, Jonathan Steele, wrote:

One young sub-editor at the Oxford Times told me her journalism training college concentrated on practical newspaper work and rarely touched on the "moral issues." When the subject of press restrictions arose, the students were told of the perils of breaking the laws and warned to learn the rules well. She added: "There was certainly no encouragement to be campaigning journalists."

Britain's aspiring reporters and sub-editors are not taught, as I was, that the press should be a watchdog over government, that it has a prodigious national responsibility and that it can initiate fundamental change. In fact, quite the opposite seems to be true in the training of British journalists.

I think the British regard their newspapers as children who could be naughty at any minute. They must be supervised, evaluated and adjudicated at regular intervals and punished if necessary. In America, the press is protected from the people who want to restrict it; in Britain, the people are protected from the press.
Anthony Sampson, in his book The New Anatomy of Britain, says London journalists are caught in the commercial pressures of Fleet Street. Money-conscious newspapers are hesitant to hire good journalists for prestige, and entertainment and comment columns have joined those once devoted to serious reporting. He acknowledges that British journalists are "aware of being less respected than Americans":

...
The story . . . is the reductio ad absurdum of the past months of corruption stories. Maybe it is churlish to complain after Washington’s press has done so much recently to expose official corruption and the abuse of public power. But the urge to expose anything remotely seamy in the way Congressmen and public officials behave has now become such an orgy here that all sense of proportion has gone out the window.

A sly dig at the lax contempt-of-court laws in America appeared in a Times story about the Watergate cover-up trial in 1974. The reporter, Patrick Brogan, explained that the jurors would be kept in a motel during the trial to prevent them from being influenced by newspaper comment or friends’ gossip. He wrote:

Thus is the provision of the first amendment to the constitution guaranteeing freedom of the press preserved at the expense of the freedom of 18 blameless citizens who will now be locked up for the next three months.

Woodward and Bernstein’s exposure of the Watergate scandals stunned British journalists; everyone soberly admitted the Washington Post coup never could have happened in Britain. But, as I expected, British journalists harbored suspicions and criticisms with their admiration.

In a lively 1976 review of the film “All the President’s Men,” Guardian writer Derek Malcolm said the filmmaker managed to “cloak the Washington Post and its staff in an amazing multicolored coat of First Amendment righteousness.” He praised Woodward and Bernstein’s courageous work but complained that the film failed to emphasize, above all, that Watergate was a triumph for the American system:

The point that screams out to any British newspaperman contemplating the mechanics of the investigation of the Post is that it hinged almost entirely on the openness of American society. You really can get access to documents over there by inalienable right. I can’t imagine any situation in which a British reporter faced with a comparable circumstance could have got access to the checks with which the Watergate burglars were paid or — in the unlikely event that he had — in which he could have made use of any of the information without running foul of the sub-judice laws and therefore a complete gag.

If the Post had been operating under British press laws, Malcolm said, “I cannot imagine any story ever getting into the paper which accused the former Attorney General of being a crook even though it was true.”

But Malcolm sharply reproached the Post reporters for seeking information from the grand-jury members; their action was “as clearly in breach of the spirit of the law as anything done by the men they were writing about.”

In a 1975 article entitled “Watergate’s lessons on press freedom,” a Times writer summarized the main philosophical handicap facing the British press, while making a plea for more liberty:

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No British judge or politician is likely to accept the proposition that the press is a constitutionally autonomous institution with the power to provide an additional check on the government. Arguably, that would offend the principle of the sovereignty of Parliament; but within the qualifications of existing law, sovereignty is surely not impaired by the press exercising its right to learn what it can and publish what it knows.

newspaper snobbery

Britain’s national newspapers offer something for everyone. From the steamy Sun to the stately Times, the selection is overwhelming, and a choice must be made with care.

Most persons expect a national newspaper to be somewhat biased; you tend to read the one that corresponds to your political and educational status. And unless you are very naive, you know which paper fits your niche.

I was naive. When I mentioned to a coworker that I was a regular Times reader, he stared in disbelief. Only financiers, diplomats and Tories read the posh Times, not young trendies like me. Later, I switched to the left-leaning Guardian and was reproved.

Readers’ habits are not always this rigid, but newspaper snobbery is a long-established game in Britain, where social classes are still distinct and political antagonism is strong.

The “working classes” tend to favor the “popular” tabloids — the Sun and the Mirror — which provide short, facile stories, juicy court reports and sensational layouts. The Sun, owned by that unstoppable Australian tycoon, Rupert Murdoch, has by far the most contempt for its readers, but both newspapers print a daily pinup to give male readers a chance to work out their fantasies.

Inflated scandals and tragedies are the usual front-page fare in the Sun and Mirror. For example, the Sunday Mirror’s lead story Jan. 9, 1977, was about a boy mauled to death by German shepherds. The Sunday Times, in contrast, led with President-elect Carter’s economic plans and placed the dog attack farther down the page with a small headline. However, the Mirror at least displays some political idealism in its firm pro-Labor party stand.

Britain’s nebulous middle class supposedly reads two slightly more respectable tabloids, the Daily Mail and the Express, which are politically conservative. The Daily Telegraph, which joins the Times and the Guardian in the “quality broadsheet” category, is proudly right-wing. It even advertises itself on a billboard in Oxford with the pithy dictum, “Times change, values don’t.”

One journalist told me the Telegraph was for people who liked to see their views repeated in print, but this formula probably applies to other newspapers as well. The Guardian, for instance, could be accused of permissiveness and an anti-South Africa bias, but
admire the paper because it shuns taboos. It tackles sensitive subjects in depth, carries an abundance of news and is highly entertaining. One Guardian story told about a blind woman who regained her sight during a boisterous New Year’s Eve party. It was entitled, “Woman sees in New Year.”

The philosophical differences among British newspapers can be summed up by the headlines they use. After a particularly nasty murder by an escaped convict, who was fatally shot by police, newspapers responded as follows:

“Inquiry into massacre manhunt” — Daily Telegraph.

“Cottage murders inquiry starts” — Guardian.

“My God, she’s a brave woman” (with kicker) “Police chief tells of wife who faced killer” — Daily Mail.

“Why we shot the monster” — Sun.

Britain’s national newspapers are in serious financial trouble caused by declining advertising and circulation and by the rising cost of newsprint. The squeeze is inevitable: Fleet Street will have to modernize, which means reducing the number of employees in the production departments. Most national papers still use hot-metal printing methods.

Another irritant for both national and provincial newspaper managements is the acrimonious battle with journalists who want a closed shop (or 100 per cent union membership) and some degree of workers’ control. Newspaper owners contend a closed shop will lead to news censorship, such as the banning of outside contributors who are not union members. The journalists’ union denies this.

These problems — with the pressures already discussed — point to an uncertain future for the British press. I hope it can retain its freedom — restricted as it is — because much of the rest of the world seems intent on muzzling its newspapers.

I admit I would not like to be a journalist in Britain indefinitely. Nevertheless, there are some good and even daring newspapers there. They have given me a modest understanding of the British people and many hours of enjoyment.

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Sentence of the Year

A second chapter, “The Court and Individual Liberty,” goes rapidly over the old “economic due process” decisions of the first decades of this century, and, after a review of intervening material, places these in challenging juxtaposition with what is probably the most extreme personal-liberty decision ever uttered, the 1973 abortion case, wherein the Court purported to extract from the general language of the 14th amendment not only a constitutional choice between the two almost inutterably solemn interests concerned, but even a set of rules differentially applicable to each of the three-month periods of a nine-months pregnancy.

Banquet for a Senator

By MARK TWAIN

This article about a banquet for Sen. William Andrews Clark of Montana appeared originally in Mark Twain in Eruption, edited by Bernard DeVoto and published in 1922 by Harper & Brothers. It is reprinted here by permission of Harper & Row, Publishers, Inc. The banquet was held Jan. 26, 1907, and the article was written Jan. 28, 1907.

In the middle of the afternoon day before yesterday, a particular friend of mine whom I will call Jones for this day and train only, telephoned and said he would like to call for me at half past seven and take me to a dinner at the Union League Club. He said he would send me home as early as I pleased, he being aware that I am declining all invitations this year — and for the rest of my life — that make it necessary for me to go out at night, at least to places where speeches are made and the sessions last until past ten o'clock. But Jones is a very particular friend of mine and therefore it cost me no discomfort to transgress my rule and accept his invitation; no, I am in error — it did cost me a pang, a decided pang, for although he said that the dinner was a private one with only ten persons invited, he mentioned Senator Clark of Montana as one of the ten. I am a person of elevated tone and of morals that can bear scrutiny, and am much above associating with animals of Mr. Clark's breed.

I am sorry to be vain — at least I am sorry to expose the fact that I am vain — but I do confess it and expose it; I cannot help being vain of myself for giving such a large proof of my friendship for Jones as is involved in my accepting an invitation to break bread with such a person as Clark of Montana. It is not because he is a United States Senator — it is at least not wholly because he occupies that doubtful position — for there are many Senators whom I hold in a certain respect and would not think of declining to meet socially, if I believed it was the will of God. We have lately sent a United States Senator to the penitentiary, but I am quite well aware that of those who have escaped this promotion there are several who are in some regards guiltless of crime — not guiltless of all crimes, for that cannot be said of any United States Senator, I think, but guiltless of some kinds of crime. They all rob the Treasury by voting for iniquitous pension bills in order to keep on good terms with the Grand Army of the Republic, and with the Grand Army of the Republic Jr., and with the Grand Army of the Republic Jr., Jr., and with other great-grandchildren of the war — and these bills distinctly represent crime and violated senatorial oaths.

However, while I am willing to waive moral rank and associate with the moderately criminal among the Senators — even including Platt and Chauncey Depew — I have to draw the line at Clark of Montana. He is said to have bought legislatures and judges as other men buy food and raiment. By his example he has so excused and so sweetened corruption that in Montana it no longer has an offensive smell. His history is known to everybody; he is as rotten a human being as can be found anywhere under the flag; he is a shame to the American nation, and no one has helped to send him to the Senate who did not know that his proper place was the penitentiary, with a chain and ball on his legs. To my mind he is the most disgusting creature that the republic has produced since Tweed's time.

reasons for the tribute

I went to the dinner, which was served in a small private room of the club with the usual piano and fiddlers present to make conversation difficult and comfort impossible. I found that the Montana citizen

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was not merely a guest but that the dinner was given in his honor. While the feeding was going on two of my elbow neighbors supplied me with information concerning the reasons for this tribute of respect to Mr. Clark. Mr. Clark had lately lent to the Union League Club, which is the most powerful political club in America and perhaps the richest, a million dollars’ worth of European pictures for exhibition. It was quite plain that my informant regarded this as an act of almost superhuman generosity. One of my informants said, under his breath and with awe and admiration, that if you should put together all of Mr. Clark’s several generosities to the club, including this gaudy one, the cost to Mr. Clark first and last would doubtless amount to a hundred thousand dollars. I saw that I was expected to exclaim, applaud, and adore, but I was not tempted to do it, because I had been informed five minutes earlier that Clark’s income, as stated under the worshiping informant’s breath, was thirty million dollars a year.

Human beings have no sense of proportion. A benefaction of a hundred thousand dollars subtracted from an income of thirty million dollars is not a matter to go into hysteries of admiration and adulation about. If I should contribute ten thousand dollars to a cause, it would be one-ninth of my past year’s income, and I could feel it; as matter for admiration and wonder and astonishment and gratitude, it would far and away outrank a contribution of twenty-five million dollars from the Montana jailbird, who would still have a hundred thousand dollars a week left over from his year’s income to subsist upon.

It reminded me of the only instance of benevolence exploded upon the world by the late Jay Gould that I had ever heard of. When that first and most infamous corrupter of American commercial morals was wallowing in uncountable stolen millions, he contributed five thousand dollars for the relief of the stricken population of Memphis, Tennessee, at a time when an epidemic of yellow fever was raging in that city. Mr. Gould’s contribution cost him no sacrifice; it was only the income of the hour which he daily spent in prayer — for he was a most godly man — yet the storm of worshiping gratitude which welcomed it all over the United States in the newspaper, the pulpit, and in the private circle might have persuaded a stranger that for a millionaire American to give five thousand dollars to the dead and dying poor — when he could have bought a circuit judge with it — was the noblest thing in American history, and the holiest.

In time, the President of the Art Committee of the club rose and began with that aged and long-ago discredited remark that there were not to be any speeches on this occasion but only friendly and chatty conversation; then he went on, in the ancient and long-ago discredited fashion, and made a speech himself — a speech which was well calculated to make any sober hearer ashamed of the human race. If a stranger had come in at that time he might have supposed that this was a divine service and that the Divinity was present. He would have gathered that Mr. Clark was about the noblest human being the great republic had yet produced and the most magnanimous, the most self-sacrificing, the most limitlessly and squanderingly prodigal benefactor of good causes living in any land today. And it never occurred to this worshiper of money, and money’s possessor, that in effect Mr. Clark had merely dropped a dime into the League’s hat. Mr. Clark couldn’t miss his benefaction any more than he could miss ten cents.

When this wearisome orator had finished his devotions, the President of the Union League got up and continued the service in the same vein, vomiting adulations upon that jailbird which, estimated by any right standard of values, were the coarsest sarcasms, although the speaker was not aware of that. Both of these orators had been applauded all along but the present one ultimately came out with a remark which I judged would fetch a cold silence, a very chilly chill; he revealed the fact that the expenses of the club’s loan exhibition of the Senator’s pictures had exceeded the income from the tickets of admission; then he paused — as speakers always do when they are going to spring a grand effect — and said that at that crucial time Senator Clark stepped forward of his own motion and put his hand in his pocket and handed out fifteen hundred dollars wherewith to pay half of the insurance on the pictures, and thus the club’s pocket was saved whole. I wish I may never die if the worshipers present at this religious service did not break out in grateful applause at that astonishing statement; and I wish I may never permanently die, if the jailbird didn’t smile all over his face and look as radiantly happy as he will look some day when Satan gives him a Sunday vacation in the cold storage vault.

**clark introduced**

Finally, while I was still alive, the President of the club finished his dreary and fatiguing marketing of juvenile commonplaces, and introduced Clark, and sat down. Clark rose to the tune of “The Star-Spangled Banner” — no, it was “God Save the King,” frantically sawed and thumped by the fiddlers and the piano, and this was followed by “For he’s a jolly good fellow,” sung by the whole strength of the happy worshipers. A miracle followed. I have always maintained that no man could make a speech with nothing but a compliment for a text but I know now that a reptile can. Senator Clark twaddled and twaddled and twaddled along for a full half-hour with no text but those praises which had been lavished upon his trifling generosities; and he not only accepted at par all these silly phrases but added to them a pile —
praising his own so-called generosities and magnanimities with such intensity and color that he took the pigment all out of those other men's compliments and made them look pallid and shadowy. With forty years' experience of human assfulness and vanity at banquets, I have never seen anything of the sort that could remotely approach the assfulness and complacency of this coarse and vulgar and incomparably ignorant peasant's glorification of himself.

I shall always be grateful to Jones for giving me the opportunity to be present at these sacred orgies. I had believed that in my time I had seen at banquets all the different kinds of speechmaking animals there are and also all the different kinds of people that go to make our population, but it was a mistake. This was the first time I had ever seen men get down in the gutter and frankly worship dollars and their possessors. Of course I was familiar with such things through our newspapers, but I had never before heard men worship the dollar with their mouths or seen them on their knees in the act.

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Edmund Freeman

By Sam Reynolds*

Such a fine man he was; firm of mind, warm with compassion and gentleness. He was blessed with humor, curiosity, courage, brains, personal modesty and insight. It is a sad thing that Edmund Freeman is dead.

The dry facts of his life reflect little of the person: English professor emeritus, scholar, teacher here for parts of six decades.

He "retired" in 1962. He "retired" much honored and respected. He never retired from the element within him that made him one of the most loved persons ever to walk the University of Montana campus.

It's hard to describe what that element was. The nice words already written above nick at parts of it. But there's so much more, and it was all rolled into a human being other people were proud to meet, as if some of his special element would rub off and make them better.

It was fun to talk with Edmund Freeman. His mind danced delightedly over a vast array of topics. His heart was as big as the sky.

He never grew tired. Perhaps that's it. Physically tired, of course. But there was a fire within him to find out, explore, explain — and never back down from moral principle. The fire was specially his. It was warm to encounter.

He died after climbing to the third floor of a campus building to participate in a radio show. Just right. Just right. Like all of us, he had to die, and for him that was the right way. He was still exploring, explaining, involved. He was still curious and compassionate. He was all the rest.

His fire burned to the final moment, and its sudden extinguishing leaves a glow that lingers in the mind when we think of this man and what he meant.

It is a sad thing that Edmund Freeman is dead. But the lingering glow is a happy one. It continues to warm the hearts of those he leaves behind.

*Mr. Reynolds is editorial-page editor of the Missoulian. This appeared in the Nov. 28, 1976, issue.
The Police Report Circa 1900

By DEBRA McKinney

This article is based on a report prepared by Miss McKinney for the History and Principles of Journalism course. The writer, a graduate of Hellgate High in Missoula and a junior in the School of Journalism, has worked for the local daily, the Missoulian.

My curiosity about turn-of-the-century police reporting was aroused by examining some early plastic-encased newspapers displayed in the entrance to the Missoulian. Headlines such as “Two Bad Coons” and “Dead as a Door Nail” led me to the microfilm files, where I examined issues of the Missoulian printed between 1890 and 1905 and the Missoula Weekly Gazette in 1890.

This paragraph appeared in the police report in the July 16, 1890, Missoulian:

Judge Gallrouth has sentenced Maggie Devere to 100 days in jail for contempt of court. The contempt consisted in her attempting to smuggle poison to King, the condemned murderer confined in the Boulder jail, who was afterwards hanged. Maggie will not need any complexion powder when she emerges from her retirement.

That quote is an example of one strange characteristic of the early police report — subjective comments. The reporter could inject opinions and analyze the subjects of his stories:

“Bum Mitt” Again
Fills Up and Gives Her Child
Away to a Neighbor

Maggie Atkinson, a notorious female from the bad lands, filled up with bad whiskey last night and turned over her eight-month-old child to a neighbor for care. . . . The child was taken to the county physician who will refuse to again allow the unnatural [sic] mother its possession.

The Atkinson woman was beastly drunk on the streets and carrying the child, when every step it seemed would carry both to the gutter. The woman's reputation is bad and it would be an act of humanity to give the defenseless infant better surroundings.

Another characteristic was the use of vivid, superfluous writing to transform a minor story into a dramatic composition. Vigorous verbs and animated adjectives resulted in passages such as this:

Another carcass of oxygen magnetized by the steel of the railroad. This time a valuable horse belonging to the mills of Ellsport; another was within an ace of being pulverized by the same engine of destruction further on. The railroad track has some particular private infatuation for horseflesh. Feed him on the choicest of chop, pamper his tooth with the sweetest of honeysuckle or give his herculean bones the softest of slopes to repose on at home, yet he will make for the railroad tracks as the whim takes him.

Headlines were similar to those in Pulitzer’s World and Hearst’s Journal during this period. An example from 1895:

Swing into Eternity
Clay Pugan Paid the Penalty
on the Scaffold
Carried Himself in a Grave Way
Told the Sheriff to Put on the Noose
Good and Tight and Pull it Up

And one from the July 5, 1900, Missoulian:

A Horrible Calamity
Six Men Blown to Atoms
By an Explosion of Oil

Sensationalism often showed a lack of humanism. One headline said, “Mayor Drops Dead.” At least it was compact, if not tasteful.

I began my analysis with the coverage of society’s grimmest crime — murder. The police reporter of the late 19th Century had a penchant for gory description.
He consistently emphasized the description of the victim's mangled body or distorted face.

By creating a sense of intrigue, murder stories must have been read widely. Murders are mysteries, and everyone enjoys a good mystery. When a fellow townsman met with foul play, people wanted all the details and usually got them.

The following story appeared in the Missoula Weekly Gazette July 18, 1890. It exemplifies the use of detail and the narrative style typical of crime reporting in that era:

A Man Found Hanging in the River
Circumstances Point to the Supposition
That He Had Been Knocked Down
and Hung While Dying

Monday afternoon about 1:30, a man by the name of J.W. Williams came up Front Street and informed Chief Feile that a man was hanging by the neck by the river bank, near where the refuse is dumped into the stream. Williams said he had gone down under the bank to attend a call of nature, and as he started to come up happened to see the corpse. Chief Feile at once notified the coroner, who summoned a jury and they proceeded to the scene, as did a Gazette reporter, who went down and took a careful survey of the corpse before it had been cut down. The man had a small rope, or rather, a stout cord tied around his neck, the knot away back of his ear, not where a hangman's knot is, and the other end of the cord, which was about two and a half feet long, was tied to a limb not more than an inch and a half in diameter, which was bent down but not broken. His feet rested about a foot in the water, and his right hand clasped a smaller limb of the one to which the cord was tied, while his left hand clasped some twigs down below his chest. If his death came from the rope, he must have been strangled. . . .

On the right eyebrow was a wound from which the blood had flowed pretty freely down the side of his face, and looked as though he had been struck with a blunt instrument. About half an inch of the tongue was between the teeth which were clinched tightly on it. The face was very discolored. . . .

If the man hung himself, he must have had terrible guts to do so when by simply standing on his feet he could have straightened himself up. . . .

The victim is dehumanized and becomes the subject of a nonchalant narrative. The lead puts more importance on the fact that J.W. Williams was out for a stroll than the fact a murder had been committed. My favorite insignificant detail is the mention of Williams' motive. If a person killed himself, he was crazy. It was as simple as that. A story from the July 2, 1890, Missoula Weekly Gazette:

Joe Matt, of Post Creek, committed suicide last week at the foot of Flathead Lake. He and his wife were out hunting when she heard a gun shot, and coming back found him dead. He had tied a small rope to the trigger, placed the gun to his breast and pulling the trigger with his foot, killed himself instantly. Joe was a brother of Alex Matt of Arlee and had been considered insane for some years.

Most suicide stories attributed the act to insanity or despondency. Often appearing on the front page, the stories were topped by gaudy headlines:

She Was Tired of Life
In a Fit of Despondency
Mrs. F.S. Blum Took Poison

She Died in Most Horrible Agony
Failing Health Had Weakened
Her in Body and Shattered
Her in Mind

Despondent, shattered in mind and weak from continued illness in body, Mrs. F.S. Blum swallowed a large quantity of bed bug poison at 12:40 yesterday afternoon. . . . She died at 3:30 o'clock after having suffered the most terrible agony. . . .

Obituaries in the late 19th and early 20th Centuries were unlike those of today. They neither described social achievements nor listed survivors. In fact, they seemed to have no particular, consistent style. Some appeared on the front pages, capped with extravagant headlines, and others were concealed among columns of headless type. An example of the latter in the Missoula Weekly Gazette:

Word reached here this morning that Joseph Lamprey, one of the oldest of old timers in Missoula County and Montana, had died. About 10 o'clock last night he had a fit of some kind and shortly expired. . . .

Obituaries usually were solemn, unless the victim was an Indian or other minority:

Too Much Dancing Causes Death
Indian Giving Hilarity Full Swing During Celebration Succumbs to Cramps

Out on the Flathead reservation where five tribes are at present holding high carnival, one of the braves, Kootenaie Darsoe, shuffled off this mortal soil yesterday afternoon and passed on to the happy hunting ground. . . . The Indian was one of the fastest in the big demonstration and according to information received from the agency last night he danced himself to death.

Missoula had its share of freak accidents in its early days. The accident story possessed many of the characteristics of the murder story. Infested with lurid details, it too displayed a lack of tact and humanism. The following story appeared in the Missoulian July 2, 1895:

His Life Crushed Out
Edward L. Eisenman Meets With Instant Death

No more distressing accident has been recorded in the history of Missoula County than that which occurred in the
vicinity of Vermillion about 2:30 o'clock last Saturday afternoon and by which Edward L. Eisenman's life was instantly crushed out by a falling tree and his body horribly bruised and mangled in the presence of his horror-stricken brother, William C. Eisenman. . . . The spectacle presented was a sickening one . . . .

And another later that month:

It Was a Cruel Blow

Distressing Accident Near Lo Lo Last Wednesday
Two Little Boys
Kicked in the Head

One of the Little Fellows Will
Die While the Other May
Pull Through

An extremely sad and highly distressing accident took place on last Wednesday night near Lo Lo. Mr. C.A. White, the inspector of the Northern Pacific railroad company, was going up the valley to inspect and receive some ties. He was driving up with a horse and buggy. In the buggy beside him were his wife and two children, two boys, five and seven respectively [sic]. The little fellows were placed in front, seated with their backs toward the dashboard. Everything had gone pleasantly until . . . something in the road caused the otherwise gentle horse to shy and plunge forward and at the same time kicked both his hind feet high in the air and over the dashboard where just the heads of the little boys were protruding. With a tremendous and cruel blow each sharp-shod hoof found its victim and in the twinkling of an eye both the little fellows were a crushed and bleeding mess and lying at the feet of their parents, a horrible sight. . . .

In the darkness of the hour of saddest bereavement the sympathies of the whole community reach out to the parents who have received this cruel blow.

It seems ironic that the reporter would extend his and the whole community’s sympathies to the parents after writing such a story. What mother would want to read “a crushed and bleeding mess” as a description of her children? The headline “One of the Little Fellows Will Die” is totally unsupported.

divorces in detail

Today divorce is one of the least emphasized occurrences in the Missoulian. The names of those involved are simply listed under the heading “Divorces.” That was not the case during the period studied. Divorces were treated like any other item of public interest. The stories contained all the details and personal matter typical of the reporting at that time. Perhaps divorce was overplayed because it was not as common as it is today. In this example from the Missoula Weekly Gazette, I find myself thankful that I was born in an age in which citizens are not subject to such personal exposure by the press:

Wants to Get Loose

Mary E. Carmichael has commenced proceedings for a divorce from her husband, John W. Carmichael. She makes allegations of a most damaging nature. They were married at Missoula, November 19, 1899. She alleges that since their marriage her husband has treated her in a cruel and inhuman manner; that on the 30th day of April the defendant threatened to kill her; he had a knife in his hand and the plaintiff believes that he would have killed her had she not sought security in flight; that on the 9th of May the defendant attempted to take her life with an axe and that she was only saved again by flight. She alleges further that her husband has failed to provide for her because of his idleness, profligacy and dissipation. For the reasons given above, she asks for a divorce.

Through my investigation of police reporting in turn-of-the-century Missoula, I found that reporters in general failed to incorporate qualified opinion into their stories and were allowed a freedom of subjective comment not found today. Reporters and newspapers catered to the morbid interests of their readers with little regard for the feelings of the individuals involved in the stories. Those characteristics exemplify an obsolete style of journalism.

Taxed to Death

HELENA (AP)—Last November, Montana’s voters agreed to create a trust fund for their ancestors from taxes on coal mined today.

—From the Feb. 1, 1977, report.
An Editor in the Classroom

By KENNETH RYSTROM

Mr. Rystrom, managing editor of the Vancouver (Wash.) Columbian, was a visiting lecturer at the Montana School of Journalism fall quarter, 1976. He taught a class in editorial writing and interpretation and a seminar that emphasized press ethics. This report is based on a series of articles he wrote for the Columbian while he was at the journalism school (except for the final article, which was written in Vancouver). Mr. Rystrom has worked as an editorial writer for the Des Moines (Iowa) Register and Tribune, and in 1974 he was president of the National Conference of Editorial Writers. He earned a B.A. in journalism (with high honors) at the University of Nebraska and an M.A. in political science at the University of California at Berkeley.

Twenty-one years is a long time to be away from the college campus. But some things haven't changed.

The pace on campus, in spite of hectic schedules of some students and faculty members, remains more leisurely than in the outside world with which I am familiar.

Opportunities for learning are greater probably than they ever will be again. Knowledge is more abundant and more accessible here than anywhere else in modern society.

College people have open to them almost unlimited intellectual, cultural and recreational activities. The options and the available time never are likely to be so great again.

And yet, as I said, things haven't changed. As it was in my college days, it is a rare student who realizes that this time in his or her life may be the most exciting and most rewarding. Few students really appreciate all that's going for them here.

That, at least, is my tentative conclusion on the fourth day as a visiting lecturer at the University of Montana in Missoula. This is the first of 11 weeks I'll be spending here teaching classes in editorial writing and the ethics and problems of journalism.

One contrast to the students of the 1950s (my college era) seems apparent. The young people I have come in contact with are more willing, even eager, to speak up, raise questions and discuss sensitive matters. The change is refreshing, and no doubt will prove a challenge to me before the quarter has gone very far.

Yesterday, for example, I asked a class to pick a topic to brainstorm for an editorial. The young man who is the managing editor of the student daily, the Montana Kaimin, immediately proposed discussing the Catholic Church's supposed interjection of itself into the presidential campaign, especially on the issue of abortion. That bold suggestion caused me to suck in my breath. It produced some instant arguments over whether abortion is a legitimate campaign issue and whether there is such a thing as the Catholic vote. I felt the need to reassure those who might have felt squeamish or defensive about tackling this topic that we were engaging in a merely intellectual exercise to illustrate how an editorial is written. I'm not sure any of the students needed reassuring, but I, an original member of the silent generation, felt the need.

So far, I have felt this unusual experience to be highly rewarding. I have been anticipating this opportunity for a sabbatical after almost 20 years of meeting daily deadlines.

I look forward to a more leisurely pace than I have
known. No doubt the pace is here to be enjoyed, if I can gear down. The first piece of advice I got when I arrived came from a Montana journalism professor who has been a friend of mine for 26 years: Slow down and enjoy your opportunity.

I also look forward to broadening my perspectives. When you have had your nose to the typewriter for two decades, you can’t help but push yourself into a narrow, preconceived view of your community and the world. I want to do a lot of reading and talking with people who have different ideas.

I look forward immensely to exchanging feelings and ideas with the young people on this campus. I want to help them understand what journalism is about in the working world. But I also want to understand how they look at the world and how they view what I and other members of the press are doing. I’m going to be evaluating their work, but I want to know how they evaluate those now in the profession they want to pursue.

Out of this exchange, and the sabbatical in general, I hope I can acquire some benefits which will help me personally and help me be a better editor when I return to the Columbian in December.

I expect from time to time to write a News Perspective article for the Sunday Opinion Page.

Missoula, Mont., is about 550 miles from Vancouver. But in some ways it might as well be a light year away.

As will Washington, Montana will have an anti-nuclear initiative on the ballot in November. But, unlike Washington, no one I have talked to here foresees that any of the power companies plans to build a nuclear power plant in the state in the near future.

The slim prospect of nuclear plants here is being used as an argument by both sides. The power companies are trying to reassure voters that, if they vote “no,” they won’t have to worry about nuclear plants, since none is likely to be built soon. Opponents, such as Missoula’s daily newspaper, the Missoulian, respond: If the companies aren’t planning on plants, “why are the utilities so excited about the nuclear power initiative?”

The Missoulian writer, editorial-page editor Sam Reynolds, concludes, “By blocking such initiatives wherever they rear their heads, the utilities boost their national position in behalf of nuclear power. ‘See,’ they can say, ‘the voters in California, Montana and other states have rejected added restrictions on nuclear power development.’ ” The American people therefore must want nuclear power.

Montanans don’t want to be an example for any other states. They feel they are different from everyone else, and most seem to want to stay that way. About the only state I hear mentioned very often is North Dakota, the state immediately to the east, although nearly 500 miles from Missoula. Usually North Dakota is the butt of jokes. The jokes Montanans tell about North Dakotans resemble Polish jokes.

rugged individualists

Montanans are rugged individualists, or try to give that impression. They are big on guns. A recent survey of states indicated that Montana might be in Jimmy Carter’s electoral column except for his less-than-absolute stand against registration of guns. (He is for registering handguns but not rifles and shotguns.)

Conservatives aren’t the only gun supporters in the state. A professor-friend of mine, extremely liberal in many ways, spoke vehemently against gun registration of any kind during a recent friendly discussion. I have seen no evidence that he cares about guns personally. But he, like the radicals of the right, doesn’t trust the government and sees guns in the hands of the people as a check on Big Brother.

In spite of the spirit of individualism, a few large corporations dominate Montana’s economy and, perhaps to a lesser degree, its politics. The Missoulian has been publishing a series of articles about how (to quote one of the headlines) “corporations almost always win in court.” The biggest are Montana Power Co., the Anaconda Co. and the Burlington Northern, Inc. (the railroad).

A key sentence in one of the articles: “Speaking specifically of the Montana Power Co.’s record before the court, one Helena attorney commented: ‘I know the utility lawyers are capable of great persuasion, but how do they consistently line up five guys (the five Supreme Court justices) to compel them to come out with decisions favoring the company?’ ”

Speaking of the courts, I hear that judges are much more authoritarian in Montana than many places. They seem especially fond of telling officers of the court what they can and can’t say. The Supreme Court recently held the attorney general, Robert Woodahl, in contempt of court because he had talked about pending criminal cases in a workman’s compensation investigation. Woodahl also is running for governor as the Republican nominee. He has complained that, though the alleged compensation irregularities are part of his campaign against the present governor, Gov. Tom Judge can talk about the investigation but he (Woodahl) can’t.

I have heard talk that some of the judges seem to be putting obstacles in the way of the investigation. On the day before this was written, a federal judge ruled that an attorney, a former law partner of his, would not have to testify a second time before a grand jury. The attorney contended that, though he had been granted immunity from prosecution, the grand jury might try to indict him for perjury.

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So far I have not run into vigilantes or the sheriff's posse comitatus. But today's paper contains a long story quoting the Missoula County sheriff on how citizens of a burglary-plagued trailer park can protect themselves and their property.

He said he was "not encouraging citizens' arrests because there is a danger involved," but he told his listeners they ought to be aware of their rights. He then proceeded to go into detail about how a suspect can best be apprehended, how you hold your gun and how you get him to lie down on his stomach with his hands behind his back until help comes.

Then came these sentences:

"In a discussion on the use of firearms, [Sheriff] Moe suggested homeowners who keep guns for protection get guns no less than .38 caliber. Studies showed that officers shot with guns less powerful than that generally lived, he said.

"However, Moe and Sgt. John Breuer of the sheriff's office warned against using guns too powerful.

"'You only want to get the person you're after,' Breuer said. 'There's no use going through him and hitting something else.'"

The sergeant said the best gun for the homeowner is a shotgun.

Can you see Sheriff Gene Cotton passing out that kind of advice?

My first impression of Montanans was that of aggressive individualists. Now I am discovering another side to this individualism. Many Montanans want to be left alone to live their private lives among the undefiled beauties of their state.

Perhaps some of the aggressiveness results from their efforts to keep outsiders (who may be next-door neighbors or Californians) from invading their private spheres.

A young man who recently accompanied me on a quick trip to and from Vancouver belongs to a family that spends a lot of time in the wilds of the Bitterroot Range, camping and hunting, winter and summer. My daughter, who is here with me, has made friends with a young man and a young woman who devoted their summer and fall to restoring an old mining town under a program of the Bureau of Land Management. The professor who teaches photography here at the University of Montana is a leader in an organization devoted to restoring ghost towns. My daughter spent much of last weekend with a young man who will be a visiting lecturer in the School of Journalism next spring, this month launched a little publication of his own. It's called "The Free Association."

The first issue rails against what he sees as "American Totalitarianism": the tapping of phones, burglarizing of homes and offices, opening of mail, infiltrating of political organizations, proliferating of files with unsubstantiated information, planting of stories in the press, using the FBI and CIA for illegal purposes.

He paints a dismal picture. But he concludes (how appropriately for a publication out of Missoula, Mont.): "I agree with those who suggest gathering in communities small and open enough to permit members to come to know and trust each other. It will require us to live and enjoy simpler material lives, to evolve with nature rather than to exploit it. Our needs will be no greater than we and our immediate community can provide using our own skills... I believe we must find ways to build new communities where ideals are not touted, but quite simply lived hour by hour, day to day, year by year for the rest of our lives."

freedom, justice, dignity

A letter in Harper's magazine (October) makes the point that not all Americans outside of the nation's capital are suspicious and cynical. "The common man lives removed from the sophistication and ennui of the social elite of this nation; his intimacy with the surrounding community encourages as well as necessitates his attempt to live as a moral individual," the letter writer says. "Hence, he retains the hope that his larger community, this nation, might reflect,
especially in its leaders, that ‘humanitas’ which . . .
leads to genuine freedom, justice and dignity.”

The letter — the lead letter, in fact, in that issue —
was written by a woman living in Bigfork, Mont. That
is about three miles up the road from where my
professor friend is building his print shop. He knows
her.

Montana is a huge state. But it’s really only a small
town.

The next assignment for students in my editorial-
writing class is to write an editorial endorsing a
candidate.

The editorials are due the day after this article is
scheduled to appear. So I have no way of knowing
how many of my 23 students will have developed the
techniques of writing editorials about political races.

I know that in our classroom discussions several of
them voiced extreme uneasiness about the very idea
of endorsing candidates.

One of those who expressed the most serious
reservations was the editor of the student newspaper,
the Montana Kaimin. He is concerned about
newspapers exercising undue influence on the voters
by telling them how to vote. He and several others
suggested that newspapers limit their editorials to
commenting on candidates and issues, leaving the
voters to decide for themselves.

Earlier in the quarter the student editor had
dropped by my office to talk about how to end an
editorial protesting the University administration’s
decision not to publish a student directory this year.
He was wondering whether he should urge students
to call the president’s office, en masse, in an attempt
to reverse the decision. His concern was that, if only a
few followed his advice, the cause he was
championing might be more harmed than helped.
The paper could end up looking ineffectual.

The editor resolved his dilemma by devoting most
of the editorial to the merits of the case, muting what
otherwise might have been a trumpet call to storm the
administration building.

Endorsing candidates isn’t much different from the
process that the student editor went through in
deciding how to write the editorial on student
directories. An editorial writer can write a flaming
piece denouncing the opposition and inciting the
demons in a way that will result in voters’ support
for the chosen candidate. Or a writer can carefully
examine the qualifications of the candidates, weigh
the issues and calmly and rationally arrive at a choice
of one or the other. Readers can be left to do as they
wish with the newspaper’s recommendation.

I opened a class in which we talked about
endorsements by reading some quotations from
editorials written by Horace Greeley in the New-York
Tribune in 1856. His editorials were filled with almost
unbelievably personal attacks on the Democrats and
their presidential candidate, James Buchanan. He
put his own personal spin on the idea of endorsing
candidates.

The class was in laughter by the time I was well into
the reading. Such extreme resort to political emotion
sounds ridiculous today.

Yet some editorial writers follow the Greeley
formula — telling only the good side of one candidate
and the bad side of the other — but using a less
strident voice than Greeley’s.

Which type of editorial produces more results?
Editors have been arguing that question for decades.
But my suspicion is that most readers today don’t look
to editorials to be harangued or told what to do (to
top or anything else). I think most of them expect to
be treated as rational persons and to be reasoned
with.

I think the Kaimin stood a better chance of getting
student directories by making as logical a case as it
could, leaving the president free to decide on the
merits. I think a newspaper stands a better chance of
convincing its readers, at least over a period of time,
by treating all candidates fairly and reaching
conclusions about recommendations cautiously and
responsibly.

The newspaper that follows that formula has no
need to apologize for exercising its prerogative of
endorsement candidates.

Let me end this defense of the balanced
endorsement with a point that came out of the class
discussion. I read to the students an editorial that had
appeared that day in the Missoulian. It contained a
strong endorsement of a man for state superintendent
of schools. Women have held that position for the last
60 years, and his opponent is a woman. The editorial
mentioned mostly a recital of the man’s apparently far-
superior qualifications for the job. It mentioned only
how many of his opponent’s ideas and programs were
sound. Did the woman have some ideas
to support the chosen candidate. Or a writer can carefully
examine the qualifications of the candidates, weigh
the issues and calmly and rationally arrive at a choice
of one or the other. Readers can be left to do as they
wish with the newspaper’s recommendation.

I opened a class in which we talked about
endorsements by reading some quotations from

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noted. At least some of the class concluded that the woman was not given fair treatment.

In spite of this one deficiency, the editorial made a pretty convincing case for the man. But, when the reader gets the impression that the writer hasn’t told the whole story, then newspaper people do have cause for concern over how they are trying to use their editorial influence.

The message I hope I left with my students was that they need to go to extreme lengths to be fair in writing all editorials but especially in writing endorsements.

I asked students in one of my classes if, at this stage of their education, they think the traditional forms of news writing are adequate for telling readers what really is going on.

Not a single one raised his or her hand.

Then I asked how many felt wholly uncomfortable with the who-what-when-where-why type of reporting. Only two out of 20-some responded.

From that I conclude that most of my students hold some significant reservations about what we used to call objective journalism but do not see it as completely inadequate for telling a story.

My questions came at the end of a session on the New Journalism, a form of writing, more popular a few years ago, that tends to emphasize the writer’s feelings and perceptions of events and persons around him. “It’s a style of reporting in which the writer immerses facts in the sights, sounds and atmospheres that surround them in real life, and sometimes connects them by comparison with other facts of history, society and literature,” one of my students wrote in a report on the New Journalism.

According to another student’s report, the New Journalism can achieve “an intimacy with the reader that cannot be reached under the standards imposed by conventional journalism.”

I did not detect a lot of devotees of pure New Journalism among my class members. But the class discussion indicated they think that the type of writing most journalists do can be improved by taking a lesson from Tom Wolfe, Jimmy Breslin and Gay Talese. Instead of just facts, stories could benefit from more descriptive detail, interpretation and personal observations.

One of the papers quoted a Nicholaus Mills as suggesting that the New Journalism developed during the Sixties to tell the story of social upheaval which the old-fashioned journalism could not tell. The paper said: “Events like the Vietnam War and the ensuing demonstrations against it, student protest, the counter culture, the black movement, the women’s movement — all of these and more were so influential in forging social and political innovations that conventional journalism was unable to cover them effectively, Mills claimed.”

One reason the New Journalism may have declined in popularity is that most of these movements now are on the wane. Americans seem to want a new era of tranquillity, for which the old-style journalism may be appropriate.

A couple of the student reports suggested that, to some extent, the Hardy and Talese type of writing has worked its way into the standard press. “Advocacy is starting to find itself popular to a certain extent in the commercial press,” wrote one student, “as columnists, like Nicholas Von Hoffman and Pete Hamill, have shown. News analysis and interpretations are becoming more flexible, many verging on personal editorials.”

**new opportunities**

Reporting sights, sounds and smells and interpreting facts have given reporters new opportunities to tell stories that are more than bare-bones facts. In many instances the reader has been the beneficiary. Who, what, when, where and why don’t always tell all the story, especially a complicated one or one that is not keyed to a specific news event.

My students were quick to point out something we tended to ignore 20 or 25 years ago — that no reporter can be strictly objective. True objectivity does not exist in the reporting of news.

Some of the advocates of New Journalism jumped to the conclusion that, if objectivity is impossible, the journalist must write from a purely subjective point of view. That, they argued, was the only honest approach to reporting — tell the reader where you are coming from and what you feel and see.

Fortunately, little of that extreme got into daily newspapers. For the most part, reporters struggled along using the old techniques with a little leavening from the New Journalism. That is about where I see the press on this campus — far more responsible than the advocacy journalism of a few years ago but still experimenting with interpretation and impressions.

When I asked the question, “What should we be doing now that we realize that true objectivity can’t be obtained?” one student shot his hand into the air.

“Try as hard as we can,” he said.

I guess that is the message I would leave with my students.

Members of my class on ethics of the press are concerned over what they see as a tendency of the press to invade people’s privacy.

During sessions on libel and the right of privacy, students cited a number of instances in which they thought the press had stuck its nose into personal matters the public didn’t have to know about. Some of these cases even involved public officials, who, under the New York Times vs. Sullivan ruling of the Supreme
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The class had no compunctions about publicizing Rep. Wilbur Mills' involvement with stripper Fanne Fox and his alcoholism, since he had made a public spectacle of himself. They were comfortable with exposing Elizabeth Ray's alleged sexual arrangement with Rep. Wayne Hays.

But when it came to Rep. Donald W. Reigle Jr., the class seemed to draw the line against invasion of privacy. One student brought to class a copy of a Mike Royko column, of which he approved, on the Reigle case. Royko writes well. I enjoyed reading the column aloud, and the class enjoyed hearing it. The class agreed with Royko's conclusion that Reigle's affair with a volunteer campaign worker, on his own time seven years before when married to an earlier wife, was not fit for print. A key point was that taxpayers' money was not involved.

"Oh, there might be a few other possible reasons for printing such a story," Royko wrote.

"If the woman had been a Russian spy, that would make it news. But she wasn't."

"Or if Congress happened to be voting on whether to start World War III, and he was in the lady's bed. But that didn't happen."

"Or even if the lady were the editor's wife. That would be news, I suppose. At least to the editor."

"But this just seems to be a simple case of a male and a female, who aren't married to each other, going to bed. . . ."

"So what made this news in Detroit? Apparently it was news because the Detroit News' editor thought it was news."

As an exercise on the subject of privacy, I asked members of the class to study a fictitious case contained in "The Media and the Law," an account of a three-day symposium on press issues.

The case features an investigative reporter named John Peter Burnwood, who is writing in-depth profiles on three candidates for the U.S. Senate. Two of the profiles are based largely on photostated copies of documents, apparently from the FBI files, which arrived in an unmarked envelope.

Concerning one of the candidates, Alex Aphid, the documents show that he is slow in paying bills; that a neighbor said he has frequent, loud parties attended by hippie types and accompanied by a distinctive sweet aroma; that notes from a psychiatrist indicate he suffers from a potentially disabling mental illness. Burnwood reports all of this without further substantiation.

Concerning Carla Cassandra, a second candidate, the papers show that a professor said she had done poorly in law school because of little aptitude for law and hard work or "had spent too much time with men." A 25-year-old medical record shows she had an abortion at age 15. (One of Cassandra's campaign planks is anti-abortion.) The papers show that her husband had been convicted of manslaughter for slaying his first wife in a fit of passion, had served five years in prison, had changed his name, moved 1,000 miles away and had become a model citizen. Burnwood reports all of this.

The files do not mention the third candidate, the incumbent senator, Bob Bumptious. But Burnwood gets something on him by calling the local sheriff (who is up for election next year) and having him (illegally) query the FBI's National Crime Information Center. He finds that as a teenager Bumptious had been arrested for hit-and-run homicide but never prosecuted. Then Burnwood himself comes across Bumptious late one night in a bar, apparently intoxicated, "engaging in amorous activity" with Wanda Werewolf. Wanda had been arrested but not prosecuted earlier for soliciting. Burnwood reports all of this too.

But, boy, the members of my classes would not! Most of them would touch none of the above — none of the information on Aphid, Bumptious or Cassandra.

In the first place, most of the information was unsubstantiated or obtained illegally, and that's enough to keep it out of print. But many of the students went into great detail to explain that, even if substantiated, they regarded most of the information to be of insufficient public concern to merit publication.

A few thought that, if Aphid's medical records could be corroborated, his potential mental incapacity should be publicized. (Medical records indicating that Montana's Republican candidate for governor has periodic severe headaches became public in the recent campaign here.) But others thought the press ought not be hasty in printing matters in such a sensitive and vague area as mental health. "Aphid's psychiatric history is personal," one student wrote in his analysis. "Unless Burnwood can show hard evidence of chronic psychosis, it is also irrelevant to the campaign."

Some thought Aphid's financial report, if accurate, was suitable to publish. But, as one student wrote, "I've been the prey of a few collection agencies myself, and I feel that it would have no bearing on how I would vote on national issues."

The students (no surprise) just snorted at the idea of making anything of parties attended by longhairs.

A student or two would have reported Bumptious' scene with Wanda, with some misgivings, since, as one student wrote, "it is not a good public way for a senator to act." But most thought everyone has a right to be drunk once in a while and people's sex lives are their own so long as public business is not interfered with.

Media spokesmen in the three-day symposium
seemed to lean toward reporting Bumptious’ teenage hit-and-run incident. But my students, almost to a person, concluded, as one wrote, that “the time lapse between the case and its disclosure strains the issue.”

A few students thought that (as one put it) “because Cassandra’s abortion conflicts with her major issue, that fact should be printed.” One said her record in law school “indicates she might not be capable of making laws.” But most went along with the student who wrote, “The three items relating to Cassandra are also private, outdated and without connection to her public duties.”

While agreeing that Cassandra’s husband’s past should remain private, the students were divided on whether Burnwood’s paper would be in trouble legally if it printed the information. Some argued that his close relationship to Carla made him a public person and thus would subject him to the New York Times ruling if he sued for libel.

But others contended that he had done nothing to make himself a public person and could argue successfully in court that his privacy had been invaded and his reputation ruined.

Judges themselves might disagree on this question today. One of the areas in which judicial thinking is changing these days (and apparently running against the press) involves the definition of who is a public person.

The press still is able to say about anything it wishes about public officials, so long as it avoids a display of malice. But the press finds that it must be increasingly careful of what is said about people whose lives are on the border between public and private. The concerns of my students for respecting rights of privacy should stand them in good stead when they get jobs as reporters and editors.

The message of the course I’m teaching on ethics of the press is that the press is being held much more accountable for actions than it ever has before.

One mystified student came to my office to ask what holds together the 20 or so motley topics he and his 25 fellow students have been giving reports on all quarter. I replied that a lot of changes are taking place in the field of journalism and that most of these topics represent current pressure points on the press.

We have spent several class sessions talking about codes of ethics, for both individual newspapers and journalism organizations. Nearly every major national journalism organization has rewritten its code within the past few years — under pressure to be tougher and more specific. Much of the tightening relates to conflicts of interest, gifts and special favors. Just as public officials are being expected to stay clean, so are journalists.

The class has talked about increasing public concern over the right of the press to print certain information about various types of people.

In the area of libel, it almost is impossible to libel a public official unless a paper has shown gross irresponsibility in reporting. But the courts are drawing a smaller and smaller circle around nonofficials who would be considered public persons in a potentially libelous situation. The press will have to use increasing care as it reports the activities of persons who fall on the borderline between public and private.

Readers and news sources are becoming more demanding of accuracy in the news columns — and of redress when errors occur. Students who made inquiries in this area found that a growing number of newspapers are prescribing specific locations for corrections. Some, such as the Columbian, run them on the same page in approximately the same location. Others, such as the Missoulian, try to run corrections in the location in which the original story appeared. In both cases, editors show their (perhaps reluctant) intention to make certain the correction is seen and is not buried in the back of the paper.

Speaking of corrections, I noted an unusual event on NBC’s evening news a couple of weeks ago. John Chancellor took considerable time to make three corrections.

Earlier, he said, NBC reported that Jimmy Carter had said it would not be appropriate to ask Henry Kissinger to stay on to help solve the Middle East puzzle (as proposed by Sen. Abraham Ribicoff, D-Mass.). Chancellor said that Carter actually had said that it would not be appropriate at this time to comment on the proposal. Some difference!

Second, Chancellor said NBC had reported that, in line with Carter’s avowed policies, the Justice Department had changed its policies toward draft evaders and was no longer prosecuting them. The department, according to Chancellor, had informed the network that its policy had not changed but that some attorneys were not prosecuting.

Third, NBC earlier had said that porpoises feed on tuna, hence the reason they are found in tuna schools. Not true, Chancellor had to admit. They don’t eat tuna. They only like “to hang out with them.”

Radio and television have been even more notorious than newspapers in not owning up to mistakes. Chancellor’s breast-beating was refreshing, although, having been caught in my share of errors, I could sympathize with him.

For almost as many years as most newspapers have existed, they have printed letters from readers. In the past some have been reluctant to print letters critical of their practices and policies. But today most editors have learned that, to gain credibility with readers, one of the best things they can do is print critical letters. Even editors who might be inclined to throw away embarrassing letters are finding themselves under pressure to let critics have their say. More and more editors are successfully resisting the temptation to add editor’s notes to the ends of letters.
Some of the larger, more progressive newspapers employ special staff members to enlist and handle complaints from readers. On some of these papers, the person is called an ombudsman, a Scandinavian description for a person who acts as a spokesman for persons with complaints. His assignment is to see that the proper action is taken in response to a complaint or to help the complainant understand why the newspaper did what it did.

Other papers have hired what some call a media critic. He evaluates and criticizes practices of the media (his own paper and others) without necessarily having had a complaint lodged. Charles Seib of the Washington Post is an example.

press councils

Another means studied by my students is the press council. Press councils have existed in Europe for a number of decades. If a person can't obtain satisfaction in his complaint against the press, he can take it to a council, usually composed of both press (or former press) people and citizens. If the council finds the newspaper or television station to be wrong, it has no power to fine or punish except the power to publicize its findings.

Some councils have been attempted on a local basis (including Bend, Ore.). But most, including one of the more successful, in Riverside, Calif., have failed, largely because of lack of business and stick-to-it-iveness. A state council has been formed in Minnesota, and some press-council advocates think that the state provides the most practical level for press councils.

An experiment with a national press council in this country has been under way for three years. Known as the National News Council, it started out to respond to complaints against only the national media (networks, wire services, syndicates, news magazines, the newspapers that circulate nationwide). Recently, with new financing, it has enlarged its authority to include complaints against any of the media.

The council has had a hard time gaining acceptance in the press. One of my students who dug into the council found that "the council will occasionally be discussed in journalism reviews or trade publications, but almost never in newspapers or on radio and television stations." Some organizations, including the New York Times, have refused to cooperate with the council.

As of last February, the council had dismissed 33 cases as being unwarranted, dismissed 21 after review and upheld five complaints. Noting the low number of upheld complaints, the student concluded that "the council has set up a fairly narrow set of guidelines" that keeps it from getting into anything that isn't clear-cut.

Students took a look at a fairly recent phenomenon known as journalism reviews, publications generally written by journalists about good and bad practices in the media. They found a couple of good reviews, but neither is much noticed by the general public. Most of those directed toward the local level, such as the Chicago Journalism Review and the Northwest Journalism Review, have failed to obtain sufficient support to live. But the reviews that continue help keep up the standards of the industry.

One final pressure point, before I take over the entire page: a concept known as the right of access. Some legal theorists argue that readers ought to have a legal right to gain access to news columns to tell their side of the story. A Florida law that provided that right under certain circumstances was found unconstitutional by the U.S. Supreme Court a couple of years ago. But some of the theorists persist in pushing the concept.

The idea of the right of access horrifies most journalists. They fear that judges will take over the functions of editors. Most judges have indicated they wouldn't want the job of editor (or they would, I suppose, have gone into journalism in the first place).

Editors should have little to fear from the right of access — or from press councils, media critics or journalism reviews — if they act on their own to open up their columns to persons of all points of view.

Montanans seem to have a fear of being ripped off by outsiders. The state's relatively brief history shows that they have ample reason.

For more than a century the state's natural resources have been plundered and its people exploited by profitiers who have been primarily interested in filling their own pockets. Billions of dollars in profits have flowed out of the state.

It's no wonder that many Montanans strenuously oppose expanding the strip-mining of coal beyond the power requirements of their own state. They don't like the idea of utilities from Washington and Oregon coming in — destroying the landscape, polluting the air and transmitting clean electric power out of the state. They can't forget the cattle, copper and railroad barons who made their profits on Montana's resources, took their money and left the state overgrazed, poor, overfarmed and bankrupt.

The first victims of the Montana rip-off were the Native Americans. The whites sent the last of them packing with the defeat of Chief Joseph in 1877 just before he and his Nez Perce people could escape into Canada. At about the same time, the whites were reaping a harvest of buffaloes that doomed that source of food and hides.

In the 1860s gold was found. With that began exploitation — running from petty thievery to the buying of the legislature to the stealing of the "richest hill on earth" — that has not been surpassed in the history of this nation.

Now, my source for that broad statement is a

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Montanans, and, since Montanans are a little paranoid about exploitation, perhaps it ought to be taken a trifle lightly. The source is a newspaperman (which in itself may or may not lend credence to this claim), but more than that he is (or was) the author of one of Montana’s historical classics.

The book is Montana—High, Wide, and Handsome by Joseph Kinsey Howard. First published in 1943, the book now is out of print. Copies are very difficult to find. I bought a used copy of the 12th edition (1955) for $10!

Much of Howard’s story is devoted to telling how “Nature and man’s greed have combined to rob Montanans of their birthright, the land.”

The gouging that Montana got at the hands of the gold and silver exploiters was nothing compared to what the copper kings did to the economy, politics and living standard of the state. While they made billions in profits, they left the miner poor and sick, warred with each other, bought political positions, virtually avoided paying taxes and shipped their money back east, with much of it ending in William Rockefeller’s Standard Oil pockets.

Montana hasn’t yet escaped from the control of the major survivor of the copper war, the Anaconda Co. But since 1959, when the company sold its chain of Montana newspapers, Anaconda has gradually reduced its influence in the state. It now is in the process of selling out to a conglomerate which may have even less interest in the welfare of the state. (In recent years “The Company,” in Montana terms, no longer is Anaconda but the Montana Power Co.)

Montana’s grasslands first attracted the cattlemen. Texas longhorns were driven up the Bozeman trail. It wasn’t long before they were overgrazing the fragile, dry prairie. The land belonged to the U.S. government, but the cattlemen took control of it through what they called their “customary range.” Some of them eventually earned title to it under various homestead acts, but some just up and left when the grass ran thin or competition for the range became too tough or the sheepherders ran them out.

Then James Hill ran Great Northern railroad across Montana and set about to realize his great dream. He wanted to fill his railroad cars going east with wheat and cattle headed for the populous markets. He set about to put a homesteader on every 160 acres of Montana land within reach of his railroad.

Several years before, a wise conservationist had estimated that four square miles of pastureage — 2,560 acres — was the minimum needed to sustain a family in Montana. “A quarter section of land alone will be of no value,” he warned. Montana should not be homesteaded under the provisions of the original law that allotted 160 acres per family. Even with the extended homestead law of 1909 (320 acres allowed) Montana was not a fit place for the smalltime farmer.

But Hill lured thousands westward with promises of good land, plenty of rain and a ready market. The poor devils who accepted his invitation soon became known as Honyockers. They were doomed to fail.

World War I brought a few years of hope. The government encouraged the production of wheat; prices were high; the rains came. The farmers responded to their nation’s call, tilled soil that should not have been broken, invested in expensive farm machinery, borrowed large sums from the banks. When the war ended, the government drove down the prices of wheat and bankrupted the farmers. The Federal Reserve Bank completed the process by restricting credit, causing Montana banks to fail long before those in most parts of the country.

Even Uncle Sam with the “I want you” pointed finger ripped off Montana, if Howard is to be believed. Because of an overestimation of the state’s population, a higher percentage of young men was drafted from Montana than from any other state, and a higher percentage did not return from battle. “The First World War left Montana bankrupt, in land, money and men,” Howard wrote. A low percentage of returning veterans came back to Montana. It was too miserable a place to return to.

**a very bad scare**

As Howard was writing his book, Montana received what he called “a very bad scare” from the Bonneville Power Administration. The BPA and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, according to Howard, wanted to increase water storage on the Columbia River and its tributaries to aid the Bonneville and Grand Coulee power projects. Montanans discovered that these proposed dams would “destroy thousands of acres of productive land, some industries and even some communities.” The beneficiaries of this new power would not be Montanans but their neighbors to the west, notably the State of Washington. By protesting strenuously, Howard recounted, the plans got changed and Flathead Lake was saved.

Montanans still are suspicious of their neighbors to the west. If Pacific Power and Light and Washington Water Power need power, let them find coal fields in their own areas, or build nuclear plants at home, or (at a minimum) transport Montana’s raw coal back home and burn it in their own atmosphere.

The message is clear: Keep your hands off Montana. Some Montanans at long last are ready to fight to keep Montana for themselves.

But whether they will prevail over present-day developers (including Montana Power Co.) and some of the political leaders remains to be seen. One encouraging sign: Montanans last month voted to establish a coal-tax reserve fund which supporters hope will diminish pressures for rapidly selling off the state’s coal resources.
Eleven weeks of college teaching have left me with mixed feelings.

The quarter has not been long enough for me to do all the things I wanted to do. I would like to stay here longer.

Yet I’m becoming itchy to get back to Vancouver and the Columbian. (Part of that comes from the fear of being snowed in over here.)

Probably the greatest benefit has been the one I had hoped for most — a slower pace, with more time to read, think and explore new ways. The combination of a university campus and Montana (which is a state of mind as well as a political state) gave me exactly the opportunities I needed to do different things and to be a different person.

Some of the changes were very specific. I have developed the habit of going to my apartment in time to watch the 4:30 p.m. news on CBS (TV programs generally come on an hour earlier in the Mountain Time Zone). Half an hour later the same station carried the ABC news, and half an hour after that the other station in town carries NBC news.

I have not been much of a television watcher during my life, and I have almost never watched the evening news. I have never thought I had enough time to sit around watching the tube. Reading seemed much more important and productive.

Will my new TV habit follow me back to Vancouver?

Not since my early days of college have I gone off to the movies by myself. Going to the movies alone is like going dancing alone. But I’ve dashed out several times by myself to see a film, and not felt at all self-conscious as a middle-aged loner in a house packed with gregarious college kids.

Reading has been one area in which the 11 weeks have not been enough. I’m only now getting into some really interesting volumes on Montana. I suspect that, in spite of good intentions, I will not be inclined to read much about Montana in Vancouver.

I have spent quite a lot of time reading books, magazines and essays about the press (not to mention student papers by the score). Some thoughts that had been vague before coming here have begun to solidify. Most of these could be summarized in two sentences: The right to a free press established in the First Amendment was not intended for reporters, editors and publishers. It was intended to protect the citizens’ right to know.

In many instances over the years, the media have performed well as guardians of the public’s right to know. In other instances, they have been primarily interested in their own well-being. It took a decision by the U.S. Supreme Court (31 years ago) to force the Associated Press to provide its news services to competitors of its members. The First Amendment, Justice Hugo Black wrote for the court in that case, "rests on the assumption that the widest possible dissemination of information from diverse and antagonistic sources is essential to the welfare of the public. . . ."

Much of the development of my thought along these lines took place in the editorial-writing and ethics classes I have been teaching. One of the moments of revelation came during a class discussion on freedom of the press and how important it is to defend it against attack.

knee-jerk reactions

A student interrupted the flow of the discussion to say he was tired of the knee-jerk reaction of the press to anything that seems a threat to its freedom to do as it wishes. This predictable, instant response, he argued, actually can weaken the First Amendment guarantees if it causes the public to think that the press is acting in a self-serving manner. A much slower, calmer approach would stand a better chance of winning the understanding of the public, he said. I agree.

The students also have taught me that what may seem perfectly rational to a person of my generation doesn’t make any kind of sense to them — and vice versa. On the day on which this is being written, a student, reporting on codes of ethics of newspapers, said he found in a survey he made that the main exception to a newspaper’s paying its way to all events is in sports. “The question remains,” he wrote, “that, if a reporter must pay for a meal while covering a campaign dinner or luncheon, why should he or she not also have to pay for a ticket to any sporting event?”

I found these students to be one of the great delights of this sabbatical. I have become well acquainted with several and somewhat acquainted with many more. A few probably aren’t meant for journalism — can’t write very well, don’t have much push, too impatient or idealistic. But most seem to be sincere in their studies and in their interest in journalism. Several write very well, and some have excellent minds. (A few even excel in both areas.)

A couple of students rather consistently wrote way-out, sardonic editorials, and many of them wrote at least one of this kind. But, for the most part, the editorials have been moderate, generally pragmatic and within the realm of acceptability in a newspaper of general circulation.

I have detected very little student radicalism. Some have said that is because this is Montana. But I heard one of the journalism instructors say that the Montana Kaimin is better and more responsible this year than it has been for a long time. I have become very fond of many members of the Kaimin staff, partly as members of my classes and partly through an old college tradition, the Friday afternoon beer.

The faculty members here have played a big part in making my 11 weeks enjoyable. The faculty is of a size that encourages congeniality (a dean, four print
media professors, one photography professor, two radio-TV professors and me). Several have gone out of their way to help me feel at home and lend assistance. (I’m told they are going to take me out for a steak some night this week.)

I have gotten enough positive feedback, from students and faculty, to think I at least have come close to fulfilling my commitment to the University of Montana School of Journalism.

One professor told me that a colleague had remarked to him, referring to me, “Well that is one visiting lecturer who has worked out.” I’ll know more about what the students think when I have them fill out a “student’s faculty evaluation” form in the next-to-last class. The students have the last word these days.

And so my second college career has ended. On December 13, I’ll be back at the Columbian. How much of Missoula and Montana do you suppose will come back with me?

College students today represent a cross between the silent generation of the Fifties and the activists of the late Sixties and early Seventies.

That’s the impression that I gained while teaching journalism during the fall quarter at the University of Montana.

The students I came to know are not silent—most of them anyway. So in that sense they are not like those of us who sat quietly and took notes in college classrooms 20 and 25 years ago.

In those days of McCarthyism, we thought twice before expressing opinions that were even moderately radical. In fact I passed up a chance to tour the Soviet Union with a group of college editors, partly because an editor warned me that my name might get on a list that would mark me as a suspicious person in later life.

College students of today seem to be much less inhibited. Montana students were highly critical of Gov. Tom Judge during his campaign for reelection this fall. The editor of the student newspaper editorialized strongly against a proposal from the commissioner of higher education that would restrict the use of student-activity fees. The student-governor strongly against a proposal from the student newspaper.

Students already have a substantial influence in faculty evaluation. At the conclusion of a course, students are given forms for indicating how they rated the instructor and the course. The dean of the school suggested that I distribute the forms to my two classes. Submitting myself to that kind of judging was a little scary. I can see how a professor whose career may depend on student evaluations could have cause for concern.

While I was there, the law school rehired a beginning professor who had received low ratings from students last year. Some of the members of the student bar group went to the student newspaper with a complaint against the law dean’s hiring of this person. The protest launched a heated debate over whether the students’ opinions had been considered and whether the newspaper was a proper forum for pursuing opposition to him. Students and professors argued on both sides of the issue.

I could not possibly have imagined public questioning of a professor’s qualifications in the Fifties, except (as in fact I did as student editor) possibly to defend a professor against the McCarthyist, right-wing criticism of that day.

Students still like to print words that offend most middle-aged, middle-class Americans. I had a few of those words appear in editorials written for my class, and a few were published in student-newspaper editorials. But present conditions represent a tremendous improvement over just a few years ago, I was told. The managing editor of the student paper remarked one day in class that persons who try to make their point with profanity display their lack of ability to express themselves.

Dramatic public protests have not died out completely. During a patriotic parade through downtown Missoula, an assistant professor and several students dug a miniature grave in the courthouse lawn to protest nuclear proliferation. But I think most students recognize the ineffectiveness (even counterproductiveness) of such behavior.

So how are these students of the Seventies like those of the Fifties? For the most part they are serious
students. They seem interested in getting good grades. They want to take courses that will prepare them for jobs. They want to enroll in programs that are reasonably down to earth, yet also introduce them to interesting and challenging ideas.

Their heads are not way up in the clouds, but they are not going to surrender their ideals either.

Several of the evaluations from my students indicated that I hadn’t done everything right as an instructor. They did not pussyfoot in telling me exactly how they would have done things differently. But many of them also reflected the theme stated by one student: “He was a newspaperman first—a teacher second. When I take a class from someone in the real world, I want to hear about the real world. It’s refreshing to finally have a good guest lecturer.”

Incidentally, I shared some of these News Perspective columns with the students after they appeared in print. Here is one student’s reaction: “The use of the columns written for his paper, the Columbian, were often interesting and enlightening. They afford an ‘in the business’ perspective on press problems and day-to-day situations.”

I come back really high on today’s college young people.

Media Coverage of Grizzlies

By Charles Jonkel*

The grizzly bear, like airplane crashes and natural disasters, makes good copy. In fact, the grizzly embodies two things journalistically attractive: its fearsome, violent reputation and its role as a symbol of the “natural world.” Deservedly or not, it has both.

Grizzlies do evoke strong emotions. Some people view them as vermin or dangerous killers of people; certain ranchers and outfitters consider them a serious nuisance or liability to a legitimate enterprise; Indians revere them as a most important fellow inhabitant of the ancestral land; zealous conservationists equate the grizzly with Mother Nature, and hunters regard the species as the ultimate trophy. All of these views are no doubt valid under various circumstances.

These diverse values, for better or worse, have tended to greatly increase the grizzly’s importance as a resource. And any valuable resource attracts further attention. If this resource is public, as in the case of the grizzly, special interests and viewpoints may become inflated, and sooner or later politics enters.

Recently, therefore, many people have questioned the status of the Montana grizzly and its habitat, the management of the species by the state and the character of hunters, biologists and Park Service personnel. Because of the journalistic attractiveness of the grizzly, all views and opinions, whether good or bad, well informed or poorly informed, have received widespread press coverage. As a result, powerful eastern conservation groups and federal agencies have exerted their influence in the state on behalf of the grizzly by listing it as a “threatened species” under the Endangered Species Act of 1973. The Montana grizzly, largely as a consequence of press coverage, has become the property of the federal government.

This event can be viewed in several ways. The Endangered Species Act can be a valuable tool if used properly. And because federal land-management agencies control so much of the grizzly habitat in Montana, a federal act as a tool to help preserve the species could be most useful. The state (or, more precisely, the Montana Fish and Game Department) sorely needs such tools to maintain viable management programs. However, it is not an easy matter for state and federal agencies to share management of the same resource. As indicated that I hadn’t done everything right as an instructor. They did not pussyfoot in telling me exactly how they would have done things differently. But many of them also reflected the theme stated by one student: “He was a newspaperman first—a teacher second. When I take a class from someone in the real world, I want to hear about the real world. It’s refreshing to finally have a good guest lecturer.”

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I come back really high on today’s college young people.

*Mr. Jonkel is a research associate in the University of Montana School of Forestry. This article is reprinted from the Oct. 17, 1975, issue of the University’s student daily, the Montana Kaimin.
The Tribune and the 1929 Crash

By PAUL NOCKLEBY

This report was prepared for the History and Principles of Journalism class. Mr. Nockleby, a graduate of the University of Montana, is a teaching assistant at the University of Minnesota and a candidate for the M.A. in European history. He examined Great Falls Tribune editorials preceding and following the 1929 stock-market crash. In this article, he describes changes in the opinions expressed in general editorials and editorials addressed to residents of north-central Montana between July 1, 1929, and Nov. 10, 1930.

In the months preceding the stock-market crash of 1929, Great Falls Tribune editors wrote exuberant reports of a material prosperity that seemed apparent everywhere. The editors pointed proudly to signs that "sustained prosperity" could be expected:

Good wages and shorter working hours, bringing increased leisure as well as financial means toward higher standards of living, have been material factors in the sustained prosperity of America.1

Surely we have every reason to be optimistic. America is prosperous, generally speaking, because we lead all other nations in the number of inventions each year and because we have almost unlimited resources.2

The wide distribution of life insurance and of savings accounts gives the most convincing proof of the solid prosperity of the American masses.3

The period of agricultural depression which followed the world war is about at an end and . . . confidence in farming as a profitable enterprise is being restored. . . . There never has been a better time for the man who actually wants to obtain a farm of his own to buy land right now, and the farmer who has the necessary experience and equipment for carrying on his operations should have little difficulty in making a farm pay for itself at prevailing prices.4

Editorials praised America for its success, and one, appropriately in a Sunday edition, attributed the nation's booming economy to "spiritual factors," most notably the "Christian principle" of sharing one's wealth with others.5 Implicit in that editorial and others was the idea that the United States is divinely ordained to be an outstanding success among nations.

Editorials praised business during the boom of the late 1920s. Articles often quoted U.S. Chamber of Commerce publications that offered proof of the expanding nature of business. The Tribune trusted business and businessmen to protect the economy. One editorial called on

private industry to stabilize employment, and of those in charge of public works to conduct them so as to take up the slack of employment in a seasonable and helpful way.6

Furthermore, the Tribune appreciated steps businessmen were taking to regulate themselves:

A relatively new and striking phase of American business development is reflected in the record of progress in the setting up of standards of trade practice. . . . It is apparent that this experiment in the self-government of industry is rapidly becoming a fixed practice with every indication of further rapid development during the years immediately ahead.7

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1Great Falls Tribune, Aug. 13, 1929.
2Ibid., Sept. 15, 1929.
3Ibid., July 20, 1929.
4Ibid., Oct. 11, 1929.
5Ibid., June 30, 1929.
6Ibid., Aug. 17, 1929.
7Ibid., Sept. 2, 1929.
Sound business principles were cited to persuade readers that business trusts might not be all that bad:

The public is inclined to no longer fear “trusts” if the power which accrues to large combinations of capital is used to reduce costs of operation and the money thus saved is shared with the people who must buy.8

In addressing the proposed Great Northern-Northern Pacific merger, the Tribune stated:

Railroad consolidation is inevitable. The public has little to fear from those mergers, for governmental regulation and natural competition between groups will assure efficient service at reasonable rates.9

Later, the Tribune, again trumpeting the tune of capitalism, announced:

America has reached a new conception of economy. Conservation of time and labor has become more important than conservation of goods. With our factories multiplying their productive capacity at such a tremendous rate, the trend is toward a higher standard of living and increased consumption of commodities instead of the pioneer ideal of economy and penny-saving. Expansion of markets and increased sales is a greater problem than production of commodities.10

So, the Great Falls Tribune editorials helped the cause of business enterprise, often echoing the U.S. Chamber of Commerce and the Better Business Bureau, among others.

**government limits urged**

In the months before the stock-market crash, the Tribune strongly advocated governmental economic policies that today would be called conservative. In editorial after editorial, it praised attempts to limit government involvement in affairs that presumably could be handled by private enterprise.

Of primary importance was applying sound business practices to the operations of government: “The necessity of administering public affairs in such a way that adequate governmental service may be rendered at the lowest possible cost.”11 An Aug. 22, 1929, editorial expressed concern about the per-capita increase in the cost of government operations from $19.10 in 1913 to $50.52 in 1925: “Such an increase, in such a short period, can only mean an overgrowth of government.”12

The Tribune did not apologize for its pro-business biases. In looking to the future, it made these comments:

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8Ibid., Sept. 6, 1929.
9Ibid., Sept. 13, 1929.
10Ibid., Nov. 10, 1929.
11Ibid., Aug. 7, 1929.
12Ibid., Aug. 22, 1929.

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The need for economic efficiency will ultimately spell the doom of graft in government. With the development of high standards and the acquisition of greater experience in methods of organization, the time will come when our public officials will no longer be under constant pressure and constant temptation, for we shall have come to protect their integrity as we now protect the funds in our vaults.13

If the homesteads, the tools of production, the instruments of traffic and exchange must be socialized in the interest of efficiency, then the instinct of ownership must find something else upon which it may lay hold, or we shall presently find ourselves floating at large through life like certain rootless plants in our lakes; with nothing to give stability and permanence to character, no foundation upon which to build those stately mansions of the soul, which, after all, are the “houses not made with hands” in which we all live.14

The whole climate of opinion perhaps was best illustrated by the fact the Tribune quoted the Chamber of Commerce estimate that “human life in the United States represents a value of $1,500,000,000,000,”15 with the suggestion that an increase in the quantified value of human life was tied to an over-all increase in the quality of life.

In early September, Tribune writers had premonitions about the stock disaster and warned readers not to endanger the fundamental prosperity by undermining it through speculation. Quoting economist Roger Babson, an editorial concluded:

Now we begin to hear warnings... . Money that should be used in the conduct of established business is being poured into the stocks of new enterprises for which high hopes of remarkable expansion are held. But investments of this sort are not confined to merchants and manufacturers. According to the best of authority, more people are borrowing and speculating than ever before in our history. Everybody seems to have a mania to get hold of stocks... . It is the sign of a more stable and happier country when the average man puts his savings in profitable stocks with the idea of leaving them there to earn a reasonable return. But it is not so healthy when this man borrows money and buys on margin, betting on a rise in the market, so he may make a “cleanup.” Wise investments are all right. Gambling is not. The quicker everybody appreciates this fundamental fact, the quicker the country will get on a more secure economic base.16

Eleven days later, the Tribune again sounded a warning:

Ordinary horse sense, based on the experience of the past, supports the contention that this bull market cannot continue forever. Sooner or later a crash is coming because many stocks are now selling for double and treble their earning capacity — and capital has a way of forsaking industries that can’t earn a profitable rate.17
The Tribune's analysis of the condition of the stock market, issued more than a month before the October crash, was astute. Its view of the basic health of the economy, however, was entirely incorrect, for it asserted that the economic condition of the country was essentially sound:

Probably no nation in history has had such widespread prosperity. Our great home markets, our natural resources and our genius for mechanical invention and industrial organization have all combined to that end and there is every reason to suppose that these factors will continue to work increasingly to our advantage.21

October 23 through 25, 1929: Days of panic on Wall Street. On Saturday, October 26, a Tribune column, "Slaughtering the Lambs," reasserted in hindsight the inevitability of catastrophe that the newspaper had predicted:

If any moral is to be drawn from the cataclysm which has swamped the stock market in the last few days it is that the average man or woman with modest resources has no business in the game.
The terrific tumbling of stocks, with many traders selling the market short, is explained as "a much-needed housecleaning, ridding the market of weak and overextended marginal accounts."

Unquestionably, this housecleaning was needed, but it is tragic that those who had to pay for it should be those who could least afford it....

It has been a terrible slaughtering of lambs. But if it prevents other lambs from going to the slaughter, it will not have been in vain.19

Three weeks later, the Tribune still was saying that the stock-market crash was nothing more than a housecleaning:

Now the joy-ride is over — and there is a terrible headache. But the economic conditions which brought us our prosperity are no different than they were before.20

On November 22, almost a month after the crash:

The Tribune believes that the recent orgy of speculation was an annoying fester on legitimate business and that it was a good thing for the country as a whole when it was lanced.21

Significantly, the Tribune did not yet recognize that the great American business institutions were in unusual trouble:

The vast natural resources of this nation lie before us unimpaired. The greatest and richest market in the world, unshaken in its purchasing power, is at our command. World markets, relieved now of credit strain, are open to our initiative and ingenuity. The financial power of the strongest banking system ever seen is as ready and able as ever to support us. The most efficient industrial organization and transportation ever created are at our service. Nothing whatever in the basic conditions of business progress has been changed in any way.

So, let us face the economic facts squarely. Let us accept the gospel that permanent prosperity is based on production and not on the stock market — and let us do more producing and less speculating.22

editorial tone changes

By December 1, the Tribune was beginning to recognize the pervasively depressing significance of the stock-market crash. For a long period, editorials had told readers that "it's not as bad as it looks." By December 1, the editorial writers were beginning to sense that the economy was in far more serious shape than they had presumed. This wavering can be seen in a December 1 editorial:

The secret of continued prosperity in America lies in our ability to sustain the nation's capacity to buy at least on its present level.... Now we see that our troubles are not overproduction but underconsumption. Approaching the problem from this angle, the corollary is that underconsumption is caused by insufficient buying power, which, in turn, comes from unemployment and reduced wages.23

The point is that the Tribune no longer was sure about the basic vitality of the American economy. Those long expositions on the healthy economic conditions simply stopped appearing on the editorial page. A New Year's Eve editorial advised readers that material progress was not everything:

Happy is he who is contented with what he has. That is not to say that one should not strive for improvement and advancement, for wholesome ambition is the stimulus that has made the world greater today than it was yesterday. It has been so through the ages and will continue to be so.

But the envious person is destined to constant unhappiness. He cannot forget that in material things he is not so well endowed as some others are.24

Finally, a watershed in the evolving editorial opinion of the Tribune was reached Jan. 20, 1930, when the editor finally acknowledged that a depression had set in:

There is not now the opportunity for a rapid return that there was after the depression of 1920 and the upgrade climb is likely to be slower and longer.25

The irrepressible Tribune optimists, while acknowledging the depression, consistently refused to play the role of Cassandra:

21Ibid., Dec. 1, 1929.
22Ibid., Dec. 31, 1929.
23Ibid., Jan. 20, 1930.
Again, in stressing the relative well-being of American farmers, the Tribune compared Russian “rich kulaks” to American farmers and concluded that the richest Russians had only one-seventh the income of their American counterparts. The Tribune editors sensed a sign of hope:

Spring is the harbinger of hope. . . . Spring is the symbol of hope. That hope expresses itself in some form. No matter how hardened we become to the sad realities of life, at least some of the primitive influence of spring affects us in some degree. We may not attempt to write spring poems, but, just the same, we do compose a poem in either thought or action.

In April the Tribune blamed the rapidly deteriorating economy on psychological pessimism, and the only thing separating Americans from a return to prosperity was a change in attitude from “bear” to “bull”:

Prosperity manifests itself in material things, it really has its origin in the mental realm, and if we are to sustain prosperity in this country we must approach the problem with constructive minds and predicate our action on clear thinking.

The nation, taken as a whole, has been down in the dumps for about six months. The psychological cause of the present depression was the stock-market debacle, which, in turn, had been brought on through the refusal of speculators to properly read the trend of the times.

Our business structure, though fundamentally sound, needed a readjustment. But the bulls of the market would not permit it to be made in a temperate manner. They carried on in high-handed fashion which could not end otherwise than in a bearish reaction.

For more than three months, level-headed businessmen and bankers have been noting the unmistakable signs of business recovery. Only the pessimists and those who don’t understand economics are unable to see the indications of better times ahead. The result is that prosperity is not manifesting itself as quickly as it otherwise would.

One senses more than 45 years after that was written that the author really did not believe conditions were as healthy as he asserted, that he did in fact realize that the trough had not been reached, but that he thought a little encouragement to his readers might help smooth the downward slide. If he did in fact realize the sorry state of the economy and did not report it, he was irresponsible. A simplistic Pollyanna argument employing ad hominem arguments and other logical sleight-of-hand did not really help turn the economy around. Serious defects in the American economic structure needed remedy, and the Tribune editor was far afield if he thought those remedies could be effected soon.

Through the summer and into the fall of 1930, the stark reality of an honest-to-goodness depression became apparent to the Tribune staff. The editor no longer pretended that worsening conditions were products of men’s imaginations; he knew that hard times had arrived, in grey, living color. Drought exacerbated the economic difficulties in that year—in some areas of Montana, drought was particularly insufferable. Many thousands sold their farms and moved out of the state; others went to town to look for employment.

The Tribune articulated the bitter nationwide resentment against the powerful industrial class. In a June 26, 1930, editorial, the writer asked some pointed questions. He reported that

a startling and unsparing indictment of the indifference of business, and even of government, to unemployment in this country has appeared in Forbes magazine. Reasoning from the principle that business is business and that its only objective is to make money, the captains of industry are represented as saying in effect:

“One of the easiest ways to cut down expenses being to cut down on salary and wage rolls, we of course lay men off right and left. . . . What happens to the hordes of workers we lay off is not our concern. Our responsibility begins and ends with running our business with surpassing efficiency, which means with a minimum of human labor. How to take care of unemployment is for others to solve. Let George do that.”

And can government really be much more concerned, so long as its seeming chief aim is to please and satisfy the big business powers? Apparently not, for it is a commentary upon how this whole problem has been neglected that neither government nor industry has taken the pains to keep track of unemployment from season to season. Forbes says it has been nobody’s business what happens to breadwinners denied the opportunity to earn their bread.

We have here a terrible picture of heartless self-interest, with more in it of fidelity to actual fact than many of us would like to think.

As the Tribune editor saw the economic outlook grow more dismal, his formerly tacit approval of the Eastern industrialists turned into sharp resentment. He abandoned the idea of national prosperity and began to brace himself and his readers for hard times. The focus of his editorials concerning economics shifted from an emphasis on national prosperity to an emphasis on regional survival. His editorials after June, 1930, were addressed not to Americans but to Montanans. Certainly, both kinds of editorials are numerous on either side of that date, but 45 years later such a division is readily apparent.

24Ibid., Jan. 24, 1930.
25Ibid., Feb. 20, 1930.
26Ibid., March 7, 1930.
27Ibid., April 5, 1930.
28Ibid., June 26, 1930.

Montana Journalism Review
east-west antagonism

The sectional antagonism between the East and the West has a long history, almost as long as the persistent antipathy between North and South. The editor of the Tribune keenly felt this mutual animosity. To 1929 Great Falls journalists, the industrial East and its lackeys in the White House ran the country in a way so blatantly pro-industry and anti-agriculture that Westerners were forestalled from any real parity, political or economic, with Easterners.

If the consistent underlying theme was one of East-West antagonism, the immediate issue during those months was the question of the Hawley-Smoot Tariff, which, passed by the Congress March 24, 1930, was the highest protective tariff in U.S. history. The debate over its passage, its enactment and its subsequent repeal provided the Tribune editor with plenty of ideas for editorials. Identification of the Hoover Administration and certain congressmen with the Hawley-Smoot Tariff was the cause of much distress at the Tribune, which railed against the tariff, the industrialists and Hoover.

The Tribune editorial writers contended that the proposal, although "cloaked under the guise of a tariff for agriculture, really was a bill for further protection of the industrial east." Further, the ones pushing for the tariff were "the smart and powerful Yankees who come down from Massachusetts and Connecticut asking for higher tariffs," men who were "the porcine industrial grabbers of the east." The Tribune singled out Sen. Joe Grundy of Pennsylvania and Sen. Gerald Nye of North Dakota as two of the contemptible supporters of the tariff. Senator Grundy was so vilified in the Tribune that his defeat in the 1930 primaries was cause for much rejoicing in editorials for weeks thereafter:

The Tribune also criticized President Hoover and Republican Rep. Scott Leavitt of the second Montana congressional district, both of whom favored the tariff:

Any representative of this state in the national congress who voted to enact this grossly unfair tariff bill definitely aligned himself with the industrial east against the welfare of Montana.

And:

No more brutal measure ever was put upon the federal statute books than this bill to which Mr. Leavitt gave his whole-hearted support. Coming at a time of worldwide depression, it is certain to put new artificial obstacles in the way of recovery of business. . . .

By what line of reasoning Mr. Leavitt arrived at the conclusion he should vote for a measure that will further reduce employment in Montana's industries and will cut the income of Montana's principal farm crop, we do not know. But next November when Montanans are smarting under the conditions which he has helped to create, he will no doubt realize his colossal mistake, and he will be given the opportunity to stay home and think it over.

The Tribune thus served notice on Representative Leavitt that it thought he was not acting in the best interests of wheat-growing Montana. This in-no-uncertain-terms castigation of Leavitt was perhaps the opening volley in the mid-term elections.

An important year-round issue discussed in the Tribune and important to Eastern Montanans in 1930 concerned the Agricultural Marketing Act of 1929. It created a Federal Farm Board of nine members, who were advised by committees representing the cooperative associations that marketed major commodities. It also provided a $500 million revolving fund from which the board could make loans to cooperatives to help them market their crops more effectively. Another provision, inserted by the farm bloc, permitted loans to stabilization corporations for controlling surpluses. In effect, these corporations could influence prices so long as the Farm Board lent them enough money. But the Farm Board had no control over production. Consequently, not even generous loans for stabilization could long sustain prices if they should begin a major decline owing to gross overproduction or adverse economic circumstances. From the first, the farm community was dissatisfied with the legislation that created the Farm Board.

It has become apparent that the Farm Board program, as operated during the last few months, is a failure as an instrument to establish economic parity [with the industrial east].

The Tribune, initially, hoped the Farm Board might be able to do something about the price of wheat, which had dropped to 60 cents a bushel by May, 1930 — a price below the costs of production. But in that month, the Tribune determined that the Farm Board could not help Montana farmers, and it blamed the Hoover Administration:

Montana Journalism Review
The Puzzled Distance Runner

By Robert C. McGiffert

Last week's change in the weather was even more welcome to runners than to normal people, and as I headed up Beach Drive along Rock Creek it occurred to me that I just might log 10 miles instead of my customary eight.

I didn’t let the thought linger. In wrestling with the psychology of distance running, I've learned it’s best to focus on what’s close at hand — the bridge where the creek meanders a half-mile from my starting point, or the Park Police station, where I make a U-turn and start back to the “Y” at Beach and Broad Branch Road.

As it turned out, I did run 10 miles that morning, but the decision was late in coming. I’m seldom sure when the idea of doing extra distance hardens into irrevocable commitment, but on this morning I think it happened in the sixth mile, when the arithmetic of the course dictated that by reversing direction I’d finish at eight miles, but by pressing on I would commit myself to 10.

There’s nothing unusual about a run before work, of course. Thousands of Americans take one, as the growth of running clubs, running magazines, running-shoe factories and running injuries attests. But I’m surprised I’m one of those thousands, and my puzzlement is as nothing compared to that of family, friends and business associates, who until two years ago had never known me to run for anything except a bus or an inattentive bartender.

The question everyone asks is why, and it’s a tough one to answer. I know what my goals are: I want to run 1,500 miles this year and I want to run a marathon before I’m 60. Barring illness or injury I’ll achieve the first. I don’t know about the second. I’m 53, and I’m not sure six years gives me time to get ready.

But deciding why a man in middle age should have such goals is something else again. I’ve never been a health nut, and as far as I can tell there’s still too little evidence to say that jogging lengthens life.

It’s not the joy of running. Most of the time I don’t like it much. It makes my feet and legs hurt.

It’s certainly not the competitive spirit. I’ve run in competition twice, with pathetic results. In the first race, seven miles, I finished roughly 300th out of 400 and was 12th out of 16 in the 45-54 age group. In the second, a four-mile dash, I was close to last among 60.

There was only one other geriatric entry in the dash, though, and I wheezed past him in the last mile and won a Thanksgiving turkey. My wife, who worries when I run hard, was pleased.

I really don’t know why I knock myself out this way. Most of the other wizened runners I know are similarly puzzled. And most, like me, began their running casually, almost by accident.

In my case the beginning was the sight of a grizzled old codger pounding along on a treadmill at the health club I joined in October, 1974, to try to do something about my generally flaccid flesh. “Better give that a try,” I thought, and did — completing, before exhaustion, 100 paces.

In the early weeks I counted my progress in strides: 100, 150, 200, 300, 500, 750. I remember the tremendous sense of achievement I felt when I jogged 1,000. It took four months of running three to four times a week before I got to a mile. After that the gains came quickly. In June, 1975, I was running three miles at a time, five days a week. By September I was doing five miles. This summer I’m up to eight, six days a week, and when it’s cool and I’m rested I push it to 10.

I do run gently. A seven-minute mile is within my capacity over short distances, but at anything from three miles up I poke along at eight or nine minutes a mile.

My blood pressure has plunged since I began running. My resting pulse rate is way down. My appetite hasn’t been affected one way or the other, but I sleep better than I have for years.

Those physical benefits are enough reason to run, I suppose, but I’m not satisfied that they’re my reason. There were a few minutes in June when I thought I knew mine. I was at Swiftcurrent Lake in Glacier National Park, and as the morning sun found the snow at the top of Grinnell Glacier along the great rock wall of the Continental Divide, I ran in solitude through the forest. Birds and wind and water and my footfalls made the only sounds I heard. I was euphoric.

“This is why I run,” I thought.

But it wasn’t. Beach Drive, with cars monoxiding into downtown Washington, sure isn’t grizzly country, so there must be another explanation.

A few days ago a young friend asked me for it, and I told him, “It helps my sex life.”

I don’t think he believed that, but it got his attention.

*This article appeared in the Aug. 26, 1976, Washington Post. Professor McGiffert, a member of the Montana journalism faculty since 1966, has worked as an editor at the Post for five summers.

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The Journalism Faculty

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A.B., M.A., University of Michigan. Professor MacDonald was the Pierre Andre intern at WGN Continental Broadcasting in Chicago in 1972. He subsequently served as a teaching fellow in the University of Michigan speech department, media director of the John Mogk campaign in Detroit, producer-director of the University of Michigan Television Center and as an instructor at the University of Northern Iowa.

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B.A., M.A., University of South Dakota. Professor Miller has worked as an announcer, newsman and production director at radio and television stations in South Dakota. During his military service, he was in charge of the Writers Branch of the U.S. Army Europe Pictorial Center. He taught for five years at the University of South Dakota, where he also served as film director and program director of KUSD Radio-TV. During the 1963-64 academic year, he studied at Columbia University as the recipient of a CBS News and Public Affairs Fellowship. From 1964 to 1966, he was program director of an educational television station, WDSE-TV, in Duluth. He is the author of the books *Ghost Towns of Montana* and *Ghost Towns of Idaho*.

VISITING LECTURERS
1976-77
To us, political harmony was one of the deadliest of opiates because when there was peace and quiet in governmental halls, the corporate termites were very busy. . . . Suffice to say, the Voice in its relentless pounding on issues was in frequent disfavor with many legislative and executive offices. It was to them a very odorous onion in a petunia bed. . . . The Voice, above all, was the dream of a desperate but determined group of men and women — a dream that became a reality for 30 years.

Harry Billings