

RAY BROOKS

SHOP TALK

MENTAL MEANDERINGS OF A REMINISCENT REPORTER

It's horrible how time flies. I can hardly believe that it was over two years ago that Shop Talk first appeared, swathed in hope and glowing with the peaceless vigor of a new idea. . . . the idea of a column devoted to merchants and business men of this city that would record as faithfully as possible news of their stores, their troubles, joys and their up & downs.

But—as they say in So. Cal. these days—many bridges have passed under the water since then, and though my guiding star has never twinkled out, there have been certain wanderings up side roads looking for readable, printable, interesting "stuff" to augment news of the merchants. Some have been all right, some very bad, but none of it malicious.

I have been accused of "taking things" at certain people—people who, having voiced their sentiment, have definitely displayed an utter lack of a sense of humor and don't know a good story when they read it—especially if it's about them.

In the main, however, Shop Talk has remained on the fence, avoiding argumentative subjects, many times not reporting things it really wanted to report, not rapping nearly as often as it should have. Writing about citizens of a small community is a ticklish operation. It must be interesting, but not spicy, personal but not too personal, newsy but not too revealing. Yes, there's a fine line to observe in small town reporting that many careless reporters have failed to recognize. And then what? . . . the dog house!

But whatever its failings, Shop Talk has seldom if ever taken itself too seriously. As Ed Emeritus says, wisely editorializing in "Newsdom":

"The weighty pronouncements which rattle from the lips of mighty statesmen and are smeared all over the headlines are not read half so avidly as the chit-chat columns modestly tucked away in an almost forgotten page.

"Every now and then the chit-chat brigade goes philosophical and heavy and tries to smash into the field of the weighty thinkers. And when we turn the few pages and arrive at the spawning grounds of our favorite reporters of the glamorous, we feel sort of let down when they ditch it all and get serious."

Certainly it is hard to ring the bell every time. But whatever the ringing it should reflect the activities and the hopes and the ambitions of the people about whom it writes. And today the world is full of "isms" and our political & economic structure seems to be tugging about our heads so furiously that no more fitting fable could be written to today's harangue than the little age-old poem: S. Warrell, The Hardware Man, handed us, to wit:

IS THIS YOUR?
Two foot jackasses—now get this done!

Were tied together with a piece of rope.
Said one to the other, "You come my way,
While I take a nibble at this new-mown hay."
"I won't," said the other, "you come with me,
For I, too, have some hay you see.
So they got nowhere, just pawed up dirt,
And oh, by golly, how that rope did hurt.
Then they faced about, those stubborn mules,
And said, "We are just like human fools.
"Let's pull together, I'll go your way."
"Then come with me, and we'll both eat hay!"
Well, they ate their hay and liked it too.
And swore to be comrades good and true.
As the sun went down they were heard to say,
"Ah, this is the end of a perfect day!"
Now get this lesson—don't let it pass:
Learn this one thing from the poor jackass—
We must pull together 'tis the only way.
To put business on the map and put it to stay.

PASS PLUMBING CHANGES
Amendments to the city plumbing ordinance were adopted by the city council Tuesday night and the new sections are published in today's Herald.

Local Men See Huge Water Projects Rising in S.W. Desert

1,180-Mile Trek is One 'Gigantic' After Another

By MICHAEL STRASZER

Hollywood's demon publicity men have long since made the words colossal, stupendous and gigantic commonplace and trite and thus robbed me of the only proper adjectives to describe what I saw last weekend in company with C. T. Rippey, William Rojo, Jr. and Frank Paour. And if the movie writers did not take the words away from me then Harvel Guttenfelder, Harry Abramson, and Charlie Jones have.

With Rippey as pilot and host, Rojo as chauffeur, Paour and I as ballast, we toured sections of the Metropolitan Water District project from Cajaleo reservoir near Arlington in Riverside county to Parker Dam in Arizona, Boulder Dam and Death Valley. We hit every spot covered by Messrs. Guttenfelder, Abramson and Jones a week previous.

It was a trip worthy of all the superlatives the latter trio have been expelling and the glowing accounts our quartet have been reporting to anyone we could hutton-hole during the past week. Until one has been over the more accessible portions of the Metropolitan Water District one cannot understand the magnitude of the \$220,000,000 project that is going to start delivering Colorado River water to Torrance and the other 12 cities in the district in less than two years at the rate of a billion gallons daily.

Heat Stopping Novel
If the M.W.D. wizards—and they are that—had needed a giant measuring stick for their plans they must have used Boulder Dam. And the builders of that great blockade to the rampaging muddy Colorado could have taken their measurements from the eye-wearing reaches of Death Valley. Everything in that part of the Southwest is on a super-super scale, including Paul Bunyon breakfasts they serve at Division One of the M.W.D. the first pumping plant beside the river.

Next fall when the heat devils stop their mad dance in the desert areas which surround the M.W.D. works and in Death Valley you must make that 1,180-mile tour to really grasp the meaning of water and power. But don't start this week-end because it's getting hot in the desert and all accommodations for travelers are being bearded up in Death Valley.

We were fortunate in having splendid, cool weather throughout our route—even Death Valley belied its name and greeted us with a gentle breeze that kept our consumption of "coke" and crushed strawberry sundae to a minimum. We were also fortunate in having as our guide Director Rippey, Torrance's representative on the M.W.D. board, whose presence permitted us to enjoy all courtesies along the trail.

Tunnel Trip Thrills
Leaving Torrance sleepy-eyed and yawning at the forbidding hour of 4 a. m., last Friday, we drove direct to the Cajaleo reservoir via Santa Ana canyon. We were too early to arouse any guide there but the impressive earth-filled dike that will impound all water coming from the Colorado River before it is apportioned out to the 13 M.W.D. cities was our first contact with the colossal proportions of the sights we were to see in the next two days.

At Banning we visited the M.W.D. headquarters and went to the Lawrence Adit of the 13-mile San Jacinto tunnel. Here we experienced the major thrill of the trip—a descent, clad in hip boots, slickers and helmets, into the bore itself. This is 500 feet below the level of the city of Banning and more than 2,700 feet below the actual surface. To see how that tunnel is being penetrated in drenching downpours of water spouting from solid granite is an episode we'll never forget.

Our guide below as well as above ground was Superintendent Austin, a six-foot, seven and one-half inch giant, who is in charge of the Lawrence adit. His evident interest in showing us all there was to see was a lesson in mining courtesy.

Building Like Cathedral
Returning to the sunlight again, we took the road to Palm Springs (to find that colorful community about to doze off for the summer), Indio and the Arizona border. We reached Division One or the M.W.D. above Parker Dam (now 90 percent complete) about 4 p. m. in time for some brief sight-seeing and a welcome shower before a dinner fit for men who have labored all day building the gigantic structures we saw all around us.

That evening we toured Gene Wash, one of the two settling basins just above the intake plant and then visited the settlement of Parker, Indian braves lunched along one board sidewalk, fat, greasy squaws squatted against the few business fronts and mechanical pianos wheezed. Parker's attractions are a few stores and the widest main street I've ever seen—it was the surrounding desert.

Saturday morning we encountered our gigantic breakfast in the mess-hall with the workers and a few other guests who had spent the night in the well-furnished guest house located at Division One. Then we went to the cathedral-like pumping plants that tower among the rocky hills and beside the swift and yellow Colorado like 21st century power palaces. These great concrete structures dwarf men like some vision of the future.

Spend Night on Desert
From the Colorado we drove to Boulder Dam, to view that magnificent monument to man's ingenuity and resourcefulness in all its finished splendor. The immense power plants, one on either side of the river, resemble a movie set designed for color films—all dull burnished aluminum and Chinese red. The boat trip aboard a launch to the face of the dam is the best way to comprehend the towering strength of the dam, its intake towers and other details.

We drove thru Boulder City, marveling at the lush growth of the trees, lawns and gardens which have been created out of the desert by man's labor and the God-given blessing of water. Las Vegas—well, you know that old cow-town—is flourishing and the pawn-shops are crowded by those who have been beaten a well-marked trail from the gambling halls to the "uncles' nervous fingers and cash drawers. We had dinner there and then flitted across the desert to Death Valley Junction and a night's rest at the Anargosa Inn. It was 6 o'clock the next morning when we started into the Valley. Climbing to Dante's View we beheld the vast panorama of colorful distances that have lured men to death and other men to health. A swift descent took us to the Devil's Golf Course and the salt beds, way below sea level.

Dazed by Sights
Because Rippey can qualify as a "desert-rat" he has made six or seven Death Valley trips in as many years and the weather was unusually fine, we saw all the major points of interest in a short time. Breakfast found us at Furnace Creek Ranch—the Inn is closed for the summer. Within 35 minutes of Death Valley Scotty's weird castle, we turned off to cross more mountain ranges and sloop down to sea level and the sand dunes and then wind our way out to greener pastures and paved highway at Olancha.

At 7 o'clock we were home in Torrance—still dazed by the sights we were trying to find other words than colossal, stupendous and gigantic to describe what we had observed. I've been on many a motor trip but I've never had better company than my good companions, Rippey, Rojo and Paour—even if that and serve the dinner. Tickets for the motor cars like a tortured band with a bass voice!

City Applies for WPA Project

An application is being made of WPA authorities for a project that would employ Class B labor in landscaping city property at the city yard off Western and El Prado, clean up parlings and alleys. Forty men would be employed, the city furnishing a supervisor and trucks. The request was approved by the city council Tuesday night.

COUNTY WEALTH GAINS

World commerce was responsible last year for an increase of more than \$26,000,000 in the wealth of Los Angeles county and contiguous territory.

Glenn M. Jain was employed as assistant to Acting City Engineer Leonard at \$150 per month by the city council Tuesday night. He will start work Monday, Jain, a local resident, is resigning as an experimental engineer at the Hyatt plant to take the city job. He is a University of California graduate who has had several years' experience with the State Highway department and the city of San Diego engineering office.

ROGERS-FINLAYSON WEDDING MONDAY

A shower in South Gate Tuesday honored Miss Lucille Finlayson of Los Angeles, who on Monday evening, May 16, will become the bride of Raymond Rogers Jr., 2215 Andrea avenue. The couple will reside in this city where the groom operates a Union Oil service station.

SCOUT MOTHERS MEET MONDAY

The Mothers Auxiliary to Torrance troops Boy Scouts of America announce their regular meeting will be held at the home of the president, Leah Bratton, 1926 Gramerey avenue, Monday evening, May 16, at 7:30 p. m.

CHRISTIAN CHURCH SCOUTS PLAN DINNER

Boy Scouts of First Christian church troop will strive to establish their financial independence through funds they receive from a dinner, which will be served in the church recreation room Thursday, May 19, from 5:30 to 7:30 p. m.

Ladies of the church will cook Rojo and Paour—even if that and serve the dinner. Tickets for the motor cars like a tortured band with a bass voice!

This is Fine Rattler Weather in Mountain Areas

These warm days are mighty fine rattlesnake weather, County Forester Spence D. Turner warned prospective mountain park visitors today. So wear high boots and watch your step.

The rattlers are envious, however, and will not attack humans unless cornered or suddenly come upon and startled. Even then they rattle a warning before striking.

Assistant Engineer Employed by City

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IN SOCIETY

PIANO STUDENTS IN PRACTICE HOUR

Mrs. Teala Billini presented ten of her younger students in a practice hour at her Los Angeles studio, 537 1/2 South Burlington avenue, last Friday evening.

Those taking part in the program were Audrey and Terry Grafton, Teala Rosemary Billini, Marjorie Boos, Nancy Ann Whyte, Winifred Philp, Barbara Lee Watson, Marilyn Stannard, Thelma Ness and Norma Levy. Fifty adults were present to hear these children, who range in ages from six to eleven years. At the close of the musical program coffee and cake were served.

On May 27 an older group will be presented in a second practice hour in the Los Angeles studio, June 12. Mrs. Billini will present her annual pupils recital at Redondo Beach Woman's clubhouse.

ELEMENTARY P.T.A. MEETING TUESDAY

Torrance Elementary Parent Teachers Association will hold their regular meeting Tuesday, May 17, at 2:00 p. m., in the school auditorium.

Members will please note the meeting is one week early. The president, Mrs. Harold Smith leaves the following Monday to attend the state convention at San Francisco.

LOMITA-SAN PEDRO COUNCIL MEETING

Fern Avenue Parent Teachers Association and Walteria Parent Teacher members will share honors in entertaining the Lomita-San Pedro Council at their regular meeting, which will be held at Fern Avenue school Friday, May 20, at 10:00 a. m.

JUNIOR MUSICIANS HERE MONDAY EVENING

Junior Musicians of America will be presented in a concert in Central Evangelical church, corner of Marcellina and Arlington avenue, May 16, at 7:30 p. m. The 40-piece orchestra will be presented under the direction of R. Leggett. The public is invited. No admission charge.

WHAT WOMEN OF MOOSE ARE DOING

Women of the Moose will hold their regular social meeting in their hall, 1526 Cravens avenue, Friday, May 13, at 8:00 p. m. Members may bring friends. Cards will furnish entertainment.

May 17, Women of Moose (Thimble club) meet at the home of Anna Wilkins, 1424 216th street—for pot-luck luncheon. District conference will be held in Whittier, Friday (tomorrow). All members of the organization invited to attend.

Loyal Order of Moose with Women of the Moose announce a card party to be held in the hall, 1526 Cravens avenue, Friday evening, May 27. Tickets now on sale.

MRS. HOOVER HOSTESS FRIDAY MORNING CLUB

Members of Friday Morning Club were entertained at their regular meeting Wednesday evening in the home of Lola Hoover at 1424 Acacia avenue.

Plans for the excursion trip Friday were completed. Daily refreshments were served to Mrs. Edward Morang, Hugh Herring, A. W. Johnson, Fred Knudsen, Jas. H. Crumrine, F. W. Minick, F. C. Winkler, Edgar W. Leck, C. L. Ingold.

BETSY ROSS LUNCHEON MONDAY

Betsy Ross Star club will hold their luncheon meeting in the Masonic temple Monday, May 16, at 12:30 p. m. Special program will follow the luncheon.

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