

Press-Herald

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Our Complex County

The Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors, consisting of five men representing more than one million residents each, has been described as the executive and legislative head of the largest and most complex county government in the United States.

The size of Los Angeles County government and the complexities are best understood when we realize that the County is larger in population than all but eight states, its nearly \$1 billion budget is greater than the budgets of about two-thirds of our states, and that the county has nearly four score departments employing more than 40,000 people.

While the Supervisors exercise the normal functions of a legislative body, they have the additional function of acting as executive head of the county. An administrative officer helps the Board with the executive tasks, but the burden of responsibility is on each of the five members of the Board elected from districts of the county.

This newspaper recently commented on the practice which has developed—through necessity—of delegating much of the administrative and legislative field work in each district to appointed deputies who are on the staff of each supervisor. Because of the large areas each supervisor represents and the more than one million residents in each district, personal contact with constituents is virtually lost.

We believe that the county government—with its huge budget, complex operation, and more than 300 special districts—is a branch of government that should be kept close to the people. We get plenty of this government by fiat from Washington, D. C., and Sacramento without sandwiching another layer in the pile.

With all the talk on reapportionment and the drive to make government truly representative, we believe it is time someone took a close look at Los Angeles County. The need for more supervisors, at least twice as many, is apparent daily.

May 15: Make It a Date

Circle your calendar now; May 15 is going to be a big day in Torrance.

The build-up has been energetic and the response has been outstanding: This year's Armed Forces Day parade on May 15 should be one of the greatest spectacles witnessed by the city in a long period of time.

Already on the line are bands and military units representing all branches of America's armed forces; Charles J. Hitch, assistant Secretary of Defense, will be grand marshal and principal guest of honor; and city officials and civic leaders are going all out to make it a memorable day.

The parade will follow the city's traditional parade route from downtown Torrance west on Torrance Boulevard past a reviewing stand in front of the City Hall.

Make it a point now to be in town on Saturday, May 15, and to pack up the family and pick out a spot along the parade route in time to see one of the nation's outstanding military parades.

OTHERS SAY:

A Samaritan Shield

The good citizen who goes to the aid of a victim of crime, or aids in a criminal's capture, too often ends up paying a high price for his good Samaritanism. Personal injury or damage may well be his chief reward.

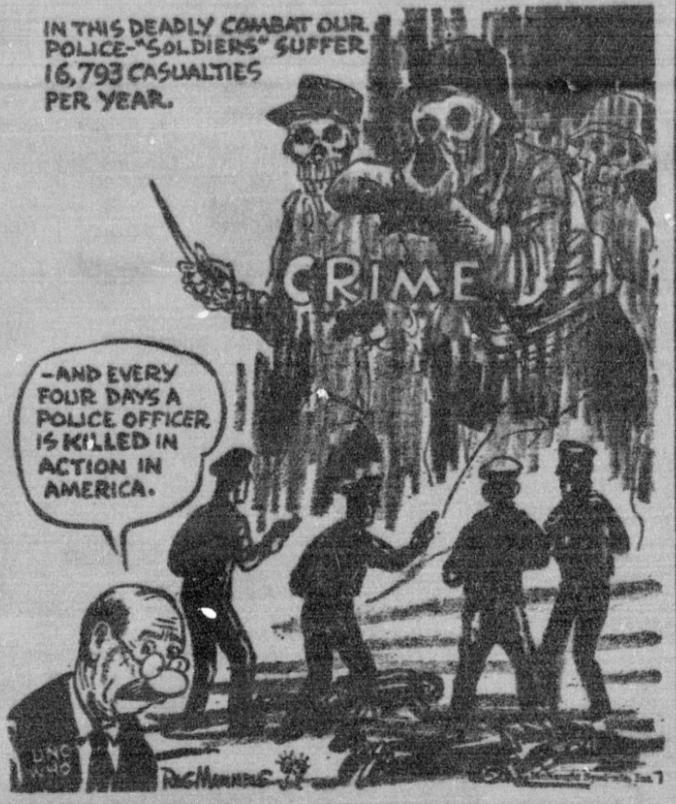
As a shield for such persons, State Controller Alan Cranston and State Senator George Miller, Jr., have proposed a commendable law under which the state would pay the costs of damages or injuries received in the course of their helpfulness. It would be, they feel, merely an act of fairness to extend the principle that society bears a responsibility for crime prevention and detention of felons.

As the Controller and the Senator point out, no law will change human nature, but theirs hopefully might "help create an atmosphere in which the citizen is more likely to act responsibly to help others who are endangered by criminals." The compensation involved would not be a reward; it would be merely a compensation for damage sustained in a generous act. Most people find good citizenship a reward in itself.—California Feature Service.

There were 24 million women employed in this country last year, while 2 million men were without work. These statistics were reported by Mrs. Esther Peterson, assistant Secretary of Labor, to show that womanpower is needed as well as manpower to meet the plans for the Great Society. For that matter, women have been needed from the beginning of time.—International Falls (Minn.) Journal.

It's an amazing thing how the human mind can interpret the same set of facts to suit its own peculiar prejudices. For years now, we have been assured by our self-styled experts that the reason we in America need to have more government direction of our economy is because it has gotten too complex to operate as a completely free system. The "cover" story in a recent Time magazine reports on the apparent trend in Soviet Russia to copy capitalism in an effort to increase industry production. There, say Soviet experts, the economy is getting too complicated for central planning.—Opportunity (Wash.) Herald.

IN THIS DEADLY COMBAT OUR POLICE—"SOLDIERS" SUFFER 16,793 CASUALTIES PER YEAR.



ROYCE BRIER

The Patriots of '76 Had Some Human Foibles, Too

Parson Weems didn't invent the cherry tree yarn, because George Washington became a legend during the Revolution. The Parson only gave the yarn currency.

Ever since, many historians have tried to unfreeze Washington, without much success. The Revolutionary struggle was of a nature to beget unreality. History never mentions that Hero Tom Paine, long after the Revolution, called Washington a scoundrel, that Patrick Henry hated the Constitution, that Hamilton was shady in his personal finances, that Jefferson was shift with friends, that John Adams was a disagreeable, self-serving old fellow.

Throughout the Nineteenth Century the mass of Americans refused to believe these realities when they were recounted, which wasn't often. Even today the Daughters of the American Revolution don't believe a word of it, and are likely to brand you a subversive if you bring it up.

Of course, the founding fathers and lesser patriots

around them suffered from the usual human weaknesses. But they had courage, and a large stock of horse sense, and a stubborn determination to establish a free and workable society in America. This meant really a free white society: for many of the Fathers had had consciences about chattel slavery, and most of them weaseled on the issue in their preachments on liberty.

Early in this century a historian named David Muzzev set out to say some of these things in a textbook called "An American History." Dr. Muzzev died the other day, aged 94, the controversy over his writing long forgotten.

But you should have been around in the 1910s and 1920s, when his histories were introduced at school. We have had more acute rows over textbooks in our time, but none that lasted so long.

Big Bill Thompson, the Chicago mayor who wanted to "punch King George in the nose," in the unlikely

event His Majesty dropped around, used to make speeches displaying a rat in a cage he addressed as Muzzev, and some papers carried cartoons of a rat gnawing at the foundation of a schoolhouse.

For years Dr. Muzzev got "rat" letters daily because his history thought the Tories were shabbily treated in the Revolutionary period. (Thousands were hustled into ships and transported to the maritime provinces of Canada.)

Notwithstanding, the histories stayed in the schools and were studied by millions now grown gray with only a serious loss of love of country. The texts in fact were well-rounded, though not great history. They were also lucrative for Dr. Muzzev.

Long a history professor at Columbia, Dr. Muzzev became a welcome lecturer across the country. On his retirement he used to say he missed the excitement of the old days, and sometimes wished Big Bill Thompson and his rat were still around.

WILLIAM HOGAN

'The Ambassador' Called An Informed Documentary

I like Morris L. West's "The Ambassador," probably for a different reason than the author intended. This is a forceful and informed document on the bloody futility of the whole situation in Viet Nam. It is called a novel. More accurately it is an exercise in that odd private journalism, the documentary novel, or "nonfiction novel." Under this format a writer can milk the drama and tragedy of a contemporary crisis and yet to suit his purposes and to make his own points.

"The Ugly American," for example, "Uncle Tom's Cabin," or "The Grapes of Wrath."

West's "The Shoes of the Fisherman" was an example of the "nonfiction novel," too. That focused on Papal power and politics. In effect, this Australian Catholic writer played Pope himself while his fable was in progress.

In "The Ambassador" (Morrow, 275 pp.; \$4.95) he plays at being the American chief envoy in Saigon about two years ago. Maxwell Gordon Amberley is a dedicated, thoughtful career diplomat in his upper 50s, a Henry Cabot Lodge as de-

signed by John P. Marquand. A serious student of the Zen way of the Buddhist faith while ambassador to Tokyo, he is assigned to the hornet's nest of Saigon. Even Zen won't do him much good in this post.

A journalist at heart, West plays the diplomat's role forcefully. He shows us the hard, grinding job of formal diplomacy in an impossible situation and one man's dilemma in frequently having to square his beliefs and moral standards with his government's.

This playing diplomat (or Pope) against vivid backgrounds is good fun and games. While here it results in two-dimensional characters and something less than a work of Tolstoyan dimensions, it provides something else.

"The Ambassador" tells me things I have never been able to find out about Viet Nam, even in the most articulate news coverage. What is the Buddhist situation down there? What were the Catholic-Buddhist clashes all about? What do the illiterate people in the rice paddies think?

West puts a great deal of this into sharp perspective for readers like me—even the American CIA's role in

some of this mess, and the local Apostolic Delegate's position in the diplomatic power plays at hand. One assumes that West knows what he's talking about, and so this "nonfiction novel" becomes more substantial than the frosting on the cake—which is the well-carpentered commercial fiction in the foreground.

I can't agree with the publishers that "The Ambassador" will be "long remembered," like "Main Street" and "All Quiet on the Western Front." It is a novel of the season, like West's other glossy books. It does make the reader think about the sad and nonsensical military-diplomatic jousting down there. Little enough commercial fiction does that.

Editor, Press-Herald
A matter of interest and importance to this City has slipped by almost unnoticed. I refer to the recent completion of 10 years of dedicated service by Mayor Albert Isen, the first and only Mayor ever to be elected by the people of Torrance.
Mayor Isen's hard work and devotion to this City is well known. During these

STAN DELAPLANE

Check With the Airlines For World's Fair Travel

"Can you suggest medium-priced hotels and how to get World's Fair tickets in New York in July?"

I can't because it's hard to say what hotel will have rooms. This is going to be a big summer at the Fair. But the airlines—American, TWA, United—will show you a list of hotels of various prices.

The airlines will give you amazing amounts of free service: Make your hotel reservations. Get your tickets for the Fair. Sometimes at a discount (TWA). Give you pamphlets with all sorts of Fair information (American). United has its extra services.

The airlines will also get you theater tickets in advance. Have a rent car waiting if you need one. But a rent car is useless in New York City. You only need one if you are going up country.

Around of the ticket offices is rewarding. Just pick up all the World's Fair pamphlets you see on the counters. One evening of relaxed study and you'll go with a lot more fun.

Do you have any information on camping in Europe?"

I've never done this. And reader reports are puzzling. Some people have found it excellent. But this week I have a letter from an American woman who lives in Thailand—not an extremely clear country—who found the camps "incredibly filthy." Her description would put you off camping in Europe forever.

Camps I've seen just passing through in France, Germany, and Switzerland looked very nice. But then, I never lived in them.

I'm sure that camping is much cheaper—people who've done it quote very low daily costs. The price of road travel for a family, in Europe or in the U.S., is high. The only way to beat it is to camp.

We have heard the European coffee is poor quality. Should we carry our own instant?"

You can buy American brand instant coffee all over Europe. Tourist hotels usually have it on the table. Or ask for it.

"We hear cigarettes are expensive but that they can be bought at the airport at duty-free prices."

They can—if the airport shop is open. They work on daytime schedules. You order and the package is delivered on the plane. These shops also sell—duty-free prices—all kinds of travel items. Transistor radios. Battery powered razors. Get to the airport an hour and a half ahead of flight time and shop a little.

"Appreciate any advice on getting most stopovers out of a trip to Europe."

The airline association is pretty complicated about this. You should have a travel agent work it out for you. The rough idea is that you can stop anywhere between your starting point and the farthest point you go. A ticket to Rome lets you stop in 16 European capitals.

Now—ask your agent to figure it out something like this: Enter via Shannon and then to London. Make the northern swing of Scandinavia, Germany, Switzerland. From Rome—exit through Madrid and Lisbon. Now—see if you can't

go home through Puerto Rico, Jamaica and other Caribbean ports. If it costs anything, it will be very little. I'd guess something like \$20.
Now—have your agent figure out best prices: Ask about 21-day excursion rates. Ask about family plan. There are so many combinations that the man in the next seat may be paying \$100 more for the same flight. Because he didn't explore all these possibilities.
"Can you suggest any Mexican wines?"
I'd suggest you forget it. They have great beer. But the wine I wouldn't use for paint thinner.

HERB CAEN SAYS:

U.S. Culture Reaches Europe

CULTURED EUROPE? Sally Spear was in Cologne recently, and asked a university friend: "The streets are so deserted tonight—where is everybody?" Friend: "Home watching 'The Untouchables' on television" . . . Singer Glenn Yarbrough, whose hit record, "Baby, the Rain Must Fall," is making him a mint, just bought the 85-foot schooner, Pilgrim—last seen on your screens as the boat sailed by Gardner McKay in the TV series, "Adventures in Paradise" . . . Ah, yes, there's good news today: Burma Shave signs, once criticized as a traffic hazard, are about to sprout again on the Nation's highways, because so many motorists complained that they missed them. Just by not being there, they became a hazard . . . A Palm Beach, Fla., outfit called Old World Stone, Inc., is advertising nationally: "Life Size Cupids, \$19.95," thereby settling an age-old question. A life-size cupid is "almost three feet tall." Yrwelcome.

ADDENDUM: Speaking further of classic imponderables, I noted the other day that Bank of California ("The Bank of Action!") is now offering special checkbooks "made of durable, long-lasting virgin vinyl," and I wondered how you prove THAT. Well, it's the same old business: ask a silly question—Technicians inform me that vinyl is frozen at birth, and if it can withstand a freeze of 15 degrees or lower without cracking, it's "virgin" (otherwise it's reprocessed) . . . Literary note: One of the most published authors of paperbacks around here is Jane Sears who disproves the notion that you have to live what you write. She wrote "Ski Resort Nurse," and she can't ski. Then "Las Vegas Nurse," and she has never been there. Then "Television Nurse," although she doesn't own a TV. And now "Surfboard Summer"—and you're right. "I should point out, though," she adds, "that I WAS a teen-ager, once."

PARTIALLY CLOUSY: Frank Sinatra, still persona au gratin (as in hard cheese) with the Nevada Gaming Comm., has leased his Cal Neva at Tahoe to Tommy McDonnell, Bob Peccole and Ben Perlman, who'll open June 30 with Milton Berle as headliner . . . At Rocca's, two gals were discussing the news story about the possible use of computers to find ideal marriage partners, and one of 'em sighed: "George and I should've gone IBM before we got married—we're definitely incompatible!" . . . And our final Native Wit for today is Pianist Abe Battat, who wonders if you heard about the karate expert who got drafted. No? Well, the first time he saluted, he killed himself.

SCOOPS DU JOUR: The Regency Hotel people of N'York (Loew's) are dickering mightily to take over the Mark Hopkins Hotel by buying Cowboy Gene Autry's 25-yr. lease. If the deal caves in, Autry will carry on by sinking \$1 million into a complete refurbishing (but Mr. A. those "Gene Autry Hotels" swizzle sticks at the Top o' the Mark have got to GO) . . . Everything's coming up rosy for the new S.F. Film Festival regime; now Bing Crosby has agreed to serve on a committee—as has Shirley Temple . . . The pulling and hauling—and occasional hair-tearing—over the S. F. Opera Company's annual appearances in L.A. (them people down there want their own company) will probably be settled by the most obvious device possible: it'll be the San Francisco Opera Co. here, the Los Angeles Opera Co. there. So majestically simple nobody ever thought of it before, apparently . . . Ed Keating, publisher of this area's best and only national magazine, Ramparts, is back from N' York conferences with Atty. Louis Nizer. Decision: Keating, represented by Nizer, will go ahead, all flags flying, with his libel suit against Alabama's Gov. Wallace, who, on the telly, described Ramparts as "a militant pro-Communist magazine." Keating: "Libel per se!"

Morning Report:

Finally, Italy has struck back—at us. An American play, "Mysteries and Other small Pieces" has been banned in Trieste. The cops over there said our play, performed by an American company, was too dirty for their natives to see.

Such action has been a long time coming. Ever since the end of World War II, the Italians have been making movies that have been attacked and banned all over America. In fact, only recently has Hollywood been able to catch up.

For some reason, imported stuff always is in bigger demand. I guess that's why strippers in Paris are always billed as "straight from New York" while clubs here boast about "Paris sensations." I suppose it's just a case of the other pastures being barer than ours.

Abe Mellinkoff

Mailbox

Editor, Press-Herald
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