

The Disclosure Policy

At a time when prosecuting attorneys in seven Northern California counties are investigating skulduggery in county assessment practices, it is comforting in our own county to know that officials are endeavoring to keep all cards on the table in so far as local assessing practices are concerned.

Illustrative of this fact, County Assessor Phil Watson in this issue of the Press-Herald prints the list of assessment changes in our community. In some areas of the county, he will print all of the local listings. Over a five-year period, all of the two million or so real property valuations for assessment purposes and all changes—both up and down—that may take place throughout the county each year will be exposed through newspaper publication to taxpayers' inspection.

Thus, each taxpayer is given opportunity to assay the assessor's appraisal of his own property against those of his neighbors.

He is enabled also to see which property owners, either honestly or dishonestly, are claiming tax exemptions as veterans, widows, or for other reasons. These dropped following last year's publication from 310,000 to 261,000.

Most important of all, the hundreds of Mr. Watson's deputy assessors who are charged with the responsibility of the two million appraisals for tax purposes are reminded that through newspapers they must submit their work to a public audit by the taxpayers themselves. This challenges the deputies to do a better job; and, of course, the assessor's policy of "full disclosure" discourages any possible dishonesty such as that reportedly taking place in the north.

No doubt these are some of the ideas county supervisors had in mind two years ago when they voted unanimously to accept Assessor Watson's recommendation for the use of newspapers as the best means of notifying taxpayers, rather than the alternative of individual mailed notices.

Clearing the Climate

With other states, especially in the midwest and south, making concentrated efforts to take industries away from California, or corraling them before they get here, it behooves us to make every effort to enhance our siren call.

Ohio, for example, is carrying on a national advertising campaign in which it boasts of many enticements, especially the state's business climate of co-operation and government thrift . . . the lowest state and local business taxes among the top 11 industrial states, lack of state personal income tax, a balanced budget, and a lack of need, or plan, for new levies.

California's legislature took what may seem to some a small step toward clearing the state's business climate when it refused funds to keep in existence the California Economic Development Agency. However, according to Casper W. Weinberger, former assemblyman from San Francisco, "The abolition of just one agency is the best demonstration California could possibly give industry and capital seeking a place to expand that we know the best way to attract new business is to have an economical, low-tax government that welcomes, by a maximum absence of restraints, new private job-creating activity of all kinds."

Ohio, we're rising to your challenge!

Opinions of Others

"Other nations have also laughed and sneered at the predictions that their money was coming to be worth more as a fuel than as a medium of exchange. These predictions HAVE come true, and they can and will come true in the United States unless someone in authority begins to 'do something about it.'"—Oakdale (Calif.) Leader.

"Our forebears had to rely on their own endeavors and by working hard they achieved independence. It's an old fashioned heresy to advocate having to root for a living, but we still think it's a better answer than Appalachian Aids, Wars on Poverty, etc., etc."—Harlowton (Mont.) Times.

Morning Report:

Well, here it is only a little more than three years before the next Presidential election, and Mr. Johnson has said his first nasty word about that other political party.

That's the way he put it, too. He accused a "prominent member of another party" of breaking the confidence of a White House conference on Viet Nam. It took reporters present—those with a long memory of American affairs—to figure that the President was referring to the Republicans.

Up to now, LBJ has trotted his Old Harmony Trail of being President for everybody, even the unmentionables. I guess he figures that if he doesn't name them, the voters will forget they are around. Which almost happened in 1964.

Abe Mellinkoff

Why Don't You Stop Him, Officer?



ROYCE BRIER

Seattle Police Harassed By New 'Freedom Patrols'

As the Gilbert lyric ran 85 years ago: "Ah, take one consideration with another—a policeman's lot is not a happy one."

It is quite evident the situation has since deteriorated. All across the world the policeman stands today a figure under siege, whether his conduct be good, bad or indifferent.

For convenience let us confine this discussion to American policemen, and say they have laws to enforce. For more than a century we, the people, have been adopting laws, and there are thousands of them, though perhaps only two-score are vital to an orderly and just society.

On average, a policeman is neither brighter nor dumber than the rest of us. He may do a good deed or make a mistake, and who doesn't? But his job is such that he often must act instantly, on instinct. If he is right, or lucky, he may spare the innocent; if he is wrong he may severely punish the innocent for a venial offense.

Now in civil rights involv-

ing the Negro, this question is at the forefront of every American community, from the great city to the cross-road hamlet.

The policeman is increasingly called upon to enforce these civil rights. In some cities (South) a majority is against enforcement; in some (North and West) a majority is for it. The Negro victims of civil rights wrongs want more enforcement. North and West, as well as South, the more militant are cynical about the police authority, and charge "brutality" or discrimination in every civil rights incident.

The civil rights people want to curb the police with civilian review boards. The police authority generally replies this would gravely cripple police operation. In Seattle, following the killing of a Negro by an off-duty officer, the civil rights people have devised a new restriction. They have set up "Freedom Patrols" to monitor policemen on their official rounds.

It is a guess here this device will not work, that it

is capable of causing more violence than it can avert.

The scheme is this: Negro and white civil rights workers, with identifying arm bands, are to follow policemen, watching for wrongful conduct, excessive use of force, or discrimination. They are to report, but avoid argument or intervention.

But the atmosphere of harassment is inescapable. The best and fairest policemen on any force will resent it. The worst will turn on the monitors. The fairest monitor, if he be a Negro, cannot be expected to be objective when witnessing a Negro's arrest for whatever offense. The same prejudice civil rights advocates lay to policemen, will be imposed on policemen.

No police department can function under such surveillance, and laws cannot be enforced under it. A policeman is responsible to the whole people who hire him. If he betrays them, or the laws, means must be found to rectify it. But it cannot be rectified by subjecting him to the judgment of a self-appointed part of the people, however just their cause.

WILLIAM HOGAN

Nelson Exposes Hazards Of Buying at Discount

So you think you got a bargain when you bought that power mower for \$30 off the list price? What's that — it wasn't the name-brand advertised, which was out of stock, but one just as good and costing less? Have you used it yet? Wait till you do.

I'm afraid the suburbanite who bought that substitute mower at "lower-than-list" from a local discount store is in for a shock when he began using it. In Walter Henry Nelson's expose of just such a deal the blades of the mower dulled almost at once and weren't worth resharpening because the steel was "soft." The customer had to get a new mower.

This is merely one illustration out of scores cited in "The Great Discount Delusion," a slashing indictment of the price policies followed by some discount stores. Note that I say "some," because others do genuinely cut their prices. But Nelson's expose is so wide-ranging and buttressed by so much testimony down from the trade press, Congressional investigations, and court proceedings that the

existence of large-scale phony discounting cannot be denied.

In some instances, where legal hearings are on record, the author names names and places. In others, he invents names to describe practices that may be familiar to readers. Have you ever tried to discover what a genuine "list price" or "suggested manufacturer's price" really is? One sure way is to go to several different stores pricing the identical article and then compare it with the "discount" price. This will give you a good idea of how much, if anything, you are saving.

Some of the most damaging admissions on discounting quoted by the author are taken from the trade press. In one publication circulating among discount merchandisers appears the following statement: "When the customer knows he can buy a tube of well-known toothpaste in a drugstore for 69 cents and in our drug store for 46 cents, he knows he is actually saving something. But in soft goods it is most difficult to determine what the value is in terms of the price."

And it is on the other items, not the loss leaders, that discount stores make their substantial profits. Even on the loss leaders it is sometimes difficult to make a purchase. The author describes in detail the sales technique employed to divert customers from advertised name brand products to others "just as good."

The book will teach you about the "switch," the "nail down" (when the salesman is warned by his boss that the advertised product is "nailed to the shelf" and must not be sold), and the "spiff" (a special bonus for making a successful "switch").

The book is not directed against open - and - above-board discount stores, but against those "iffy" establishments which try to fool the gullible customer, and often get to monopolize the trade in small towns, driving out of business the local traders who offer service with their merchandise. As such it is certain to create a ruckus. But if it also alerts the customer against becoming a "pigeon" and "taking the bait," it will have performed a public service.

STAN DELAPLANE

English Is the Language Of the Hawaiian Islands

ISLAND OF KAUALA HAWAII—"We will be three weeks in Hawaii. Would it be valuable to learn Hawaiian? And are there any Hawaiian language books?"

There are a couple of books all right. But you won't find anybody to speak Hawaiian to you—auwe! A number of Hawaiian words have worked into the island colloquial talk. So nearly everybody says "pau" for finished. Or "piliika" for trouble. Or "haole" for a Caucasian as opposed to Hawaiian mixture or Oriental. "Wahine" for woman is used jokingly. But the language is English.

All the little one dollar guide books have a list of these with the pronunciation. So before you can get untanned, you should be able to tell how you met this haole wahine on the beach. But she gave you so much piliika, you were soon all pau.

"What are the best native presents to take home.

Straw hats woven from pandanus are island products. Monkeypod wood bowls are good looking. But I think too high-priced. Philippine hardwood bowls are competitively priced here and on the mainland. And I think they're better.

Most things for sale in the islands seem to come from other parts of the Pacific. Carved ivory from Hong Kong. Slippers from Japan. Straw hats (better than local) from Tahiti with shell bands.

The island sportswear for women is very good and inexpensive and there's a lot of choice. So pack light and buy here.

"Can we get rooms with kitchenette by the week?"

Hawaii Visitors Bureau, Honolulu, will send these listings. The Honolulu Advertiser, the Morning News, paper, runs ads each day. Looks to me like they average about \$14 a day near the beach. Monthly rentals are a little cheaper.

"We have been thinking of spending a year (with our two children) in Guadalajara, Mexico. Can this be done on \$300 a month? Is it true you can get a house maid for \$25 a month?"

On a yearly rental, I think you can do this. Try a house in the suburbs. Maybe near Lake Chapala. Locals probably get maids at \$25. But as a visitor you may have to pay a little more.

This \$25 maid sounds like a good deal. But what happens is you need two maids—one of them is always visiting family. Or going to a village fiesta or something. They're a help. But it's not the greatest maid service in the world.

"If we take a car, should we hire a full-time driver?"

I don't. Many Mexicans do have drivers. But I think it's mainly for prestige. My experience with hired drivers has been all bad. One crashed a truck. The car was wrecked and I was lucky. One was so hungover I had to do all the driving. Most of them played with traffic as though they were matadors in the bull ring.

"Would it be possible for two boys to camp on a beach where there is good surf?"

Plenty of places. Here on the island of Kauai there's tremendous surf. Warm blue water. And if you shop the plantation town stores, not too expensive. Lot of surfing water and beaches in northern California from Mendocino south. Good surfing and cheap living in Lower California, Mexico. Lot in the Caribbean. But for surf, get on the Atlantic side of the islands.

Most of these places you

cannot work. But you can fish—that helps. And in the warm countries, clothes are no problem.

"Could you give us some basic advice on planning a month's vacation anywhere abroad. Particularly on not spending much."

Choose a place not too

far from home—transportation chews up your money. Find a headquarters and don't move around too much. Movement eats up your cash. Try to set up a place where you can cook for yourself—more fun and you learn the country better. Or go in a guest house or pension. Hotels and eating are the killers.

HERB CAEN SAYS:

Old Kearny's Still Swinging

THE DAY STARTED off winsomely enough, with the radio announcer delivering the typical San Francisco weather report: "High fog in the morning, dissipating in the afternoon." Such a pleasant thought, but who wants a hangover at 6 p.m.? I rolled a piece of copy paper into the typewriter and stared out the window at the unlikely city. Purple and magenta freighters were heading out for faraway, glamorous ports, like Coos Bay and San Pedro. A cable car slid down the Hyde St. hill, lost in the grip of a hundred tourists. Alcatraz dozed in the cool sun—a rock without a role.

"I don't hear that typewriter singing," my wife called out gaily from the next room. Drat. What a wife never understands, as Thurber once said (or was it E. R. White), is that a writer is working when he looks out the window. I was trying to remember somebody's line about Kearny St., delivered in the 1880s, when Kearny (pronounced "Carney" then) was the most rollicking thoroughfare in town. "In the space of one block on Kearny," he said, "I could raise a gang to hijack a schooner, topple a statue, rob a bank, or set off for a treasure hunt in the Galapagos."

Must have been a swinging street. Still is, in parts. I put the cover back on The Singing Typewriter, stifling it in mid-E, and set out, flat of arch but light of heart, toward Kearny.

PEERED through a window into Enrico Banducci's office, above the hungry i. Enrico may not have the most elegant office in town, but it's the most ridiculous: two rolltop desks, a pool table, a billiard table and three phones that never stop ringing.

"Hey, Bandooch," I said, "I'll play you for a buck. You're on," he said, dumping his secretary off his lap and grabbing a cue, or even vice versa. I broke and began running the table, having learned the art young at my father's knee in Sacramento. A cop walked in, dragging an old Chinese fellow. "Hey, Enrico," said the cop. "Give Wong here a job—he's the best damn janitor in town." "Okay, Monahan," said Enrico, "send him down tonight. With his own mop."

THE PHONE rang. "Hungry i," said Enrico. "Who's in the show? Well, madam, there's Dick Gregory and two acts whose names I can't remember." I sank a three-ball combination. "Lady," he screamed, "Do you realize that while you're talking I'm getting KILLED?" He slammed down the phone.

I POCKETED my winnings and trudged back to the typewriter. Whose bread I win, his song I sing, and so I sing this song of Enrico Banducci and what's left of life and color on old Kearny St.

CAENFETTI: Ray Shirer on NBC News the other morning, flashing the details of the New Zealand quintuplets: "The little girl arrived first, followed by four boys. More in a moment!" What followed was a commercial, not additional children. . . . Ivan Branson, retired owner of Morning Glory Caterers and Past Potentate of Islam Temple, is still the most potent taster for miles around. Became a father for the first time at age 62, and now, at 64, he's about to achieve that pinnacle again, thereby qualifying for membership in the Senior Fathers of America (other distinguished members: Nelson Rockefeller, Bing Crosby and modestly forbids).

BUSY SIGNAL: Hilly Rose flew to L.A. to tape an interview with Theodore H. White, author of "The Making of the President," and as they were chatting in White's rented house, the phone kept ringing—a dozen times in 30 minutes. "Sorry," White said, "this is no longer his number." At last he sighed to Hilly: "I came down here for a rest—and the phone company gives me Jose Ferrer's old number. All girls calling." Don't tell Rosemary.

FAREWELL: The scene—literary, political and social—will be much less stimulating without Eugene (Bud) Burdick, who worked too hard, lived too fast and died young. Like Adlai Stevenson, but in his own highly original way, he was one of the Good Guys—the kind we can never have enough of. He worried and fretted about everything except his own physical well-being, and the result was the sad headline: death at 47. . . . And now Constance Bennett has passed from the scene, dead at 59—a showbiz age; she was probably 65, but no matter: when I saw her in N. Y. a year or so ago, she was as ravishing as ever, having discovered, as Oscar Levant once said about Zsa Zsa Gabor, "the secret of perpetual middle age."