

EDITORIAL

Peers?

If you are accused of a crime in Luzerne County, and you happen to be something other than retired and-or a housewife, the chances of your getting a trial before a jury of your peers is virtually negligible.

Of the 266 jurors chosen last week to serve during the weeks of Sept. 7, 13 and 20 in Luzerne County Common Pleas Court, only 11 list an occupation other than "housewife" or "retired."

How did the list get so lopsided? First of all, jurors are not actually picked at random in Pennsylvania as they are in several other states. A person must submit his name to the jury commissioners before he can be chosen—a fact not known by many people who might consider a call to serve as a legitimate obligation.

A new system initiated recently in this county requires that all prospective jurors who would be willing to serve during 1972 fill out and return a questionnaire to the courthouse by Aug. 15. The system will no doubt be helpful to the jury commissioners in eliminating incompetent jurors, but it will probably do little to increase the diversity of potential jurors.

Most important, though, is that the vast majority of citizens regard duty as a time consuming bore, a task to be avoided at any cost. The pay is low—\$9 a day plus carfare—and the hours, if not long, are tedious. For these people, signing up for jury duty is simply asking for trouble.

So if you are accused of a crime in Luzerne County, and you happen to be something other than retired and-or a housewife, the chances of your getting a trial before a jury of your peers is virtually negligible. And unless you fill out a questionnaire and get it back to the courthouse before this Sunday, it seems to us you'd have no basis for squawking about it.

Eat Up

How many times have children in this country been forced to finish a meal they either did not want or did not like by a parent who begs them to "Think of the starving Chinese." The rationale behind this statement goes something to the effect that you can force a child to eat if you can make him feel guilty for not eating. The irony is that a child is made to consume more than he can use because in the back of his mind lurks starving people. What he is being told is that if he is in the position to consume more than his share in the world's wealth he had better consume it, because to waste it would be an insult to those not as lucky as he.

Ecologists are fond of telling us that America, with six percent of the world's population, consumes 60 percent of the world's goods. No doubt this is true in a country that can risk \$250 million of its people's money to guarantee a loan for a private company (which should, by all rights, be bankrupt) so that the company's employees can remain on the job and be in a position to continue consuming. This is called stimulating the economy.

Sen. James Eastland, (D-Miss.) makes \$150,000 each year for not growing cotton. We pay him, and others like him, incredible sums of money so agricultural supplies can be kept low enough to keep profits high. This is sound policy.

There is something of the child at the dinner table in our situation today. While the administration worries about how to keep us consuming, one of the greatest human catastrophes is occurring on the other side of the globe. Thousands of East Pakistanis are being bombed, burned, and murdered by troops from West Pakistan. Starvation is rampant in East Pakistan, and famine is predicted for the fall. Refugees are pouring into India, a nation that can't even support its own. Meanwhile our government has been supplying arms to West Pakistan, helping to create more victims. We remain callous to the hungry, the sick, and the dying.

We wonder how good a system can be that forces us to consume while others starve.

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Changes

By Eric Mayer

On July 20, 1969, a day hailed by one observer as the greatest since the world began, a worldwide television audience watched in awe as a space-suited figure inched down the ladder of his ungainly craft to set foot in the ageless dust of the moon.

Now, two years and three moon landings later, a disgruntled former astronaut, Bobo Merriwell, has stunned the nation with the release of top secret documents, already dubbed The NASA Papers. The documents reveal that Neal Armstrong's "one small step" left its transitory imprint in a New Mexico desert and that his "great leap for mankind" carried him no further than NASA's super secret "moon set" near the White Sands Proving Grounds a scant 600 miles from the Manned Space Craft Center in Houston. In the wake of their disillusionment and disappointment, Americans are left with one bitter question—what happened to the \$40 billion?

The most expensive and expansive hoax in recorded history was brought to light when Mr. Merriwell, disgusted with his "minor role in the space program," approached the New York Times Official Secrets Editor with NASA documents that he had carefully microfilmed during coffee breaks. Merriwell and the Times' staff, working night and day with special Flash Gordon decoding rings, translated the papers and bared a monstrous, if ingenious, conspiracy, one that had excited, duped and probably bilked the American public for more than a decade. Said one newsman, "What was fascinating was the unique manner it was accomplished this time."

Among the documents: The seminal letter from science fiction author and scripter Arthur C. Clarke to former NASA official Webb. (Along with a later letter suggesting that soon simulation equipment might best be tested in the context of a movie.)

Rough drafts (by an unknown Hollywood writer) of historic words from space, including not only Neal Armstrong's famous "Eagle has landed speech but also the "A-OK" popularized by John Glenn.

A multi-million dollar contract for "space hardware" with the Mattel Toy Corporation. The entire transcript of the high level board meeting that gave Adlebard Kociensky his now renowned moon monicker—Neal Armstrong.

According to the papers, the Moon Race was instigated during the cold war rivalry of

the early sixties partly in response to a similar Russian move and partly, as program supporter JFK put it, "... as an uplifting and invigorating tonic for the American spirit."

At first, NASA's largest concern was "hiding the wires," a term that recurs frequently throughout the papers. Several experts, reviewing "space walk" films in light of this new information, have already discovered "783 frames in which mechanical supports are detectable." These experts are presently studying the more sophisticated lunar liftoff sequence, a sequence that struck many laymen as phoney.

Predictably, as NASA widened its exploits with ingenious arrays of special effects, some insiders suggested that an actual moon program be attempted. President Johnson, in a phone call to Unmanned Space Craft Director Pickering (whose program was not implicated in the papers), dismissed the idea for budgetary reasons. "How can we get to the moon for \$4 billion a year when we can't even get out of Vietnam for \$30 billion?"

Not all of the NASA revelations are grim,

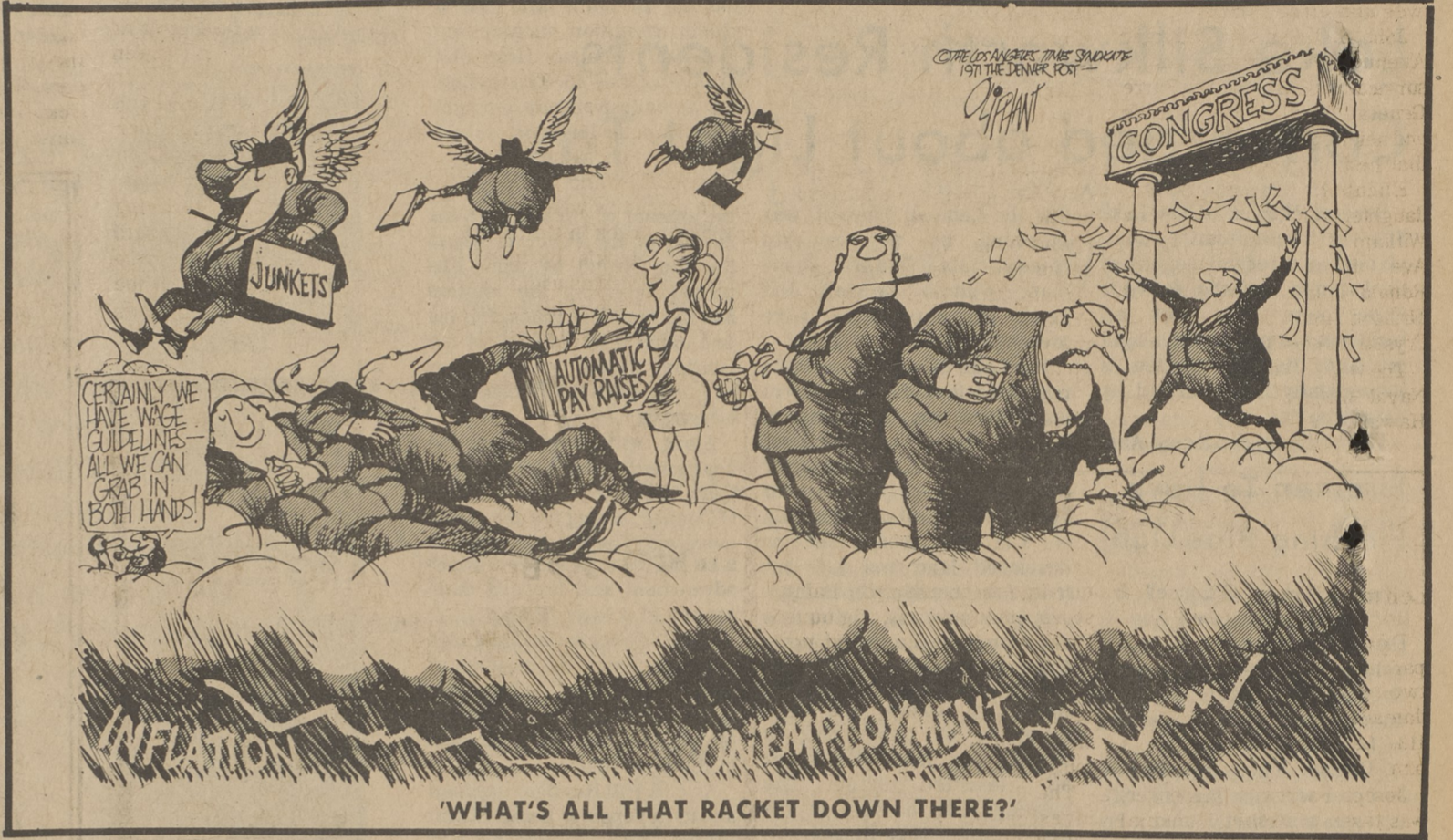
however. Considering the number of ludicrous gaffes committed, it's surprising that the hoax remained viable for so long. There are bizarre tales of prominent scientists receiving "lunar rock samples" contaminated by ring pull tabs and cigarette butts. Only a few days ago, at 3:20 a.m., during the third moon ride of astronauts Scott and Irwin, a national television audience saw a drunken stage hand wander inadvertently onto the moonscape. However, insomnia-plagued spinster Maude Quigly's letter to her local paper was ignored by the national press.

Explained by similar misadventure was the malfunction of Apollo 12's television camera; a malfunction not caused by pointing its lens at the sun as reported, but rather necessitated by a falling boom that crushed the cardboard LEM beyond repair.

Not explained was the real use of the \$40 billion, only a small portion of which was spent on mock-ups. Conflicting reports had the money earmarked for education, ghettos, food programs, or the CIA.

In a similar vein FBI patriarch J. Edgar Hoover damned the NASA papers as "typical communist titillation." The President, spending yet another working vacation at his Western White House, was unavailable for comment. However, it is thought that the revelation plan that would have allowed Mr. Nixon the opinion (in case of dangerously low voter ratings) of making a dramatic, election eve appeal from the "surface of the moon."

Even as the tumult dies down one is struck by the feeling that the calm is merely the prelude to another storm. One wonders, if the inclination was there, why didn't the scientists, in their ever advancing quest for knowledge, press on toward an actual conquest of space? Why did they settle for a hoax? Perhaps the answers are to be found in the new batch of secret documents that, one informed source assures us, is already under preparation at the Times. These papers, sarcastically called the Columbus Papers, will reportedly reveal, among other things, a long list of ships which have recently fallen off the edge of the earth.



TRB from Washington

Congress won't be back till September and has left the city littered with unsolved problems. Mr. Nixon hails the moonshot but won't act on the economy. Things ought to be more cheerful these days; some troops are coming home from Vietnam, there's that lively trip of Mr. Nixon's to China, and there's the splendid adventure on the moon. But somehow it is hard to rejoice. The economy doesn't seem to get any better; the Administration wrings its hands about grasping trade unions and corporations but doesn't do anything about it, and the banks put up their interest rates. Inflation and unemployment continue and the stock market sinks. If this kind of thing goes on we guess Mr. Nixon will be a one-term president.

It's not just the immediate difficulties though they are bad enough; the long term problems of American life continue and an inactive congress and a reluctant president do not seem able to cope with them. It is frustrating. People ask what is wrong; for the first time in years they wonder if a government where everybody has a veto power can solve the problems of poverty, racial tension and inequality.

Congress was going to reform the electoral college; it didn't. The tax system has as many loopholes now as ever. Welfare reform hasn't passed. There's talk about health legislation but families still go bankrupt over hospital bills. Crime is no better. The ghettos

expand. Public housing accounts for only one percent of all housing in the US compared to 20 percent in Britain; Congress never funded the program it voted in 1949 of 810,000 new public housing units in the next "six years".

Last year congress decided to cut down farm subsidies for the rich and voted a limit of \$55,000 per crop per farmer. This turns out to be just a joke. The big farmers subdivided farms and created new entities; Sen. Eastland (D., Miss.) received \$160,000 in 1970 for not growing cotton; this year he met the \$55,000 limitation by creating eight subsidiaries, and expects to get \$159,925 for not growing cotton. Congress doesn't seem to know how to write laws that stick. Or is it just make-believe?

On the other hand, congress has bailed out the Lockheed aircraft corporation all right with a government guarantee of up to \$250,000,000. In this new form of state capitalism the large corporation is rescued; it is the little man who must struggle in the competitive economy.

One difficulty is the lack of access to the President. His press conferences are erratic. Following a gap of two months he held an impromptu one last Wednesday where about 50 hastily summoned "regulars" found themselves in the pleasant surroundings of the oval office where FDR used to hold his twice-a-week affairs. It was good to get back to the place unencumbered by radio or TV

operators, asking questions freely for an hour without being an unpaid actor on a nationwide television show.

Mr. Nixon was deft and silky and handled himself well. His replies weren't always exactly answers, but they filled in a good deal of territory that the country ought to know about. Indeed, it was to deal with one sensitive subject, that Mr. Nixon may have called the conference—his relations with Dr. Arthur Burns, his erstwhile economic mentor, whom he made head of the Fed.

Mr. Burns thinks the President ought to crack down on union-management to control inflation and proposes a wage-price review board. Unflattering observations by Mr. Burns about the economy to a congressional committee brought one of those leaked stories from the White House that Mr. Nixon was "furious" with his former friend, and thought of retaliating.

Concentration of industrial power is growing, too. The 500 largest corporations now control three-quarters of all the manufacturing assets, and that statement wasn't made by any wild-eyed radical; it was made by Attorney General Mitchell, June 6, 1969. Indeed, the top 100 corporations now own one-half of all manufacturing assets, and 49 big banks act as a kind of liaison nervous system for the U.S. corporate establishment, with representatives on boards of 300 of the 500 largest concerns.

We smiled at the report of god-old Gov. Reagan of California salting away part of his income in cattle-raising, which is one of the perfectly legal loopholes that shelter rich men. There are lots of other loopholes, too, of course; the law is a sieve. The one tax that really hits the well-to-do harder than the poor is the graduated income tax. Economists call it a "progressive" tax in contrast to sales, payroll and property taxes, that put the heaviest burden on the poor and are hence "regressive". Well, economist Walter Heller pointed out here recently that the graduated income tax has been reduced five times since the Korean war to the tune of \$35 billion a year. Fine news for the affluent. But meanwhile sales and regressive taxes have gone up, trying to fill the gap. It's a way by which the poor help subsidize their betters under the present national tax system.

The Census Bureau's respected Herman P. Miller reports that the overall effective tax rate on a poor family (\$2000 a year) and a rich family (\$50,000 a year) is presently just about the same—around a third—when the burden of sales and similar taxes is considered.

Gunnar Myrdal, the Swedish economist, notes, "America... of all the rich countries (is)... the one which has the highest rate of unemployment, the worst and biggest slums, and which is least generous in giving economic security to its old people, its sick and its invalids."

Insights and Illusions

by Bruce Hopkins

(NOTE: This is the second installment in a series of articles comprising an interview with Bruce Hopkins. The interview was held by Greenstreet News' roving reporter who chooses to remain anonymous. But his initials are BPH (Pronounced biphh).)

I: Well, Bruce, you've been something of a journalist for—

H: That's a nice description, "something of..." Hits it exactly.

I: Yes, well you've been writing for some six years now. How do you feel about freedom of the press?

H: Loose.

I: Loose, Bruce?

H: Yes, loose. Certainly it is our most important freedom. If we are indeed a people's government, there must be a means of keeping the people informed and allowing them to express themselves. There is a poster in my apartment bearing words once spoken by JFK. It says: "The great enemy of truth is not the lie—deliberate, contrived, dishonest... but the myth—persistent, persuasive, unrealistic." That is exactly the problem that the Pentagon Papers pointed out. The government had not actually been lying to us—they had been mything us. They created a myth which we were asked to accept as truth. The danger was in the fact that this was not as dishonest as it was unreal. It was its believability that we fell for. No, the people must be informed of the truth. And they must

have the right to object and to criticize.

I: Have you ever regretted anything you've written?

H: Ah. Hmmm. Gee. Huh. No, I think not. Often I've regretted that what I wrote did not communicate what it was intended to, but always it was a genuine expression. The idea was genuine and honest, even though the words may have been put together badly. One problem with writing humor, which I think I do occasionally, is that it only creates laughter. Very often the importance of the statement is chuckled away. Conversely, vehemence in writing tends to breed only anger. It divides more than it unites. And the problem with speaking quietly and clearly is that it doesn't appeal to any real emotion. The reader or listener agrees, but isn't inspired to action. Sometimes, although not real often, I wonder if it's worth bothering to express a viewpoint—because usually only those who agree are inspired. But I suppose that if a piece of writing causes one person to reconsider, then it is a victory.

Editorialists are, of course, quite egotistical. They feel they have the answers and that everyone should listen. And they have the power. Someone once asked me what gave me the right to say some of the things I write in my articles, and I told him quite simply: the Constitution. I must admit that I sometimes forget that one must temper one's words with a bit of courtesy because it works better in the long run. But I am impatient by

nature and tend to dash into things. And it is the alienation that sometimes results which I find regretful. But those are the penalties to writing. I don't like to make enemies, but I have to speak out.

I: Let's change the subject for a moment.

H: Good idea. Personally, I was getting a bit bored there.

I: How about sex?

H: Gee, I really think we ought to get to know each other a little better first.

I: No, no, I mean, how do you feel about the sexual revolution?

H: Loose. I think it's a valiant effort. Morals are a very personal thing, and I don't see why people feel they must impose their own morals onto others. The only restriction on sexual behavior should control the forcible infliction of one's sexuality upon someone else. There is a strong and rather successful movement in New York currently involving homosexual liberation. And I think it is very valid. There is nothing wrong with sexual activity between two consenting adults. It can be an extremely genuine and affectionate relationship. Why must we consider that kind of thing a sickness? Granted there may be degrees of homosexuality that are perverse, but no more than certain degrees of heterosexuality. What a person does sexually should be of no concern to anyone except the people with whom he happens to be having sex. Naturally, they ought to have some say in the matter. No one in the sexual revolution is

demanding that others adopt their standards of morality. They are merely asking for the right to their own sexuality. A right they should certainly possess.

I: What about pornography?

H: I personally find most of it boring. But again, it should be a matter of individual choice. People should be permitted to read what they choose. I do object to blatant advertising of pornographic material because that infringes on the rights of those who find it offensive. The same is true of prostitution. I favor its legalization, but I object to blatant advertising. Streetwalkers who try to impose their bodies on me as I walk down Eighth Avenue are rather offensive. But a little bordello here and there can be valuable in releasing sexual frustration for some people. Certainly this, in some cases, can be dangerous from a health standpoint. But if an individual wants to take the risk involved, you and I have no right to demand that he not do so. The thing we must keep in mind when dealing with the sexual revolution is not to allow it to infringe on the rights of those who choose not to participate in it. That is where the control must be exercised. Tell me, have I communicated or alienated?

I: That, I suppose, remains to be seen. NEXT WEEK: Bruce Hopkins continues his dual process of communication and alienation in the final interview entry. Don't miss this exciting episode.