

EDITORIAL

Attic Sales

A unique form of gambling takes hold of some Back Mountain women in the early fall after the kids are squirreled away at school and the fall cleaning's done.

The lady of the house gets out and goes to the grocery, the cleaner's, the shoe repair, the department store.

Yes, but there's another place that's more fun, and it's positively addictive—almost against the law, even—the garage or attic sale, sometimes with home-baked goodies on the side.

The ladies are betting their time and gasoline against the possibility of finding a rare piece of china, an antique samovar, or a pair of kid's pajamas without holes in the knees.

Over a period of weeks, tracking down attic sales through the classified ads and by word of mouth, the ladies find themselves a part of a caravan of the same cars going from one sale to the next.

When the same faces keep showing up at church bazaars, white elephant booths, fall fair counters, and garage sales, it is easy to believe that there is such a thing as a professional shopper for these types of sales.

After covering a dozen or more of these events we're convinced that not only the same faces show up, but it's the same collection of items floating around from sale to sale. The identical vase that went for 35 cents at one booth shows up discreetly in another place two weeks later for 50 cents.

But bargains are to be found, and that's what keeps the ladies going.

Cannikin

Early next month the largest underground nuclear test ever attempted by the United States is scheduled to take place on Amchitka Island in the Aleutians. It seems that this test, like others before it, has caused a good deal of worry from environmental quarters, and for good reason. The Aleutian Islands are part of an intricate and sensitive geological fault system, the same system that causes so much apprehension to Californians. A blast with the power of the forthcoming Cannikin test could be extremely dangerous under these circumstances, not only because of the danger of earthquakes but also because of a high probability of the release, through fissures in the earth, of radioactive energy.

The most disturbing aspect of nuclear testing is that although the Atomic Energy Commission has repeatedly assured us that testing is safe, post-blast monitoring in Nevada has revealed "unexpected" seepage of radiation into the atmosphere, seepage that the AEC has either played down or attempted to suppress altogether. The Environmental Protection Agency has submitted a report termed "highly critical" of the forthcoming blast, but the report has been "classified." William Ruckelshaus, Administrator of EPA, has sent a letter to a Presidential committee concerning the test, but the letter is being kept secret contrary to the advice of Mr. Ruckelshaus himself.

The reason for all of this, of course, is "national security," in whose interest the Cannikin test is being undertaken in the first place. We are, by now, fed up with the government's indiscriminate use of "national security" for the suppression of information vital to the people of this nation, and would submit, with a tinge of disrespect, that, if it is not within the realm of "national security" for us to know the possible dangers of nuclear testing, we would like to know what is.

Insights and Illusions

by Bruce Hopkins

"You're the absurdist's absurdist, Bruce," Frank said as we munched peanuts in the Ninth Circle, chucking our peanut shells on the floor and sipping our respective glasses of escapism on the rocks. We laughed. For whatever it was worth.

Frank is this person who recently came along, adding himself to the list of persons who have shared in the absurdity of living absurdly with Bruce Hopkins. Frank is unique. He entered absurdly through friends who knew us both and figured we were right for each other. The first evening we met we became old friends—it was like we'd known each other for years. I think maybe we have.

Frank and I have done a number of similar things in our lives. Last Christmas we both made our own Christmas cards and sent them to our own friends. We didn't know each other then. We both wrote the same thing on our Christmas cards. That's a bit weird when you think about it. Frank and I think very much alike, which is good when it isn't bad. We were discussing this fact or something like it as we munched peanuts and chucked shells in the Ninth Circle. The Ninth Circle, named so for reasons I have never thought about, is a place to go which is something we all need. It's cheap and has good food and drinks and all the peanuts you can eat and all of the peanut shells you want to throw on the floor. The bar is upstairs and the dining room is downstairs, which is as it should be. Although it could be the other way around and no one would mind. It doesn't really matter what your position is as long as you know what you're doing there. The Ninth Circle has a very pleasing atmosphere as long as you don't give it much thought. If you do, you might begin to find it a bit absurd to be walking on peanut shells.

"I wonder what's happening downstairs," Frank said.

"I've often asked myself that," I remarked.

"You aren't going to be very good for me," Frank speculated. "I mean we think too much alike. I'm afraid we'll just sort of complement each other's hangups."

"Oh I don't know," I replied not knowing. "Basically we're different. I mean you think there's hope. You think there is a purpose to it all, whereas I don't think there's any hope. I think it's all absurd."

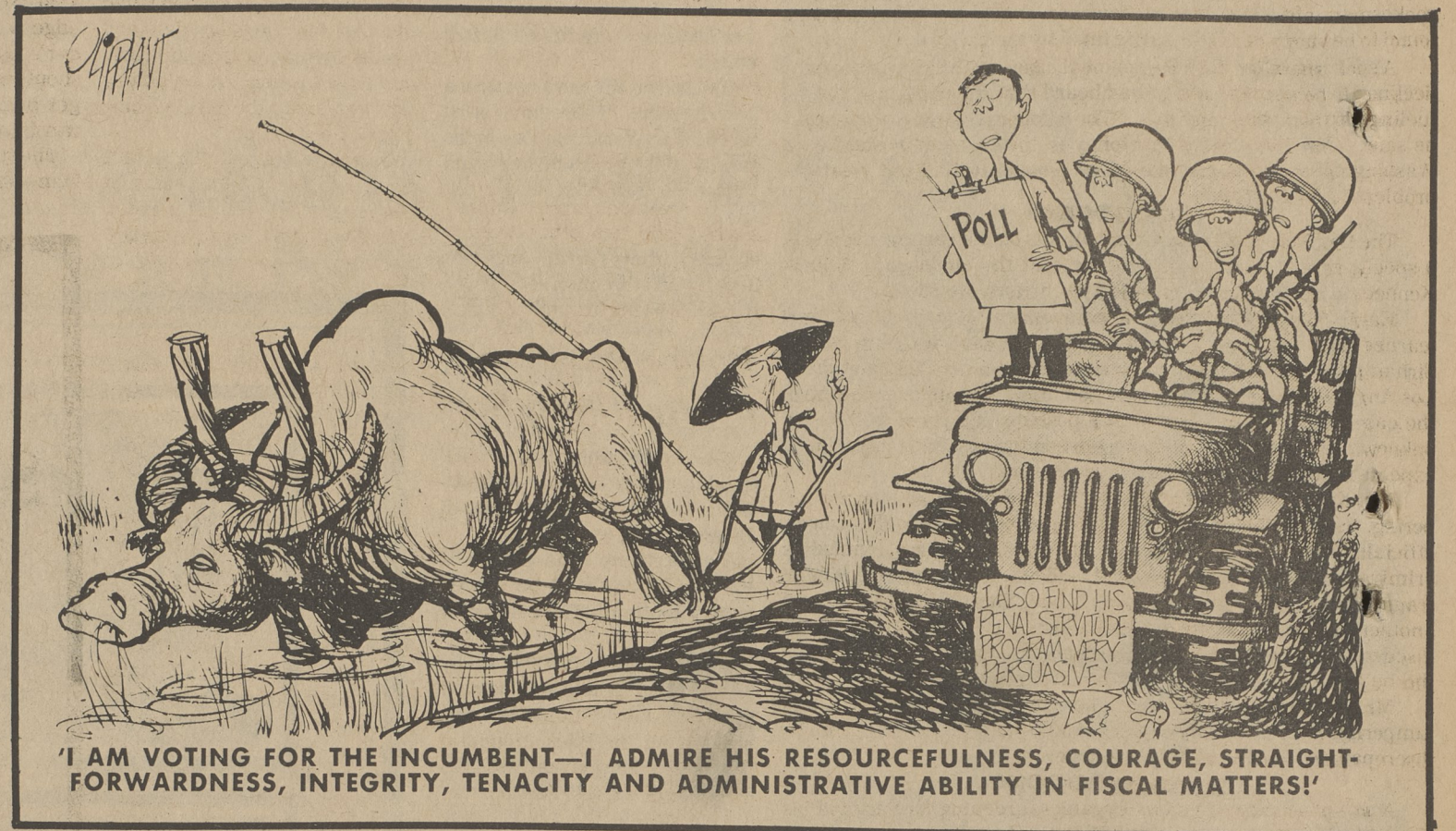
Frank was a theological student once.

Now he's an artist. I was a teacher once. Now I'm an actor-writer. We both hate the question "What do you do for a living?" because we both live for a living. We do what comes along. One of us, I forget which, used to be a teacher and the other of us used to study theology. Actually we both still do both because we're both artists, or so we tell ourselves at the Ninth Circle in between peanuts.

"I hate my ankles," I said noticing my ankles propped on a chair.

"We had to do that once in a sensitivity course," Frank said. "We had to name two things we disliked about our bodies. I said I disliked my hands and the fact that I was short."

"Yeah, I don't like your hands much either," I said, not really having noticed anything dislikeable about his hands, but knowing that people like to think you've noticed their strong features.



Changes

By Eric Mayer

Wherein the King faceth a decision and maketh nothing clear.

It is the custom in the kingdom of America, where democracy is said to prevail, that rulers rise slowly for dubious reasons only to be cast out quickly for good ones. So it was that King Richard, whom some call the Tricky and others call worse, viewed the coming year of election with trepidation. Saved once by a dog, relegated to kitchen jousting, caught finally by the many headed serpent Press and thrown into the grim Pits of Political Oblivion, the King had no wish to lose the prize that his skill in the art of the hatchet had won.

But his overfed realm rumbled with spiritual indigestion and the jaws of defeat breathed hot against his back. In the dead of the night the ghost of his predecessor dragged credibility chains through the venerable halls of the White Palace, lamenting lost mandates and the tyranny of history.

Poor King Richard's jowls filled up with concern and drooped toward his lapels. His eyes retreated back into the shadows under his brows to peer out, like feral creatures from their dens. Little wonder he fell to all manner of political conjurations.

But as morning dawned on the marbled

splendor of the fabled city of Washington, the King's thoughts were far removed from such conjurations; far from his Asian children's crusade, far from oriental pilgrimages, far from his sporting in the fields of economy. It was with the utmost solemnity that he donned his working attire, clothing himself in an impregnable armor of opinion polls and mid-west receptions. A star spangled shield he hefted, and at his side hung the sword of power that men have named democracy. Over all he pulled the invisible cloak of the Silent Majority—that magic raiment wrought by court sorcerers for 44 percent. And thus caparisoned, as if for a great battle, King Richard left his chambers, the dwarf Kissinger at heel.

He went out into the courtyard where lines of gray visaged men waited to purchase wisdom at the influence counters. Some perhaps would buy wisdom enough to advise a future ruler. The sight must have cheered the king, or maybe he spoke in an attempt to drown out the dark murmurings of the Wind of Doubt that swept incessantly out of the east, chilling the realm.

He said, "Why so glum, friend Henry? Rememberst thou not how I vanquished the Red Knight in his own kitchen?"

"Aye" replied the dwarf gloomily. "That 'twas then, and indeed the pans did rattle. But

now the people murmur amongst themselves saying, 'Buyest thou a used cart from this man?'"

At this the King's face darkened and he said no more till he had entered the Temple of Vested Interests where Those Who Know awaited his coming.

A choking stench emanated from an open door at the far end of the meeting room. The cloud lifted from the King's face when he saw this and was replaced by a deathly pallor. Only too well he remembered the entrance to the stinking Pits of Political Oblivion. He could still see those cold stone steps leading down, down into the rustling, moaning darkness where rising politicians wasted their promise in dank obscurity, and fallen leaders, yoked to minor embassies, degenerated into elder statesmen.

The head priest of Those Who Know came forward to greet the King. His face flickered like a guttering candle, forever changing its form while still retaining its identity.

"Have you thought on the problem, your highness? Times are hard and the election draws near. Are we again to unleash the Terrible Tongue?" As he pronounced the dreaded name, the priest's voice dropped to a silken thread, and simultaneously a hideous, alliterative babble issued from the murky Pits.

darting his eyes around the room, began stuffing his pockets and his plastic bag with peanuts. Pockets bulging, he darted his eyes around once more and slithered out the door.

"I'm a bit tired of people looking just like their dogs," one of us said as we looked at the girl across the room with long, straggly, unkempt hair. She had a long, straggly, unkempt-haired poodle with her. The other of us said something about people seeming to take their dogs almost everywhere anymore.

As I sat crunching peanut shells under my feet I thought for some reason about the Trident Gum Commercial on the radio where the lady says what she likes most about Trident Gum is that it's sugarless of course and that, well, she thinks your teeth are just about the most important thing I guess next to your health. I laughed.

"What's so funny?" Frank asked. "All of it," I replied. "The whole thing." A little while later we went home.

At King Richard's Court

King Richard's hand fell trembling to his sword hilt. He was remembering the humiliation of the last election.

"Nay" he breathed. "Nay. For when the Terrible Tongue is once unleashed no man can rule its lash. Friend falls with foe. That much have I learned."

Now the dwarf Kissinger spoke up. "But Majesty, in the southernmost realms, in the half civilized lands where the Biggites dwell, cavorting each sabbath with the hides of swine, the powerful chief Wallace threatens your supremacy. 'Twould ill besem you to banish the Tongue without providing for a suitable successor."

"That is so" said the King, his jowls flapping their agreement, his eyes darting about as if in search of an answer. "But consider you this. There is one man in this realm to whom I have awarded the highest Medal of Servitude. He is that glorious hero whose praises are sung far and wide by the troubadors. Bold Rusty they call him, defender of freedom."

With this King Richard turned abruptly and departed from the noxious temple, the dwarf Kissinger scurried off toward the lair of the serpent Press. The King, he thought, would soon appease the creature with another tasty bombshell.

Footnote

(Editor's Note: Mr. Freeman gained national prominence in 1968 with his stories dealing with the nation's richest mineral resource, oil shale. With charges of a scandal in the Federal Government concerning the resource beginning to appear, his third article in a series follows.)

by J. R. Freeman

Washington was shocked last July when the U.S. Interior Department, guardian of the public's rich oil shale lands of the West valued at \$6 trillion, decided to grant sodium leases to a host of land barons, one of which is represented by President's Nixon's former New York law firm.

Interfering with the Federal Government's clear title to the 17,200 square mile shale rich lands is a 20,000-acre cloud involving sodium preference right lease applications for which former Interior Secretary Stewart Udall must be judged solely responsible.

The sodium preference right lease applications are based upon sodium prospecting permits issued by Interior with Mr. Udall's blessing in 1964. They pose a complex legal problem because it would be impossible to remove the sodium minerals without disturbing the oil shale. Yet the shale cannot legally be removed under sodium leases. And as before, many Interior employees privately feel that the sodium permits and lease applications were filed only as a pretense to get control of the shale. The precedent setting

decision to award these leases was made by Interior Secretary Rogers C. B. Morton last July 6. Prior action in the department has been continually pigeon-holing the requests since 1964.

In January and February of that year hundreds of sodium prospecting permits, covering at least a quarter of a million rich oil shale acres, were filed with the Colorado Land Office of BLM. Udall's critics insist that he should have recognized this for what it plainly was: just another way to get control of the public's shale reserves. They say he should have protected the public interest by rejecting the permits.

Most of the sodium permits later expired due to inaction by their owners, but eight of the so-called prospectors did file sodium lease applications and requested a hearing so that they might obtain the 20,000 acres of rich shale lands for their alleged sodium mining. Mr. Udall and his former legal advisor, solicitor Edward Weinberg, granted their requests at the urging of former Secretary of the Interior Oscar Chapman.

It is interesting to note that Chapman's law partner, Martin L. Friedman, former legal counsel of the Democratic National Committee, represents Advance-Ross Corp., a diversified firm of Chicago wanting some of the sodium leases. But to illustrate how non-partisan oil shale has become politically, Advance-Ross is also represented by Franklin B. Lincoln, assistant secretary of Defense under Eisenhower and a former member of Mr.

Nixon's New York law firm. Another member of Mr. Nixon's firm is, of course, John B. Mitchell, now U.S. Attorney General, whose job is to give legal advice to the President.

This is all part of the reason Washington was shocked when Interior awarded the leases. The fact that Secretary Hickel had it in his power to grant the leases on 20,000 acres of the richest mineral land in the world is not disconcerting since his White House dismissal. But his successor, Mr. Morton, has yet to prove himself an active guardian of public lands. Washington sources in Interior suspect that Mr. Morton will weaken under the pressure of the powerful oil lobby still further and award oil shale leases near election time next year.

Testifying recently before a Senate Appropriations subcommittee on the controversial Alaska pipeline proposal, which has been approved by most Interior bureaucrats, Mr. Morton declared that Alaska had "sold those oil leases too early."

The new secretary was quick to point out that "Any decisions that we make are not going to be made on a profit-loss factor inherent to any economic group. They will be determined on the national need."

Still addressing the pipeline question, Secretary Morton said that first a national energy policy should be established, with review of such factors as the impact of the Mid-East conflict on world oil supply. It can be assumed that he might take the same position with the shale controversy. But he hasn't yet.

Rather, Mr. Morton has decided to lease away a portion of the richest shale land in hopes big oil will move toward a more serious development stage.

The President expressed the belief that "the time has come to begin the orderly formulation of an oil shale policy—not by any headlong rush toward development, but rather by a well considered program in which both environmental protection and the recovery of a fair return to the government are cardinal principles under which any leasing takes place."

But he did not elaborate on the fact that the U.S. Atomic Energy Commission has set off four test explosions already this summer on the Nevada test range, specifically designed to help extract oil from the shale beds at a later date. If the plan works, and if big oil will later foot part of the cost, there will obviously be hundreds of such nuclear explosions in shale country, which would appear to be running headlong into a clash with environmentalists everywhere.

At the same time, Secretary Morton has put feelers out to determine if enough environmental safeguards can be overlooked to entice the big oil boys to lease two tracts of land each in Colorado, Utah, and Wyoming in late 1972. And it goes without saying that at about the same time the Nixon Administration will have forgotten about Vietnam Papers, and trips to Peking and have its attention focused on huge campaign contributions from the oil barons.

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