

editorial/opinion

Human relations: key police policy

Whether the Lincoln City Council's appointment of George Hansen as police chief will prove a blessing or a bane for the city remains to be seen.

The key to Hansen's success or failure will be whether he possesses the characteristics that have made Lincoln's Police Dept. one of the finest in the nation: sensitivity to, and awareness of, people as human beings.

Those qualities mark the LPD as a whole as well as the individuals whom it comprises. That the department and its members are so marked is not accident; it is the result of careful screening and even more careful training.

Because most police work involves not TV cop theatricals but one-on-one encounters with all kinds of private—and, for the most part, law-abiding—citizens, a law enforcement agency's effectiveness depends more on its sensitivity than on its officers' expertise in reading fingerprints or finding the murder weapon.

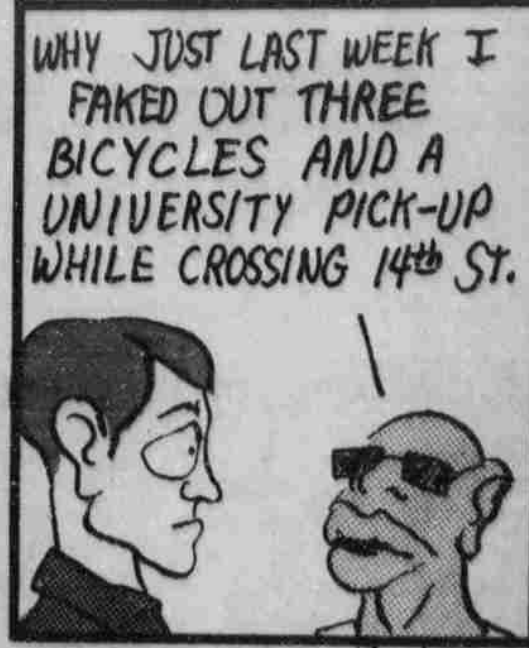
This city's Police Dept. is effective, and its police-community relations excellent. The situation needs not be considered jeopardized now, simply because Lincoln's new police chief is a stranger to the force.

Hansen said before his appointment that Lincoln's "strong community identification" with the police was one reason he wanted the job.

We hope that statement indicates his willingness to maintain and improve the department's skills in human relations.

Rebecca Brite

RALPH *by Kathleen*



U.S. tax system creates peculiar wildlife preserve

By Arthur Hoppe

"Okay, Billy, into the car. Hand me that picnic hamper, Mother. You sure you remembered everything? There's no supermarkets in the wilderness, you know."

"Yes, dear. But are you sure it's safe? I mean..."

"Safe? Why, you'll be safer there than you are at home. Ever since the government declared it a Wilderness Area the rangers patrol it all the time, watching for careless campfires and things like that."

"Can I take my .22, Dad?"

"No, Billy. It's a wildlife preserve. But you'll see pigeons as big as your head and cats and dogs. They're pretty wild, but they won't hurt you any if you don't try to pet them."

"What's the name of this place we're going, Dad?"

"Why, I thought you knew, Billy. It's called the City."

"It sure sounds exciting, Dad. Who lives in the City?"

"Oh, no one these days. But when your mother and I were young, hundreds of thousands of people lived there. It was even more crowded than out here in the suburbs."

"Why did they leave the City, Dad?"

"Well, that's hard to say. I guess it was the last police strike that broke the camel's back. I remember the mayor flying in from his home in the country to declare an emergency and announce he was giving the police the \$,1000-a-day pay increase they wanted."

"Wow! That's a lot of money."

"You can't blame the police, son. They had a real

innocent bystander



dangerous job, what with the folks on welfare rioting and burning the garbage that was piling up in the streets."

"Why were they rioting, Dad?"

"Oh, you can't blame them, son. They couldn't get their welfare checks on account of nobody was working in City Hall because the buses hadn't run for months. The mayor tried to get an injunction against the bus drivers, but the judges were all on strike. Not that you could blame them, seeing as how nobody had the courage to serve their court orders."

"You mean people left the City because they were afraid, Dad?"

"Well, it wasn't so much that as it was taxes. You see, once folks started moving out there were fewer left to pay the salary increases. Got so a man paid more taxes every year than his house was worth. You can't blame them for moving out."

"But if everybody had stayed, Dad..."

"Oh, everybody agreed that things would work out if everybody stayed—everybody else, that is."

"Gee, Dad, the City kind of gives me the willies. Why do we want to go there for our picnic?"

"Peace and quiet, son, peace and quiet. I tell you, there's nothing like going to the City these days to get away from it all."

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IF YOU LET A FRIEND DRIVE DRUNK, YOU'RE NO FRIEND.

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Long hard climb



Puritan work ethic—an American myth

By Marsha Jark

There is a basic myth that is a major part of the American psychology: the Puritan Work Ethic. The myth had its greatest popularity during the later nineteenth century, but more recent figures also have espoused it, notably former President Richard Nixon.

According to the ethic, if a man works hard, success and wealth will be his rewards.

The idea's influence is evident in such other myths as The Free Enterprise System, The American Heritage of Hard-working Immigrants and The Self-Made Man. Like these, it had its basis in fact—but the circumstances were temporary.

The American ideal of rugged individualism is as phony as a three dollar bill. Richard Nixon tried to sell that ideal back to America at a reduced price, but was exposed as a flim-flam man. Apply his own words to himself.

"That work ethic is why Americans are considered an industrious, purposeful people, and why a poor nation of three million people, over a course of two centuries, lifted itself into the position of the most powerful and respected leader of the free world today."

His words are illuminating because Nixon seemed to be a modern example of the self-made man. He went from

being an obscure lawyer to President of the United States.

He fit the mold well: rich, powerful—and corrupt. What many people realized long ago was that noble motives ascribed to the free enterprise system were a smokescreen to hide the basic motivation of greed.

Even in the nineteenth century, specific conditions were needed for a person to amass great wealth in a short period of time. Statistically, a white male born in 1835 had the best chance of becoming a millionaire.

He could call himself a self-made man if he wished to ignore the factors of the particularly favorable economic conditions, the easy exploitation of workers, and luck.

Those most likely to succeed from this generation were usually from the middle rather than the lower class. Andrew Carnegie, the poor floor sweeper who became a success, was an exception rather than a rule.

The 1800's was a time of rapid, but unstable economic growth, a time of many financial "panics." Banks failed and people lost their savings because of irresponsible Wall Street speculation and an unnaturally inflated economy. The already-rich garnered most of the profits from the economic booms.

Where does this leave America today? Some people

think the cure to America's economic ills is to go back to a system without controls, the free enterprise system.

They idealize the golden past, not realizing we are years past the beginnings of the Industrial Revolution. Economically that system didn't work because successful businessmen spent more time holding lavish parties than putting the profits back into the system. Their workers did not benefit from profitable years and their wages were cut during unprofitable years. Labor was cheap, as were people's lives.

The era of unrestrained economic growth is over. The natural resources that are now available to be used are not obtained cheaply or without damage to the environment.

It is time to rewrite the Puritan Work Ethic to read, "Competition can be good, but cooperation is better." People need to see that survival of the fittest means success only for a minority.

Seeing the truth about one of our cherished ideals is the first step in realizing why America doesn't come off like the good guy in the westerns.

If we want quality of life for everyone, some people will receive what they have not earned. But that seems to be better than people getting what they earn by taking it from others.