

Arizona Hunting Trip Described

A "pinch-hit" speaker, called on when the scheduled speaker could not appear, last Tuesday night gave the Moore County Wildlife Club one of its most enjoyable programs of the year. The club met at the Lakeview Community House, with supper prepared and served by members of the Vass Rescue Squad and their wives.

Howard Butler, club vice-president gave a colorful account of a hunting trip he took with his son Dan two years ago, when they spent 11 days in the saddle hunting mountain lion and bear in Arizona, describing canyons, mountains, forests, wildlife and numerous amusing incidents.

He was filling in at the July supper meeting for Dr. George R. Heinisch, past president of the club, and past president and a director of the State Wildlife Federation, who will present his talk later on the organization of wildlife clubs in the State, their purposes and accomplishments.

Other programs are planned on conservation of timber, water and soil, to be presented by experts, following the recess the club traditionally takes in August.

President Ralph Mills presided.

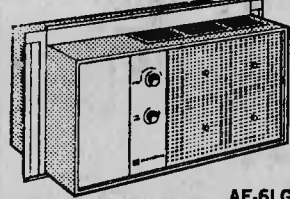
CARD OF THANKS

We wish to publicly express our thanks for the many kindnesses shown us at the death of our loved one, Merwyn Bruce Cox. Every expression of sympathy, including the flowers, food, visits and cards, is greatly appreciated.

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WILDERNESS AS A TONIC — I

Nature: Vast Reservoir Of Energy

Better bird-watching may not be the best hope of mankind, but a knowledge of nature can be a valuable antidote for the ills that afflict 20th Century man. Recently, The Saturday Review printed a long article expounding this thesis, by Joseph Wood Krutch, literary critic who had become one of the most eloquent observers of the natural world and of man's responsibilities to it. The Pilot will reprint the Saturday Review piece in a series of shorter articles, over several weeks, starting herewith, believing that its message is of interest to many readers who may not have seen the original.

BY JOSEPH WOOD KRUTCH

A few months ago the Sierra Club of California published a magnificent book of seventy-two large color photographs by Eliot Porter. Though I wrote a brief introduction for it, this is not a plug. As a matter of fact, my subject did not begin to worry me until the introduction was in type and I learned for the first time what the title of the book was to be: "In Wildness Is the Preservation of the World."

"Oh, dear," I said to myself, "that's a foolish title." Nature-lover though I am, this was going too far. "Wildness," I said, "is a tonic and a refreshment. I think we are losing something as it disappears from our environment. But to call it the preservation of the world is pretty far-fetched. True, I doubt that we can be saved by increased production or by trips to the moon. In fact, I sometimes doubt that we can be saved at all. But wildness! Now really!"

Another shock came when I learned that the phrase is a quotation from Henry David Thoreau. Henry, I know, confessed his love of exaggeration and once said his only fear was the fear he might not be extravagant enough. But he rarely said anything really foolish. I thought I had better look up the context. And not to keep the reader in suspense (if I may flatter myself that I have generated any), I must confess that I have come to the conclusion that what Henry said is neither foolish nor exaggerated. It is a truth almost as obvious as "the mass of men lead lives of quiet desperation."

Something Prehuman

Here is the context: "The West of which I speak is but another name for the Wild, and what I have been preparing to say is, that in Wildness is the preservation of the World. Every tree sends its fibers forth in search of the Wild. The cities import it at any price. Men plow and sail for it. From the forests and wilderness come the tonics and barks which brace mankind."

What is this wildness Thoreau is talking about? It is not D. H. Lawrence's Dark Gods and neither is it the mindless anarchy of some current anti-intellectuals. Those are destructive forces. Thoreau's wildness is, on the other hand something more nearly akin to Bernard Shaw's Life Force—it is that something prehuman that generated humanity. From it came a magnificent complex of living things long, long before we were here to be aware of them, and still longer before we, in our arrogance, began to boast that we were now ready to take over completely; that henceforth we in our greater wisdom would plan and manage everything, even, as we sometimes say, direct the course of evolution itself.

Yet if—as seems not unlikely—we should manage or mismanage to the point of self-destruction, wildness alone will survive to make a new world.

Ultimate Hope

Like so much that Thoreau wrote, this appeal to wildness as the ultimate hope for survival is more relevant and comprehensible in the context of our world than it was in his. A few of his contemporaries—Melville and Hawthorne, for instance—may have already begun to question the success of the human enterprise and the inevitability of progress. But life as it is managed by man was becoming increasingly comfortable and seemingly secure. Men were often anxious (or, as Thoreau said, "desperate") concerning their individual lives. But few doubted that mankind as a whole was on the right track. There was not yet an age of public, overall anxiety. That mankind might plan itself into suicide occurred to nobody. Yet, though few today put such hopes as they have managed to maintain in anything except the completer dependence upon human institutions and inventions, the possibility that we have too little faith in "wildness" is not quite so preposterous a suspicion as it seemed

then.

In a world that sits not on a powder keg but on a hydrogen bomb, one begins to suspect that the technician who rules our world is not the master magician he thinks he is but only a sorcerer's apprentice who does not know how to turn off what he turned on—or even how to avoid blowing himself up.

Should that be what he at last succeeds in doing, it would be a relatively small disaster compared with the possibility that he might destroy at the same time all that "wildness" that generated him and might in time generate something better. Perhaps there is life (or shall we call it "wildness?") on other planets, but I hope it will remain on ours, too. "Pile up your books, the records of sadness, your saws and your laws. Nature is glad outside, and her merry worms will ere long topple them down."

Great Reservoir

This wildness may often be red in tooth and claw. It may be shockingly careful of the type but careless of the single life. In this and in many other respects we are unwilling to submit to it, but somehow it did, in the end, create the very creatures who now criticize and reject it. And it is not so certain as it once seemed that we can successfully substitute entirely our competence for nature's. Nature is, after all, the great reservoir of energy, of confidence, of endless hope, and of that joy not wholly subdued by the pale cast of thought that seems to be disappearing from our human world. Rough and brutal though she sometimes seems in her far from simple plan, it did work, and it is not certain that our own plans will.

A very popular concept today is embodied in the magic word cybernetic—or self-regulating. "Feedback" is the secret of our most astonishing machines. But the famous balance of nature is the most extraordinary of all cybernetic systems. Left to itself, it is always self-regulated. The society we have created is not, on the other hand, cybernetic at all. The wisest and most benevolent of our plannings requires constant attention. We must pass this or that law or regulation, we must redress this balance of production and distribution, taking care that

encouraging one thing does not discourage something else. The society we have created puts us in constant danger lest we ultimately find ourselves unable to direct the more and more complicated apparatus we have devised.

Margin For Living

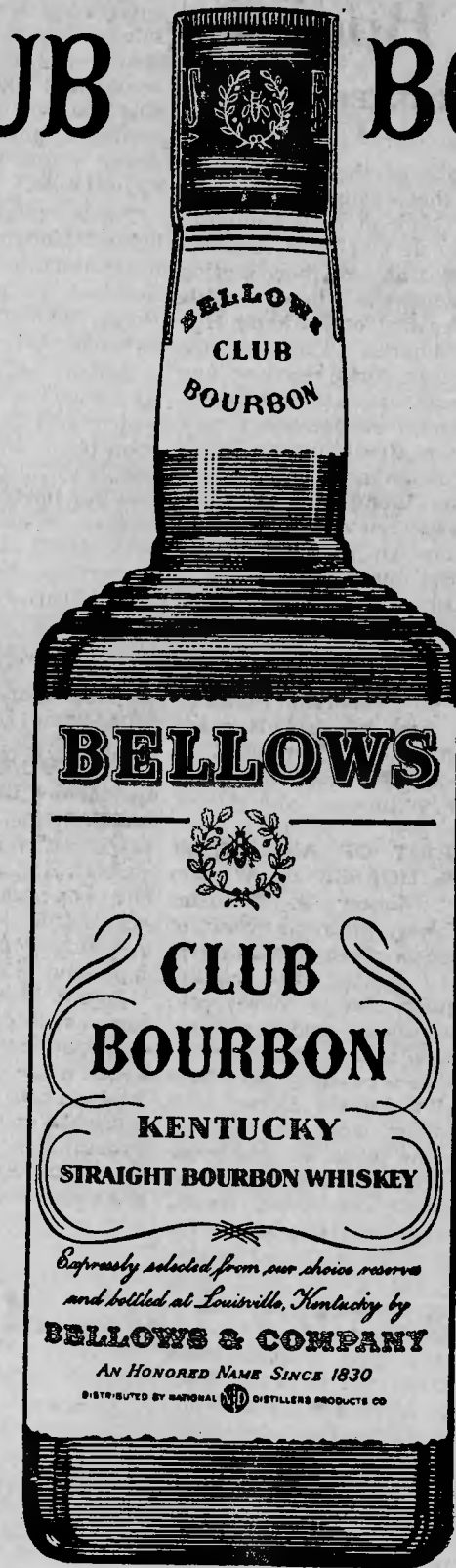
A really healthy society, so Thoreau once wrote, would be like a healthy body that functions perfectly without our being aware of it. We, on the other hand, are coming more and more to assume that the healthiest society is one in which all citizens devote so much of their time to arguing, weighing, investigating, voting, propagandizing, and signing protests in a constant effort to keep a valetudinarian body politic functioning in some sort of pseudo-health that they have none of that margin for mere living that Thoreau thought important. It's no wonder that such a situation generated beatniks by way of a reaction.

Many will no doubt reply that Thoreau's ideal sounds too close to that of the classical economists who trusted the cybernetic free conception of Herbert Spencer et al. and that it just doesn't work. But is it certain that our own contrary system is working very well when it produces, on the one hand, a more or less successful welfare state and, on the other, an international situation that threatens not only welfare but human existence itself?

Should the human being turn out to be the failure some began a generation or more ago to call him, then all is not necessarily lost. Unless life itself is extinguished, nature may begin where she began so long ago and struggle upward again. When we dream of a possible superman we almost invariably think of him as a direct descendant of ourselves. But he might be the flower and the fruit of some branch of the tree of life now represented only by one of the "lower" (and not necessarily anthropoid) animals.

Although there are no living Civil War veterans on Veterans Administration rolls, about 2,000 Civil War veterans' widows are receiving benefits.

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