

AMERICANA

ALABAMA

THE urge to confess strikes the Fonza S. Headleys and achieves publication in the distinguished *Chilton County News*:

I have 2 boys married; they have 2 girls apiece. I have 2 girls married, which has three. I have 2 boys in the Army, and one in the CCC; one boy that wants to be. 2 girls at home with me; 2 grandchildren lie asleep. In all, how many that be?

Now if you are done, you find wife and me make 21; 2 daughters-in-law, nice and kind; 2 sons-in-law, not far behind. I am 47, my wife is 49. We live south of M. & O. Dixie Line.

I learn a lesson, from this true confession; how you love and cheer one another, for we want to be your sister and brother.

CALIFORNIA

LEGISLATORS will be Solons in San Bernardino, the *Independent* proves:

Councilman Leon Atwood of the second ward may or may not spend more time at his Yucaipa ranch than in his ward as some residents charge, but none can deny he finds means of enlivening the meetings of the otherwise august city fathers. Leon's latest was to crawl under the council table when Councilman George Shafer of the third ward was speaking and set fire to Shafer's shoe laces. Atwood howled with laughter.

FROM Pasadena, by way of the Los Angeles *Examiner*, comes additional proof of the resourcefulness of Californians:

With the bangtailed ponies having shaken the rich dust of Santa Anita from their feet, guests at Pasadena's exclusive Vista del Arroyo Hotel were at a loss for entertainment on which they could wager a bob or two, until someone thought up a toad derby.

The derby was held yesterday in the hotel lobby with 20 horned toads named after famous race horses facing the barrier and primed to go a gruelling distance of 25 feet.

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

CONGRESSMAN Bolles felicitates the Federal Trade Commission *via* the *Congressional Record*:

Mr. BOLLES. Mr. Speaker, in this 1 minute allotted to me in the moving eons of this world I may be able to bear to you my colleagues a great message of hope. Great Homer died, Virgil passed from earthly scenes, Cato and the Caesars turned to clay without knowing how long spaghetti should be in order to be good food. Now into this chaotic scene, where over the centuries the controversy has continued concerning the span of spaghetti, we have had a decision from one of those bureaus where the act of man becomes the act of God. Mr. Speaker, this great international question has been settled by our marvelous Federal Trade Commission. Thousands of people, aye mil-

lions, from Booraboola Gha to the Alento have waited with bated breath for this decision. I insert here the Federal Trade Commission report on this most vital and attention-demanding subject of how long spaghetti should be. [*Commission's report is cited in full.*]

Oh, Mr. Speaker, this is epical as well as epochal. Can you, with your magnificent background of sun and prairie, picture the disastrous effect on Hereford cattle and on durum wheat growers of the Dakotas if the Federal Trade Commission, after months of deep deliberation, delving into historical tomes and the chronicles of Froisart and foods for a starving world, had decided that spaghetti, in order to be edible, should be 20 inches long? God save Mussolini.

MINNESOTA

A BIOLOGICAL note culled from the political columns of the St. Paul *Dispatch*, reporting an interview with Mrs. Ruth Hanna Simms on candidate Dewey:

One of the handicaps under which he labored at the start — his youth — “is rapidly disappearing,” Mrs. Simms went on.

NEBRASKA

GENEALOGICAL researches of the Kearney *Daily Hub*:

FINIS Barney, Elmcreek, has called attention to the fact his father gave

him that name, with the understanding he was to be the last child in the family. However a brother, the late Frank Appendix Barney, came after Finis.

NEW YORK

A TRIUMPH for specialization is revealed in an advertisement in the New York *Cue*:

YOUR DOG'S HOROSCOPE. Send date of his birth and know your own dog better. Price \$1. “Dog Horoscopes,” P.O. Box 209, White Plains, N. Y.

IN OTHER UTOPIAS

FRANCE

THE conservative Paris *L'Ordre* comments on religion:

From his earliest youth, Roger Chartier showed a curious propensity toward sadism. At seventeen, while still under age, he enlisted in the army. After his discharge, he entered a theological seminary.

A PLEA for national security in an advertisement in *Paris-Soir*:

One of the most important rules to be observed during the present war crisis is to keep the nails soft. Soak them daily in a mixture of oil, vinegar and lemon juice, to which some boric acid has been added.

(THE MERCURY will pay \$1 for items accepted for Americana. Those which are not used cannot be returned.)

DOWN TO EARTH

By ALAN DEVOE

Consider the Frog

IT is very easy for a man to forget, while he listens to the terrible voice of his radio reciting Europe's destruction or reads in the newspaper the latest manifestation of domestic chicanery, that in this time of blood-spilling and political chaos and despair the elemental life of earth goes on as usual. It is hard to remember that the cumulus clouds still sail high in the sky, unmoved from their course by the thunder of cannon, and that, though peoples be shelled out of existence, the wind still blows and calms in its customary fashion, the maples still thrust their taproots into the earth and raise their leaves to the sun, the hairless luna caterpillar still metamorphoses by its ancient alchemy into an eye-winged moth.

It is good for a man to remind himself of things like this — that there are venerable stabilities which the insanities of dictators are not able to overthrow. It is good for instance, just to shut off the radio for a while, throw away the newspaper, and go out into the warm

darkness of a country night and listen to the frogs. The bullfrogs are breeding now, and in millponds and bayous, in the damp, hot dusk, there is a deep-throated chorus that comes from thousands of resonating vocal sacs. Frogs will be croaking and mating and feeding when Hitler and Mussolini and Stalin have been dust for many a millennium. It is good for a man to shift his attention for a while to something as permanent as a frog.

It is early in spring, when the first bloodroots are blossoming and shadblow has just come into flower, that the frog emerges from its winter torpor. Since early the previous fall it has been hibernating in a hidden place — the leopard frogs and green frogs buried deep in the soft bottom-mud of creek or pond, the wood-frogs concealed in interstices of rotting stumps and lichened fallen logs — and during all the time of cold the sluggish frog-blood has scarcely circulated, the frog scarcely stirred in its deep sleep. In the spring, thawed by the returning sun, it issues forth, ready