

Pearson Wins Friends With Friendship Train

By Helen M. Staunton

IN RECENT years no non-government gesture has created such international good-will as the Friendship Train and few have received such spontaneous backing from all over the country.

The man with the idea for the train—and the man who got handed the job of organizing it—was Drew Pearson, who first suggested the food drive Oct. 11 and flew to France just before Christmas to be in on the distribution.

If ever the time, the plan and the man clicked, the Bell Syndicate columnist's plan was it. The proposed 80-car train grew into 500 cars, and the Friendship Train sections rolled up to the eastern seaboard with 11,000 tons of food, largely a tribute to the whole-hearted cooperation of newspapers along the routes. Whether or not they were among the 600 dailies and weeklies using Pearson's "Washington Merry-Go-Round," they joined almost unanimously in sparking the food drives in their own communities, Pearson told EDITOR & PUBLISHER this week.



Pearson

'A Newspaper Show'

"To a large extent it was a newspaper show, over there and here too," Pearson summed up.

And not until the French people welcomed the train so enthusiastically and the French newspapers devoted some of their precious little space to the train was he sure that strikes and unrest in France and Italy would not cause the project to backfire and some of the food be wasted, he admitted.

"If we had just arrived in France with a ship that was loaded by the American Government we would have gotten nowhere," declared the columnist. "Newsreels taken here were shown in theaters before we got there—I didn't leave anything to chance. They knew it was a bona fide gift from the American people."

Flatcar Speeches Abroad

Pearson mentioned one U.S. newspaper stunt he thought particularly effective for long-range good-will. Amon G. Carter, publisher of the Fort Worth (Tex.) *Star-Telegram*, held up 16 carloads of flour from there while he had the bags stamped with messages of friendship from Fort Worth.

"I saw some of those in Italy," said Pearson. "They're certain to be made up into clothes and towels."

Overseas, Pearson set up a committee so there would be one newspaperman on each

train. Pearson was on the first train with Geoffrey Parsons of the European Edition of the *New York Herald Tribune*. On other French trains were Lansing Warren of the *New York Times*, Paul Ghali of the *Chicago Daily News* and Bob Parker of International News Service.

"We did feel that we were obligated to go and tell the people what the Friendship Train was," explained Pearson.

In Italy the same flatcar speeches by newsmen accompanied the dropping of carloads of food, but the newsmen were Pearson, John Secundari of Columbia Broadcasting System, Carl Cortesi of the *Rome Daily American*, and Rita Hume of North American Newspaper Alliance.

From the grateful citizens the Americans received honors at a number of the towns. In Pearson's lapel as he described the trip to E&P was the narrow red band of the French Legion of Honor and he has been voted the first decoration to be awarded by the Republic of Italy, the Italian Star of Solidarity.

He added a footnote: "You had to be able to drink champagne early in the morning, because at every station you had to sample the wines."

Other Projects Inspired

Even now that the Friendship Train's food is well on its way the idea is still producing results.

Started since or planned, Pearson mentioned, are Governor Warren's milk ship from California to France, Italy and Greece; the Michigan Friendship Caravan from 70 Junior Chambers of Commerce to France; two Abraham Lincoln Friendship trains leaving Lincoln, Neb., and Springfield, Ill., Feb. 12 for Germany and Austria; the Northwest Friend Ship to Austria and either Germany or Czechoslovakia; the New England Friend Ship to Scotland; the North Carolina Friendship clothing drive, and the campaign by New Orleans to adopt Orleans in France.

He estimated the new drives would produce another 20,000 tons of food and clothing.

Pearson disliked the organization detail work, but he admitted: "I got a tremendous amount of satisfaction because it accomplished something and a hell of a satisfaction to see the response in this country and even more abroad."

The comment was typical of the columnist who has been one of the most controversial personalities of the press since he collaborated with Robert S. Allen on the first "Washington Merry-Go-Round" book.

"I think I'm still in bad with an awful lot of people," he remarked with a twinkle. "I have a lot of enemies and a few good friends. Right now some people

are saying some nice things about me, but it probably won't last long."

Early Bird Columnist

Describing how he works on his column, Pearson related: "I get up at 6 or 6:30 and finish writing the column before breakfast. I write one column a day except on Wednesday when I write two, and on Saturday I write none. In summertime I get up at 4 a.m. As I get up early, I know my farm hands get up early too. I get them started and then work on the column."

He reserved his greatest enthusiasm for that sizable farm of his and sunrise on the front porch, climaxing with the fact that "You can spit right into the Potomac, if you spit 150 feet, straight down."

Two assistants help uncover news. Tom McNamara and Jack Anderson, and a full-time lawyer, John Donovan, who also manages affairs for him.

"But anything important I don't leave to anybody," Pearson declared.

On his own schedule the day of the interview was a talk with a cabinet member and a long-distance call that might uncover another story. He was, he revealed, on the trail of the "real reason" for Eisenhower's withdrawal from the presidential race.

No New Libel Suits

Pearson mentioned that since he has been writing for Bell instead of United Feature Syndicate he has had no new libel suits filed against him.

"I do the filing now," he twinkled, referring to his withdrawn suit against Westbrook Pegler and another against a rival publisher who called him a communist.

Bell never questions anything in his columns except a point that might be libelous. "I take the responsibility now," he explained. "In the old days I used to sometimes put stuff in to devil them."

"But," he added, "I think the syndicate would tell you that I'm a better libel lawyer than any of them."

'47 Linage Sets New High Mark

NEWSPAPER AD sales men shooting for new lineage records have thrown the year 1929 into the discard. It was a good one, but 1947 was better.

In Media Records' measurements for 52 cities, released this week, 1947's lineage totaled a neat 2,008,535,854—16.1% ahead of last year's total and 6% better than the previous record, 1929's 1,897,213,018 lines.

The big gainers over 1929 were Retail and Classified, with 11.5 and 37% increases, respectively. By comparison with 1946 totals, these classifications gained 16.1 and 11.8%, respectively.

General and Automotive made steep gains over 1946—18.1% and 63.1%—but they couldn't quite reach the previous records. Automotive was far below the totals amassed in 1928, 1929 and 1930. General, however, wound up on the heels of 1929—only 6.5% behind.

On the E&P Index, a comparison with the average total for the last five years, 1947 gained 41.6%. All classifications had substantial increases, Automotive being the leader, with an increase of 105% over the 1942-46 average.

(City report on pages 56-58)

NEWSPAPER LINAGE—52 CITIES

	Compiled by EDITOR & PUBLISHER from Media Records		measurements)	
	1947	1946	% of	E&P
	Linage	Linage	1946	Index
Total Advertising				
12 months	2,008,535,854	1,729,713,225	116.1	141.6
December	186,913,274	163,257,097	114.5	140.8
November	198,808,481	164,120,122	118.7	143.2
Display				
12 months	1,534,935,617	1,306,051,096	117.5	140.1
December	149,383,134	128,853,119	115.9	140.5
November	153,361,247	127,347,828	120.4	142.1
Classified				
12 months	473,600,237	423,662,129	111.8	143.9
December	37,530,140	34,403,978	109.1	179.2
November	41,447,234	36,772,294	112.7	147.6
Retail				
12 months	1,127,242,002	971,283,756	116.1	140.9
December	117,247,075	101,155,323	115.9	145.1
November	113,367,458	94,052,153	120.5	146.3
Department Store				
12 months	427,512,988	380,247,319	112.4	130.3
December	43,048,470	37,797,560	113.9	134.6
November	42,989,466	36,767,896	116.9	133.4
General				
12 months	314,605,173	266,285,155	118.1	125.1
December	24,935,208	22,388,220	111.4	119.1
November	32,003,957	26,595,729	120.3	129.1
Automotive				
12 months	68,671,744	42,106,120	163.1	205
December	5,214,631	3,415,405	152.7	152
November	5,956,985	4,674,652	127.4	149
Financial				
12 months	24,416,698	26,376,065	92.6	119
December	1,986,220	1,894,171	104.9	104
November	2,032,847	2,025,295	100.4	121