

Sensational headlines

Recent Tribune headlines have made us feel like we are subscribing to one of those tabloids sold at the checkout counters of chain grocery stores. A front-page headline Jan. 20, "Former state power dies in flop house," led us to suppose that we would be reading about how a once-powerful state official died like King Lear. And so former state Sen. Mayhood did die. But the article told us two other, more significant, things. In the order of importance that the Tribune seemed to attach to them they were, first, that Mayhood ~~got~~ about what he deserved for having used the political process to his advantage; second, that Mayhood died defending the safety — perhaps the life — of a fellow human being.

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The Jan. 21 headline "Anderson flare-up shocks state farmers" led us to believe that Sen. Wendell Anderson had lost his temper over an issue that could well cost him the support of most, if not all, Minnesota farmers. Again, the headline did not lead to the real story.

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Anderson, apparently irritated by criticism over his vote in favor of the 1977 farm bill, asked a group of 65 state farmers why they hadn't communicated their position to him on the bill before the vote. Two farmers then left the room "in disgust," while six others met privately with Anderson and were "rather pleased" with the

results of the meeting. Finally, the story reported that Anderson was likely to support a farmer-sponsored bill this year.

The Anderson headline suggested facts controverted in the story itself: Anderson did not so much lose his temper as ask a few farmers a tough, well-aimed question; only two farmers were "shocked," and apparently the farm community can expect Anderson's support on a current farmer-sponsored bill, for which most farmers are very likely to thank Anderson at the polls in November. — Jane and Michael Murphy, Minneapolis.