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Few characters in this grand old town of ours were ever more colorful than Sigmund Bloomgardt, who ran a little second-rate clothing establishment on lower Middle street.

Bloomy, as he was affectionately referred to by natives who knew him, didn't prosper quite as much as some of our other respected Jewish merchants who came to New Bern from across the sea. If that ever bothered him, he didn't complain about it.

Having hailed from Germany, as did his wife, if we remember rightly, he naturally was regarded with a certain amount of hostility during the first World War. He had less than nothing in common with those responsible for that mighty conflict, but it made him an object for suspicion and ridicule just the same.

Small boys living in Bloomy's neighborhood, over on Eden street, used to taunt him whenever he came out of the house, or ventured into his yard. Always it was the same rhyming chant:

"Kaiser Bill went up the hill
to take a look at France;
Kaiser Bill came down the hill
With bullets in his pants."

Actually, Kaiser Bill never got any bullets in his pants, or anywhere else. Defeated in war, he was sent into exile and lived to a very ripe old age. Hence, the chant hurled at Bloomy was more poetry than truth.

Bloomy might have been a beautiful baby, but physical attractiveness wasn't one of his assets in later years. He had an exceptionally ugly face, but his friendly smile worked wonders in winning the favor of all who knew him.

During the depression, when Hoover had everybody looking for prosperity just around the corner, serving on a jury at the County Courthouse was an opportunity rather than a burden.

Picking up a few dollars in this fashion was a fortunate thing for some of the folks who had empty pocketbooks. Bloomy qualified for this category, and landed in the jury box fairly often.

Hard of hearing, he missed most of the testimony, and the big words used by blustering lawyers in their pleas to the jury were, to put it mildly, far beyond his comprehension.

Perhaps it was just as well. At any rate, the juries that Bloomy served on invariably rendered good verdicts, which makes us wonder if it wouldn't be better today if some jurors heard less.

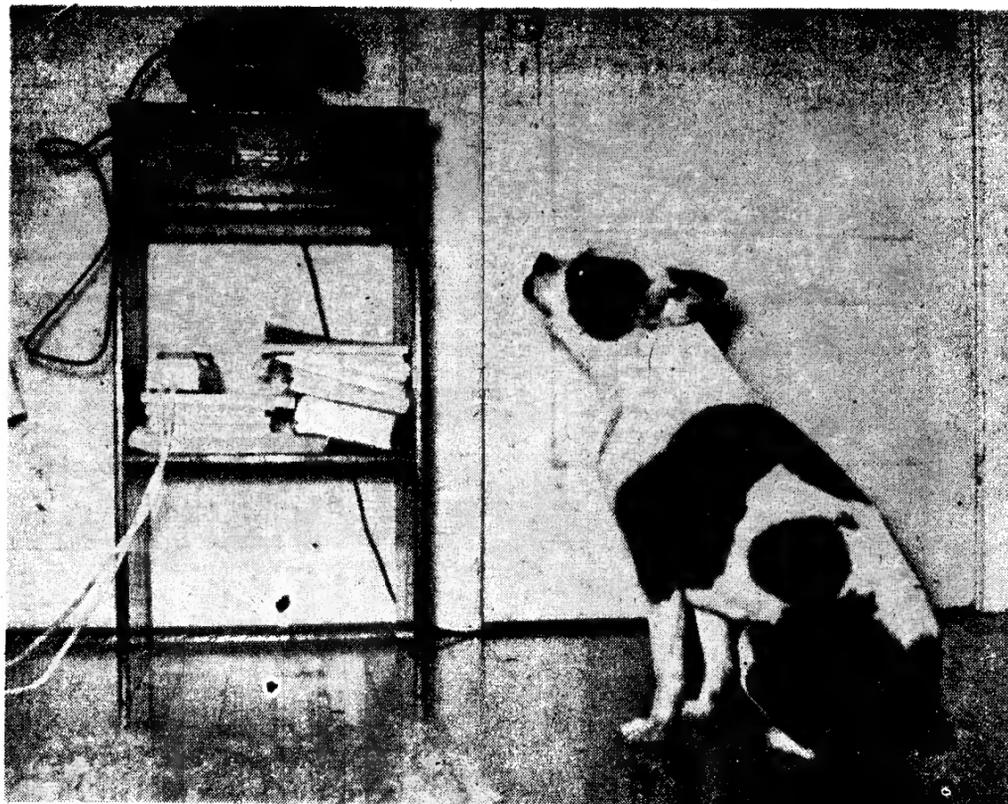
To think of Bloomy is to think of his big black umbrella. He toted it rain or shine, to and from home, and got kidded about it a lot. Those who kidded him got soaked by a considerable number of sudden showers, as the years rolled by. Bloomy meanwhile stayed dry.

It never occurred to this kindly German Jew that he was making history in his journey from the cradle to the grave. Yet, his personality is interwoven in the fabric of New Bern's lasting lore.

In the final analysis, we forget the so-called big wheels who dominate our community life for their comparatively short stay on earth. Their contribution, great or small, passes into oblivion, while remaining ever fresh are the memories of folks like Bloomy.

Bloomy amassed no wealth, wrote no book, composed no song, nor elected to political office. He didn't look important, and measured by things material he lived up to his looks.

Why then, do so many New Bernians still remember the likes of him? It's a question not easily answered. His immortality stems from the intangible. That's a word



HE STILL REMEMBERS—Buster Willis, the 13-year-old Boston bull who bosses the Raymond Willis home at 906 Christopher Avenue, never has figured out why the family telephone conked him on the head when he was just a puppy—a few weeks old.

Actually, it did him a big favor, seeing as how it cured him of nibbling and yanking lamp cords. What happened before the telephone episode should have cured him, but it only made him world famous.

Fresh from weaning, he bit into a lamp cord on an otherwise peaceful morning, and inadvertently turned himself into an electric appliance. Ordinarily, he was content to tug at cords in much the same way that he tugged at Raymond's and Mary's heartstrings. This time it was different.

He was stiffer than a starched collar when his owners found him. He still had the severed cord clenched between his teeth, and the end of his tongue had been neatly clipped off by the 110 volts racing through his tiny body. The rest of his tongue had disappeared down his throat.

"He'll either live or die," Dr. D. R. Coppage

said, "and there isn't much we can do about it." Buster appeared right dead, so Dr. Coppage appeared dead right.

Three days later, Buster's unconscious twitches turned to wiggles. Having been lit up with some pretty strong stuff, he didn't act too joyous when he staggered to his feet.

Winning a tug of war over all available lamp cords, he latched onto the telephone cord. The telephone had Buster's number. It toppled from a small table, and clobbered him, as they say in places other than Harvard. The blow woke Buster up instead of putting him to sleep.

From that day to this, Buster has assigned the telephone to long distance, and Buster does the measuring. Don't bother to call the Willis home, if Raymond and Mary aren't at home.

The phone won't be busy, but Buster will be—minding his own business. That large charge did serve one other purpose, aside from solving the cord problem. It gave Buster so much energy, stored up in his innards, that he is still a live wire, despite his advanced years.

Crusade Chairmen Are Busy

Preliminary work to assure the success of the Laymen's Witness for Christ Crusade that opens here on August 16 is well underway.

Committees and their chairmen have already been named, and the committees are functioning. Spurred by the realization that never before in the nation have so many prominent lay speakers assembled in a single city, local church leaders are highly enthusiastic.

Named as executive chairman of the one-week series of services in the New Bern high school auditor-

ium was Ernest Smith, who is largely responsible for bringing the Crusade here.

Livingston Stallings will serve as chairman of the finance committee, while Donald Smith is music chairman. Others named are Harry Wright, publicity chairman; Tim Montgomery, prayer chairman; Sam Futrell and Milton Langston, co-chairmen for reservations; J. Wilbur Smith and V. J. Chance, co-chairmen for ushers; Cedric Boyd, auditorium chairman; J. E. Edwards, chairman for business

firms; Mrs. W. F. Dowdy, Sr., residential chairman; Rev. K. Alvin Pitt and Capt. W. H. Abernethy, co-chairmen for personal workers; Rev. Cecil Campbell, ministers' advisory chairman; and Craig Barnhardt, hospitality chairman.

Aside from New Bern, intense interest in the Crusade has been voiced over a wide area, and large groups from neighboring communities are already making plans to attend.

Wasn't Hard to Sense the Gravity of Lebanese Move

New Bernians had little trouble sensing the gravity of the Lebanese crisis, when the storm broke this week.

Before the official announcement that Marines were being sent into the trouble zone, news of the impending action filtered out of Cherry Point and Camp Lejeune through unofficial mediums.

Citizens in these parts stirred uneasily, recalling the movements of men from the two big bases during World War Two and the later Korean action.

Bloomy wouldn't have understood, but New Bern understood Bloomy. What else mattered?

Most apprehensive of all were the many Marine families living in our midst, and their countless friends. Home is where the heart is, and this thing had arrived there to dampen the joy that a heart should have.

A service town such as this does not have to read the papers, listen to radio, or watch television to know when an international crisis looms on the horizon.

Invariably, it is reflected in the activity engendered at nearby bases. There has been nothing routine about the activity at either base in recent days. Under the circumstances, this could hardly be classified as surprising.

More of Something Needed if Warden Is to Catch Kitty

Maybe New Bern's dog catcher should take a course in cat catching, or else get a larger and stronger net.

All primed to ensnare a number of objectionable cats on King street the other day, he managed to catch the oldest and orneriest feline of the lot.

That is, he caught the critter temporarily. Clawing and biting like two infuriated women in a hair pulling contest, the cat ripped his way through the net and took off down the street.

How far can a cat run before he runs out of breath? That, if the dog catcher is still interested is where he'll find the town's most determined escape artist.

Suggest Plan To Foil Fake Call for Aid

Like other New Bernians, Ken and Shirley Margolis haven't been too happy over the revelation in last week's Mirror that someone with a viciously warped sense of humor is placing fake ambulance calls here.

This unbelievably cruel character calls up in the wee small hours and pretends that there is an accident victim in dire need of emergency attention.

These urgent pleas for help haven't come from pay phones, but from some residence. The caller, obviously no stranger, has shown by his descriptions of make believe accident locations that he knows New Bern and its surroundings.

Ken and Shirley, it seems to us, have come up with a suggestion that can cramp the style of this character and others like him. In fact, it can put him out of business.

It will only take a few seconds, they reason, to verify any and all ambulance calls. When a call comes to one of the local funeral homes for an ambulance, the ambulance driver, or anyone else receiving the call, can ask the number of the phone from which the call is coming.

The driver could say, "Please give me the number of your phone and I'll call you right back to confirm it."

If the caller was faking, from his usual private phone, he wouldn't comply, knowing he would give himself away. If the call was on the level, such a request from the ambulance driver would bring a forthright reply.

The same procedure, if followed, would no doubt discourage such a character from phoning in false fire alarms, if the notion strikes him. If the call comes from a pay phone, there's a solution to that, too. In calling back the number for confirmation, the proprietor of the business establishment can be asked for, and his identity determined.

A Weekend Prayer

Gracious Father of the whole human family, our hearts are overwhelmed as we contemplate the wonder of Thy workmanship in all the earth. How vast the domain of Thy Spirit is! How manifold Thy creations are! How intricate the patterns which are brought into being by Thy divine power! We acknowledge in humility that Thy plans are marvelous beyond any telling or understanding of them.

Gratitude wells up within us when we recall that Thou hast set us in families upon the earth. What a rich blessing it is to be loved within an intimate circle of fellowship, and to have opportunity for extending love throughout that same circle! Teach us, our Father, the way of greater tenderness with those who love us most. Increase our patience and graciousness in the Province of home. Make our homes increasingly the instruments which Thou canst use best in the enlargement of Thy Kingdom.

Let us never forget, dear Father, our relationship to the whole of Thy family, wherever they may live. Enlarge our hearts until those who are not our kinsmen in blood may truly be our kinsmen in brotherhood. May nothing that is human be foreign to our concern and our compassion. Through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.—M. Elmore Turner, Pastor, Broad Street Christian Church, New Bern, N. C.