

# Eastern Echoes

By Gail Roberson



## Life Is Seldom Dull

Life is a wonder, and seldom is it dull. Somewhere along the way, I always stumble upon something that evokes a, "DO WHAT?" out of me. From my files, here are a few bits and pieces I've been collecting:

**Hardware disease.** That's what farmers call it. It seems that cows have a habit of eating anything they come across while grazing, and are particularly attracted to nails, staples, tacks and wire. Therefore, many farmers make a calf swallow a magnet. When the calf has reached maturity and is slaughtered, the butcher removes the magnet, along with all the debris and scrap it has attracted, and then sells it.

As for sheep, they will not drink from running water. Hence the line in the Twenty-third Psalm: "He leadeth me beside the still waters."

The original name for the butterfly was, *Flutterby*. Only female mosquitoes bite, a cockroach will live several weeks without its head, and a mole can dig a tunnel 300 feet long in one night. I can vouch for that one.

The Washington Monument sinks six inches every year, the top of the tower on the Empire State Building was originally intended as a mooring place for dirigibles, and castor oil is used as a lubricant in jet planes. I knew there had to be some use for that stuff better than what my mama insisted on doing with it.

As for taxes, the great Roman poet, Vergil, once held a funeral for a dead fly, complete with pallbearers and lengthy eulogies. You see, in ancient Rome, cemetery land was not taxable, and so, by burying a fly on the land surrounding his private villa, the poet turned his home into a burial ground and thus made it . . . tax-exempt.

This next one is particularly timely, as I am building my outdoor studio and was just, tonight, looking through my fireplace file and studying the mantle ideas. At one time, people hung their coats (or mantles) over a fireplace in order to dry them . . . thus the term "mantle" exists today in the sense that it does.

It costs more to buy a new car today than it cost Christopher Columbus to equip and undertake three voyages to and from the New World. And, by the way, his hair was blond.

President Taft weighed 352 pounds, Woodrow Wilson's wife grazed sheep on the front lawn of the White House, and President Ulysses S. Grant, while in office, was arrested for exceeding the Washington speed limit on his horse.

The average housewife walks ten miles a day around the house while doing her chores and spends twenty-five hours a year making beds.

The typical American spends a year of his life on the telephone, two out of five women dye their hair, and, in San Salvador, drunk drivers are punished by death before a firing squad.

In a ceremony witnessed by more than twenty people, a Los Angeles secretary officially married a 50-pound rock. Moses Alexander, age 93, married a woman who was 105 . . . they were both found dead in their bed the following morning.

And, this little "jewel" fluttered to the floor while I was placing my file back on the shelf. It seems a fitting closing to the wonders of everyday life:

In 1970, an Arizona lawyer named Russel H. Tansie, filed a \$100,000 damage suit against God. The suit was filed on behalf of Mr. Tansie's secretary, Betty Penrose, who accused God of negligence in His power over the weather when He allowed a lightning bolt to strike her home. Ms. Penrose won the case when the defendant failed to appear in court. Whether or not she collected has not been recorded.

## County Has Received \$459,913 For Schools

Craven County has received \$459,913 from the state as part of a 1987 General Assembly plan to shore up public school buildings.

The money credited to Craven County, which will accumulate interest, was part of a \$35 million appropriation by the state to the 100 North Carolina counties on a per-student basis.

Jones County has received \$52,836, and Pamlico County, \$67,762, according to General

Assembly figures.

The money has been generated by a 1 percent increase in corporate income taxes.

Another \$95.5 million has been put into a fund that the General Assembly created to help counties with critical school building needs. The Commission on Critical School Facility Needs currently is analyzing counties' needs before distributing the money.

The bill passed by the legislature last July is expected to generate \$1.36 billion for public schools over the next 10 years.

## Educators

From Page 1

day school ad is co-chairman of the children's ministry, the finance and building fund. She has two children.

Mrs. Saunders received her bachelor of science degree and master's degree from East Carolina University. She has been teaching at Bangert in the first and third grades for 14 years. Mrs. Saunders individualizes instruction to meet a student's needs and provides instructional activities that promote creative and independent learning. She correlates and integrates instruction on all skill levels. Her open and positive rapport with students, parents and teachers provides a relaxed learning environment without stress.

She is a past grade chairman and a state finalist in the Jaycee Outstanding Young Educator Program in 1980. She is a member of NCAE, NEA, International Reading Association and Alpha Delta Kappa International Sorority for Women Educators.

Mrs. Saunders is married to Zoot Saunders and they have two daughters, Erin and Abigail.

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## Allies Or Not?

Most citizens consider the U.S. notion of democracy — government of, by and for the people — as the most desirable form of government. Key principles underlying that democratic commitment in the United States are that the military is subordinate to civilian authority and that elections are the legitimate way to resolve disagreements about political issues.

Traditions in Central America are quite different. Democracy in the North American sense is relatively rare, while military governments or other forms of dictatorial rule have been commonplace. Elections have frequently been held, but are often fraudulent or overturned by force if the results are displeasing to powerful groups in society. Frustrated by this historical legacy, some have argued that attending to problems of poverty and injustice is more important than observation of the niceties of electoral procedures. Others argue that free and fair elections are the only way to guarantee that reforms, once made, can endure.

Recent elections in Guatemala, Honduras, and El Salvador, while largely fair, either did not include serious opposition groups of the left or did not raise crucial questions such as violations of human rights by the military because many feared that discussion of these violations would lead to a military coup. The Nicaraguan election of 1984, also procedurally a fair election by Central American standards, excluded important candidates on the right. It is debatable whether elections that exclude important groups or avoid difficult questions can produce long-term solutions to the problems of Central America.

The military has been a dominant force in most Central American countries since independence. It still holds veto power over the decisions of most of the civilian governments, but in the 1980s has found it necessary to exercise influence behind the scenes rather than to intervene directly by seizing power.

Traditionally, the United States and the military in Central America viewed each other as natural allies in their strong opposition to communism. More recently, assassinations, kidnappings, and other massive violations of human rights by Central American armed forces — and U.S. public reactions to revelations about these violations — have caused both the United States and military leaders to question this alliance.

Past U.S. tolerance of dictatorial governments that were protective of U.S. interests has been replaced in certain cases by an active policy of promoting democratic governments in the region. But as in past experiences such as the Alliance for Progress in the early 1960s — Kennedy's bold political, economic, and military response to Castro's victory in Cuba — the United States has found it much easier to create an efficient and disciplined army than to bring about an honest and competitive political party system, an independent judiciary, or a stable economy. As in El Salvador, the commitment to democracy may be overshadowed by a perceived need to defeat a guerrilla insurgency and is, in any event, an extremely costly and long-term policy for the United States.

Whether the United States should actively promote government in the region that reflect our own democratic values or take a direct role only when extreme governments clearly threaten U.S. interests is a question that the next President of the United States will have to address.



Award Winners

Several West Craven High School students returned from a Future Homemaker of America competition held at Lenoir Community College with awards. They were: Reva Clark, second place in cake decorating; Erma Coward, second place in job application and interview; Tony Fonville, third place in food service; Parinda Cox, third place in nutritious snacks and Felicia Williams, third place in job application and job interview senior occupation. The following students received certificates: Melody Wright, child development display; Miguel Coward, food service; Daphne Roach, comparison shopping; Denise Dudley, illustrated talks (senior); Michelle Waddock, chapter program of work and Tyrone Moore, food service.

# SOCIAL SECURITY?

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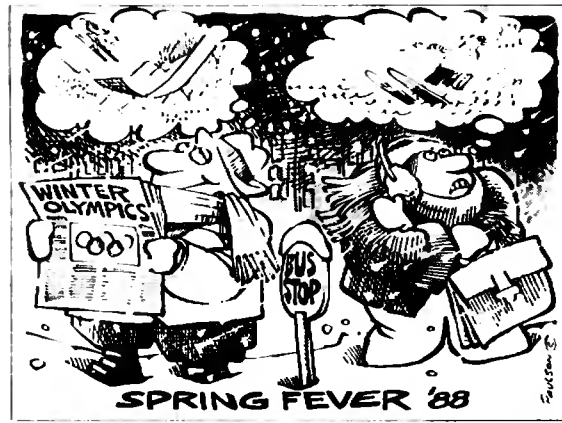
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