

GAIL WINDS

by: Gail L. Roberson

The Internal Revenue Service is like lint . . . always in your pocket. It's taxing time again, and if you have not already paid in full, you will, soon enough. As the deadline for filing taxes draws nearer, most of us hug our purses and pout. But, it won't do any good. The federal government has no trouble whatsoever in drawing blood from a turnip.

I don't have much to say today. Since the IRS knocked the wind out of my sails recently, I've just been drifting along, unable and uncaring. It always takes me a while to repair the sail and catch the breeze again once the great giant of a storm has ripped it to shreds. So, if I sound a bit out of it today, I am.

The evil form 1040, serves double duty, says one man. He believes it to be a unique form of self-destruction. First, the form sorely taxed his income, and then it taxed his powers of deduction. His two-year old son swallowed some coins and suffered a great deal of prolonged distress. The doctors couldn't help the poor child, so the man took him to the Internal Revenue Service. They didn't have any problem at all.

People owe it to themselves to become as successful as possible. Once they've finally become successful, they owe it to the IRS. I work 80 hours a week to be as productive as I can, and as successful as I can. And, I also like the money. But, after taking a long look at my schedule, I'm come to the conclusion that I would probably be just as well off, financially, if I worked only half that much. As a taxpayer, I am someone who doesn't have to take a civil service exam to work for the government.

If money is the root of all evil, then income tax is the weed killer. Not only can we not take it with us, we can't keep it while we're here either. The more you make, the more they'll take. Sometimes it hardly seems worth the effort. Remember those posters that said, "Uncle Sam wants YOU"? Well, now they read, "Uncle Sam wants YOURS."

When I think of the Internal Revenue Services, my mind, at the same time, projects the image of a bird. We should strive harder to protect our birds. The dove brings us peace. The stork brings us tax exemptions.

Still, with all the hate I have for the governmental branch called the IRS, I suppose I have at least one good thing to say about paying taxes. I don't like it, but I try to console myself with the thought that paying income taxes is a small price to bear for the freedom of living in a country where I can outright attack the government by writing far from agreeable opinions of its practices and not be thrown in jail for it, or worse.

So, much as I hate to say it, I'd rather be taxed than tried for my opinion on being taxed. But I'm still not having a good day.

Oyster Relaying Halted By Parasite's Presence

The annual relaying period for transplanting oysters to leased or deeded bottoms has been cancelled for this year, according to William T. Hogarth director of the N.C. Division of Marine Fisheries.

The findings that oyster deaths last fall were caused by an oyster parasite known as Dermo is the reason for cancelling the relaying period, he said.

This parasite is easily spread when an infected oyster is placed near an uninfected oyster.

Sampling for Dermo was conducted in a limited number of areas last fall and cannot be made again until early summer due to low water temperatures.

This leaves many relaying areas untested for the parasite causing the concern about transplanting, Hogarth said.

Pending further testing, oyster relaying will be reopened for the spring 1990 season, he said.

"Cancellation of this program will hurt many shellfish leaseholders who rely on cleansing polluted oysters for production on their leases," Hogarth said.

Normally, 20,000 to 30,000 bushels of oysters are moved to leased land each year, he said.

During the red tide relaying

program, many polluted shellfish were virtually cleaned out and availability of oysters to transplant this year would be low.

Dermo is a single-cell parasite, invisible to the human eye, fisheries spokesmen said.

The parasite thrives in warm, salty waters typical of tidal creeks and sounds during drought conditions attacking the oysters and eventually killing them.

In samples from the Newport River, 40 percent of the oysters contained Dermo. Lockwood Folly and Virginia Creek samples showed that nearly 85 percent of the oysters were infected with Dermo.

The parasite has also been identified in Jones Bay in Pamlico County, fisheries spokesmen said.

Transplanting of clams will begin April 1 and continue through May 15. Designated areas for this activity have yet to be determined, Hogarth said.

For further information, interested persons can contact the Division of Marine Fisheries by calling 1-800-682-2632 Monday through Friday 6:15 a.m. to 11 p.m.

Obituary

William G. Cook

William Gary Cook, 52, died Sunday at his home on Rt. 2, Vanceboro.

The funeral service was held Wednesday at 3 p.m. in the National Avenue Baptist Church, New Bern, and officiated by Rev. Phillip Hall. Burial was in Celestial Memorial Gardens, Vanceboro.

He is survived by his wife, Ida Fornes Cook; two daughters, Theresa Cook Toler of Vanceboro and Barbara Cook Jones of Chocowinity; his mother, Lillian

Cook of Bridgeton; three sisters, Elizabeth Losavio, Ethel Acker and Barbara K. Stille, all of Vanceboro; six brothers, Franklin T. Cook, Jimmy Lee Cook and Gene Cook, all of Bridgeton, Edward Cook of Washington, Harold Cook of New York and Earl Gray Cook of Morehead City; and two grandchildren.

He was a native of Vanceboro and had lived at Cowpen Landing for six years. He was the owner and operator of Cook Construction Co. and had worked for Weyerhaeuser for many years.



SEEDS FROM THE SOWER

By Michael A. Guido, Metter, Georgia

An old lady said to a stranger, "If you're going to give me a pitcher of milk, don't skim it first."

What she meant was: If you're going to do a favor, don't spoil it by an ungracious word or deed.

Some people give, but they give grudgingly. They do you a favor, but they never let you forget it. They want you to look up to them for help, but they look

down on you when they help you. But a person who looks up to God never looks down on man.

Don't expect to enjoy life if you keep the milk of kindness all bottled up. And if you're going to serve someone, don't skim the sweetness from the service.

The Bible says, "Whatever you do, do it heartily, as unto the Lord."

Our Opinion

Poor Hit Hard Whenever Any Item Tax Is Levied

When it comes to this matter of levying taxes, the source itself in just about every instance hits poor people hardest because they are the least able to pay.

When it comes to property, if a poor family owns a home, it so often finds it extremely difficult to pay the taxes levied upon that home. While we do not argue that by necessity one smokes cigarettes, if he or she does, the heavy taxes levied upon each pack hits the poor person harder than the well-to-do citizen.

Now we have been reminded that when the argument begins over the charge that the sales tax hits the poor person harder than the rich person, that very argument can be extended to just about every source of taxation.

Of course, the more money one makes, the more income taxes he or she pays. The more property one owns, the more property taxes one pays. Yet, this nation, state, and locality would be in bad shape if only income and property taxes were allowed.

We have been reminded critically that the gasoline taxes hit the poor person much harder than the rich person even though each pays the same amount per gallon. We are reminded that the state gasoline tax is 15.95 cents per gallon while the federal tax per gallon comes to 9.10 for a total of 25.05 cents per gallon. It is argued that the poor man has to have transportation to get to and from his work. That is surely true, and there is no argument there from us.

The present proposal in North Carolina is to increase the gasoline tax by around five cents per gallon, the money to be used for building and improving our highways and roads.

Taxes on items, we have long contended, work a greater hardship on those least able to pay. The sales tax offers the best example because few of us ever stop to consider how much taxes we pay on gasoline, and smokers seldom stop to think of how much taxes they are paying on a pack of cigarettes.

Now we believe that anyone must agree that there is a difference between taxing a necessity and a non-necessity. Does anyone argue that tobacco and alcohol are necessities? We realize that the confirmed smoker who wants to quit but who is unable might look at tobacco as a necessity.

We are bothered at times about just where we are heading when we pick out item by item upon which to place special taxes, and then add a sales tax on the very taxes we are already paying. One day we might look at items other than clothes, food, and medicines as being non-essential with both special taxes and sales taxes added and collected at the cash register.

We realize that the subject of taxes is not a favorite one with our citizenry. All of us dislike the very word when it comes to paying. It becomes more tasteful when it comes to some benefits we might receive.

So we are aware that item taxes hit the poor harder than the rich. At the same time the rich are able to pay taxes in general much better and with far greater ease than the poor.

But both poor and rich are about equal in their dislike of paying taxes.

It's Time Some Attention Be Given Rural Hospitals

A bi-partisan coalition of U.S. House members has proposed legislation to improve and insure the availability of health care in small towns and rural areas.

This group, concerned that rural hospitals are an endangered species, is making a start. While progress might be slow, the effort just has to be made, and the sooner we can go about this business, the sooner rural areas will be helped.

We are deeply concerned when we read that since 1980 in this country 163 rural hospitals have been forced to close because they just could not make ends meet. That is a sad story, but it is one which ought to serve as a challenge to congress to delay no longer.

The group involved contends that the Medicare payment system discriminates against hospitals and physicians in rural areas. For hospitals, it is pointed out that there is an 11 percent differential between payments to rural and urban hospitals.

Why must this be so? If we look at the machinery now set up to handle the problems of health care, it would appear that government has dealt rural people a bad deal or at least a less palatable one than that which urbanites enjoy.

Today in North Carolina many counties are struggling to entice doctors to come to the area. There are government programs, but even then we understand that today in our state we have counties without doctors.

And when we read that this or that rural hospital is in deep financial trouble, we must wonder how long it can remain open. Since 1980 we have had several hospitals in North Carolina to close their doors because they no longer could make it.

If the government does not seek to equalize financial treatment, then we are likely to see the picture grow ever darker. Doctors want to go where hospital services are readily available. Enticing a doctor to come to a community in which a hospital has just closed its doors is a difficult and well nigh impossible task.

In our area of North Carolina, we are rural. Our own Beaufort County hospital and our own Pungo hospital serve a rural clientele, according to our understanding of how the government looks upon communities of our size and our population.

One congressman suggests that the federal government will really determine which rural hospitals survive. He says that two thirds of them are now losing money and adds "many of them will not be around long unless we do something to help."

One proposal which seems to be gathering some steam would remove that 11 percent differential between rural and urban hospitals over a three year period. And lawmakers interested in this proposed bill say they must equalize Medicare payments between rural and urban doctors.

So a start has been made. It would be a great tragedy if the effort dies in its infancy. Some adjustments seem so badly needed. Congress can sit back and do nothing and allow the picture to become every more clouded, or it can make a genuine effort to help.

And as we see the picture, help is needed now.



Bassin' with the pros

Have you ever lost a bass because your line broke, the hook was too dull to penetrate properly, or your reel wouldn't engage properly?

Problems like this happen, but they can easily be prevented, notes Freddie Lee, a professional tournament angler and member of the Johnson Outboards Pro Staff.

"Fishing tackle is almost maintenance-free," explains the former fashion model-turned-angler, "but there are some basic things every angler can do to insure that tackle continues to perform properly on trip after trip. Whenever a problem does occur, you know it's going to happen at the worst possible time, such as when you hook the biggest bass of your life."

The first thing Lee suggests is to make certain lures are dry

when they're put into storage. This is especially important if an entire tackle box should get wet during a rainstorm, because the added moisture may cause the hooks to rust.

"A single wet lure dropped into a box after use won't cause many problems," says the Johnson pro, "but a tightly closed box holding several dozen wet lures is inviting trouble."

"When all my lures get wet, I spread them out on a towel and let them dry, or blow them dry with a hair dryer. I dry out the different compartments in the tackle box, too, before I put the lures back in."

Wet reels can also cause problems. Lee suggests putting a few drops of oil on them after each fishing trip. That way, the oil has a chance to do its work while the reel isn't being used. The worst

time to oil a reel is in the middle of a trip when the fish are biting.

"Quite possibly the most neglected aspect of tackle maintenance is sharpening hooks," Lee continues. "I sharpen the hooks on each lure when I first take that lure out of its package. Manufacturers can make excellent lures, but most of the hooks used are only moderately sharp."

"If a hook slides across your fingernail without biting in, it's too dull for bass fishing," she says. "Only a few seconds with a file will sharpen it so it sticks on your fingernail immediately, and when it does, it's ready for fish."

On her tournament boat, Lee uses a chart recorder to help pinpoint structure likely to hold bass. She doesn't have the unit mounted on the console, however, like many anglers do. Instead,

hers is mounted on a small, carpet-covered board under the console.

"Under the console the recorder is protected from rain and dust, and it doesn't receive nearly the vibration that it would on the console," she explains. "The board is movable so I can put the recorder in different positions for when I'm idling slowly and just looking, or when I'm up in front and actually fishing."

"For fishermen who use these expensive pieces of equipment, I'd really recommend keeping them under the console. It's the best preventive maintenance I know of to keep problems from occurring when you least want them to."



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