

GAIL WINDS

by: Gail L. Roberson

"Nothing" is often a good thing to say. There's nothing wrong with having nothing to say, as long as you don't say it out loud. Some folks are so long-winded that they forget what they're saying by the time they finally get around to it. I come from a long line of seasoned talkers. One of my uncles talks so fast it can be compared to a man reading Playboy magazine while his wife turns the pages.

One good thing about silence is that it can't be repeated. I have found that "opened by mistake" applies more often to mouth than it does to mail. No one has yet invented a better trap than an open mouth. Even a fish would stay out of trouble if he kept his mouth shut. What you don't know won't hurt you, but it can bore your friends half to death if you keep repeating it.

There are those who talk a lot but say very little, and those who talk a little and say very much. I don't see too many people who don't fit in one or the other of these categories.

A woman in Los Angeles was berating the grocery store man about everything from his prices to the fact that it was raining outside. As she finally left, he commented . . . "That woman's got enough mouth for two sets of teeth."

But in comparison, some parents were worried sick about their little boy, age eight, who hadn't spoken a word since birth. One day he looked up at breakfast and said, "Could I have a little more sugar on my oatmeal?" The parents were dumfounded, and hysterically cried, "You spoke! You said something! Tell us, why have you waited all these years?" The little kid shrugged his shoulders and replied, "Up till this, everything's been okay."

We professional speakers have to keep our feet clean, for we never know when we'll put them in our mouth. We also have to watch the clock. On concluding an exceedingly long and dull presentation, one speaker said, "And now, if anyone has a question, I'll be glad to try to answer it." A member of the audience stood up and asked, "Is it still 1989?"

Speaking in public is hard enough, but keeping it interesting is the real challenge. The master of ceremonies at a banquet table awakened a guest at his right by tapping his bald head with the gavel while the last speaker was holding forth before a large and exhausted audience. "Hit me again," the aroused snoozer implored. "I can still hear him."

An accomplished public speaker knows the rules and uses them: Stand up so people can see you. Speak up so people can hear you. And shut up so people will like you.

Some people are easily entertained. All you have to do is sit down and listen to them. We all know a few. They're people of words and not of deeds. Like a garden full of weeds.

Yes, nothing is opened by mistake as much as the mouth. There's no need to say all that you know, but always know what you say. But even then, you can bet your mouth mints that after all is said and done . . . somebody's probably still talking. The tongue weighs practically nothing. Yet, it's surprising how few people are able to hold it. So, let's save face, and keep the lower part of it shut.

Southern Seen

By LARRY MCGEHEE
We must confess to mixed feelings about the mixed-up affairs in China.

All my sympathies are with the young protesters, and I share with Congress and most Americans deep feelings of revulsion at the crackdown on them and the executions and prosecutions that have followed.

Yet, those who were around between 1968 and 1970 are haunted by memories of similar student revolts in our own country, of police and protesters clashing at the 1968 Democratic Convention in Chicago, and of deaths at official hands at Jackson State and Kent State in 1970. We recall only too well the mood of the times, the public call for suppression of the young and for the dismissal of those administrators who tolerated their disruptiveness. The impulse of "get things back to normal" was overwhelming. We have seen even felt some revival of this in the recent flap over the Supreme Court decision on the buring of the flag.

If a return to normalcy was so urgent in our own country in 1970, in a nation where freedoms of speech and expression were long-engrained habits and rights, it is likely that such an impulse would be even stronger in China in 1989, in a nation unaccustomed to assembly and protest.

The troubling aspect of the China protests is that it raises a very thorny question of "why were the protests of American students wrong but those of Chinese students right?" Almost as troubling is to hear American leaders who attacked American student protests calling for economic and military intervention on behalf of Chinese protesters.

It is a peculiar paradox. Perhaps because it is such a paradox, President Bush has been moving cautiously and carefully—too much so, to many people's way of thinking.

Bush knows that China is not going to go away. He knows that this emerging nation represents a large percentage of the world population and a hunk of the world's power. He knows that China has always acted self-sufficiently and that when the current storms pass, China will still be there and will still need to be dealt with.

President Bush is personally as pained and as indignant as the rest of us about what is happening in China. But there is a difference between acting personally and acting presidentially. His present dilemma is in finding the best way to act

presidentially.

He has registered with the Chinese government his own protest on behalf of the Chinese protesters. He has seen to it that they know that most Americans share his feelings. He has not been able, however, to show the Chinese government how to retreat from its strong-arm repressions without losing face.

And to the Chinese, "losing face" is a matter of great importance. A lot of alumni thought President Kingman Brewster of Yale, Bush's alma mater, "lost face" for treating protesters at Yale too gingerly. Who was right? What were the other action options that could have been taken?

Those are the relevant questions. What are the options? What are the likely consequences of the options? How can two warring sides that both want economic progress come together instead of flying apart?

Bush and our nation are in a dilemma which is the classical paradox of progress. Status quoism is always the way of governments, but progress is always the impulse for protest. No resolution of a revolution is ever completely satisfying to anyone, and no perfect mechanism for reaching a resolution has ever been invented. The use of mass protest and the counter-use of force to suppress it is an admission that talk, thought, and transactions are skills we practice poorly and too infrequently.

Protests come suddenly and in masses, and suppressions follow as inevitably as knee-jerk reactions to walking into a coffee table in the dark. Perhaps accommodation, cooperation, and reconciliation are already impossible by the time the people occupy the public square. Perhaps if there were many smaller forums where people could speak out and governments could hear, both protests and repressions would become unnecessary.

But meanwhile, as we await such a millennium of rationality, we all find it hard to stay cool about cold-heartedness, don't we? We pour our indignation instead of solutions only because other options are not obvious to us. It is a painful and perplexing paradox.

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Our Opinion

Little Would Be Realized By Tax On Movie Tickets

We are rather surprised that one of the plans under consideration in the North Carolina Legislature is a tax on movie tickets.

As we read the proposal, it states that a three percent tax would be collected on all theater tickets with the estimated sum coming to the state being \$1.7 million per year. With the budgetary problems facing the legislature right now, the figure is extremely small, but the blow to the theaters might be heavier than most people realize.

We know that today we have far fewer theaters in our state than were in operation 50 years ago. The onslaught of television has hit the movie business hard, and hundreds of theaters have been forced to close their doors.

In 1950 neighboring Beaufort County had five movie theaters operating. Today we have one building with three movies. The facts tell us the story of what has happened. When people can sit at home and over television watch a good movie or a ball game or a quiz show, then thousands do that rather than spend money at a theater.

We cannot at this writing know just how the theater owners will react to such a proposed ticket tax, but we are of the opinion that over the state theater owners are having it difficult enough without any special tax being applied to the tickets. Of course, prices range, but a theater ticket today will cost anywhere from one dollar to five dollars for a movie. For a play with live talent, the cost might range from \$10 to \$20.

The proposed three percent tax would be paid by the customer and not by the theater. We realize that fact. But every little extra charge might hurt more than most of us know. Certainly, theater operators know, and they are expected to make a fight before the legislature.

The people of North Carolina need to realize that the legislature is groping with every possible straw, looking up every possible avenue for additional money and finding strenuous opposition to just about every approach. At the same time the pressure is heavy and continues to find additional monies in order to give teachers and state employees a six percent pay raise. We expect the body will find the money somewhere. But finding it from theater goes to the tune of only \$1.7 million per year hardly makes it a worthwhile source.

At this point, it is only a proposal. It is in the legislative budget hat along with many other proposals. The attitude of the citizenry so often can be summed up aptly by saying "tax the other fellow, but leave me alone."

Finding new or additional tax sources is no easy task. Legislators do not make friends by taxing special interests or using item taxation or hitting any one group's pocketbook. Some might be happy with the use of the money received, but on the other side of the coin, from whence it came might leave some unhappy North Carolinians.

No Other Way

As much as it pains us, we must agree that in just about every endeavor today, costs run wild ahead of revenues. And it does pain and concern all of us who have payrolls to meet and business needs to face.

We have just learned that Pitt County Memorial Hospital, the facility used by East Carolina Medical School, is increasing its room rates by 19 percent and its hospital care prices by 17.2 percent. In practical terms, the normal room heretofore costing \$210 per day will go to \$230 per day as of October 1. We are concerned with higher prices there, but we see no other way.

This hospital and medical school represent big business for our part of the country. And the hospital, just as all North Carolina hospitals, faces the fact that many patients do not pay or pay very little. So it is pointed out that when one leaves the hospital in Greenville, 26 cents out of every dollar in the bill is there to pay for somebody else who does not pay.

That's the way it is. And we have no other choice.

If Someone Offers You Drugs--
JUST SAY NO
And GO HOME!

NO!

Double Talk Does Not Help The Need For Prison Space

People all over North Carolina have long realized the need for more prison space. They are tired of seeing criminals be sent up for five years and get back home in five months.

Now a recent meeting of the Southern Legislative Conference, held in Baltimore, attended by several North Carolina legislators, may have been partly a social experience paid for by the taxpayers and partly a discussion time. But even in discussing problems now apparent in Southern states, when we read double-talk, we must confess that something sounds very strange.

An Associated Press story says "new prisons fill up as quickly as they are finished and aren't the answer to prison overcrowding, but that does not mean states can stop building them, Southern legislators have been advised."

Now if that above paragraph is not one great piece of wisdom, we just do not know wisdom when we see it. Why do we build prisons?

We build new prisons because the present facility capacity is inadequate to take care of the number of criminals assigned. So we must provide more space. If the general public would only stop to take a good look, then our citizenry would realize so very well that the courts are trying to mete out justice, but because of limited prison space, the parole board is thwarting pure justice by issuing paroles long before the inmates ought to get them. We must keep the prison population down, and the only way we can do it is to parole too many too quickly.

So the legislators are advised that building new prisons and adding more cells cannot be the answer. If providing adequate prison space to house the criminals of North Carolina who have been tried before a jury and found guilty, then sentenced by a qualified judge to prison is not the solution, then someone ought to stand up and tell the Southern legislators just where they can find that much sought after solution.

We all must agree that other factors are involved in this challenge of meting out justice. But providing adequate prison space is at or near the top of every list, we must believe. If this be untrue, then why is the federal government pushing North Carolina so hard to provide additional prison cells?

Common sense tells us that we cannot build prisons overnight. The North Carolina Legislature this year has appropriated \$80 million for prison construction. So we ought to get some additional space, but \$80 million hardly will fill the overall needs.

In North Carolina we seem to have a prison cap of 18,000 prisoners. When the prison population passes 98 percent of that 18,000 for as much as 15 days, then what might be termed "emergency" paroles are given. That fellow who robbed a store or who snatched a pocketbook from a woman or who shot someone can be seen back home in weeks.

Justice takes a back seat. Prison space is in control. Let North Carolina quit dribbling the ball and build adequate prison space.

Unusual Order

We have never before heard of an order from a court that a dog be brought into the courtroom in order that purer justice might be found.

In Durham County a mixed breed dog was a fine pet. She strayed away and the owner tried valiantly to find her with no success. Another family found her and adopted her. Both owners apparently had great affection for the dog. Now the court plans to exercise a Solomon-like gesture and see just which family the dog wants to be with most.

As we read the story, we see that lawyers are having a field day with such an unusual order. The fact that both families want this dog very much poses a difficult problem. But we doubt that pure justice can be found by bringing a dog into court to see just which family she chooses.

We doubt very much that this is the way to settle this lawsuit.

Women's Group Hears Devotion About Prayer

The Women's Ministries of Vanceboro Pentecostal Holiness Church met last Tuesday night. The meeting was called to order by President Jeanette Boyd.

Lois Spear gave the devotion. The topic was prayer and praise and she referred to Acts 16:25 for the Scriptural reference. She pointed out the prayer is a beginning situation, a link between mankind and God. She said when people quit praying, the link is broken between mankind and God.

Mrs. Spear said people need to continue praying because prayers is able to change things. She said people

also need the prayers of their loved ones. She also said people need to sing praises to God, including praises of joy and thanksgiving.

The group made plans for a mission supper at 6 p.m. before prayer meeting at 7:30 p.m.

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