



point of view

BY BILL NIXON

Editor's note: Nixon, an Edenton native, is vice-president of Parker Brothers Newspapers of Chesapeake. His column appears weekly in a number of that group's publications.

Have you been a patient in a hospital lately? If so, you probably found the bill for services to be more of a hazard to your health than your original illness.

What is behind the continued increases in hospital and related care? Last year, hospital costs increased another 19 per cent to a new record high. Why?

If you are one of those that keeps up with the monthly cost of living reports, you'll see right at the top of the list are "medical treatment" and utility bills.

An examination of the escalating cost of electricity reveals the average household electric bill has gone up 700 per cent over the past 35 years! And still, the utilities say they need more money.

But wait. Let's look at these costs a bit closer. Actually, the cost of electricity per thousand kilowatt hours, in the average home, has increased seven times because the household requires seven times more electricity to operate the array of appliances and gadgets found in most homes.

The cost of operating an air conditioner, deep freezers, hair dryers, and refrigerators; washer-dryers, electric can openers, radios, televisions, night lights, and so on contributes greatly to the increased cost of electric services.

What was once considered luxuries is now necessity. We find fault with everyone but ourselves when we receive our monthly electric bill but ourselves. In reality, it is really our dependency on so many electric gadgets that creates the higher bills. And we will not admit that we can do without many of the appliances and items we now have plugged in.

So, how about the rising cost of health services? Are we to blame for the increases for these services also?

Americans now spend \$274 billion a year for medical care. Of that amount, most

goes to doctors and therapy. Only \$110 billion actually goes to hospitals.

Nonetheless, there is an enormous increase over what was paid for medical treatment a dozen years ago. Can we go back to those years? Back before transplanted synthetic organs and limbs, pacemakers, mechanical pancreas, the artificial larynx and stereoscopically restored eyesight? Would we go back? No.

Today's Americans are willing to pay whatever it costs to live longer. We want the best doctors, the best therapy, the best of everything, including hospital facilities. And the best always cost more.

Americans also spend more time in the hospital today than ever before, and we go more often. Many times, hospital care is not even needed, but we often feel we have to have the treatment so many feel can only be found in a hospital.

Sure, it all cost a lot, but with insurers or employers or the government paying the bills, why not?

So, who is really the cause of higher and higher cost for day to day living. The answer is probably as near as the mirror.

Whether you are a duck hunter or not, you'll enjoy this story.

Even during duck hunting season, it is doubtful our feathered friends are in any danger of extinction. Hunters have refined the art to using magnum cannons without birdshot patterns the size of a canned ham without ever ruffling a feather. And still they miss their targets.

Duck hunting is seldom economical but always joyous. It's necessary to keep convincing yourself that it's fun to get up at 3 A.M., lie in a cold, wet place, and make strange sounds. A plumber does the same thing under a house; but gets paid for it.

Making duck sounds is a real art. Some guys can make sounds so realistic they have to shoot drakes in self defense to keep them from trying to mate with them. Most duck imitations can be described

as accurate duck calls, Daffy that is.

Probably one of the most impressive duck stories told involved a curious sky hunter, as those that use the magnum cannons are called, and the guy who soundlessly knocked duck after duck out of the air without firing a shot.

When asked how he did such a thing, the hunter replied, "I ugly 'em down." When asked to explain, the guy twisted his face into a horrible contortion, his eyes met the duck's, and suddenly the air was filled with feathered cartwheels as the duck fell at his feet.

"Wow!" exclaimed the curious sky hunter. "Why don't you bring your wife out here and get double your limit?"

"Can't," replied the hunter. "She's so ugly she's magnum ugly. She tears them up too bad."

Until next week, we'll leave you with this thought. If you want your child to grow up right, train them while they are young to walk in the way that they should go, and walk there yourself once in a while.

Notaries Publics

Jean White, Perquimans County register of deeds, will conduct a three-hour course for Chowan County residents to satisfy new state requirements for Notaries Publics.

The one-time seminar is mandatory prior to the first appointment of persons who wish to become notaries, according to Clayton Morrisette, continuing education director at College of The Albemarle. The brief training session will begin at 7 P.M. on February 24 at John A. Holmes High School in Edenton.

A \$8 registration fee will be charged for the training course which was developed by the N.C. Department of Community Colleges in cooperation with the N.C. Department of State.

"We are always getting ready to live but never living."
Ralph Waldo Emerson

Beyond The Weeds — Start Planting March 1st

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world gathering that smilax by himself. He told her how it was all over the ditches and just running on top of the ground.

Sue packed her snippers,

apron and wire for her decorating duties the next morning. She got the kids off, left Charlie some eggs, and was putting on her new corduroy split skirt with matching argyles and topsiders

when Charlie came back from warming up the engine. He mentioned that some of the leaves were curling, but Sue paid no mind.

It was when she went out to check the trunk that she

became unglued. People all the way to the courthouse heard her yell, "Charlie, you get out here this instant!" And some other things.

No wonder Charlie had filled the trunk in less than two

hours. No wonder the leaves were turning brown.

Sue taught Charlie an important lesson right then and there.

Kudzu vine makes a lousy Christmas wreath.

Hoke Roberson, Jr.

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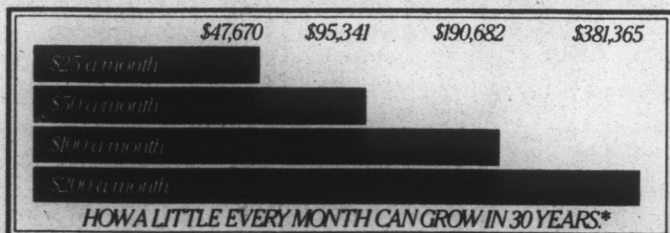
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