

The Franklin Times

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LOCAL EDITORIAL COMMENT

Whole Thing Needs Airing

It is strange—although a perpetually occurring thing—that keepers of the minutes of board, council and commission meetings diligently record for posterity and the law such actions as calls for bids and approval of reports and other harmless bits of information. And stranger still, these same efficient historians omit completely the really significant goings on. But, then, how do you record a distasteful discussion or one with which you might not agree?

Whoever acts as secretary to the Louisburg Town Council is no worse in this matter than a number of others we could mention. This one just happens to come to light vividly today.

Last Friday night—with newsmen tipped that something was brewing—the Council met in regular session. Right off, according to reliable reports of the meeting, at least three members expressed a very great dissatisfaction with the way the town is being operated. At one point, according to the report, the Mayor himself said he was ready—if the Council was—to "clean house".

The fact that the Council barked and then rolled over as it has done in the past to be patted on the head is beside the point. The discussion is of public significance. If half the Council is not pleased with the way they are running things surely the Louisburg taxpayer wants to know more. And surely this expression should have been made a part of the records of the meeting.

Now that what has been whispered in private for some time is a matter of public—such as it is—record, it should

be quickly brought even more in the open.

The public has seen a deterioration of services in recent months and much of what the Council discussed is probably already known. One does not need to research the ordinance book—which one Council member says might as well be burned for all the good it's doing—to know that the town is dirtier than it should be or that garbage pickup is not up to par. And there is little need to get into the subject of electric current charges—doubled this month, in some cases.

One Council member expressed the belief that things will not change as long as Town Administrator E. S. Ford remains in charge. The air should be cleared because as long as the matter hangs it is an injustice to Mr. Ford and to others. If things aren't going well and Mr. Ford is hired to see that they do, the burden has to be his. On the other hand, if the fault lies elsewhere or with some others, this should be brought to light.

It isn't easy serving on a Council, board or commission. It's often times a thankless job but most members of such groups serve honestly and well and to the best of their ability. When they see things not to their liking, they do what they feel they are sworn to do—act in what they believe to be the best interest of the public that elected them.

Some change is apparently now indicated in the operation of the Louisburg Town government. Whatever that change may be or what direction the Council feels it must take should be told the people. And the sooner, the better.

A Letter From A Dead Soldier

Just before Sgt. Jeff Davis left for Vietnam, he wrote a letter and requested that it be opened only in the event he died there. It was written to Miss Janet Hall, to whom he was engaged and whom he later married in Hawaii. Jeff's widow, Mrs. Janet Davis, of Indianapolis, sent to the Manchester Union Leader the non-personal part of Jeff's letter. We were so moved by it that we want to share it with you. At the same time we congratulate the Union Leader for carrying it above its banner on the front page.

From a letter by Sgt. Jeff Davis of the 101st Airborne Division, before his death in Vietnam.

"Well, if you are reading this, my short but full life has ended. However, I'm not sad or hurt; I'm happy where I am now. I am free of the great responsibilities that life puts upon a person. It is too bad I had to die in another country, the United States is so wonderful, but at least I died for a reason, and a good one.

I may not understand this war, or like it, or want to fight it, but nevertheless I had to do it and I did.

"I died for the people of the United States.

"I died really for you, you were my one real happiness.

"I died also for your Mom and Dad so that they could go on working at Grant's and Chevrolet. For your brothers that they could play sports in freedom without Communist rule.

"I died for my parents that they could enjoy my Dad's retirement in freedom, go on vacations and have fun. Nancy, so she could raise her sons to be morally and physically straight in a free world, or country at least. For Duke whom I admired my whole life. For others also who enjoy this wonderful country, and who appreciate what they have and thank God every day for it.

"I died for the guys with long hair and protest signs. The draft card burners, the hippies, the 'anti-everything' people who have nothing better to do. The college kids who think they shouldn't have to serve because they're too good. — I died so these people could have a little longer time to try to get straightened out in life. God knows they need it.

"Yes, I died for the so-called 'younger generation,' of which I was a part but for some unknown reason I never became an active member. I guess I was a 'square' or something with short hair, no police record, didn't drink or smoke (pot included) and volunteered for the service. I died for the

parents of these kids also, God forgive them. "I died so these members, active members, of the 'young generation' could have the right to do what they do. To protest, have long hair, go to the college of their own choice, wear weird clothes, and run around mixed up with no direction at all.

"I died so they [could] protest the war I fought and died in. Without it, what would they protest? But, I also died for the many thousands who died in this war and other wars before, for these same reasons. For the men who fought gallantly on the many battlefields of many wars to keep this country free. I guess that in order to gain freedom there must be war. I died for the United States.

"Sgt. J. A. Davis
"Co. A. 3/187th Airborne Infantry
"101st Abn. Div.

"P.S. (Concerning future children). Please send them to church. Let them learn of God and how wonderful He is. Teach them to be strong persons: physically, mentally and morally. . . My life is over now and I leave behind a big debt. . . Do me a favor. Don't cry over me now. It's too late. It's over. Forget it, and start again. Mould your life around a new partner because I've gone on to a new life. I hope some day that you'll join me here; and if you do, then I'll know my life has been lived according to God's wishes 'cause with you I'll be in Heaven. Thank you, and Goodbye."

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"Take Care, Son, Eat Proper Food, Don't Protest In The Rain"



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

To the Editor:

As a result of my early study of American History, I gained some clear impressions of the type of people who settled this country, conquered its wildernesses and gave us our democratic traditions and institutions. For the most it seemed that these were men who sought some measure of self-determination by escaping from the dehumanizing effects of unjust, outmoded political and social systems designed to perpetuate a propertied aristocracy. These were individuals who came to this land determined to shape their own destinies, to think their own thoughts and to steer their life course based upon ongoing perceptions rather than prescribed behavior or irrelevant rules of conduct.

As we would say today, these were men who were willing to "stand up", "speak out", "let their opinions be known", and who were willing to question the wisdom and motives of their leaders and authority figures before committing themselves to a course of action. Yet, in spite of this awareness, it appeared that the primary prerequisite and ongoing requirement of the American educational process, in which I found myself caught up in, was to learn to "sit down", "shut up", keep your opinions to yourself and "obey those in authority without question".

Being very anxious to do what was right and to receive praise and approval, I accepted all and resisted nothing, even as I learned that Hitler and Stalin encouraged the very same behavior among their subjects in educating them to be unquestioning, non-thinking, programmed puppets who would never harbor an impulse to question what they were told or to resist the commands of their power-crazed leaders. I tried, but could never quite reconcile this similarity in educational philosophy with the American emphasis upon the respect for the worth and dignity of each human being.

Upon completing my formal education, I took my place in society, and promptly discovered that my learned behavior patterns brought little real respect or advancement in the world of reality, and that I was all too prone to allow others to impose their opinions and will without resistance on my part.

The necessity for restructuring my learning and my attitudes became apparent as I came to realize more and more that the type of people who were moving this country forward and getting the world's important work done were those individuals, who, like their forebears, dare to "stand up", "speak out", "let their opinions be known", and who refuse to accept as truth any utterance just because it issues forth in a "booming" voice or appears on the printed page. These were that breed of men who do their own thinking after considering all available perspectives on an issue, all the while realizing, as did John Donne, that "No man is an

island", and that conversely, "No one man is a community". Obeying their more noble instincts, and their God-given conscience, these were the kind of people who had led, and would continue to lead America along the path of greatness.

As this country struggles through another of the turbulent eras in its brief but troubled history, it would behoove each of us to take stock of our personal characteristics and attitudes to see to what extent our behavior reflects the nature and spirit of our American heritage.

Sincerely,
Talmadge H. Edwards, Jr.
Rt. 1, Louisburg

Come To Think Of It
By Frank Count

I seen a picture in the paper the other day where a woman was demonstrating. She was carrying a sign she musta had her first-grader write for her. It said: There ain't no freedom without freedom of choice. She was fretted about the way schools are being run in Louisiana or someplace.

I been thinking since I seen that sign. Ain't it a shame that us old folks got the freedom of choice to get drunk and run up and down the highway. We got a choice to pay our money and go see them terrible movies at Zebulon. Ain't they having a ball down there over them pictures?



We can play poker if we want to and we can tell the President of the United States to go take a flying jump. We ain't even got to like Bob Scott. We got a choice. We could like Ben Roney. We could if we wanted to 'cause we got that freedom.

Womenfolks got freedom to wear them short skirts and to go barefooted or they can wear shoes and overalls if they want to. They can cook for the old man or they can make him eat out. They got a choice. The old man might not have—but the womenfolks has.

Dogs can chase cats if they want to. They ain't got to, but they got that choice. Chickens can lay eggs if the notion strikes them. Least some chickens can.

I can go down main street and park long's I want to. I got that choice. The policeman can give me a ticket. He got a choice, too. The barber can mess up my hair or he can make it pretty. He got a choice.

The man at the gas station can clean my windshield or he can pour grease on it. He got a choice. I could pop him one or I might not, depends on how I'm feeling at the time and maybe the size of him. But I got that choice. I can if I want to.

I can go home when I finish writing this and face the music or I can hang around the store with the boys and face it later. I ain't gonna win nothing—but I got the choice. The little woman got a choice too. She could leave. She won't 'cause she got a choice.

The HEW can slack up on Mississippi and hit Georgia. They got a choice. They can like Lester Maddox or they can like John Lindsey. They can't very well do both, but they got a choice.

I can keep on smoking cigars if I want to. I can't smoke 'em in the house. That's the little woman's choice. But I got a choice too. I can do it outdoors or I can quit.

I could stop messing with Melvin and Zeke and all them other characters if I wanted to. I wouldn't have near as much to tell you but I could stop. I ain't got to eat but I got a choice.

Nearly everybody got a choice nowadays. Everybody except them pore little youngins. Ain't it a shame?

It's not enough to scare nobody to death. Them youngins are gonna be big boys and girls in these days. Then, I betcha you they get a choice. I hope I live to see it. I shore do.



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