

Bequest

Whenever a man gives up something he has loved and labored for, a part of him dies. And what could be more natural than for a man, at death, to bequeath what he has found good?

Although I shall continue as editor of The Franklin Press, my ownership and business ties with the paper will be broken August 31. As that date neared, I have found myself looking about for something of value I could pass on to the newspaper, and to its owners and staff members of tomorrow, and the tomorrows after that.

I found what I was looking for quite by accident. It was in the first editorial I ever wrote for The Press, nearly 12 years ago.

In it, I first pointed out that a newspaper, by its very nature, is a semi-public institution; and that the public, therefore, was entitled to know what its future objectives and policies would be. Then, as the best way to indicate those, I stated some of my beliefs—beliefs about people, about our form of government, and about the small newspaper's relationship to those two.

As I re-read that long-forgotten introductory editorial, I suddenly realized that all these years, without being conscious of it, I have been putting those convictions to the test; and that they are valid—so valid they are the one thing I possess of real value.

So that piece, written as a sort of Confession of Faith, now becomes a sort of Last Will and Testament.

Here it is:

I believe in the character and the intelligence of plain people. I believe that the conclusions reached by the majority of average men and women about public affairs generally are both right and sensible. I believe that the expert's usefulness is confined to the technical field—on fundamental questions of right and wrong, of what makes sense and what doesn't, and of the fitness of men for public office, I put my trust in the mass judgment of ordinary folks. I believe, moreover, that, even when the people are wrong, they are right—it is their government, and they have the right to make their own mistakes.

I believe, however, that freedom ALWAYS is in danger, and that democracy will work only so long as the electorate is: (1) honest; (2) independent; and (3) informed.

The only honest ballot is that cast with a view to the well-being of the whole nation, or state, or county, or town, or district. If the time ever comes when the mass of the voters go to the polls thinking chiefly of individual or group interests, mob rule isn't far away.

The only independent convictions expressed at the polls are those representing conclusions reached by each voter, individually. When the individual ceases to do his own thinking, fascism is on the way in.

And of course the only intelligent voter is the voter who is informed. When the people do make mistakes, I believe it is due, not to lack of character or intelligence, but to lack of clear, unbiased information.

There can be no democracy without, first of all, the public school system, and, second, media for the dissemination of public information.

Information about world, national, and state affairs is available to the public through the daily press, the radio, and a dozen other media. But none of these does, or can, adequately inform the citizen about what is going on in his own community—the progress being made at his church or at the district school, the deliberations of the board of aldermen, the proceedings of the board of county commissioners. For this, there is but one medium, the county newspaper.

And because good local government is quite as important in a democracy as good state or national government—is, in fact, the very foundation of the two latter—the county newspaper has a vital function to perform. Though far narrower in its field, its service, in my opinion, is even more important—and often more salutary—than that of the great daily.

I believe the primary duty of a newspaper is to serve as a mirror to the community in which it is published. Whatever the mirror may reveal, the people have a right to see; be the news good or bad, the public "can take it". If the mirror reflects a pleasing picture, the people of the community, encouraged, will try to make it even more pleasing; if it reflects a blemish, the people, give them time, will do something about it.

With every opportunity, of course, there goes a responsibility, and this is especially true of a newspaper. I believe its first responsibility is to publish the local news—fearlessly, accurately, and without bias. Its second is to speak out boldly, when the situation demands, on any matter that affects the public interest.

But I believe that most persons, most of the

time, try to do the right thing as they see it; so The Press, when it criticizes, usually will damn ideas, movements, or acts—not individuals. And, as a rule, its policy will be to encourage and work for the desirable, rather than merely condemn the undesirable.

I believe that the hope of America lies, not in its cities, but in its towns, villages, and rural communities. It is there that neighborliness and unselfish devotion to the common good thrive; it is there that character is emphasized and the sense of right and wrong seems most acute; and it is there that the "horse sense" we call common, but which really is far too uncommon, is most often found.

And I believe that economic opportunity in the non-urban areas will constantly increase, in this age of rapid communications. I believe, too, that the opportunity afforded by the country—the opportunity to escape the cities' indecent crowding, haste, and pressure—the opportunity to LIVE as well as to earn a living—is destined to win the recognition it deserves, but hasn't received in the past.

I believe in youth. Some of it is a bit frowzy around the edges—but some of youth always has been. Today's youth is better than yesterday's; and if tomorrow's is not better than today's, the fault will be yours and mine.

No investment, no matter how good, ever yet has paid as high dividends as the investment of thought and time and money in the things that serve youth.

I believe a better community—better churches and schools, better economic opportunity for all, better citizenship—is far more important than a bigger community. Mere bigness is greatly over-rated in America today. Besides, as a community becomes a better one, it is sure to grow; but the reverse is by no means certain.

And I believe that growth, if it is to be stable, must come slowly. That is as true of an enterprise as of a community, and it is my hope that this newspaper's staff can improve the paper, not overnight, but gradually: make each issue a little better than the last.

No bequest should bind the devisee, and I would not seek to bind those who come after me. It is my hope, though, that they, too, will prove these things and, finding them true, will adopt them as their own.

Weimar Jones

Letters

Appreciation

Dear Weimar,

On behalf of the Franklin Jaycees, I would like to express our appreciation to you and your fine staff for helping us make the annual Macon County Folk Festival the greatest success in its history.

The Jaycees realize the importance of a newspaper in our town. Your paper is an asset to Macon County.

We would like to return the many favors you have extended. Please feel free to call on us at any time.

ROBERT W. MOORE,
President,
Franklin Jaycees.

Franklin.

An Appeal To White Friends

Editor of The Press:

To our white citizens and friends of Macon County: Please help us to keep our people from making the same foolish mistakes people have made in other places.

We do not want our children to go to your schools, because we are proud of our school building. But we would appreciate your help with our school. We would like our school equipped with the necessities like your school. And of course we want the best teachers available—teachers who are interested in our school.

We want no confusion in our community and we want nobody coming in here stirring up confusion and getting some of our people who know no better to follow them. And you can help us avoid that by helping us have a better school. Better homes and schools build better communities.

MRS. GARFIELD McKINNEY,
President, Chapel P. T. A.

Franklin,
Route 1.

If You Only Knew

(Lion Magazine)

You probably wouldn't worry about what people think of you if you could know how seldom they do.

Elvis Must Go — Or It's Buttermilk!

(Cartooge-Jay-Bird)

Elvis Presley has got to go, or else station WFSC has got to check with local dairymen before playing "All Shook Up". Latest word is that the Parker boys' cows commence giving buttermilk the instant Elvis begins to warble, or wobble, that is.

And In The U. S. A.?

(Chilton, Wisc., Times-Journal)

The New York Times had its correspondents in the far corners of the world check on mail deliveries and got these answers:

Three or four deliveries daily are routine in cities in Japan, Italy, England and France. In Pakistan the postman makes five deliveries a day. In barbarous Moscow the lettercarrier makes 28 deliveries.

The Five Horsemen Of Our Highways



STRICTLY

Personal

By WEIMAR JONES

Probably because I have always said, emphatically, that I never would retire, some of my friends have pretended to misunderstand that piece I had in this space a couple of weeks ago, about my changed status at The Press. In it, I emphasized that I was merely shifting the direction of my energies a bit, not retiring. (Matter of fact, I wouldn't stop work if I could, and I certainly couldn't if I would!)

Anyway, I've been kidded a lot about my "retirement".

The latest was in the bank last week. When someone, in apparent innocence, said: "Well, I hear you've retired", I pretended to be angry, and replied: "Brother, that's a fighting word with me". Whereupon T. Y. Angell put as aptly as anybody could just what the situation is:

"As I understand it", he said, "you haven't retired; you've just moved out of the complaint department."

I wonder sometimes about these folks who call themselves self-made. They seem inclined

to boast about their handiwork. Some of 'em, it seems to me, might more appropriately apologize.

Now they're changing the old songs — "Swanee River", "In the Ev'ning by the Moonlight", "Old Black Joe", etc.—to eliminate all reference to Negro slavery.

How far can Americans go toward refusing to see anything they don't want to see?

It would make just as good sense to pretend there never were any New England slave ships, or any Southern slave-owners.

You have to pay for progress; if not in money, then in complexity.

That was brought home to me the other day in Sylva, where they recently put in the dial telephone system. I had occasion to telephone the Harris Hospital, and in the drug store where I asked to use the telephone, they inadvertently gave me an old directory.

So I dialed the same old familiar, easy number — 14.

I was told that was not the correct number now, and was given the number to dial. And what do you suppose it was? Another easy two-digit number, or even one with three digits? Not at all!

It was "Justice 6-4-1-4-3." A name, plus FIVE figures.

Well, I'm just a country boy from Franklin; so I'd forgotten half those numbers before I even got 'em dialed.

Members of the Stamey family here plan to attend their annual family reunion Sunday at the home of Jake W. Stamey in Clarkesville, Ga.

Which brings me back to what I said in the first place. Progress is wonderful, but —

"You have to pay for progress; if not in money, then in complexity" — in this case, five figures and a name's worth of complexity!

Sgt. Moore Shoots With Army Team

Sergeant First Class Alvin J. Moore, whose wife, Loretta, lives on Franklin, Route 3, recently participated in the National Rifle and Pistol Matches at Camp Perry, Ohio.

Sgt. Moore, regularly stationed in Germany, fired for the All-Army pistol team in the matches, Aug. 12-17.

He entered the Army in 1949, received basic training at Fort Jackson, S. C., and arrived in Europe in April, 1956. He was last stationed at Fort Benning, Ga., and is also a veteran of service in the Far East. His parents, Mr. and Mrs. Jess W. Moore, live in Sylva.

STAMEY REUNION

Members of the Stamey family here plan to attend their annual family reunion Sunday at the home of Jake W. Stamey in Clarkesville, Ga.

DO YOU REMEMBER?

Looking Backward Through the Files of The Press

65 YEARS AGO THIS WEEK
(1892)

Mr. Tom Price's mother came down from Rabun Monday and will spend some time with him.

The town council and Mr. A. S. Bryson are at logger-heads about working the street in front of Mr. Bryson's lot.

Dr. J. M. Lyle is dead. He was one of the leading citizens of Macon County and a good man is gone. Dr. Lyle will be missed in the church and educational interests of the county. He was a practicing physician 38 years.

25 YEARS AGO
(1932)

Judge Hoyle Sink, who commented Tuesday that the courthouse smelled "like an old tobacco can", on Wednesday sent a prisoner to clean it up. A man given 30 days in the county jail is to be released, under guard, once a day to do the work. In addition to the guard he will be accompanied by a bucket, mop, and strong soap.

Assailing the North Carolina grand jury system as an archaic, expensive piece of unnecessary legal machinery, Superior Court Judge Hoyle Sink recommended its abolishment in his charge to the grand jury at the August term of court Monday. "The grand jurors are employed to sift evidence, at great cost, that already has been sifted. I have never known of an instance where a grand jury was worth a hill of beans." The third shipment of Red Cross flour for Macon County arrived Saturday and totaled 420 barrels.

10 YEARS AGO

The tax valuation of Macon County properties of the Nantahala Power and Light Company has been increased by a quarter of a million dollars.

Installation of the 115 parking meters recently bought by the Town of Franklin was being completed Thursday and Mayor T. W. Angel, Jr., announced the meters would go into operation at Friday noon.

Mrs. Nelson Lakey and three children, of Winston-Salem, visited her mother, Mrs. Maude Mason, recently.—Tellico Item.