

WEIMAR JONES
Editorial Page Editor

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THURSDAY, OCTOBER 8, 1959

TIME FOR ACTION
On The Courthouse

The three public meetings on Macon's courthouse problem seem to have shown two things:

1. While there may be disagreement about what should be done, there is virtually unanimous agreement that something must be done.
2. We've been trying to reach a decision on a basis of much opinion, but few exact facts.

There has been the quite positive opinion, for instance, that we can build a new courthouse for \$300,000. Maybe so. But what kind of courthouse? How big would it be. What materials would it be built of? What would it look like—would it be a cheap imitation of thousands of little courthouses from one end of the land to the other, or would it be a structure of beauty and dignity that we could be proud of?

Nobody knows!

And there has been the even more positive opinion that the present courthouse never can be made adequate. Maybe not. But if you have a plumbing problem, you don't decide what can be done till you've consulted a plumber, because, knowing all the tricks of his trade, he may come up with ideas you never would have thought of. If you think you need an operation, you don't decide to have it till you've consulted a physician. If you have a tooth that's giving trouble, you don't decide to have it pulled till you've consulted a dentist to see if it can be saved, and will be satisfactory if it is saved.

To many laymen, the evidence is that even a thoroughgoing remodeling of the present courthouse would still leave us with something inadequate and unsatisfactory. Maybe they are right. But it would seem to make sense, before we spend the far larger sum a new courthouse would cost, to be sure. And, just as with the plumbing and the operation and the tooth, the only man qualified to tell us yes or no—and why—is a first-class architect who has carefully studied the problem.

Because of his training, a good architect might see ways, that the layman wouldn't, to make better use of the space that's there.

The chances seem to be he would say no. But even if he should say yes, we ought to know, before deciding what to do, how much it would cost to remodel, and exactly what we would get for the money, and how much it would cost to build a new courthouse, and exactly what we would get for that money.

It was right and proper for the county commissioners to seek the opinion of the public. But you can neither remodel nor build a courthouse by mass meeting. Now the time has come for somebody to pick up the ball and run with it.

That somebody is the county commissioners. It's time they submitted something definite to the public. And it's time, so they can have something definite to submit, that they went out and hired a top-notch architect to give them facts and figures.

Mrs. Freas

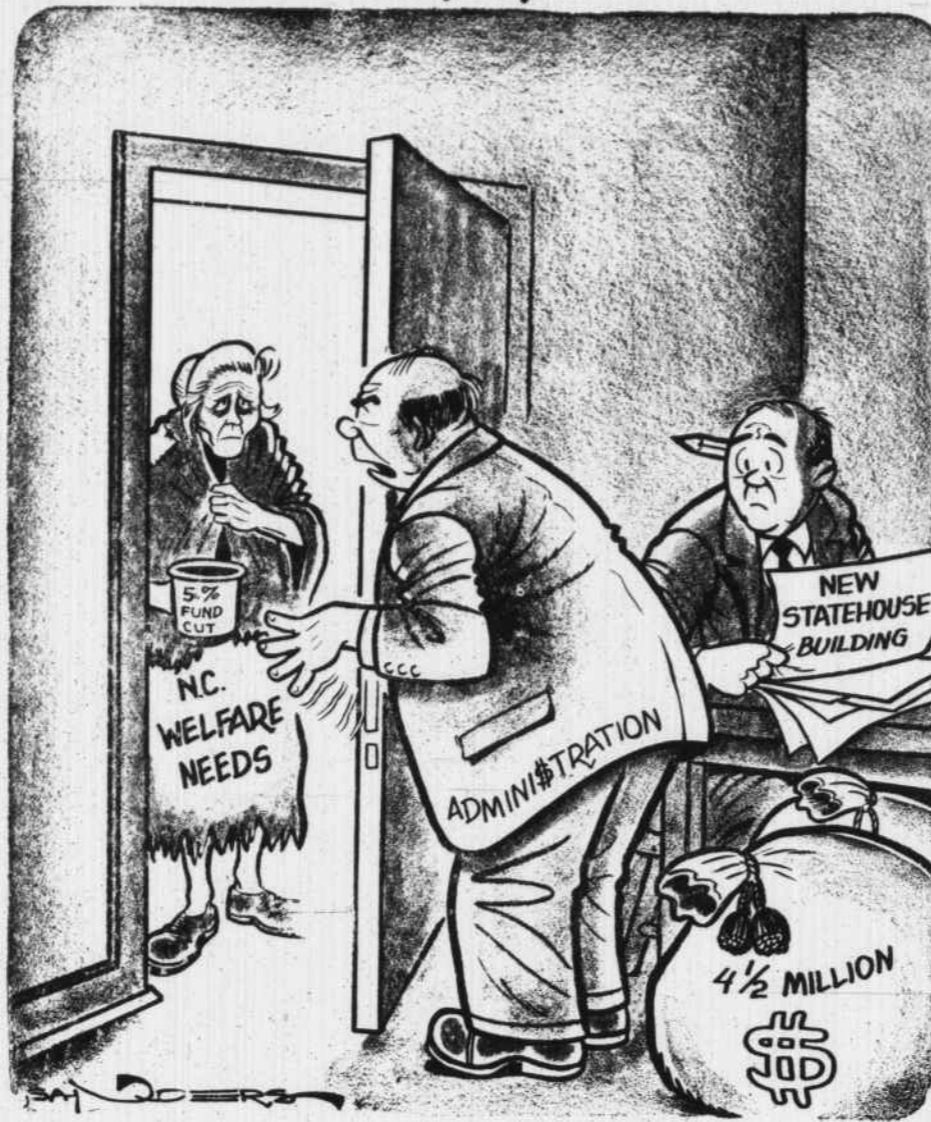
To her friends, Macon County will never be quite the same without Mrs. Esther Morgan Freas. But it is also true that Macon County would not be quite the same today without the beneficent influence of her spirit.

Nowhere do people get to know each other so well as when they are thrown together in a hospital, and a woman who once shared a hospital room with Mrs. Freas said of her: "She was the most selfless person I have ever known."

With her selflessness, Mrs. Freas combined other winsome characteristics that made her beloved. In her nature, there was a nice balance of strength of character and kindly tolerance, of usefulness and a never-flagging zest for living, of humor and a quick and deep sympathy. To the end of her long life, she kept her youthful enthusiasm—especially for nature and its beauties.

"Being with her, even for a brief time", someone has said, "left you with the feeling you had just been touched by a gentle, scented breeze from a blossoming apple orchard."

"Don't Disturb Us, Lady, We're Working On A Top Priority Project."



Why The Delay?

It has now been six weeks since announcement of the proposed sale of Nantahala Power and Light Company's retail distribution system to Duke Power Company.

But, as this is written, there still has been no petition filed with the N. C. Utilities Commission for approval of the sale.

Why the delay? Are Nantahala and Duke waiting for the opposition to die down? waiting for some new issue that will take people's minds off this one?

The Juvenile Problem

Most of us have been horrified by accounts of the juvenile crime, hoodlumism, and gang wars in America's big cities. Now we are shocked to see evidence that no community, not even ours, is immune to the disease.

It has been only a few weeks since juveniles stole and wrecked an automobile here. More recently a young woman was shot from a passing automobile filled with young men. It is true her injury was not serious, and it may be the weapon was not a gun. But the injury could have been serious; and it is only a step from using a pellet gun to using a rifle or shotgun.

These and other incidents in recent months certainly are not numerous enough to suggest the problem here is desperate, calling for panicky measures. But they do serve as a warning. And perhaps the most encouraging feature of the situation is that a group of interested citizens is studying the problem.

Why is there a problem? The chances are there are a number of causes.

Part of the trouble probably is contagion; young people read and see on television about the "exploits" of "tough" youths elsewhere, and imitation gets in its work. Part of it is due to the filth constantly fed youth via television, the movies, and the printed word. Part of it may be due to lack of

'CLEVERNESS WITHOUT WISDOM'

Had First Better Set Our Own House In Order

The modern study of the atom has made it possible to manufacture new elements which do not occur in nature. It is a regrettable fact that all these new elements are deleterious and that quite moderate quantities of them can kill large numbers of people. In this respect recent science has not been beneficent. Per contra, science has achieved what might almost seem like miracles in the way of combating diseases and prolonged human life. We have become able, as never before, to mold life on earth, or to put an end to it if the whim should seize us. But, unless by some such whim we put an end to man, we are on the threshold of a vast extension of human power.

To quote Senator Johnson's recent words, "Science could have the power to control the earth's weather, to cause drought and flood, to change the tides and raise the levels of the sea, to divert the Gulf Stream and change temperate climates to frigid."

Man has survived, hitherto, by virtue of ignorance and inefficiency. He is a ferocious animal, and there have always been powerful men who did all the harm they could. But their activities were limited by the limitations of their technique. Now, these limitations are fading away. If, with our increased cleverness, we continue to pursue aims no more lofty than those pursued by tyrants in the

past, we shall doom ourselves to destruction and shall vanish as the dinosaurs vanished. They, too, were once the lords of creation. They developed innumerable horns to give them victory in the contests of their day. But, though no other dinosaur could conquer them, they became extinct and left the world to smaller creatures such as rats and mice. We shall court a similar fate if we develop cleverness without wisdom. I foresee rival projectiles landing simultaneously on the moon, each equipped with H-bombs and each successfully engaged in exterminating the other. But until we have set our own

wholesome recreation. Part of it may be lack of discipline, particularly lack of self-discipline, among adults as well as youths. Part of it undoubtedly is a nation-wide atmosphere of "I have a right to whatever I want". (That would tend to explain the disturbing attitude of most juvenile delinquents; an attitude marked by total lack of either remorse or shame.) At bottom, though, the big factor almost certainly is the emphasis of adults, over a period of decades, on the wrong values.

It can see to it that juvenile crime is promptly detected and that punishment is sure and swift.

It can seek ways to occupy the leisure time of youth.

More effective than either of those would be to find ways to mobilize the extraordinarily fine people who make up the vast majority of our youth here. All young people seek the approval of their group. To make the public opinion of youth itself articulate would be effective.

Basically, though, this whole problem, whether in Franklin or Atlanta or Washington or New York, is due to a general break-down in moral standards. And the only real and lasting solution lies in a shift of emphasis.

For decades, we've put first emphasis on material things. To get them, we've sacrificed whatever stood in the way.

The result has been a demand for more and more jobs for more and more people at better and better pay so they can buy more and more things. And one result of that has been an ever larger number of women working outside their homes. That has meant the inevitable deterioration of home. And that explains ninety per cent of our social problems.

All You Can Do

(Ault., Colo. Progress)
Human nature changes slowly; about all that you can do, in the effort, is to improve yourself.

A civilized man is one who conducts himself as a considerate guest during his years on the face of the earth.
—Archibald Rutledge.

Strictly Personal BY WEIMAR JONES

Nobody likes a funny story better than I do.

And I'm no prude about stories. I've enjoyed, and told, many that were on the risqué side — not because they were slightly risqué, but because they were funny.

But some of the stories going the rounds today — going the rounds among supposedly intelligent, cultivated people — leave me gagging, not laughing.

That experience, repeated time after time, over a period of many months, has set me wondering: Where do you draw the line?

There was a time, of course, when you could say: If it's O. K. to tell in mixed company, it's O. K. anywhere. Well, that time has gone.

What is involved here? Is it a question of morals? Isn't it, instead, a matter of good taste?

And do not the canons of good taste demand, at a minimum, two things: Consideration of others and respect for ones self?

Consideration of others, it seems to me, would bar any story, no matter how innocent it may seem to the teller, that would be likely to offend the sensibilities of even one of his hearers; for surely it is unkind ever to offend anybody, any time, needlessly. (It is only those with adolescent-type minds who get sadistic pleasure from shocking others.)

And, from the viewpoint of self-respect, it seems to me there is a reasonably satisfactory test: Is the story really funny and only incidentally off-color? or is it really off-color and only incidentally funny?

All this, of course, is strictly personal; merely one man's opinion.

But I suspect — and that's one reason for writing this — that a lot of people feel very much as I do.

And I think we're allowing ourselves — and that's the other reason for this piece — to be bullied into listening to and laughing at things we don't like and don't find funny; being bullied by grown-up adolescents who'll go to any extreme to attract attention to themselves.

And it's nobody's fault but our own!

If we weren't so darned afraid of being impolite, and, more to the point, if we weren't so darned

afraid of standing alone, we'd pointedly not laugh at stories that really aren't funny, but are only suggestive.

And if there are as many of us as I believe there are, the silence would quickly get results. But does all this matter? Has it any significance beyond the matter of personal taste?

I think perhaps it has. Because it's always true that a pretty good index to the character of a community is the type and quality of its humor.

Needed: Proofreader

VIRGINIA PUBLISHER & PRINTER

The American Press recently published a story in which all the typos common to wedding write-ups were included. It reads:

"The bride was given in marriage by her father, wearing her mother's wedding gown; the couple went to high school together and their marriage will stop a romance begun there; the bride wore a strand of tiny matched pearls; her gown was of vile green; her accessories were plain punk; the bridesroom's mother was attired in a lace dress

which fell to the floor.

"The maid of honor wore ye low tulle; the bridesmaids carried tiny nosebags; the flower girl wore a maise gown with puffed sleeves touching her ankles; the bride mother wore a dawn blue chiffon and black stray hat; the nuptial took place in a setting illuminate by lighted Roman candles; the couple exchanged their cows; the bridal couple then passed out and greeted the guests; the ceremony was attended by only a few jobs friends and relatives."

TAKE NEAL HILL

Teen-Age Pace Setters

WINSTON-SALEM JOURNAL

Coming onto the scene to calm a public mind filled with misgivings about the waywardness of American youth is an 18-year-old Rutherfordton boy.

He is Neal Hill, Jaycee teenager of the year. And what a boy! He talks like a man.

He believes in parental discipline: "Children ought to be taught to respect and obey their parents... Folks our age might not want more guidance than most of them get, but we need it."

He believes in work: "A job teaches you responsibility and helps you grow up and find out what living is all about." (Neal worked 48 hours a week all last fall, has been on a 30-hour week since January, still managed to maintain an A average in school.)

He believes in marriage at the proper time: "I don't think there is any one age that you can set to get married. Some folks are ready for marriage at 18 or 19 — others aren't at 30." (He's engaged.)

He believes in self-reliance: "You can make of yourself pretty much

what you want."

There is little wonder that the boy is saving his money and considering becoming a medical missionary.

The Jaycees seem to have hit on the right boy. But isn't he more typical than exceptional? His ideas may be a little more mature than his age. And he may be more articulate than most of his fellows. But his habits, principle and goals are not far different from those nurtured by a vast majority of our teen-agers.

If the state of youth has fallen to the near barbaric levels some observers claim, how have we survived to talk about it? What society could survive a determined onslaught of an army of teen-agers bent on mischief. Me adults could never match the energy.

That teen-agers are for the most part a decent, law-abiding lot evidenced daily. Witness the B. Scouts, high school debating teams, scholarship winners, Future Farmers, 4-H, the Y's, and host of other youth activities. High schools and college campus are full of promising young people. Look at four Winston-Salem teen-agers turning the energy to the development of rocket which has the experts marveling.

Boys like these and Neal Hill are setting the pace for teen-age. Theirs is the pattern of youth that nation has become accustomed to. And it's by comparison that the small but ragged pattern of stemiously, arsenious, facetious, juvenile delinquency is so hard to take.

WORDS THAT USE ALL 5 VOWELS

For readers who like word oddities, we quote these words, all of which use all five vowels (thanks to "The State" magazine): abstemiously, arsenious, facetious, nefarious.—Southern Pines Pilot.

DO YOU REMEMBER?

Looking Backward Through the Files of The Press



65 YEARS AGO THIS WEEK (1894)

Road wagons, \$26; farm wagons, \$43; top buggies, \$37.50 surreys, \$75. Elkhart Carriage and Harness Mfg. Co., Elkhart Ind.—Adv.

Mr. and Mrs. Frank H. Hill, of Horse Cove, are visitors in our town this week.

Mr. Erwin Patton returned Monday from Richmond, where he took a drove of beeves last week and disposed of them.

S. P. Ravenell, Jr., a young attorney of Highlands, is attending court.

35 YEARS AGO (1924)

Beginning Oct. 11, the Public Library in the Masonic Hall will be open each Saturday afternoon from 2 until 4 o'clock. Mr. Jeter Higdon is wearing a big smile. It's a boy.—Etn item.

The Jule Siler farm, 3/4 of a mile west of the courthouse on the Murphy road, will be subdivided into lots and small farms and sold at auction Oct. 13. Bob Davis, owner.

15 YEARS AGO (1944)

Cpl. Dean Carpenter, radio gunner in the Army Air Corps son of Mr. and Mrs. E. J. Carpenter, of Franklin, is reported stationed in England.

5 YEARS AGO (1954)

A hosliery plant involving an ultimate investment of some three million dollars is to be erected just outside Franklin by Burlington Mills Corporation, world's largest textile concern. It was announced yesterday.

Mrs. C. Tom Bryson is in New York this week, as Macon "delegate" to the United Nations.