

THE PILOT

Southern Pines

North Carolina

"In taking over The Pilot no changes are contemplated. We will try to keep this a good paper. We will try to make a little money for all concerned. Wherever there seems to be an occasion to use our influence for the public good we will try to do it. And we will treat everybody alike." — James Boyd, May 23, 1941.

Bears By The Tail

This nation seems to have a mournful propensity to catch bears by the tail. And the worst of it is, we hang on like grim death until we are in the fix of being unable to let go without a fearful blow-up.

You can count up the recent bears whose tails we are still grasping without looking very far. There's the Guantanamo Naval base, pronounced both obsolete and unnecessary several years ago by some of our foremost authorities on such matters. The Navy loves it for its salubrious climate and fine harbor, but even some naval men have agreed that in these days of rockets and planes a naval stronghold so near the coast is useless and even a liability. Certainly it is proving so now.

There's the Panama Canal. The history of the Suez canal shows how completely vulnerable such a waterway becomes at the very time it might be most needed. Already the Panama Canal is too narrow to accommodate big aircraft carriers and tankers, and one bomb in a lock would put it out of commission. These facts have been known and recognized for at least ten years and the internationally-minded have been urging that consideration be given to the internationalizing of all such key geographical points.

Then there is our support of Chiang Kai Shek and the so-called Nationalist Government on Taiwan. Just about everyone, except whatever members of the China

Lobby are still around, agrees that Chiang is a both a bear and a millstone about our necks. Personally he has all the characteristics of the Chinese warlords of the old Boxer days: tough, arrogant, crafty and untrustworthy, not at all the kind of person we habitually consort with. Yet here we are and there he is: we are still pouring millions into his government and his army; under Dulles and Eisenhower we nearly got into a terrible war for him; at any moment now a sudden move by him might force us back into the same precarious spot. Yet we hang onto the bear for all we're worth. And that's another case, as the blacksmith said when asked to shoe the mule, "when it ain't wuth it."

It's a question whether our policy as regards Germany has been altogether wise. Largely through our efforts she has made such a spectacular recovery that she is now far richer and probably more powerful than any other European nation. Was this a good idea? There was a nasty shock felt over here last week at the news that Germany's chief of foreign affairs had on his staff a former Nazi leader in the pogrom against the Jews.

It sometimes seems as if we go out of our way to create our own bears. Most of them were useful at the time, but we ought sometimes to look ahead and heed the wise guys who urge us to let go while the going's reasonably good.

Clean-Up Time Again

A good point is made by the writer of a letter on this page: an all-out community clean-up would provide a valuable object lesson in this most important field of citizen responsibility.

The letter-writer suggests that parents and children turn out on a Saturday morning, collect street-side trash in boxes in the backs of their automobiles and then bring it to a central place such as the post office and transfer it to town trucks for hauling to the municipal landfill disposal area.

While it might not be possible to organize such an elaborate project by calling on all parents and children to help, it does seem that such a method

could be undertaken efficiently by coordinated efforts of Boy Scout and Girl Scout troops, all of which have numerous interested adults associated with them.

Regularly, in early spring and early fall, The Pilot reminds local residents that there is much they can do to make the town attractive for the approaching tourist "season."

If, at these times of the year, all property owners would clean up their own parkways and yards, mow vacant lots, prune overgrown shrubbery and otherwise tidy things up, there would be little left for town workers or volunteer groups to undertake.

Left, Right And The Nature Of Man

Since the assassination of President Kennedy, a smug pose of self-righteousness has been adopted by spokesmen for the Radical Right in the United States: they never tire of pointing out that it wasn't one of their crowd who shot the President. The alleged assassin, they note complacently, was a Communist—at the opposite end of the political spectrum and a traditional enemy of the Right. The fact that Lee Harvey Oswald also is alleged to have taken a shot at General Walker, one of the Right's heroes, is double evidence, they say, that they are on the side of the angels. (No Rightist yet, however, has speculated on the creed of whoever it was who bombed to death the Birmingham church children or slew Medgar Evers in Mississippi.)

The Right is abnormally touchy when you even mention such words as hatred, fanaticism or violence. A national "conservative" columnist whose work is carried by the Charlotte Observer was rebuked by that newspaper in December for attacking Chief Justice Warren who, the columnist said, had blamed the President's death on hatred fomented by the American Right. The Observer felt called upon to reprint a large part of what Chief Justice Warren actually said at the

late President's bier — in which it is obvious that nothing whatever was said about Left, Right or Center. He did point out that "forces of hatred and malevolence . . . are eating their way into American life" and that if we love our country we can "at least abjure the hatred that consumes people, the false accusations that divide us, and the bitterness that begets violence."

A similar attack on Warren was launched by a North Carolina editorialist of the air waves. Why? Can anyone deny that there are in the United States those who, as the Chief Justice said at the bier, "would themselves recoil from assassination, but who do not shrink from spreading the venom which kindles thoughts of it in others." Why should the Right lash out at such a simple statement of fact?

We note all this in connection with an excerpt from a magazine's Washington column that appeared on this page last week, whose writer speculated that the hostility and fear preached by right-wing radio broadcasts from hundreds of stations contribute to an anti-intellectual chaos that sets the stage for "the brooding Oswalds, of the left or right wing."

"Chaos" is a key word. An examination of the Right's viewpoint reveals rejection of the creative, civilizing virtues: cooperation, compassion, confidence, respect, reason, tolerance, generosity—qualities that, however imperfectly, have made possible what little peace, dignity and freedom there have been in this world.

The mentality of the Right seems never to have gotten in tune with humanity's deepest aspirations. It seems to want to direct or manipulate, rather than to inform or inspire. It seems to want to tear down, more than to build. A sense of chaos is the result.

Yes, the Right is in a poor position to preen itself because it was supposedly a Communist who killed President Kennedy. We are not dealing with Left or Right. We are dealing with a frame of mind, a view of the human condition, a sense of the nature of man. Whatever else the President's assassin was, he was de-humanized, cut off from his fellow human beings, no longer involved in the universal effort to get along with each other as best we can, let alone the attempt to learn to love and understand one another.

The assassin was a child of chaos and the label "Communist" does not remove him from the limbo that also would be our dwelling place if the Radical Rightists had their way.

'Hold That Critter!'



INTEGRITY, DEVOTION, INGENUITY RECALLED

Prof. Allen Led Early School Here

A most informative and interesting communication came recently from Ellinor Brennen (Mrs. L. Martin) Gazik of 124 W. Hudson St., Long Beach, Long Island, N. Y., in reference to news items and an editorial published by The Pilot last November about Dr. James W. Silver, professor at the University of Mississippi, who last fall attracted nation-wide attention by his denunciation of the "closed society" in the state where he has taught history for 27 years. Mrs. Gazik's letter (with "sub-heads" added by The Pilot) follows:

It gave me great pleasure to read your items on Dr. James Silver.

Being an "old-timer" and also having taught Jim in his senior year at the Southern Pines high school I felt awe as well as pride that this "boy" had attained national prominence.

One sentence in your editorial has been echoing in my mind. You spoke of that "golden age of the Southern Pines high school in the 1920's when the late Professor Allen somehow managed to communicate to class after class of students an almost holy regard for the human intellect and its potentialities."

Perhaps some of your readers may be interested in either recalling or hearing for the first time a few highlights from the early years when Mr. Allen first made his influence felt in Southern Pines.

One-Room School

Mr. Allen came to Southern Pines in 1906. At that time there was no high school. The upstairs in "King's Daughters Hall" was used as a one-room school. Miss Anna Jenks, Dr. Swett, Mr. Bion Butler were among diligent but frustrated sponsors of the infantile school system. They realized that not only was it necessary to add more classes but they were

in despair over the lack of discipline pervading the school at the time Mr. Allen assumed command. An early incident in his first year will illustrate how he met problems.

Mr. Ruthe Chatfield warned Mr. Allen, the day before Halloween, that the children would "wreck the school" the next night.

"Why, last year the principal sat up all night, wrapped in a blanket, right here in the building," he said.

'What Do I Care?'

He must have been amazed at Mr. Allen's response: "Let them go ahead. What do I care? If the parents who will have to pay the bills don't care what their children do, why should I?" No damage occurred.

One more anecdote from those bygone times.

The roof over the classroom leaked copiously. Mr. Allen tried

to get it repaired but to no avail. So, he told the children to keep umbrellas handy at all times. Miss Jenks happened to visit the school during a storm. The children's heads were invisible under their opened umbrellas. The roof was repaired.

In time, Southern Pines built a combination primary and high school.

One day Mr. Butler, then County Board Chairman, toured the new building with Mr. Allen.

"Why don't you teach chemistry?" he asked. "Why do you spend so much time on Latin? Latin, what use is that?"

Sensible Argument

After an exhaustive argument Mr. Allen concluded, "Teaching Latin requires only a book. The tax-payers are too damn stingy to equip a lab."

Said Mr. Butler, "Allen, that's the first sensible argument you've put up." The school got its laboratory.

The State Board of Education and the surrounding towns began to call the school "The Allen School" and Southern Pines had reason to be proud of the brand of education and discipline administered by its principal.

When Mr. Allen began his career in Southern Pines his salary was \$550 per year and that of his teachers \$350. After three years, when the town could not afford to increase his salary, \$300 was raised by individuals.

There was a period when no money was available to pay the teachers. Mrs. Allen recalls an amusing incident.

No Credit

She wanted to charge her groceries. No credit, she was told. Then the merchant commented, "They tell me that the teachers are not being paid. Must be a very great worry to the merchants."

Always Mr. Allen's goal was to prepare his students for college. He tried to see that not one was denied the opportunity for lack of funds. He was not above "begging" from the affluent sometimes successfully, and always in the strictest secrecy. From his own pocket, many times, shoes and school books found their way to the needy.

Mr. Allen communicated to his teachers as well as to the students his own high ideals.

Example

Frank Gibbons was one of those "golden age" teachers. He left Southern Pines to teach in one of the best high schools in Boston. Frank told me that his principal was curious as well as impressed by his command and the respect he elicited from the students. Frank was proud to give full credit to Mr. Allen's example and precepts.

Yes, you are "justified in tracing the roots of Dr. Silver's clarity, compassion, and courage at least in part to his Tar Heel educational heritage." Dr. Graham of Chapel Hill and Mr. Allen of Southern Pines were two educators with integrity and devotion to the responsibilities inherent in a teacher's role.

Grains of Sand

Have A Heart

So this is Heart Month. We're all for encouraging the heart, in every one of its many aspects: Valentine's Day Hearts-and-Flowers, hearty eaters, that fine big-jumping horse—"He's got heart" they say—and then there's the remarkable things being done in surgery of the heart; the transplant of this vital organ is the latest miracle.

Only they do say it's a bit hard to find donors.

Sing A Song of Septics

"Sludge" is a word unfamiliar to most Americans. The dictionary starts off with the more polite definitions, such as "mud," "mire," "boggy swamp"; it isn't till Definition 4 that it gets down to bedrock, so to speak. Definition 4 calls a spade a spade and says: "sewage."

"Sludge"—"Sewage"—not, you would think, a subject to inspire the poetic muse, or the denizens of commerce. That might be the case in this country, not so with that nation of poets and shopkeepers, our British brothers overseas.

That fine British periodical, the Manchester Guardian, which often turns loose a jibe or two at the foibles of its fellow countrymen, has dredged up a fascinating tale involving both poetry, advertising, and sludge, believe it or not.

It seems that there is a company over there called "Sludge Disposals, Ltd." whose job is to clean out septic tanks and drains in general, and this company employs a poetess to write its advertising. Here is the Guardian article.

THE GLORIES OF SLUDGE

By Michael Park

A lot of dirty water has slurped into the vacuum tankers of Sludge Disposals, Ltd., since Mrs. L. Davison became poet laureate to the sludge disposal industry. She has now decided, after 250 verses in five years, all singing of septic tanks, cesspits, and similar sludge repositories, that her stream of inspiration has become silted up . . . so she's decided to quit.

Readers of the advertisements who sent her so many appreciative letters will surely be disappointed. As one man, writing from Singapore, said:

I really think they're grand. Like a breath of home, from a septic tank, To a bloke in a faraway land.

Occasional repetitions apart, Mrs. Davison's main achievement has been in her variation on a limited theme. One cautionary verse reads:

A case I read, quite tragic, In my paper yesterday. . . A little lad, just two years old. Was drowned while out at play. He'd wandered in an orchard, Stepped on a rotting plank Which partly covered over A disused septic tank. This thing could not have happened

If the owner had it drained, Here's another:

Skyarks singing Bluebells ringing Summer's coming Tanks are humming. Vacuum tanker Armed with hoses Sets you free to Smell your roses.

Another verse, published only three weeks later, shows how Mrs. Davison was tending to become bogged down (if one may be permitted the phrase) in the same idea:

Soon the summer days will come Bees and septic tanks will hum. Just a tinkle on the 'phone And we'll create a stinkless zone.

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