

Commentary

NEWS RECORD

Other Opinions

Rolling Out The Barrel

Governor Martin asked too much when he called on the attorney general for a review of each of the 1,400 local appropriations in the so-called 1985 "pork barrel" bill. Attorney General Lacy H. Thornburg properly has turned down the governor's request.

However, Martin would be on sounder ground to ask Thornburg for an advisory opinion on any specific item about which the governor has strong legal doubts. Thornburg's reply to Martin says that the appropriations are presumed to be lawful, but he also implies that he's ready to examine any "evidence" that Martin offers to rebut that presumption.

In other words, the attorney general has returned the ball to the governor's court. It's possible that every one of the 1,400 appropriations meets the test that state funds be spent for a "public purpose," as the General Assembly's legal staff has determined. But Martin is the state's chief budget officer and an elected official who must answer to all North Carolinians. He is not off base in questioning any item that he suspects strongly would be spent outside the "public purpose" definition.

The legislature's legal staff has agreed that "public purpose" can be stretched to cover many activities by a wide variety of organizations, including some normally considered private. These community recipients include a Masonic lodge, fraternity and various groups that legislators want to boost a bit.

Certainly, many of these organizations qualify as worthy recipients of public funds. But the "pork barrel" bill has taken on an increasingly distasteful flavor in recent years. The system has come to work as follows: "Here's your money, legislators. Choose how you want to use it in your county." And, of course, the appropriations are more readily made for districts of legislators who have remained in the good graces of the leadership in the General Assembly.

But if the process needs to be changed, the fact remains that the governor has to mail the checks unless he can show they're an unlawful use of public funds. If Martin and his staff can back their caution about any "pork barrel" item with convincing legal objections, they should get back in touch with Thornburg promptly.

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E. Y. POND

The writer of this tending congratulating the J. Edgar Hoover Wars in ceremonies is the highest honor nation.

Lack of space prohibits this writer from fully publishing the many accomplishments of this Madison County man who has never taken a vacation in the 31 years of service as sheriff. I have often wondered how Elymas can keep going day after day, year after year, with so little rest. At 75 years of age, he is on the go from early morning to late at night, seldom taking time out to sleep.

I have known E. Y. since both of us were quite young and have never seen him agitated or impatient. His friendly disposition has always impressed me and adding to his many favors while I served as editor of this newspaper and 10 years of fire chief of Marshall, he would always assist in time of emergencies and fires.

He deserves this national honor he recently received.

SATURDAY'S EVENTS HALTED BY RAIN

The citizens of the Greater Ivy and Beech Glen communities are active in planning events which will benefit their projects. A number of events were scheduled for the community center

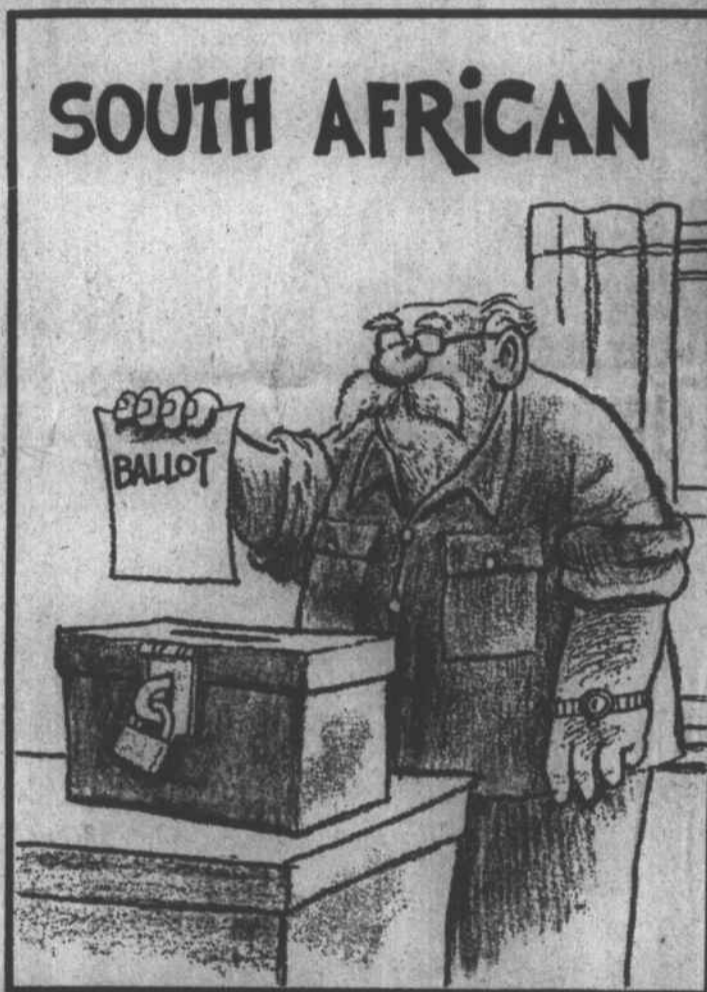


ball, many outdoor games and even a checker tournament. But Continuous showers halted all a market and checker tourney who were brave enough to attend. The weather was set to try again. I commend the efforts made and hope that the same will come around.

SATISFY

for any length of time.

Only a few weeks ago everyone was wishing for rain. The general comment was that if we don't get some rain real soon our gardens and crops will burn up. Then, a few days ago we were blessed with plenty of showers and rain. The comments quickly changed to complaints about too much rain. We've had too much rain lately and if it doesn't quit, our gardens and crops are going to drown. That's par for the course, I guess. Everyone seems to agree that the public is hard to satisfy for any length of time. The weather is not controlled by the public, thank goodness. The good Lord know what is best and we should be grateful for the way He gives us sunshine and the rains.



Know Comment

BY JOSEPH GODWIN



It is too bad that you did not know Snowball Snell. He was a very fine human being; I never knew a person who knew him who did not like him.

Snowball was a good farm worker who tended to his own business and never caused anyone any trouble. His skin was as black as that of any of his ancestors or relatives in Africa—and his teeth was as white as his skin was black. Snowball very frequently showed those teeth because he was warm and friendly, and he greeted everybody with a ready smile.

One Friday afternoon, Snowball and I finished the necessary part of our week's work on the farm and decided to go fishing.

This meant getting the catfish lines ready, checking the weights, putting kerosene into the lantern, packing something to eat, and sharpening the knives we would use to cut small bushes for fishing poles. And, of course, we didn't forget the bait.

Late in the afternoon as we entered a shady place in the road not far from the creek, a rabbit ran across the road in front of us.

Almost quicker than I could see what was happening, Snowball stopped, dropped his snack bag and bait can, lifted his hat from his head with both hands, turned it a half turn to the right, and, leaving it in this backward position, lowered it to its place on his head.

With no hesitation nor pause, he placed his left hand open, palm up, against his chest and spat into the palm of his hand. Still, as if by automatic control, Snowball balled up his right fist and hit his left palm quite hard—spattering spit in all directions!

Still delaying not a second, he again lifted his hat with both hands and completed the turn, restoring the hat to its proper position. Then he stooped over and picked up his snack bag and bait can and started walking on.

Done like rapid clock-work, this whole operation took less than a fourth of the time it takes to read about it.

Completely mystified, I asked, "Snowball, what on earth did you do that for?"

"Didn't you see that rabbit cross the road in front of us and us on our way to go fishin'?"

"Of course I saw him," I replied.

"But so what?"

As Snowball explained: "When the rabbit crosses betwixt you and the fish, he throws a hex on you. And if we don't throw off the hex, we won't get nary fish tonight—not a single fish all night long. I done that to throw off the hex. We's all right now. C'mon, let's go fishin'!"

We say that Snowball was superstitious. And, of course, he was. But let us not with our amused or smug smiles assume that superstition died on a Post Oak farm with the passing of that son of slavery.

I have also know people who would not fly on the thirteenth day of any month.

Some of my neighbors have actually left home in order to make sure their first visitor in the new year was not a woman.

For some, washing on New Year's Day is absolutely taboo! And if I'd had "bad luck" every

time I have walked under a ladder, I would have been gone years ago.

All of these things—and many more you and I could mention—are pure superstition.

Sometimes, superstition puts on its Sunday clothes:

"Clem made a promise to God about a year ago and didn't keep it, so God took him."

"Mort is really taking the death of his son very hard. But he's got no complaint against God. God just took the boy because Mort abused him so."

"If you live for God, he will bless you, and you won't ever have to want for nothing."

"God took my wife because I refused to obey him, and I didn't appreciate her like I ought to."

Move over, Snowball, you have company!

Oh yes, that Friday night—in spite of the hex being lifted—Snowball and I acted just like the apostles of Jesus: We fished all night and caught nothing!