

Opinions

Characters make life richer



Looking On

Raz Autry

Characters who made America folklore rich and rewarding have played a great part in my life. One of the greatest characters I have known was David Jones, affectionately known as Tom Dooley. He lived in my part of the county and became my boyhood hero.

During World War II, Tom was finally inducted in the Army after two rejections.

The first time he reported for induction he was rejected because of reasons not clear to him. When someone suggested it might be because of his I.Q. Tom became very indignant and said, "that is a lie, I can see as good as anybody."

A few months later the Army got desperate and decided they had a place for him. His father was the proudest man in the county. He went from place to place bragging about Tom's roll in fighting the war. When someone asked Mr. Jones who was Tom fighting, he replied the Japs. Not being able to restrain his bragging, he boasted that his boy had killed 25 Jap fighters. One of his listeners wanted to know where he was fighting. Sticking out his chest further, he replied Fort Bragg.

Finally Tom's training was over at Fort Bragg, and the unit was to complete training in Virginia. It was necessary to take a ferry across the James River to get to the training site. Being totally unfamiliar with ferrys, Tom was convinced he was being shipped overseas. Near panic because he couldn't possibly imagine going overseas without a rifle, Dooley finally reached the sergeant in charge of his platoon and demanded a gun to defend himself. His superior was so flabbergasted and mad with Tom's ig-

norance that he put him in handcuffs and locked him in the stockade when they reached the training site.

Declaring him dangerous to the war effort, the Army discharged him and sent him home. The elder Mr. Dooley spread the word that Tom had been a prisoner of war and was discharged because of shattered nerves.

Not all the characters I have known were as intelligent as Tom, some of them have been downright ignorant. One of the more intellectual characters was Jack Hogan.

Three daughters were the pride of Jack's life. He spent a great deal of his time boasting about their beauty and charm. All three were married, however, in conversation he never mentioned his sons-in-law.

When I got to know him better, I asked him about his in-laws. He said he had always told his daughters to look up, and they did. They looked up three as sorry as they could find and married them. Jack walked every place he went. My curiosity being greater than a cat's, forced me to ask him why he didn't have a car. He related this story:

Buying a new oldsmobile was the culmination of his life. Driving to the city of Roanoke Rapids was a must. This city was the shopping center for the community of Gaston.

All went well until Jack stopped at Penny's and parked beside a Mrs. Williams who was known far and wide as the worst driver in the east. Before Jack realized he had parked beside the human wrecker it was too late. They came out of the store at the same time.

Hogan insisted Mrs. Williams leave first. She would have none of it. Finally, realizing she was not going to leave, he backed into the street. Mrs. Williams got in her car immediately and back into Jack's door before he could put his car in drive.

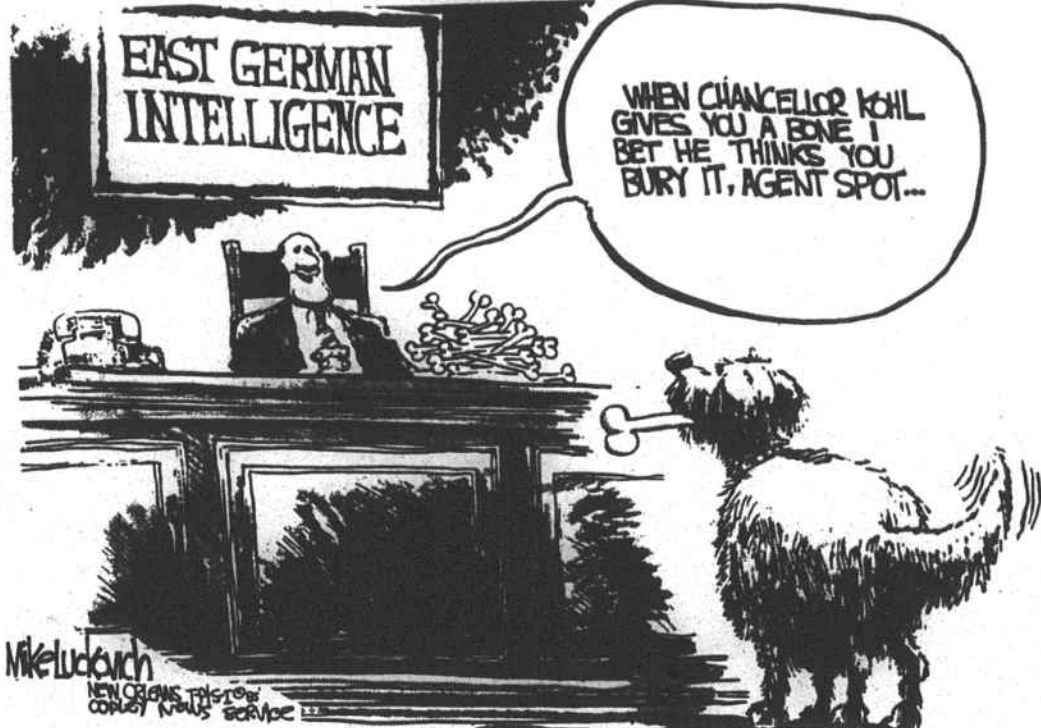
Apologizing for the accident and assuring him she would cover all damages, in turn Jack assured her it was alright and not to worry. It was important he get away from her.

Roanoke Rapids is two small cities with a residential area in between.

Hogan was stopped at a light at the upper part of town when he noticed through his rear view mirror Mrs. Williams approaching. Thinking she was going to stop, he relaxed. She plowed into the rear of his new car. Perplexed and near tears, she once again assured him the car would be taken care of.

Jack left the scene faster than a fox leaves a hound. Continuing to follow his escape route, a disheartened man with a rumped new car headed home. As he turned into the street on the way downtown, you guessed it, he met Mrs. Williams. She hit him head on. Once again she bounded out of the car and started to utter the expected, Jack stopped her in her tracks. He said, "Mrs. Williams, it is all my fault, any man who would be stupid enough to drive when you are on the street should get his car torn up."

Jack pulled his car home, gave up his operator's license and started walking every place he needed to go.



Farmers looking at new rules

By W.B. Jenkins
N.C. Farm Bureau Federation
Larry Jones, extension professor of Ag Economics at the University of Kentucky says that farmers who will be farming in the year 2000 will be those who understand and play by the new rules of the game that have been introduced since 1979.

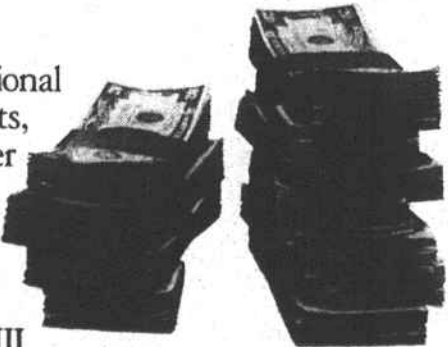
It will be those farmers who manage with a focus on sound financial management ... those that use records to stress efficiency rather than volume and those that develop a sound marketing program. More specifically, it will be farmers who emphasize controlling the cost of production ... maintaining excellent records ... and locking in profits with advance marketing techniques.

Professor Jones says the odds are that agriculture will endure several more years of lean times but the longer-run outlook is brighter than the current environment would suggest. He also stated it would be unrealistic to think that we'll return to the U.S. agriculture of the 70's. It is expected that farmland values will stabilize and interest rates will remain higher than the rate of inflation. Exports will grow at a slower pace and agriculture will continue to be at the mercy of international political and economic events.

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