



Joé Lanier

SON of a GUN

Sufferin' Succotash! . . . It is most difficult sometimes to understand the world of high finance. . . especially if you are not in it. . . Tougher than that is figuring the reasoning behind some of the Board of Trustees moves in hard times. . . It is fair to say that most people in Duplin County, by now, know Duplin General Hospital is in financial trouble. . . That the county commissioners have been asked to fill the financial void with tax monies. . . That most responsible people are going about the county promoting this hospital arguing down rumors that are mostly opinion and not fact. . . Stating their support and asking others to support Duplin General Hospital. . . The nursing staff is asked to take time off if they are not absolutely needed. . . Clubs, organizations and individuals are spending their time and money to help the looks and operations of the hospital. . . As all of this and more is taking place, a move by the hospital's board of trustees this past Thursday seems a slap in the face. . . Frustrating is putting it mildly. . . What I am referring to is the salary increase the trustees approved for the administrator, Richard Harrell. . . Prior to Thursday night, Mr. Harrell's salary was \$35,000 a year plus \$350 a month travel expense. . . Thursday night that salary was increased by \$3,000 and in addition he was given a \$1,000 bonus. . . \$4,000 is half a year's salary for several working at the hospital. . . Now, I don't blame Mr. Harrell for taking the \$4,000 if the trustees were gullible enough to offer it, and the county commissioners are foolish enough to keep pouring in tax money. . . It appears to me some people are living in a dream world and other tax payers and I are being forced to support that world. If the hospital were operating in the black and able to carry its own weight, fix its own roof, for example (the commissioners are about to spend \$80,000 in tax monies to repair the roof). . . But, if Duplin General were financially able to stand on its own feet, then a salary of even \$100,000 would be acceptable as long as the "Hospital" could afford it. . . But, \$43,100 with the hospital operating in the red seems a bit far-fetched. . . And if you add 15% to cover the fringe benefits, you are getting very close to \$50,000. . . If this is the trend, if this is only the beginning, if the tax payers can expect this every year, it may be time we begin reading the writing on the bottom line of the balance sheet. . . I think we can forget about a miracle happening. Maybe this is the straw that makes us face some facts. . .

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This is the week of the year I really feel like celebrating. . . Twenty-eight years ago I talked this young girl into leaving the security of her parents and going away with me on an adventure. Our journey has really been something. . . We have been up, we have been down, we have been here, we have been there. . . Times have been trying, times have been joyful, times have been bearable, but it has always been "we." . . As security goes, I don't suppose we will ever again be as secure against the adversities of the world as we were with our parents, but our love, sharing and togetherness has brought us as close to this parental security as one can get. It has also made us fragile. Our deepest hurt comes when the other is hurt. As our journey continues for many, many years to come, I hope, the adventure will continue to outweigh everything but our love, which is the adventure. . . Twenty-eight years of marriage, January 21st. . . Son-of-a-Gun. . .

What Parents Can Do About Drug Abuse

You can help your children say no to drugs. That's the message from the National Institute on Drug Abuse. Strong family support helps children develop the personal values and self-confidence they need to resist peer pressure. Start early, the Institute advises parents. Talk to your children before they have a problem. Although peer pressure can have a strong influence on your children, your love and guidance will help them resist negative pressures. Let them know it's okay to say no to drugs.

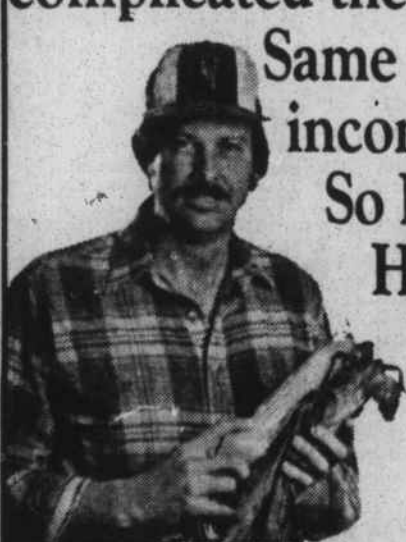


straight and let them know where you stand. While your children need your support, you, too, may find the need for help if drug problems arise. Many parents find getting together with other parents to set behavior guidelines and standards is helpful. For free flyers giving further guidance, write to the National Clearinghouse for Drug Abuse Information, P.O. Box 1909, Rockville, Maryland 20850.



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