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Does Desirable End Justify Any Means?

North Carolina doesn't seem to have enough money for all its highway needs or to pay its teachers appropriate wages or to take care of its elderly and handicapped. Everybody's begging the General Assembly for something. Where will legislators find the money?

In reply, there comes to the fore again that quick and sure fix, the lottery. A state lottery gains more and more favor as the years go by, despite the setback suffered by a 1985 bill for a binding referendum on the subject.

Now that gasoline and sales taxes have been increased, a disgruntled electorate is ready to listen to pro-lottery arguments. Lots of money, virtually overnight, with no strings attached sounds mighty good.

Proponents point to 22 other states that have lotteries, and also have no state income or sales tax, or have reduced taxes, supposedly because of the dollars derived from gambling.

And when they cite these instances, they invariably add the emotional clincher: "Think what could be done with that money for the schools, for the elderly, for whatever is now in financial distress!"

Because the need for more funds for schools, for instance, is very real, and because we love quick-and-easy solutions, it is tempting to get on the lottery bandwagon.

But let's consider the whole picture. First, the fact that a large number of other states does something is no reason at all for North Carolina to follow suit. We would hope we're not sheep and are not simply dazzled by figures. We need more information about the affect of a lottery on all the people of a state.

Also, what has or has not happened in regard to taxes elsewhere is not necessarily tied to the lottery. We have no assurance our taxes would be affected by adoption of a lottery.

Then there's the bureaucracy required to administer a new program of this kind. It will certainly cost something to establish and maintain a lottery. And can we really have complete confidence in the efficient, honest administration of another division of state government? Can we be sure the sectors of society needing help will actually be better funded, or will tax dollars previously allocated to them be channeled elsewhere?

If, after considering all this, we're still lusting after the millions of dollars that would unquestionably fall into state coffers, we must still confront the issue of morality.

Despite the obvious truth that no one is forced to participate in lotteries, the fact still remains that we would be authorizing our state to sponsor gambling, to encourage the weakness in human nature. Compulsive gamblers will have one more opportunity to wreck their lives; those who have never before dabbled in chance-taking will be tempted to try.

And North Carolina will be saying to its citizens, "Your children have textbooks bought with gambling money, and senior centers are built on principles of chance and luck, because we're taking the easy way out. The legislators don't have the courage to make choices and levy taxes, and you constituents refuse to take responsibility for these services you say you want."

The issue of a state lottery should go to the voters on a referendum, and voters should say "no" to something that is easy and morally debilitating. It is hoped most of them won't want to benefit from someone else's weakness.

"It Wasn't Me, Papa!"

Oceanographer-philosopher Jacques Cousteau, writing in the Cousteau Society magazine, summarizes the traditional excuse-making and buck-passing about problems of the oceans. He tells of those who exceed harvest limits and pollute waters and kill seals and how easy it is to blame the other fellow with, "It wasn't me, Papa!"

We are told taking responsibility for our own actions is a sign of maturity. We are mature when we can foresee and accept the logical consequences of what we do before we act. We know the risks and are willing to live with them if the desired results don't come about. When we can do this, we can act with full knowledge and acceptance of all possible outcomes. When things do go bad, though, we usually show our immaturity by using the "It wasn't me," "It wasn't my fault," "How could I know," or "I hadn't planned on that happening."

Sometimes we shift the blame away from us to another by "scapegoating." Our young



Bill Faver

children's "She did it," "Well, he threw the ball," or "He told me to" quickly follow the denial. We expect to find such behavior in children when they are growing up and seeking maturity. But, too often, we find this kind of behavior around us all the time.

Think about littering. Now any person who does any thinking at all will have to acknowledge that litter is unsightly, unnecessary, and probably unsanitary. But how many people, at least subconsciously, must say, "Well, my little bit won't hurt." When we point out the problem, we get a "It wasn't me, Papa!" response.

To the editor:

The feisty sarcasm of the Sept. 4 editorial predicting that the minimum age drinking law will be ignored appeared to encourage moral irresponsibility. What would you propose instead? Nothing? Fortunately, about one in ten 18-20-year olds will read it.

If drinking alcohol should be a matter of personal choice at 18, does anyone have a right to control an individual's consumption at that age of illegal drugs? Same principle.

Do you really believe that tired old argument used when the voting age was changed to 18 which states that a

person who is mature enough physically to go to war or hold a job is intellectually mature enough to vote? How many 18-year-olds do you know who have an active interest in the issues on which they are now eligible to vote? Have you observed any improvement in the acceptance of responsibility among that age group? How many even know what the issues are?

With a junior college diploma and responsible job before the end of my 18th year, the thing that claimed my attention most was a good time. It didn't occur to me to demand the right to vote because I knew that I was not intellectually equipped to

make intelligent choices. Even at age 23, after four years in the Navy during World War II and looking forward to marriage, a family and additional college, I did not place a high priority on voting.

My son served in the Marines from age 18 to 22, including a year in Vietnam. He came home no more interested in voting than I was at that age. Such immaturity was typical of my generation, of my son's generation, and is certainly typical of the present generation of 18-20-year olds.

Since you are so horrified at the thought of federal funds being available as a result of this evil legislation, you surely have in mind

an alternative source for funding improvements to our highways. We all agree that everyone must have good roads on which to drive while killing himself or someone else as he exercised the right to consume alcohol.

Sorry, I couldn't resist being a little sarcastic, although you and I both know that it is the least effective tactic in the art of persuasion.

G. Nash Greene
Holden Beach

How You Know When It's Over

To the editor:

You know the (tourist) season is over when:

—you can go through Shalotte without having a major part of your life go by;

—the garbage truck can travel down the wrong side of the road and you don't have to store your garbage for a week before the next pick-up;

—you walk the white line, rather than dashing across it;

—over-sized lobster-colored people aren't walking their "teeny-tiny" dogs;

—bespectacled, capped men with lily-white sock-clad legs do not walk on the beach in print bermudas;

—carsloads rush into town for their take-out libation;

—the garbage cans and dumpsters aren't filled to overflowing;

—switches (flood, porch and air conditioning) are left in the "on" position;

—rainy days merit a trip to Waccamaw;

—renters don't complain;

—you can find Solarcaine on the shelf;

—only cars of employees are parked at tourist shops;

—restaurants aren't open seven days a week;

—when the flow of goodies for gossip slows to a trickle;

—the binoculars are put back in their cases;

—neighbors can start getting together again.

Pearl F. McDaniel
Holden Beach

Day Tourists Have Rights

To the editor:

If visiting the beach and shelling each day is a detriment to the beach, then so be it, because I intend to do this for many years to come. This is a right that I have, not a privilege granted by Holden Beach or anyone else.

I think Gay Atkins and the town council should realize that most of the day tourists or visitors are senior citizens or retirees who have helped to make Holden Beach what it is today.

Not only should there be more public accessways and parking on Holden Beach, but there should also be a ramp for the handicapped so they too could enjoy the beach.

Maxine Honeycutt
Rt. 1, Supply

Football League Needs Sponsors

To the editor:

West Brunswick Youth Football League wants to be able to teach the youth of Brunswick County to play football so when they reach high school they'll have a good knowledge of the sport and experience.

We really need sponsors to help out the league and support our youth. Any business or individual that wants to help, please call me at 842-6629.

Tink Lawing
Supply

Brief Notes

To the editor:

We look forward to the Beacon every week here in Shelby and always buy one while at our second home at Gause Landing. We enjoy the Beacon very much.

Faye and Bill Hudson
Shelby

Thank you for your promptness. We received your newspaper and enjoyed it very much. Eagerly awaiting next weeks paper.

Dee A. O'Callaghan
Lexington, Kentucky

I'm subscribing to help me find work in the area. I have just bought property in Brunswick County and I'm hoping to reside there.

I have vacationed there two years. I like the place and people. I very, very much like reading the Beacon.

Freddie L. Waldron
North Tazewell, Virginia

Sarcasm Least Effective Tactic In Art Of Persuasion

To the editor:

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Sharpen Your Nose . . . For The Great Sniff Test

Are you participating this month in the great Smell Survey?

If you subscribe to National Geographic, chances are you've already gotten the questionnaire in the mail. Your sniffer and those of 11 million other subscribers are on the line. Is yours up to the job? Or have smoking, chemicals and sinusitis led to serious debilitation?

Whatever, don't throw the sniff test away. This one is actually fun to do, so pass it along to someone else if you don't plan to participate.

The magazine calls it the largest scientific survey ever undertaken regarding our sense of smell.

There's no flipping through magazine pages and looking at ads, no revealing food preferences over the telephone or talking (with dinner on the stove) to strange men and women at the door. Just the survey, an ink pen and a coin in the privacy of your own home. Oh, and don't forget your nose. That's the most important tool. But this is a one-nose survey—no kinky group stuff, OK? It messes up the validity of the results.

Once past the basics (medical history, age, sex, race, etc.), you can get into the meat of the matter: a



Susan Usher

series of six inviting "scratch 'n' sniff" panels.

Taking the coin, gently scratch the white square. Put panel to nose and sniff deeply. Notice anything? Next time you may sniff a little more cautiously, eh?

My mom used to conduct similar surveys—only she called it checking to see what had gone bad in the refrigerator and the fruit bowl.

The first panel may remind you of the dirty cloth diapers you had to wash as a babysitter or, if you're lucky, your grandmother's rose garden. Or you may smell . . . nothing.

For each panel, you must limit yourself to descriptive, choosing from among spicy, floral, woody, musky, fruity, urine, burnt, foul, sweet, ink, other and no odor.

It may be that all of us didn't get

the same six panels. In any case, I'd really like to know what other folks thought they were smelling.

If you're reluctant to take the test, then let the child of the family do it. As National Geographic points out in its introduction, youngsters seem very curious about how things smell, but lack an adult's "aversion to stench," or yucky smells.

Apparently scientists know little about our sense of smell compared to other senses—how they relate so strongly to our emotions and our memories—how a certain smell may remind you of the green stuff they used to dust the wood floors in the old high school, or why carnations remind one person of funerals and another of their favorite junior-senior prom. Apparently the only smells we are neutral toward are those we've never experienced before.

Consider yourself a pioneer, a benefactor of science, or someone whose curiosity simply got the best of them. Make the sacrifice. Dip in. Take a sniff.

And turn in your report card no later than Oct. 1, carbon to little old curious me.



I Get Reborn On Stage

For those of you who are just now tuning in to my columns, you need to know I'm a hopeless theater nut, and love acting almost more than eating. I have enjoyed the fantasy lives of Amanda in "Glass Menagerie," Fonsie in "The Gin Game," and Mary in "The Women," among other roles. These were experiences that enabled me to "be" exciting or admirable or



Marjorie Megivern

tragic women, who were totally different from me.

Well, it's been entirely too long since I had one of those "meaty" roles to play, so I was overjoyed to be cast in a UNC-W production of "Tobacco Road," which is a classic of the American stage.

I'm Ada Lester, mother of a down-and-out clan if there ever was one. These rural southerners of the depression era are without money, food, hope or morals, and they would kill for a handful of turnips.

Being Ada Lester is not a lot of fun. I spend a few hours immersed in her poverty and come home with a new appreciation of my late-night snack. I absorb the cruelty of that family, in which Grandma's death out in the brush is met with indifference and the teenage son routinely curses and ridicules his parents, and I give thanks for warm family relationships.

I've always claimed drama could often teach and preach better than schools and churches, and "Tobacco Road" is teaching me more than I wanted to know.

My whole image may change, in fact. I'm taking on Ada's worn-out shuffle, her uneducated speech and her sour attitude, all of which I hope to discard when the last curtain goes down.

But if I lose that character, I don't think I can shake the whole experience of living on the tobacco road. Existing at near-starvation level, bearing 17 children whose names and faces are soon forgotten, stealing food, enduring a loveless marriage with a lazy, unprincipled husband . . . all that takes a powerful hold on you, when you realize it really happened, happens still.

On the other hand, there's fun and satisfaction in being part of a play production: camaraderie with the cast, creativity in interpreting a role, seeing the results of hard work in crafting a scene.

Also, this is my first experience at fighting, on or off stage. As an incredible patsy, I've never lifted a hand or a stick to anyone except my own children. Now I have the golden opportunity to beat up on a man, not once but twice, and to take a stick to my grown daughter. I may turn into a real bully.

We spend this month in intense rehearsals, then will show the tragic/comic Lester family to the world. Those are the moments I love best, when we interact with a live audience for better or worse.

And when it's over, a little bit of Ada will cling to me, I'm afraid, and a new awareness of people right around me who live in the same squalor and ignorance and pain as those folks on the tobacco road.

That's the key to my obsession with theater. From a seat in the audience, I am drawn into a new world for a time and can be changed by it; from the stage I take on a whole new life and it becomes forever part of my own.