

The Problem Of Teenage runaways.....

"I'm going to run away!"
Almost every parent has heard this threat from their children. Most often it comes from a very angry little boy or girl who, everybody knows, will get awfully hungry in the next hour or so, and be scared to stay away past dark.

There have always been older runaways, too. In years past, most of them seemed to be teenage boys, who grabbing at independence might run away to join the Navy or see sunny California.
During the 1960's and on into the 1970's, there appears to have been a dramatic in-

crease in the number of juvenile runaways. Between 1967 and 1972 the FBI statistics on runaways indicate an increase of over 70 percent. The number of runaways across the country reported by all agencies in 1969 was 500,000. This number increased to 1,000,000 in 1973. These numbers do not include the thousands of young people who ran away and were never charged with the offense.

According to Peggy Johnson, deputy administrator for the Interstate Compact on Juveniles for North Carolina in the Division of Social Services, there is no way to actually tell how many juvenile runaways there are in the state, but she estimates it to be at least 5,000 to 10,000 each year.

The Interstate Compact is an agreement between all 50 states to provide services for juveniles who have run away from their home state.

"Each state provides services for the return of juveniles to their homes. This includes the home state paying for transportation back home in cases where parents are financially unable to pay. We use only air transportation and make arrangements for someone in each state for surveillance of the juvenile to be at any airport where the plane stops on its way to North Carolina," said Mrs. Johnson.

She stated that the services of the Compact are actually involved in only a small percentage of the total runaways. The vast majority either turn themselves in or are

picked up by law enforcement authorities in other states who contact their parents, or the juveniles contact their parents directly and the family pays for their return. During 1975-76 Mrs. Johnson's office assisted 532 runaway juveniles. Approximately half of these were juveniles returned to other states.

A study conducted last year by HEW of 2,400 runaway juveniles showed that more girls are running away from home than boys. The study found that 60 percent were girls, almost a third were 14 years of age and under, and 77 percent are white.

The study showed that among the runaways 58 percent had left home because of problems within the family, 10 percent because they wanted to be independent, and 9 percent because of problems at school. Only two percent reported problems with drugs, and less than one percent, problems with alcohol, although almost five percent listed their parent's problems with drugs and alcohol as their reason for running away.

The increase in runaway juveniles and their younger ages is enough to cause public concern. However, a second factor of an especially serious nature has compounded the problems according to another study conducted for HEW last year. "The nature of contemporary social conditions in America, and especially urban America, are such that the survival options of the young runaways

are extremely limited. Fear of discovery, shortage of money, food and shelter, unavailability of jobs and so on, often force the young person into situations of gross exploitation or victimization. Street hustles, such as drug selling, stealing, prostitution, panhandling, and exchange of sexual favor for shelter or food are described as part of the street scene. Hunger, malnutrition, drug abuse, exploitation and victimization are now seen as characteristic of this segment of American life. The foul revelations of the killing of 27 young transients from Houston, Texas, in 1973-74 brought home to many people the dangers to which such young persons were exposed."

The Houston tragedy and the thousands of calls coming into the Governor's office prompted Texas Governor Dolph Briscoe, to establish a nationwide toll-free hotline for runaway juveniles in September 1973. This project is called Operation Peace of Mind and runaways anywhere in the country can call 1-800-231-6946 and know that their call will be kept confidential and their message will be relayed to their parents. Many times those messages are used just to let parents know that they are alive and well. In many cases, however, children are reunited with their parents through this effort.

EDITORIALS & OPINIONS

Page 4A Wednesday, November 24, 1976

Thanksgiving is time for serious reflection

Thanksgiving.

Through the years the event has perhaps lost a great deal of its true meaning. It was originally intended as a religious event in which the new Americans paused to thank The Almighty for his rich blessings.

Today Thanksgiving is looked upon as a commercial venture for selling turkeys, just as Easter is for selling new clothes.

These are somewhat jaded views, admittedly, but considering all of the pain and strife we inflict on each other all year long it would appear few of us are very thankful for anything.

It must have taken an overwhelming faith on the part of those first strangers to the shores of this then wilderness. They uprooted themselves from generations of tradition in other countries to carve a new way of life here. When they arrived there was no travelers aide society or Salvation Army or YMCA for them to check into and seek advice on customs and lifestyles. It was all brand new. So they took it one day at a time and that has led us to where we are now.

Maybe somewhere along the way we lost that one day at a time method. We certainly appear to have misplaced that sense of adventure. That sense of approaching each new day as a brand new chance to make badly needed change in our lifestyles and to assist in whatever way possible others in improving their lot in life.

And there is no maybe about it, we have lost that strength of group effort. Now we approach life with an "I'm number one and the only important being in my life" attitude. There are even lectures based on this theory.

We have psychoanalysed ourselves into uptight and frightened isolationists.

No one thinks the Good Lord intended each and everyone of us to spend our entire lives on our knees, hands clasped and extended toward the Heavens. If that was true, then the world would be one huge Cathedral. But in reality it doesn't require these physical movements for a person to make a little comment in his heart. Something to the effect, "Thank you for giving me another day and I would appreciate any guidance you may offer to help me make this day count, not only for myself, but for anyone else I should come in contact with."

End of sermonette.

Have a Happy Thanksgiving this Thursday and everyday.

Blackbeard's reign ended in N.C. inlet

Blackbeard the pirate (Edward Teach) was killed November 22, 1718 in a fierce hand-to-hand struggle with Lt. Robert Maynard of the British Navy.

In a scene as melodramatic as any you'll see on TV, Maynard attacked Blackbeard's ship in an inlet near Ocracoke at dawn and a savage battle ensued with the pirate crew.

Blackbeard himself is reported to have suffered 25 wounds, including five pistol balls, from slashing sabers before he died.

Nine members of the 18-man crew were also killed with the remaining nine badly wounded. On the side of the Crown there were 10 dead and 24, including Maynard, wounded before the battle ended.

In the hold of Blackbeard's ship, The Adventure, another desperate battle was being waged. Blackbeard had sent his Negro slave, Caesar, down into the powder magazine with orders to blow the ship up if the pirate crew was overwhelmed.

With their captain bleeding on the deck and their comrades falling all around them, two members of the pirate crew remembered Caesar and his orders. They made a



ED SMITH

mad dash down to the powder magazine to stop Caesar. They had to overpower him to keep him from following Blackbeard's orders.

Following the victory, Maynard ordered Blackbeard's corpse beheaded and the severed head attached to the bowsprit of the British vessel. Later, Maynard sailed triumphantly into Bath displaying the head of the feared pirate.

On November 21, 1789, the State of North Carolina ratified the United States Constitution.

This was the next-to-last of the original 13 states to do so.

A convention at Fayetteville ratified the document by a vote of 195-77. A year earlier, a convention in Hillsborough had rejected the Constitution by an equally wide margin.

It was only after the Bill of Rights had been introduced, George Washington elected President and considerable economic pressure brought to bear that the state changed its mind and joined the Union.

Rhode Island, the 13th state, joined after North Carolina.

Two North Carolina governors were born this week in history: John W. Ellis (1859-61) was born in Salisbury on November 23, 1820. W. W. Holden, the state's first Republican governor (1868-71), was born in Orange County on November 24, 1818.

What's your opinion?

The Mirror-Herald welcomes letters from readers expressing your opinions on any subject you choose, or rebutting any editorial opinion we express.

All letters must be signed by writer with address included. Unsigned letters will not be published.

Address all correspondence for this page to Reader Dialogue, Mirror-Herald, P. O. Drawer 752, Kings Mountain, N. C., 28086.

Happy Thanksgiving...



The Poet's Corner



LET NOT THE HEART BE WEARY

Roses bloom and will bloom again
for God never ceases His blessings to send
Springtime may come and springtime may go
Summer will pass then winter with snow
But red robin returns the meadow is green
The budding of roses again is seen.

Beautiful is the music 'ore the sea
Bright is the sunshine that falls on thee
Days lengthen with joy as the shadows unfold
In a pool of stars shines a round of gold
Hearts that have grown cold wax warm again
for God never ceases His blessings to send.

Love cannot die if the flame is fed
Once again flourishes roses of red
Springtime, summer, winter and fall
God's love encircles the life to enthrall
Then the cycle begins all over again
For God never ceases His blessings to send.

THINK HIGH

Birds think high the sky
is the limit,
They claim the top of the tree
You see
Then dotted against the sky,
They fly upward still
Until the heavens swallow them up;
Where the human eye cannot follow
The swallow or even the flying geese
Birds think high the sky
Is the limit,
But then birds can fly.

Vivian Stewart Biltcliffe

Thank God for Rhett Butler...



TOM MCINTYRE

The long awaited telecast of "Gone With The Wind" has come and gone. The figures indicate it was the highest-rated TV show in the history of the media.

Want to know what one of the other highest rated shows in TV's history was? A modern-day horror movie for TV entitled "The Night Stalker."

Something like 120-million viewers saw "GWTW" on the Sunday night it began. The audience share was slightly less than that on the next evening's conclusion.

The gripes about breaking the movie into two parts, I feel, were reasonable. From NBC's viewpoint the reasons for breaking "GWTW" were valid. The Sunday showing gave them the highest ratings of any network for that week. The Monday night conclusion gave the network the highest ratings for the next week. In TV ratings are all that counts. Seems strange that a show viewed and enjoyed by 20 million people, ratings-wise, is not a success, but that's the way it is.

From a viewing standpoint "GWTW" was not the spectacle it was intended to be. In the first place when you reduce all of that scenery into a small viewing area it loses all the impact you get from the big screen. Watching the film on TV I also got the feeling it was more of a parody of itself. The viewers are forced to concentrate on the characters rather than the huge canvas you see in the movie theater. This rankled me because I kept expecting to see all those "Suthen gentlemen" break out into tenor-voice song and ballet steps.

Thank God for Rhett Butler. When he was on the scene all the other men paled in

the South. All of that pomp and pageantry and "ooing and aahing" over those frilly ladies must have been a burden not easily carried.

I'm surprised the Ku Klux Klan in that era didn't wear pink sheets.

And speaking of gypsies . . .

O. M. (Pete) Peterson, who labors for his daily bread at Lithium Corporation, brings us this latest note on those nomads.

Peterson said he was on a flight from Chicago last week and seated beside him was a man reading Peter Maas' best seller, "King of the Gypsies."

Peterson said he struck up a conversation with the man, telling him about the day the gypsies hit Kings Mountain and about the "mooning" shot run in the newspaper.

The man tore a couple of pages from the book and said, "This explains what that means."

Well, friends, it doesn't mean the same thing to the gypsies that it does to us.

The gypsies, even the ones that travel by car instead of wagon, still cling to ancient customs. One custom is called "Marimay" and it sets down certain rules that men and women must abide by.

From Maas' book it is explained . . .
"...a man and his family can be made instantly "unclean," complete social outcasts in the gypsy subculture, by a woman who spitefully lifts her skirt, because of some slight, real or imagined, or some feud, and exposes her genitals . . ."

So, we see that the gypsy woman who "mooned" that newspaper photographer didn't do it playfully, but spitefully.

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