



News From Grinder's Switch: Interview With Minnie Pearl

Mrs. Sarah Ophelia Cannon came to Charlotte three days ago.

A silver-haired lady with impeccable manners, Mrs. Cannon, 70, arrived from Tennessee wearing an executive red blazer, a business-woman's tie, and a conservative blue skirt. But traveling with Mrs. Cannon was another item of attire: a flat straw hat topped with 42-year-old flowers and a price tag that reads \$1.98.

Cousin Minnie Pearl was in town.

Mrs. Cannon has performed nationally as Minnie Pearl since that Saturday night in November, 1940, when "scared out of my mind," she stepped up to the microphone of WSM's "Grand Ole Opry" radio program and became the luckless, man-chasing girl out of Grinder's Switch. It worked. For the past 42 years her personification of a naive country girl consistently has remained popular with audiences at the Opry, and in 1975 Minnie Pearl was inducted into the Country Music Hall of Fame.

Last Monday, whenever Minnie Pearl was mentioned, Mrs. Cannon laughed and referred to her creation as "her," as if her

creation were a separate person for which she wasn't quite responsible. In Charlotte to promote her autobiography, Mrs. Cannon was interviewed for the readers of **The Foothills View**. She spoke as Minnie Pearl, but behind the eyes was the intelligence of Sarah Cannon, the thoughtful woman from Centerville, Tenn., who has created one of the stock characters of American folk humor.

Cannon: You know whenever I see a reporter, I think back to Hattisburg, Miss., and the time I was playing a Food-A-Rama there in July. Lordy, it was hot! Well, Miss America was there, too, and we left together, me and my costume and all. Miss America didn't perspire at all, she "glowed," as they say. Well, I was glowing pretty much. We were walking along — beauty and the beast — and this newspaper fella took our picture. Well, just for funning I told him "You be sure and get the names right now, so's people can tell us apart," and he said back without the slightest trace of humor, "Yes, Minnie Pearl on the left, Miss America on the right."

(Minnie Pearl, not Miss America, is pictured left. The Editor.)

View: In 1975, when the old Grand Ole Opry at Ryman Auditorium became Opryland Amusement Park, you said Opry had become an institution people see on their way to Florida. Has Minnie Pearl become an institution?

Cannon: The Grand Ole Opry was 57 years old this past November, and I don't think that it can entertain people that long without becoming an institution. Yes, I've been called an institution, and I've felt very complimented by that.

View: Do you still enjoy your work after all that time?

Cannon: Oh, yes. She, Minnie, is perpetually amazed. That's her secret. She's so innocent . . . It's a happy innocence, not a tragic innocence. She's never aged. That's why I love to go back to her. Minnie and Grinder's Switch, where my daddy used to unload lumber, have become a never-never land in my mind.

Please turn to Minnie Pearl, Page 3.

The Foothills View

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Food For Thought And College Credit

Food, the substance of life and a major source of global concern today, is the subject of the winter/spring 1982 Courses by Newspaper program.

Publication of the provocative 15-part series, "Food and People," will begin Jan. 14 in *The Foothills View*.

The illuminating weekly articles, written by recognized authorities, examine the role of food in terms of history, economics, psychology, geopolitics, culture, morality, and the future. Raising disturbing questions and offering fresh perspectives, the series presents an incisive view of the world food situation.

The sixteenth in an ongoing series of Courses by Newspaper programs that began in 1973, "Food and People" will be the basis of credit and non-credit courses at participating colleges and universities across the country, including Gardner-Webb College.

The winter/spring course is coordinated by Dr. Dudley Kirk, who has been Professor of Demography in Stanford University's Food Research Institute and the Department of Sociology since 1967, and the Dean and Virginia Morrison Professor of Population Studies there since 1971. He served with the Department from 1947 to 1954, when he became Demographic Director of the Population Council of New York City, a post he held until 1967.

Readers who want to supplement their knowledge gained through the series articles can purchase a book of readings, edited by Dudley Kirk, the "Food and People" course coordinator, and Ellen Eliason. The 200,000 word text provides diverse opinions on food-related issues. Besides the Reader, a Study Guide is also

available to those who take companion course for credit.

A Resource Guide has been prepared for teachers and community organizations to enliven discussion sessions and to simplify planning programs based on the newspaper series. The comprehensive Guide contains ideas for program formats, speakers and panel topics, discussion questions, and books to review.

All educational materials can be purchased at college bookstores or by mailing a coupon to be published in *Foothills View*, along with the articles.

Courses by Newspaper, now entering its tenth year, combines the resources of the nation's newspapers, colleges, and universities in presenting topics of current interest and importance to newspaper readers and students at participating colleges and universities.

The 1982 program is a project of University Extension, University of California, San Diego, and is funded by the National Endowment for the Humanities.

Area News

Dr. A. Mickey Church, Associate Superintendent of the Cleveland County Schools has been elected Vice-Chairman and Chairman-Elect of the Superintendent's Commission of the North Carolina Association of School Administrators. Dr. Church, a charter member of the state-wide organization, was elected to this position at the December NC-ASA Conference held in Winston-Salem.

The objectives of the Superintendent's Commission are to provide a support system to communicate the needs and concerns of the membership; to plan, develop, and implement programs addressing the needs of the membership; and to initiate and implement a continuous program of professional development for the membership.

Proposed City Park: It's Up For Bids Again

The proposed city park is for bids again. Town council took that action Tuesday night after hearing architect Gardner Gidley tell them that the cost of building a new park may have risen as much as \$38,393 since the park was originally bid in 1980. At that time low bids totaled \$228,607. Rising construction costs could bring that total as high as \$267,000 Gidley told the council.

Boiling Springs has qualified for \$87,500 in federal funds toward the cost of a park, and the town has matched that amount for a total of \$175,000. That still left a deficit of \$92,000 between the money the town has available and the current estimates of costs.

That money was offered to the town last month when John Searight, representing a charitable fund established by local athletes David Thompson and Artis Gilmore, offered the council up to \$92,000 in contributions provided the park be named the Thompson-Gilmore Park. At that time council delayed action until talking with Gidley. Searight was out of town this week and unavailable for comment on the council's latest action this Tuesday.

The decision to readvertise the bids appeared to endanger council's unanimity on the town's need for a park and its location off Homestead Road. Councilman Max Hamrick criticized the amount needed to be spent for an access road to the Homestead location and the size of such an appropriation for recreation.

"I haven't got a closed mind," Hamrick said, "but it will take another vote."

Hamrick's comment was sharply criticized by resident Tony Eastman, who insisted council's earlier appropriation was binding. "I think we ought to build it," Eastman said. "We've got that land, and we ought to go ahead and do it."

Councilman John Washburn then moved to advertise for new bids on a park "as quickly as possible." The motion carried 5-1 with Hamrick opposing. Mayor Jimmy Greene then appointed Washburn to a committee to study alternate sites for the park, and invited Searight to the Feb. 2 council meeting.

In other action, Mayor Greene commented on the town's audit report: "On the whole it's a good report and we're still in the black," but Greene warned that future capital expenses must come out of town reserve funds;

arranged for a consulting firm to attend the council's next meeting to advise on improving water quality;

set a special meeting Jan. 12 to open bids on two water mains extending to Crest Acres development;

called a closed session "to discuss personnel matters" and real estate transactions. No action was taken.

Busy New Year For Fire, Police

Boiling Springs Rural was the first county fire department to answer a call in the new year, as a chimney fire at a house on Sandy Run-Mooresboro Road brought out the department within the first 60 minutes of 1982 early morning January 1. Damage there was minor.

Boiling Springs police also was busy New Year's morning. Officer James Clary arrested a white male on West College at 3 a.m. for DUI and no operator's license.

City fire enjoyed a quiet New Year's week with no calls reported.