

The Foothills View

SHOE

by Jeff MacNelly

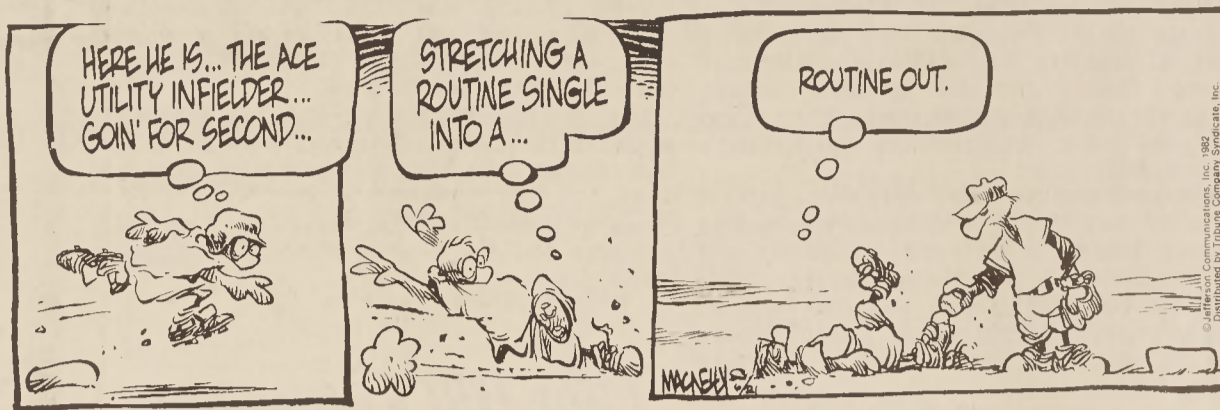


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Commentary

The editorial page of The Foothills View

"It's too bad," said Gramp Wiley as he lowered his newspaper, "but the Citizen of the Year Award went to George Potts."

"You mean you don't think George earned it?" I asked. "He's worked full time for years to make our community a better place to live — he didn't get that award for nothing."

"Well," he said.

Gramp begins with a "well" for the same reason some people begin with an "errr." It gives them time to think about what they're going to say.

"Well," he repeated. "George certainly earned it, but I feel bad for the dozens of outstanding people who will never get an award."

"Like who?" I asked.

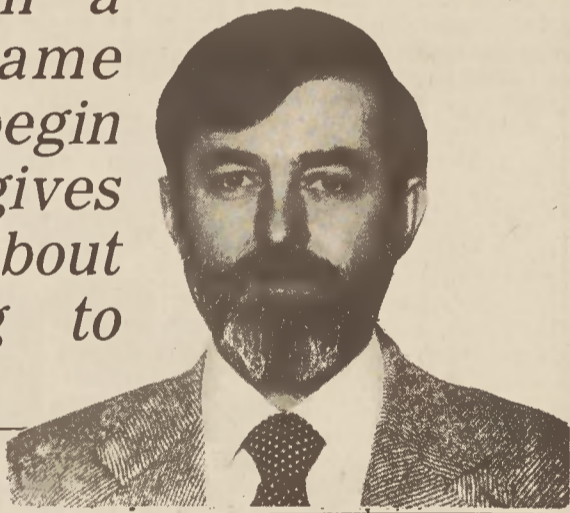
"Belle Chasse ought to be nominated for Mother of the Year," I said. "Someone ate everything in her kid's dinner pail two days in a row. Naturally the kid's teacher was concerned, and on the third day he went over to the kid's desk and whispered, 'Have you still got your lunch?' 'I've got two today,' whispered the kid — one out in my locker and this one here mama filled with poison," and the little boy in front of him turned around with eyes big as saucers."

"Then there's the official who had all the garbage and trash hauled into the town garage when the Environmental Agency closed our dump," Gramp said. "A lesser man would have run around wringing his hands wondering what to do."

The Humble Farmer

"Gramp begins with a 'well' for the same reason some people begin with an 'errr.' It gives them time to think about what they're going to say."

By Robert Skoglund



"Well, that policeman who got jumped by four young men — he likes kids so much that he took a beating with a shovel rather than pull his gun."

"But Gramp. Do you know how many papers and forms and affidavits a cop has to fill out after he'd drawn his gun? Everyone I've ever met would rather be pounded with a shovel."

"The Morris twins ought to have an award for cleverness," he continued. "Mel is bowlegged and his shoes scuff down the outside. Del is knock-kneed and his shoes scuff down on the inside. They swap every other week so the shoes wear down evenly like automobile tires that get rotated."

"Mel Function is clever too," I said. "Even though he's living on welfare, he's figured out how to keep three dogs. I know people who think they're earning good money who can't afford to keep even one."

Gramp pounded the arm of his rocker and shouted, "Talk about sacrifice — Captain Courage's new grocery store is pouring himself and his family down a rathole to help the community. There's a man who deserves an award."

I knew what Gramp meant. The Captain's new business keeps him busy 12 hours every day. Because of his lower than cost prices, every day he stays in business he moves closer to bankruptcy. We're all hoping he can hang on for at least another year.

"He's an inflation fighter if there ever was one," Gramp cried.

"He sure realized the full potential of our facilities," I agreed. "After all, what's a garage for?"

"Doc Addler should also have an award. In all the years he chased women, their looks never once made a difference to him. Most mature man in town — always claimed he was only interested in the 'inner person'."

"But, Gramp, a psychiatrist has to be stronger than the rest of us."

"Every strong man should have an award," Gramp cried. "Being strong puts two strikes against you today — most everybody wants to be weak. Then you don't have to eat anything you don't want to and when anyone asks you to work you can claim it's time for your nap."

When I woke up from a nap later I realized there are countless other deserving people who will never get official recognition: the owner of the dog who barks longer than any dog in the neighborhood — the owner of the loudest motorcycle (car, stereo set) in town — the folks with the most broken plastic grabage bags in their driveway — the person in your office who can go the longest without a shampoo. . . .

Two For Children

What would you want to leave for your children? A torch of love answers one of the poets below, Mrs. Lula Hamrick. Time to lean against pine trees, says Rev. Max Linnens, who also would caution his children to avoid all humans who seem overly fond of their halos. The two poems are printed below.

LEGACY FOR MY CHILDREN

— T. Max Linnens

Spend time enough in solitude
to stretch your soul and learn to think,
and enough time with the multitude
to shy from the destined muddle.
Spend time with children, your own and others
and learn to see the world anew
through their clean eyes.
Sit with the suffering often
and seek to feel, to heal, to bear their pain.
Go gently with the old who've tasted life
who now face death, still unafraid.

Waste no time with plastic people
who will not open life to meetings real,
shun all cliches and slogans
and people who make and use them,
steer clear of all conformists,
and run from those whose halo you can see.
Go back and scrutinize all you've been taught,
and never swallow anything
that insults your mind or soul.

Observe the man who has rare mastery
cobbling shoes, building barns, teaching philosophy,
walk with one whose face reflects an inner peace,
love the sunrise, meadows fair, quail flight,
lean against the swaying pine and catch its rhythm,
listen to the windsong, birdsong, twilight song,
and to the answering song within your soul,
and sing your prayer.

Love all animals, fowl, and flowers,
and the life that ties us all together,
stand in the surf beneath the stars
and run sand through your fingers,
and wave sound through your soul.

Early love to love yourself
and keep your heart in awe
before the God who is all love,
don't hurt, be kind, kiss and bind the wounded,
and so shall you come to know the oneness
that haunts and hungers human hearts,
and life itself shall be a poem,
and you shall move through all your days
in cadance with its rhythm.

THE TORCH

— Lula H. Hamrick

In the children's young lives
were myriad stars
that lighted the darkness of night;
But one light was special —
A torch held high —
that turned every shadow to light.

This torch was ablaze
with laughter and tears,
and oftentimes weary with care;
and because of the duties
that filled every hour
the mother found leisure quite rare.

The years passed them by,
the torch shining on,
till one day 'twas passed to another.
You guessed it — the torch
emblazoned anew
in the hand of a dear older brother.

He held the torch high,
its beams so far reaching
that everyone felt its bright glow,
till another day dawned —
the torch at half-mast —
and the hand that now held it let go.

O, but then came the miracle,
A miracle of love,
its message courageous and bright;
when all those who love him
and still feel him near,
was passed on the torch with its light.

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