



The NEW BERN MIRROR

Miss Elizabeth Moore
Box 808
5¢ Per Copy

VOLUME 2

NEW BERN, N. C., FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 19, 1960

NUMBER 47

It has often been said that we mortals turn a certain corner or walk down a certain street, and our destiny is drastically changed for all time to come. Or maybe, as some folks believe, what is to be simply catches up with us in unexpected and unpredictable fashion.

At any rate, this writer once more pondered over the apparent whims of chance when, on last Saturday night, he had a close brush with death. Had we been a second or two slower in crossing the intersection at the corner of Middle and Pollock streets, a car that crashed into a store window after being hit by another automobile would have gotten us for sure.

Walking with our pet dog Lucy at our heels, as usual, we heard the initial impact near the center of the intersection. Even with one's back turned, there was no mistaking the sound. There was just a fraction of an instant after the collision to glance back over our right shoulder and see one of the cars, too close for comfort, hurtle past.

It only took a split second for the automobile to mow down a mailbox and smash into the shoe store amid a shattering showering of plate glass. A woman screamed, "He is hurt, he is hurt!" and one could hardly have expectedly otherwise for the car's driver.

Without wasting precious moments, the writer ran across the street to Dixon's soda shop and dialed NE 7-3214. That was the number of the closest available ambulance—Willie Ballard—and being a reporter we didn't have to take time to look it up.

As things turned out, no ambulance was needed after all, but that's just one of those things. Playing it safe under such circumstances is playing it smart, and with that much glass flying around a man could bleed to death in a hurry.

After it was all over and the two cars had been towed away, and the crowd had gone, we got to recalling other close calls through the years. Most vivid of the lot, and probably the closest was the near tragedy that came to us when we were just so high.

With other boys we were swimming at the Pocomoke warehouse on upper Neuse river. Developing a cramp while swimming some distance from the others, we sank below the surface the third and last time before help could reach us.

One of the boys—and his name Fred Smith is easy to remember—made a surface dive after reaching the spot where we went down. He found us, fished us out and thereby kept us alive to someday be, for better or worse, a newspaperman. Maybe it wasn't such a noteworthy salvaging job, but you'll forgive us for being glad that he tackled it and made a go of it.

Looking at it objectively, if such a thing is possible when your own life was in jeopardy, we've often wondered whether Fred Smith was predestined to be where he was at that particular time, to do what he did.

No one else who was there on that eventful day (eventful for us) displayed the same presence of mind that Fred did. But for him we would have drowned for sure. Yet on previous days when we were swimming at the same spot—in fact the day before—he wasn't in the group. The day he was needed he was there.

Perhaps many of you have had similar experiences that threatened to have a grim ending. You too, no doubt, have missed death once or repeatedly by the narrowest of margins.

There have been accidents, for example, in which one person lived and perhaps escaped without a



A CAKE AND EVERYTHING—Central Elementary PTA had its Founders Day observance last night, and during the month of February all other groups of the Parent-Teacher Association are celebrating the movement's origin 63 years ago. Seen here are Mrs. I. C. Verrone, Central's president;

Principal W. L. Flowers; Paul Cox, legislative chairman; Harry Faulkner, president of New Bern's PTA Council; and Mrs. Kenneth Carr, a sixth grade teacher.—Photo by John R. Baxter.

PTA Founders Month Finds New Bern Members Hustling

New Bern in many respects is lagging behind a lot of wide-awake Tar Heel communities. However, when it comes to PTA activity, this quaint old town of ours cannot in fairness be classed with heavy snorers or even the cat-nap clan.

To say that all of the more than fifteen hundred members of this city's Parent-Teacher Associations are hustling for the cause would not be factual. Like every other civic, fraternal or religious group, you'll find the inevitable smattering of "joiners" who contribute nothing but another name of the book.

Still, the percentage seems lower in local PTA circles, perhaps because the eager and energetic majority who gets things done are taking up the slack occasioned by those who dodge service in any capacity.

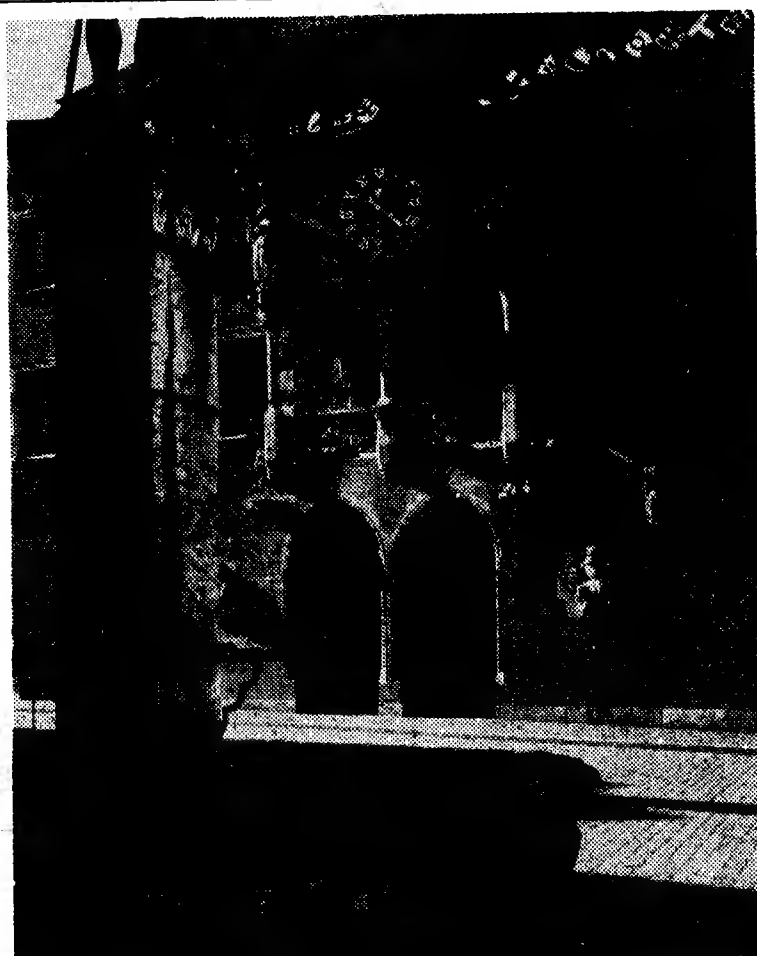
Supplementing the Parent-Teach-

er Associations that function at Central Elementary, Eleanor Marshall, Riverside, Trent Park and Oaks Road, there's an excellent Parent-Teacher-Student Association at New Bern High school with several hundred members. New Bernians aren't by them-

selfes in giving the PTA movement great momentum. There are no less than 1,140 Parent-Teacher units in North Carolina alone, and in the 52 branches that include all of the states in the Union, the District of Columbia and the European Congress of American Parents and Teachers there are 45,500 Associations. Although the New Bern units and others across the land are naturally in the limelight during February—observed as Founders Month by both the state and national PTA—the work accomplished during other months of the year is impressive though less publicized. To the combined efforts of America's Parent-Teacher Associations belongs much of the credit for abolishing sweatshops where small children once labored for long hours. And it is a matter of record that PTA groups crusaded vigorously for the establishment of juvenile courts, such as the type of court in existence here for dealing with cases involving very young offenders. In its long-range aims for the future, the National Congress of Parents and Teachers has made these recommendations for study and action in State and local legislation. Proposed is establishment of a State commission or council to coordinate efforts to secure legislation improving services for children and youth. Also of concern is the adoption and guardianship of minors. Efforts are to be made to strengthen child labor laws, and

scratch, while everyone else was killed. When such unexplainable events occur, the usual comment is that "it just wasn't their time to go." Or to put it another way, we mortals philosophize that "when your number comes up, you've had it." Until then, well, who really knows?

Anyway, you can't help wondering when the Grim Reaper comes so close that you can practically feel him breathing on the back of your neck. Is destiny planned in advance, or does it really change in the twinkling of an eye? We can't answer that, but we do know that things can happen plenty fast.



BERNE'S GOTHIC TOWN HALL

(Continued on Back Page)