



If, like us, you've gone to sleep during church services more times than you've got fingers and toes, don't feel too badly about it. Preachers, when they swap their place in the pulpit for a seat in the congregation, are sometimes guilty of the same offense.

Take for instance one of our favorite ministers, the Rev. Denver S. Blevins of Neuse Forest Presbyterian church. Not long ago he attended a church meeting in Greenville with several of his members. "I was tired," says Blevins, and he went fast asleep. He might have toppled over, but for the fact that he was in the middle of the pew, sandwiched between two leaders of his flock.

The Neuse Forest pastor, who makes no effort to effect an air of false dignity but is truly dedicated, told us about the incident the other day, and admitted that he has been kidded a great deal as a result of his unscheduled nap.

Most ministers are more sympathetic than annoyed, when they spot someone snoozing in the midst of a sermon. They realize that drowsiness isn't necessarily a sign of lagging interest, but quite often an indication that the slumbering individual has gotten completely relaxed and at peace with his Maker and his fellow man.

Of course, there's no denying that interest does reach a low ebb, if the sermon is as dull as a few we've had the misfortune to listen to. However, a thoroughly bored worshiper is apt to be so irritated, and so busy taking looks at his watch, that dropping off to sleep isn't likely.

Occasionally there can be fairly good reasons for napping, regardless of the quality of the sermon. Last Sunday the Rev. J. W. Lineberger brought one of his better messages at Centenary Methodist church, and we still had trouble staying awake. It was neither his fault nor ours.

A fatal automobile accident on the Cherry Point highway had routed this writer out of bed at three o'clock Sunday morning. By the time we got back from the scene of the tragedy, wrote the story and taped a radio broadcast for a seven o'clock airing, it was too late to go back to bed.

We took a bath and shaved, ate a couple of cinamon buns, drank a cup of strong coffee, and were ready for Sunday school. Teaching a class of 12-year-old boys and girls in Centenary's intermediate department kept us awake until the 11 o'clock church service.

For once we didn't go to sleep, but staying awake was an ordeal. Two or three times the sand man almost succeeded. In case Rev. Lineberger noticed us stifling a yawn and propping our eyelids open, he'll understand why when he gets his copy of The Mirror in his mailbox this morning.

At least we had a better excuse than the man in a tale you may not have heard. He had been up all night playing poker, and went to sleep in church while seated in the Amen corner. Not only was he asleep but snoring quite loudly.

The preacher spied him just about the time he was ready to pray, and fairly shouted, "We will now ask Bill Johnson to LEAD us in prayer!" The sleeping deacon (or was it a Methodist steward?) stirred into semi-consciousness and blurted, "Lead nothing, I just dealt!"

Then there is the story of the little boy who was next to a church attender who was snoring in similar fashion. Pointing at the boy, and then to the slumbering man, the minister said, "Son, would you mind waking him up?" The little boy was less than cooperative.

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IN THE HEART OF
EASTERN NORTH
CAROLINA

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COMES BACK HOME—Nelson Banks, right, who was born in New Bern 43 years ago but has lived much of his life in Washington, is congratulated by Potentate Ottis G. Sawyer of Sudan Shrine Temple as he takes over his duties of

Recorder for the Temple's thousands of members in eastern North Carolina. Sawyer lives in Durham. Both men have long been active in the Shrine, and civic leaders in their respective communities.—Photo by Marcus Block.

For Abundant Conversation, You Can't Beat Hot Weather

What has been the chief topic of conversation among citizens of New Bern and Craven county this week? Well, nothing took priority over the weather, and that should surprise no one. Looking the cold facts in the face, it was hot and getting hotter.

Farmers, rushing to finish their tobacco harvesting, were understandably concerned, because adverse conditions could hurt their pocketbooks badly. Merchants, in this town by the Neuse and Trent, shared the crossing of fingers, knowing of course that good crops for rural neighbors who till the soil have a decided influence on the Autumn ringing of their cash registers.

Office workers—the ones who picked August for their summer vacation—wanted it sunny but not too sultry as they headed for what they hoped would be the best spot yet for fun and relaxation.

Local fishermen, the river and creek brigade and their Isaac Walton cousins who prefer surf casting or trolling in the Gulf Stream, were likewise weather conscious. They dread storms or strong winds that upset the habits of fish, and in turn upset the conspiring humans who find great delight in hooking choice members of the finny tribe.

Baseball and softball players here didn't care a hoot about fishing prospects, but they were anxiously scanning the skies to get assurance that their all important games wouldn't be rained out.

Those teenagers who get a bang of out boating, water skiing and swimming didn't want inclement

weather either. As long as the sun was shining, it didn't worry them when the mercury climbed and the humidity became oppressive.

Everybody had a reason to echo

the sentiments of a familiar nursery rhyme—"Rain, rain, go away, and come again some other day." Everybody, including farmers and backyard gardeners who figured

more moisture would hurt.

However, there were other things to talk about, after discussing the weather, and tongues didn't lag. The suspension of Capt. James S. Ricks from the New Bern police force for "improper use of equipment and personnel under his supervision and control" was a major topic of conversation for days, and the matter got a thorough rehashing along Main street and elsewhere when the veteran officer tendered his resignation and Chief James E. Pearsall said, "I regret that it is necessary to accept it."

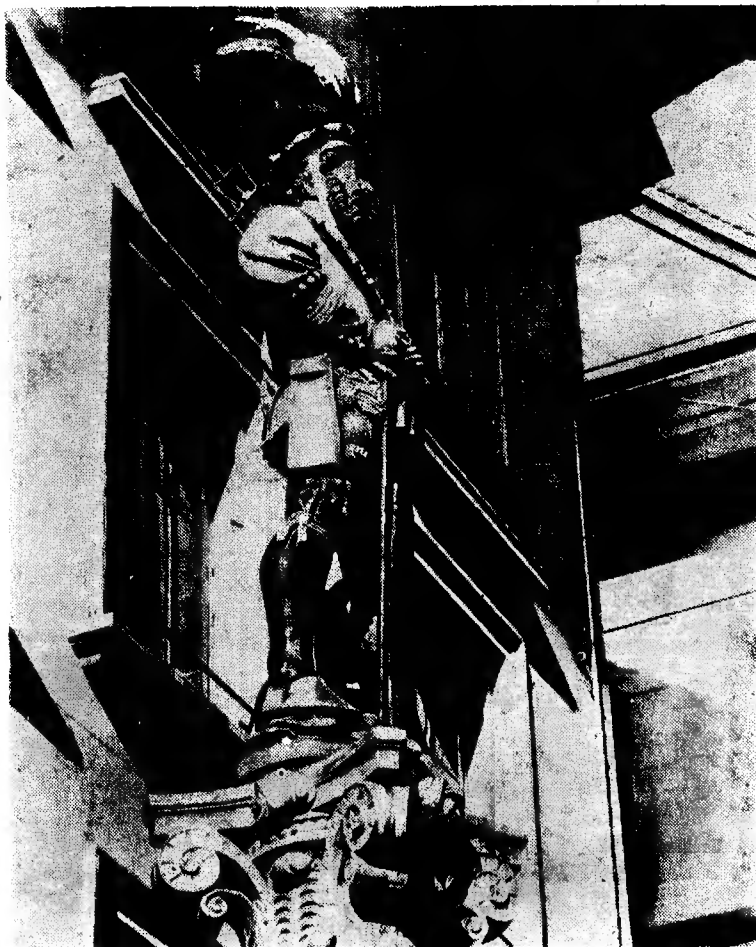
Violent death has been very much in the Craven county news this week. Over in the vicinity of Ernul, a Vanceboro man apparently went berserk, after visiting the home of a friend who said, "There was no ill feeling between us that I know of."

Starting an unexplained ruccus, the visitor got his rifle from a truck parked outside the small frame dwelling, fired slugs dangerously until a friend across the road, who had hunted with him on pleasanter occasions, fatally wounded him with a gun of his own and thereby ended a nightmare in broad daylight.

Death was riding the highway, too. A young Marine who was reportedly AWOL from his duty at Cherry Point, departed from the ranks of the living when he apparently went to sleep at the steering wheel.

The end came in spectacular fashion, when his Renault crossed from one lane to another on the spacious New Bern-Havelock thor-

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