

The NEW BERN MIRROR

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2000 Arundell St.
Horseshoe City, N. C.
EM-CAK
5¢ Per Copy

VOLUME 3

NEW BERN, N. C., FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 23, 1960

NUMBER 26

It's an ill wind that doesn't blow some good, and in the case of Hurricane Donna a few rather humorous stories were left in her wake.

We can't vouch for the authenticity of the tale, but it seems that a local woman who imbibed rather deeply during the blustery Sunday in question was so thoroughly saturated that she slept through it all.

Monday morning she discovered that she didn't have any lights. Fuming, she called City Hall and blew her stack. Told that the lights were off all over town, and wouldn't be on for some time, she wanted to know what the big idea was. The big idea, she discovered rather belatedly, was something that reached a velocity of 105 miles an hour right over her head, while she was "sleeping one off."

Then there's the story of a man heer who called the Red Cross office the morning after Donna's visit, and asked for emergency disaster relief. His severe loss, as he reported it, was a television aerial blown down, and broken windshield on his pleasure boat.

Incidentally, very few birds lost their lives in the storm here in New Bern, apparently. It has always seemed miraculous to us, but they manage to get a death grip on the branch they're clinging to, and refuse to be dislodged. Most of the tiny feathered creatures that died in the hurricane were killed when the trees they were perched in toppled to the ground.

Since the storm, the number of birds here appears to be at an all-time low. Where they went we can't say for sure, but they can't be blamed for being a little dubious about living along the Carolina coast during September.

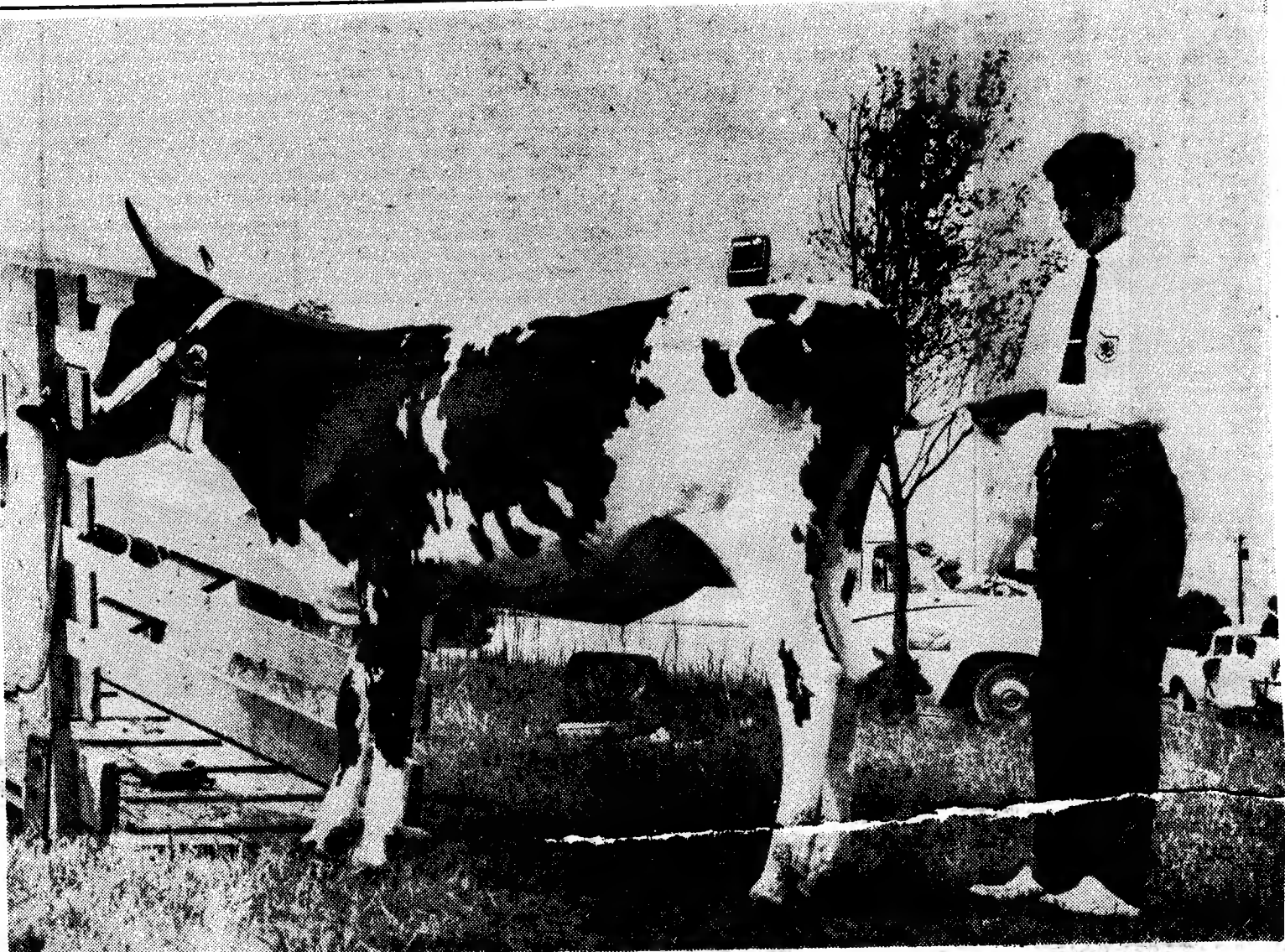
Squirrels had a rough experience too at the hands of Donna, but they didn't elect to move out of town like the birds. We don't profess to be able to read a squirrel's mind. However, our guess as to why they decided to stay put was the realization that they have a supply of food stored here. Squirrels are greedy hoarders, like the ant. They stack away far more food than they can ever eat, and would hate to pull up stakes and leave it.

Newspapers are to blame as much as anyone else for the fact that most of the headlines on hurricane damage went to beach property. Governor Luther Hodges, as usual, sped to the seashore as quickly as possible to survey the havoc wrought there. Radio and television, like the press, emphasized the spectacular.

Generally overlooked by all concerned, until later, was the terrific loss suffered by many a farmer. The finest crop in years, and a good soybean crop, got badly battered, but such things don't make as good reading or show up in pictures as dramatically as a cottage with the roof blown off, or a causeway damaged.

Radio has been soundly criticized in some quarters for the manner in which it gets up a full head of steam long before a hurricane is an actual menace to our area. No doubt about it, the mike boys really whoop it up on the airlines, and quite a few folks get genuinely frightened without cause.

However, newspapers are often accused—and in some instances rightly so—of exaggerating tragedies, crimes and other events, and they also gave Hurricane Donna a heavy play. Peculiarly, Donna cooperated by becoming a threat after all, thereby justifying the great
(Continued on Page 8)



IN TUNE WITH TIMES—Believe it or not, this exclusive Mirror picture snapped at the ninth annual Coastal Carolina Dairy Show here is an unposed one. Look closely and you'll see that Rodney Price of Grantsboro has a transistor

radio functioning on the hindquarters of his champion Ayrshire, as he prepares her for competition. That's one way to get "mooded" music while you work.—Photo by Billy Benners.

Mentally Retarded Children Getting Their Chance Now

How does it feel to be the parent of a mentally retarded child? Only a small percentage of New Bern's mothers and fathers have that experience, and they alone know what it's really like.

Certainly all of us should be heartened by the increasing awareness that developing the full potential of a handicapped youngster is not just a family matter, but a community, state and national responsibility.

New Bern's school officials have recognized this fact, and for three years now there has been a class for educable children who have an I.Q. between 50 and 70. No new teachers have been allotted in the last two years, since the supply authorized by the last State Legislature was quickly exhausted.

However, another teacher is hoped for here to supplement the present one, and long range plans call for an expansion of the program to include trainable retarded children, who are so designated because their I.Q. is lower than the educable child's—ranging from 30 to 50.

Educable children are being taught the basic needs of living, such as making change, having a sense of direction, and in some instances the capacity for limited reading. The trainable child usually doesn't get beyond the ability to attend to his simplest needs.

Superintendent Harry MacDonald and members of the school board are keeping pace with the ever-mounting interest in the mentally retarded. "They have been neglected since the beginning of time," says MacDonald, "but at

long last something is being done about it. The need is immediate, the challenge great, and the problem complex, but it deserves our full effort and support."

Mrs. Lee Anderson, a free-lance writer who lives in Seattle and does articles for various magazines, including Ladies Home Journal, has a handicapped son. More eloquently than anyone else, she has described her feelings in a letter written to Bobby. Here it is, and it is our sincere hope that each of you who read it will be inspired by these lines of faith, courage and mother love:
Dear Bobby:

You will never read this letter, for you are a child with a handicap. You are like many, the cerebral palsied, the mentally deficient or retarded, or any of the other awesome words that mean you aren't normal. You weren't blessed with a problem that could be overcome, but we were blessed with you!

People might wonder at that statement and then, with the help of modern psychology, decide it is my way of adjusting to the problem. This is right. But it isn't merely a crutch to lean on when I get tired. I could never convince them how honestly I feel we were blessed.

You see, Bobby, many parents don't take care of their normal children. Could He choose them to care for a child who needs love? He must have thought we were worthy of His trust. That is why I feel we were blessed with you.

The people I could not convince don't know you as I do. They've

never looked down on your sleeping face and wept because God made the curve of your cheek and the shadow of your lashes as perfect as any other child. He made the sweet baby quality about you that has lasted too long.

I look at you in sleep and wish I'd been more patient. I wish I had accepted what you offered as it was, rather than compared it with what it should have been—like the time you finally managed to scoot across the room in your inimitable fashion, instead of walking as I wanted you to. From now on, I'll be thankful you have the will to cross the room in any way you can.

Others don't know how much you've brought me. They don't feel that you cling because I am your support—physically, mentally, spiritually and emotionally. Yet they know that each of us must feel needed to be happy. You need me more than an ordinary child—so I am more needed than an ordinary mother.

They haven't known the necessity that opens the door to added knowledge, deeper feeling and a clearer perspective. Making it necessary to help you has made me a better person. You've taught me compassion, tenderness, acceptance, tolerance, and the art of enjoying each small pleasure to the fullest. You've shown me how to laugh when I wanted to cry; to smile when I wanted to scream; to live when I wanted to die.

IT WAS IMPORTANT FOR ME to learn to teach you. But somehow, through the years, things were reversed and you taught me.

I think that's what God intended, for you did your teaching without the power of speech.

Many look on a child like you and think, "God did this." Perhaps He did give you a terrible problem, but He mercifully kept the knowledge from you. You'll never know you've missed the thrill of making a home run on the school playground or the fear of failing before your friends, the painful joy of a first date, the confusing emotions and problems when your body outgrows boyhoods and hesitates before stepping up into manhood. You will never see the horrible sights of war, the mutilation of body and mind that leave grown men as helpless as you are now. Yes, dear, God has been kind in many of the things you are denied.

You, and those like you, have other things that aren't given to all children—a world of your own that I sometimes glimpse when you "allow" me in, a world of serenity in comparison to the one in which the rest of us live. You have an insurance against being responsible for someone else's injury or death; a protection against causing us heartbreak (because parents still love even after their children commit inexcusable crimes). You and I have been spared those indescribable tragedies. You can commit no sins, because you are incapable.

WHY DO I WRITE THIS, when you will never read it? Perhaps I write to clarify things for myself. Maybe it's an attempt to help other parents understand who have a
(Continued on Page 3)