

The NEW BERN MIRROR

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If you're a New Bernian who secretly bemoans the fact that life isn't more colorful, simply consider the plight of those artificially tinted Easter biddies you'll see on sale again shortly.

The plumage is brilliant, thanks to purple, pink, green and blue dye, but the brightness of down and tiny feathers is dulled by the dismal look in their eyes.

Maybe we're a bit old-fashioned, but the thought occurs to us that God's choice of colors for biddies, ducks and rabbits is quite adequate. Nothing smeared on a newly hatched chicken is more attractive than the golden yellow that has served its purpose since time began, and black is mighty becoming too.

You can say as much for nice white rabbits, with pink eyes. It's a good combination, and we don't blame those dipped bunnies when they droop their ears in misery over a man-inspired turn of events that transforms them into a gosh-awful creature that Mama Rabbit would never recognize.

These are temporary paint jobs, of course, since mortals, for all their smug conceit, never have been able to horn in on God's plan of creation. We're remarkably adept at being destructive, but building a single rose petal is a task too stupendous for the wisest of us.

And that's a comforting state of affairs. For folks who go around dying biddies and rabbits might get notions about changing the sunsets that glorify Carolina's coast country when day is done. And, while dabbling with shades and hues, they might try to improve on an August rainbow or a cloudy-ribbed dawn in early April.

As far as we're concerned, the trees that cast their shade on New Bern's historic streets can keep right on being green, and that also goes for the grass. Furthermore, it would make us see red if somebody managed to change the blue of the sky to orange or heliotrope.

Besides, getting back to biddies and rabbits, we're convinced that youngsters are better off if they see nature's wonders as they are, not as some misguided human tries to make them appear.

Your child can discover many marvelous creatures in this world of ours, birds and animals far more impressive than a purple biddy or a green rabbit. And if bunnies and chicks could speak our language, they would probably tell us that being colorful is less fun than being what God intended you to be.

To each his own is more than just the title of a song that was popular a decade or more ago. It's the meaning of creation, the destiny that belongs to us all. We're what we are, and it's up to us to make the most of it.

For example, if you're tall the singing of the birds in the trees is clearer and prettier to you than the fellow who is short. But, by the same token, flowers look prettier and smell stronger to the short guys. It all evens up, in the long run.

Let's face it, human beings are rather hard to please. In fact, we've known some folks who, if fortunate enough to reach heaven, would complain that their harp was out of tune and their wings two sizes too large.

In this category is the person who responds with a doleful expression when you meet him on the street, and allow as how it's a mighty pretty day. "Yes," he'll reply, "but it'll probably rain tomorrow." There really are folks who say just that, and you've encountered some of them, just as we have.

Complaining is a habit that is easy to get into, just like sarcasm, self pity, and talking about your



VIRGINIA BOUND—Pictured here, headed for Norfolk, is the first fire boat ever built at Barber Boat Works. It was ordered by Uncle Sam's Navy. Fire fighting craft of this sort are invaluable when waterfront blazes break out. —Photo by Billy Benners.

No One Has an Opportunity To Look Down on This Man

Figuratively speaking, Paul Morris operates a business that isn't on the level, but he's a man you've really got to look up to. Thousands of New Bernians have been doing just this for days now—looking up to him.

Sixty-four years young, he's the agile gentleman from Greenville who has replaced the crown and weather vane on historic Christ Episcopal church that was felled by Hurricane Donna, and is putting the finishing touches on steeple repairs.

Seldom guilty of passing up an unusual interview, The Mirror managed to corner Morris on the ground this week. What he told us about the steeplejack profession made for interesting listening, but we'll still stick to newspapering unless we sprout a good pair of wings. To the best of our knowledge, very few editors and reporters are considered fit subjects for this sort of angelic equipment.

Fortunately for Morris, being wingless doesn't worry him in the least. "It's about 160 feet to the

neighbors. Beware of anyone who has a slighting remark to make about everybody that is ever mentioned in a conversation. As soon as you're out of their presence, you'll be slandered too.

Just for today, each one of us could try a little game. From morning until night, we could make it a point to speak no evil of anyone, except maybe Nikita Khrushchev. If we felt a little better than usual at bedtime, we might decide to do it two days in a row, or periodical-ly from here on out.

top of that weather vane on Christ church," he told us, "but I don't mind being up that high." As a matter of fact, he gets considerably higher as he tours North Carolina

and ascends countless water towers, smoke stacks and brick chimneys, along with the usual church steeples.

In case you've been wondering,

the Greenville native says it is 21 feet from the top of the local steeple to the tip of the weather vane. The crown is just under three feet in diameter, and approximately nine feet in circumference. If you doubt the figures, you might like to take your own measurements.

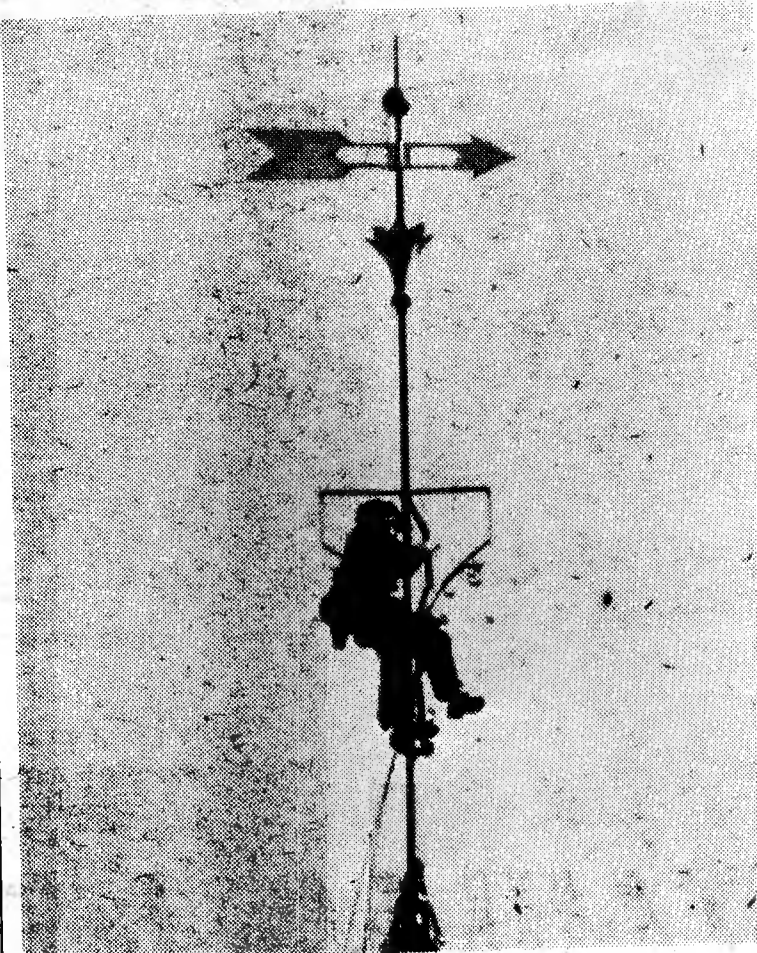
No self-respecting steeplejack uses scaffolds, and Morris is no exception. Ropes and cables are his stock in trade. He hoists himself to the spot he wants to work, and concentrates on the business at hand, rather than on the vast amount of thin air beneath his precarious perch.

"I've been doing it for 47 years," he said, "and I've never had an accident." Then he added, "I don't use alcohol, and I don't have anybody helping me who drinks. That's why I don't worry." There's no denying that risks are involved, but Morris doesn't take needless chances. His life depends on the strict observance of safety rules, and he intends to live beyond his planned retirement at the age of 65.

For the past 10 years he has done all of his work within the boundaries of the Old North State. Prior to that, he handled jobs all over the nation. His first steeplejacking was done in Virginia, and his skill and reliability quickly earned him a reputation that netted him plenty of contracts.

Wind is a major problem, when you're high in the sky. His first order of business when he goes on an assignment is to mount a wind adviser that tells him what con-

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HIGH ABOVE CHRIST CHURCH —Photo by Billy Benners.