

Lessons About Babies

By JONATHAN PHILLIPS

It's been about 20 years, I reckon, since I had much experience with babies. Seein' as how that was when Baby Sister really was an infant and I was just a young pup myself, even that doesn't really count.

For the past two decades, as far as I've been concerned, babies have been creatures about which I have little personal knowledge.

Their major functions I have assumed to be caterwauling in church and preventing married drinking buddies from staying out late.

The closest I came to a box of pampers was getting lost in the grocery store while searching for dandruff shampoo. The only thing I had to deal with under eight years of age was cheap bourbon. The only time I heard wailing and crying was when the Redskins lost to Dallas.

That is all in the past.

Now, jump to no conclusions. I have not, and do not anticipate, entering into the state of fatherhood.

Just three years ago I found it to be too much responsibility to even care for a kitten named Mojo which I had become fond of, and was compelled, with great sadness, to find the cat a nice home in Vanceboro.

I've come no farther responsibility-wise in three years.

My new exposure to the earlier life-stages of the humanoid species is by virtue of becoming an uncle to a couple of youngsters who now are ages one and less than one, and because my work associate and neighbor sports an 18-month-old to go with his two-year-old.

In the past few months I have learned, and re-

learned, quite a bit about babies.

Babies do not like to be held by, sit on the lap of, or otherwise come into extended contact with yours truly.

Maybe it's my breath (though even that has to be better than the stuff in Gerber jars the little rascals eat, not to mention what they get out of the rug) or the cheap "Brut 33" that Mrs. Columnist, in some kind of fit, brought home from the reduced price bin of some disreputable drugstore and which I sometimes wear in brutal (pun intended) retaliation for that callous act.

Whatever the reason, do not try to hand me a tot. They hate it, I hate it, and we're all better off if a safe distance is maintained.

Another thing I learned is that you do not talk trash to a baby.

Sure, you may be only kidding and the baby has no idea what you're saying when you call him "Peanut Head", "Poo-Poo Buns," or "Strained Carrot Face."

But mothers may not appreciate such infantile trash-talking, and can retaliate by forbidding you to play with the child's wind-up Smurf Train. These toys are big fun, so it is best to talk nice to babies and retain Smurf-Train privileges.

Finally, I had forgotten what a disgusting diet babies have.

To look at some finicky-eating five-year-old, it is hard to believe that just one Presidential term earlier, they would pop any object on the floor or peeled off the lower portions of the wall into their mouth.

When you see a kid turn up his nose at perfectly good

turnip greens, it must take restraint not to remind them that not so long ago they would gladly chew on a stuffed animal's ear, a cigarette lighter, a milk-bone dog biscuit, or a dead bug.

This is not to even mention the fact that when a baby does get real or semi-real food at least as much ends up smeared on the tiny chin or scattered about the surrounding countryside as ends up in the tiny tummy.

Not to dwell on negative aspects, however. Babies have two super advantages.

First they tend to be extra-ordinarily cute and entertaining, at least for short periods (the length of such period is proportional to the sensitivity of your ear tissue to sounds in the high-frequency bands and is thus, related to one's tolerance for the high-pitched cooing and oogling noises adults invariably emit in the presence of babies.)

Second, babyhood is simply a lifestage and not a permanent condition, so that even those meanies who don't like babies are not called upon to dislike anyone indefinitely—only for a few years.

Babies have one final advantage for those, like me, who have status of uncle and not parent or babysitter. We can enjoy the cuteness, but are not called upon to change message diapers, expose ourselves to crossfires of mashed banana crud and strained carrots, or arbite baby versus dog disputes over milk-bones.

That, I submit, is having your babycake and eating it, too.

Resolutions 1984

By LELA BARROW

Between the last of '83 and the first of '84 Midnight sounds: Pealing church bells ring out the old, Ring in the new—A resonant reminder of what I myself should do. Father, your great Apostle Paul told the church at Ephesus: "Put on the new man," urging the people there to cast out old habits—Ephesians 4:22-23 "That ye put off, concerning the conversation, the old man which is corrupt—And be renewed in the spirit that Christ taught."

"Let us follow that good advice and start the New Year as your child of light" (copied).

Through Jesus' death and resurrection, God is giving each of us a new beginning. I have heard many people say they made vows for the New Year and by the first of February they had broken those vows several times. To me, if I make a vow, to do, or not to do, something that is a solemn promise; If I break it I am guilty of sin in God's sight. My way of thinking, it is better not to make promises, or vows at all unless you know you can perform them. When you do make a vow, put God first in your life and He will help you keep it. You can ask forgiveness for a broken vow, and have a new beginning, start all over again.

Merle Kilgore—"Yes, you can talk to the Man; He's

got time; He'll understand; He's got shoulders big enough to cry on; Tell all your troubles; take your time; He's in no hurry; He doesn't mind. it matters not how bad you've been, you can talk to the Man."

The capital "Man" here alludes to God, the Father of us all. But the man could mean your earthly father, your minister, or a councilor—in case you need help—find someone you can trust to talk it over with. Many people have been helped through their difficulties by "talking it over" with a true friend. Turn away from the bad habits that help to destroy you. The important thing is to use today wisely and well, and face tomorrow eagerly and cheerfully and with certainty that we shall be equal to what it brings.

Everything I know about history, every bit of experience and observation has confirmed me to the conviction that the real wisdom of human life comes from the experiences of ordinary men. Lives of great men did not start from the top—their roots went deeper—like the natural growth of a tree, from the roots in the soil of the earth. Why did God choose Abraham to be the Father of Nations? He saw his dependability. He kept his vow. George Washington was a great leader—he prayed to God for help during the Revolutionary War. He made a good president.

The hope of the United States in the present and the future is the same it has always been; the hope and confidence of the men who are chosen to carry on the government should be obiding trust worthy men seeking enlightenment from above to do what is right.

Let us love life and laughter and tolerance and good fellowship Let us hate cruelty, lies, stealing. Let us dedicate ourselves to the children of the world, so they may have the Christian Freedom our forefathers fought and died for. May the people of our country be strong enough to bring the Bible and Prayers back into our schools again. Let us have energy and courage to face life what ever it brings.

Faith helped the Fathers of our country to go through the ordeals of life, raising the standards of charity. May we go forward to meet the unknown future unafraid.

Letter to the Editor

H.U.G.

Dear Friends:

The H.U.G. Program of the New Bern-Craven County Schools would like to wish each of you a Happy New Year and extend a special thank you for your support to the children and the schools of Craven County during the past year. Because of your support, more children received special attention, more

enrichment was provided in the classrooms, teachers were given assistance in their daily routines, and the community became more aware of what is happening in the New Ben-Craven County Public Schools. For your gifts of time and funding, we are appreciative.

Unfortunately, all the needs of the schools and the children are still being met. There are still

children who do not read, cannot do math, and do not have a friend. Teachers are too busy to give their "all" everyday to the students and the community is not fully aware of all of the inner workings of our school system. But, you can help by remembering the needs of the schools and the students as you plan your new year. If you or your organization could give time, services, or

funds to support the H.U.G. Program, please do so.

Again, I want to say thank you for your support in the past and encourage you to continue supporting the H.U.G. ("Help Us Grow") Volunteer Program.

Janet Furman
System Volunteer
Coordinator
H.U.G. Program

HIGHLIGHTS

Craven County's Family Weekly Newspaper

R.L. Cannon, Jr. Zeno Everette, III Edith Hodges
Publisher & Paste Up Circulation Manager
Business Manager

Christine Hill Sharon Buck Michael Hodges
Office Manager Production Manager Circulation

P.O. Box 404, Main St., Across from the Post Office
Vanceboro, North Carolina, 28586
Phone (919) 244-0780, (919) 244-0508

PUBLISHED EVERY THURSDAY

Second Class Postage Paid at Vanceboro, N.C.
(Permit entered March 1, 1978)

SUBSCRIPTION PRICES

Single Copy 20¢
1 Year Subscription \$8.24
2 Years Subscription \$10.40
3 Years Subscription \$14.56

(UPSP 412-110)

(Payable in advance. Subscribers desiring their Highlights, terminated at expiration should notify us of this intention, otherwise we will consider it their wish to continue to receive the paper and they will be charged for it).