

CHOWAN HERALD

Serving Edenton & Chowan County since 1934

MIKE GOODMAN  
Publisher/Managing  
Editor

NICOLE  
BOWMAN-LAYTON  
News Editor

BEVERLY ALEXANDER  
Advertising Representative

A publication of  
Adams Publishing Group

Our View

Teamwork  
makes region's  
dreams work

The government is one of the largest employers in the nation. From the elected officials to town managers to paperwork shufflers to street cleaning crews to those who do everything in between — there are a lot of people who work in the government sector.

The recent government shutdown in Washington, D.C., continues. It affects members of our community — Edenton residents who work with the Coast Guard base in Elizabeth City; Chowan County farmers who were relying on USDA subsidies ... the list goes on and on.

In a recent statement, the USDA assured farmers that checks would continue to go out during the first week of the shutdown. But direct payments for farmers who haven't certified production, as well as farm loans and disaster assistance programs, will be put on hold until the government reopens.

Appropriations measures for the Departments of Defense and Veterans Affairs were worked out earlier this year, which ensured funding for those departments. However, the Coast Guard was not included because its funding comes from the Department of Homeland Security. Coast Guard personnel and Coast Guard civilian employees are among the thousands of federal workers affected by the government shutdown.

Seth Johnson of Coast Guard District 5 Public Affairs said most Coast Guard civilian personnel in Elizabeth City and elsewhere are being furloughed but some civilians are in positions that are excepted and therefore will continue to work during the shutdown to maintain essential operations. Some of the positions excepted from the shutdown include search and rescue coordinators and hazardous materials specialists, Johnson said.

Coast Guard services that are deemed "critical" and will continue during a shutdown include search and rescue, port and homeland safety and security, law enforcement, and environmental response, according to Johnson.

There is little chance of the government shutdown ending soon. President Donald Trump and Congress are no closer to reaching a deal over his demand for border wall funding, and both sides say the impasse could drag well into January.

Political bickering also can be seen on the state level — as one group of lawmakers fights with Gov. Roy Cooper and vice versa. Its almost like the lawmaker in Raleigh are more concerned with suing each other than do what they were elected to do — make laws and help run the state.

During this past week's swearing-in ceremonies, we were reminded that historically, oaths were sacred bonds that people with integrity made. Are they still sacred in today's modern age? Are the people who take such pledges still people with integrity? It depends on who you ask. We're not here to delve into that debate.

Campaign promises are powerful tools that can make a politician's career, but when a lawmaker keeps such vows at the expense of the people he or she represents, a line has been crossed. That sacred oath that was recited at the beginning of a politician's term isn't special anymore. The oath just becomes useless words — just like the promises made while someone crosses their fingers behind their back.

Now that 2019 is officially underway, we encourage every lawmaker who represents northeastern North Carolina — and in particular Chowan County and Edenton — to work together. Our communities deserve help from government incentives and other economic-boosting programs. Our residents deserve to be paid as promised, and for the laws they voted on to be put into place. Our children deserve bright futures.

The only path to take is paved with a unified commitment for a better tomorrow.

While we pray for our leaders, they also must keep themselves to a higher standard — their oath. They swore to put the needs of their constituents above their own. While we admit some of needs aren't as beneficial to the whole district as others, they are just as important. It is imperative that we — lawmakers and citizens — work together for the greater good of our region.

Hopefully our short-term plans will have a ripple-effect, and continue to make northeastern North Carolina an example of the best of our state for many years to come.

Now it's time to roll up our sleeves, and get to work.

One on One  
What really happened to Virginia Dare?

What really happened to Virginia Dare, the first child of English parents born in the New World? The same Virginia Dare whom I suggested recently belonged on "The World Almanac's" list of famous North Carolinians.

A few weeks ago, I wrote about Sir Walter Raleigh's organization and establishment of the colony on Roanoke Island as described by Andrew Lawler in his book, "The Secret Token: Myth, Obsession, and the Search for the Lost Colony of Roanoke." He called the expensive and intricate preparations for the colony "the Elizabethan equivalent of the Apollo program."

In July 1587, the colonists arrived on Roanoke Island led by its governor John White whose granddaughter, Virginia Dare was born on Aug. 18. A few days later, White sailed to England for much-needed supplies. When he finally returned in August 1590, the colony had disappeared, leaving only a carving of "Croatoan" on a tree as a possible clue.

There are a lot of answers to the question of what happened to Virginia Dare, her family and their fellow colonists. Most are legends. Some say Virginia Dare grew up into a lovely young woman and was transformed into a white doe, an animal that still haunts coastal North Carolina. Another story says she and other colonists made their way to Robeson County where some locals will show you her burial site near Red Springs.

Less imaginative authors suggest that the colonists, including Virginia Dare, died from hunger, disease, or by massacre by Native Americans. Others

suggest that the colonists joined nearby Native Americans and were absorbed by them.

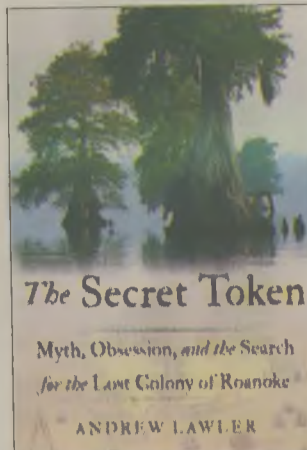
In "The Secret Token," Lawler gives a history of the developing interest in Virginia Dare and the Lost Colony. After her baptism certificate in 1587 there was no public mention of her until 1834. In that year, Harvard trained historian George Bancroft published his influential "A History of the United States." Lawler writes, "It is difficult to overstate his impact on the way we see Raleigh's colony today."

For Bancroft, the colony was "the germinating seed" for our country and its institutions, "just as important as its revolutionary coming of age."

Lawler writes that for Bancroft, "Roanoke was, in essence, the nation's humble Bethlehem, and Virginia Dare was its infant savior destined for sacrifice."

Bancroft's version sparked an explosion of writing and activity around Virginia Dare. In the 1890s, some white supremacy organizations adopted her. Lawler writes, "Roanoke Island emerged as a pilgrimage site for Anglo-Americans seeking to reaffirm their racial dominance at the annual celebration of Virginia Dare's birth."

According to Lawler, Chatham County author of "Searching for Virginia Dare," Marjorie Hudson, takes a different and



Above: "The Secret Token"  
Below: Sir Walter Raleigh



less exclusive path. She writes that Virginia Dare "is the archetypal mother, a source, like a great river of strength and blood for descendants of a convergence of two great peoples."

Lawler chronicles efforts to learn where the colonists, if they survived, went. To Croatoan, now a part of Hatteras Island? To Site X, a place marked under a patch in a map drawn by John White, located where the Roanoke River flows into the Albemarle Sound? Or to the Chesapeake Bay near where the Jamestown Colony settled and where Powhatan, the local Indian king, massacred them?

Or near Edenton, where in 1937, a California man said he found a large stone? It was inscribed with a message from Virginia Dare's mother, Eleanor, to her father, John White, reporting the death of her husband, her daughter Virginia, and other colonists. Lawler's account of this probable

fake "Dare Stone" is almost as interesting as the story of the colonists told by Harnett County native and Pulitzer Prize winner Paul Green's outdoor drama, "The Lost Colony."

D.G. Martin hosts "North Carolina Bookwatch," at 11 a.m. Sunday and 5 p.m. Tuesday on UNC-TV. The program also airs on the North Carolina Channel at 8 p.m. Tuesday and other times.

A thought for the new year

By William Francis Ahearn

if [1, subordinating conjunction] If this snow continues...  
if [2, noun] So many ifs in that question.

Function: A subordinating conjunction introduces a dependent clause and indicates the nature of the relationship among the independent clause(s) and the dependent clause(s).

Etymology:  
Middle English, from Old English gif; akin to Old High German ibu if

Date: before 12th century  
1 a: in the event that b: allowing that c: on the assumption that d: on condition that

2: whether  
3: used as a function word to introduce an exclamation expressing a wish  
4: even though: although perhaps  
5: and perhaps not even — often used with not

— if anything: on the contrary even: perhaps even  
A tiny word: IF. If only. If somehow. If someone. If I could. If not.

Miniscule but powerful. Hopeful, ardent, desperate, fearful. Life has IF written right down the middle of it. A non-controlling controller of creative will. It dwells in our hearts, causes us to stumble from time to time in fits of lost confidence, IF is a comforting rationalization and ray of hope toward the future.

IF can be an obstacle to our enthusiasm, delaying our first step. IF questions what is possible: Blending known with

LIFE

unknown, equaling a probability, suggesting a hopeful end result.

IF can be the reason our dreams and wishes have not come true. A demowall of cascading noes, relentlessly blocking the realization of our fondest hopes. Often IF can be a self-inflicting inhibitor explaining to our ID in psychoanalytic theory, that IF is completely subconscious.

IF is a voice within us. IF brought me to this point in my life. Sometimes in a positive vein, sometimes slowing the process but always opening my door to creativity. Always challenging me to jump over, crawl under or sidestep around toward what lies beyond.

At this point in my life, IF I could measure what would have happened IF I had turned left when I turned right, what would life be?

(start italics) I shall be telling this with a sigh  
Somewhere ages and ages hence:  
Two roads diverged in a wood, and I —

I took the one less traveled by,  
And that has made all the difference.  
— Robert Frost

IF only my parents had been different? How many times have you asked such a question? How many times have

you nodded that it was and is their fault? IF it were intended I should wear clothes, would I not have been born that way?

If only I was born in the right time for me? Have I been somehow misplaced by the gods? My urgent need is to re-find myself as the person I was intended to be instead of the person I am.

The answer to the IF anomaly (deviation from the common rule) is that there is no anomaly at all. Each life follows its own path and that is what is common to humanity. Each life is controlled by happenstance. Each life has the gift of opportunity and bears the weight of our own judgment.

Thus arriving at this point in my life, is obviously of my own choosing. A choosing sometimes when wisdom was not necessarily at my side, when only quick judgments were possible. Yet equally a time when life moves relentlessly on, following a path carved by time it self. IF we do nothing how will it end? IF we do much will we have a future gain? Or is it the NOW? Moment by moment life gives us the best and worst for us to manage. Indeed life would be quite boring IF there was no death to instill a sense of urgency.

Thus we cannot measure where we are at this point in our life because tomorrow will offer up a new IF, the next moment: a new IF as well. Lest we accept the inevitability, the gods have given us, IF.

So we can sort it all out.  
William "Bill" Ahearn is a resident of Edenton.

READERS WRITE

Never return a plate empty  
(Thoughts in defense of the poor)

Here's a riddle: "What is greater than God; more evil than the devil; the poor have it; the rich need it; eat it and you die?" Answer: "Nothing."

It is a riddle of stereotypes, however, for it implies that the poor have nothing, a concept easily translated into "the poor have no value."

It is a concept reinforced last week by Jerry Falwell Jr., president of Liberty University. In a Washington Post interview, he said "A poor person never gave anyone a job. A poor person never gave anyone charity, not of real value."

Falwell, like others who promote a gospel of prosperity — "God rewards the faithful with material possessions" — may make a good university president but he's a lousy Christian.

The story of Dives and Lazarus in the Gospel of Luke is only one biblical warning against judging others based on their lack of wealth (16:19-31).

Are the poor less faithful? Are they less loving or less caring about the future of their children? Of course they're not.

They are often more frightened, however.

Stand in the Food Lion check-out line as a mother uses her Food Stamp card. Watch as she pays for the balance in cash only to find that she doesn't have enough money and then listen as she explains to her child why some items have to be returned.

To be poor is to lack the means of affording the basic necessities of food, housing and health care. It is not a condition that anyone chooses. And, except for elderly living on low incomes, it is also not a permanent condition.

At the food pantry, there is a monthly turn-over rate of 25% because many people seek assistance sporadically depending on their job, health or family situations. To de-value those struggling

to make something of their lives, as all people seek to do, is to kick someone already down on their knees.

Many of my generation did not grow up in great wealth. We did, however, grow up in caring communities — communities of dedicated teachers, church youth leaders, coaches and scout masters. Caring communities, I believe, are never impoverished communities.

We give in this life because we all have debts to repay, gifts to acknowledge. No one is so poor that they cannot share; no one is so wealthy that they cannot be concerned. Love received must become love returned.

True poverty is to believe that one has no debts — to return the plate empty. It is to be greater than God; more evil than the devil.

Roger Coleman, Director  
Edenton-Chowan Food Pantry