

The Warren Record

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An Encouraging Sign

It may be an encouraging harbinger of Warrenton's future that a group of merchants and professional people met in the courtroom of the Warren County Court House Monday night in order to develop a unified effort to improve downtown Warrenton.

Not surprisingly, W. Monroe Gardner, who has been at the head of efforts to improve the quality of life in Warrenton and Warren County for three decades, was the spokesman for an anonymous group of merchants which has been meeting in recent weeks in the hope of establishing a merchants bureau.

Mr. Gardner indicated that a purpose of such a bureau would be multi-faceted. Included would be the promotion of extended hours of operation, better building maintenance, improved store fronts, better promotional activities including ad-

vertising and merchandising on a collective basis, upgrading vacant buildings and the attraction of additional merchants.

Not a one of these possibilities seems unduly remote. As the spokesman pointed out, in the Forties, not a single Warrenton store was vacant. Of course, there are myriad reasons why Warrenton today is not the shopping mecca of yesterday.

There are today, within a one mile radius of Warrenton, Mr. Gardner revealed, a total of 107 merchants, each of whom needs to band together to get Main Street back into full operation.

The message of Monday night's merchants meeting was clear. Warrenton is faced with a do-or-die situation, and unless each of us is willing to take the bull by the horns, our future is bleak indeed.

Spending On Defense

One of the perplexing things about attempting to arrive at a balanced federal budget is trying to reduce the defense portion of the budget to a reasonable level.

President Reagan's proposed new budget, a unique whopper calling for the expenditure of a trillion dollars, calls for a generous appropriation to the Pentagon. That has liberals and a whole lot of fiscal conservatives worried.

The problem is that the defense portion of the budget is not for bombs and bullets alone.

It was pointed out by Congressman W. G. (Bill) Hefner, (D-N.C.) that the military-construction budget requested by the Department of Defense would include \$150 million in fiscal year 1988 and \$210 million in fiscal year 1989 for construction projects for new and existing military facilities in North Carolina.

The proposed budget for Fort Bragg, which is close to

Congressman Hefner's heart, is \$43 million for 1988 and \$98 million for 1989.

Not surprisingly, Congressman Hefner sees this as a big economic boost for North Carolina.

"Not only will these construction projects provide better facilities, increase our military readiness and improve the lives of our military folks but it will also bring a great deal of money and jobs into our state," Congressman Hefner is quoted as saying.

It should be obvious on the surface that military spending has appeal to many congressmen, given that virtually every congressman has a military installation in his or her district. And until it is possible to separate what goes for foolish defense spending to what passes for wise appropriations for the folks back home, the defense portion of the budget is not likely to be diminished.

Reading And Driving

In The Richmond County Daily Journal

Illiteracy is one of the biggest problems that North Carolina needs to overcome, if this state is to continue to develop economically and its people are to prosper.

Currently, the state has one of the highest rates of adult illiteracy in the nation, and that must change if the state is to continue to progress. Various adult education efforts, centered around the community colleges, have been initiated to deal with this problem and are making some progress.

Unfortunately, the state may be moving backward more quickly than forward because of the high dropout rate in our schools. Currently, approximately one out of every four North Carolina ninth graders will drop out of high school without graduating. Studies indicate that reading problems are a major factor in these youngsters' decision to leave school. There can be little doubt that many of these dropouts are functionally illiterate.

Thus, every time an illiterate adult is taught to read, an illiterate teenager is growing up to take his place.

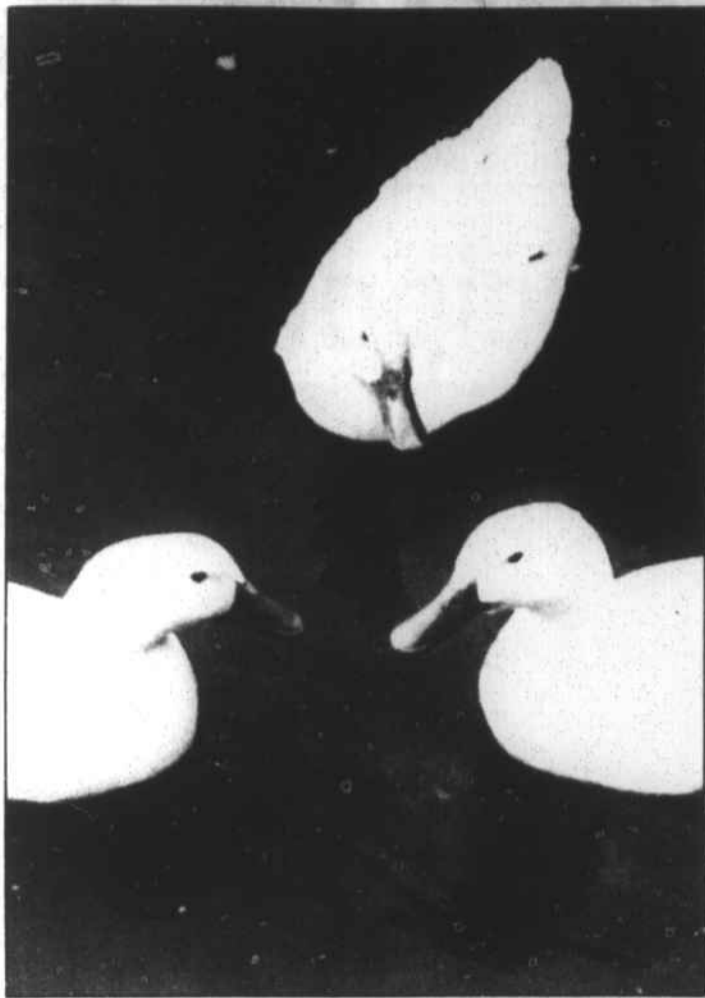
That's a serious problem and up until now we have been unable to come up with a solution.

Lt. Gov. Bob Jordan recently made a suggestion that might be a major step toward that solution.

Jordan suggests that new drivers be required to pass a reading test before they initially get a driver's license. After all, what is more important to the average 16-year-old than a set of wheels? You can try to motivate a kid that age by telling him that he'll never get a job or make a success of his life, if he drops out of school and doesn't learn to read, but kids don't think that far into the future. If they know that they can't get a driver's license unless they learn to read then, all of a sudden, educational attainment can produce instant gratification.

Jordan's idea is worth a try.

The Warren County Scene



Ducking the issues of cold and winter and striking a deceiving spring-like pose are these three feathered friends sunning themselves on a January day in the waters of a pond between Warrenton and Macon.

(Staff Photo by Dianne T. Rodwell)

Carolina Commentary Jay Jenkins

Marking Historical Sites

Years ago a historical marker noting General Sherman's Civil War passage through Anson County disappeared on several occasions.

Investigation led to a prominent socialite in Wadesboro, according to Dr. Jerry Cashion, research supervisor in the N. C. Division of Archives and History. The socialite admitted to running over the sign with her car.

"I just don't think a barn burner should be memorialized in Anson County," she said. Since then, a replacement marker manages to survive.

Vandalism of the roadside markers isn't a major problem, says Cashion, though one did find its way to a bar at Myrtle Beach. A marker on the coast was used as a grill for roasting oysters.

There are now more than 1,200 historical markers across the state, at least one in each of the 100 counties. The first marker was dedicated on Jan. 10, 1936, in the Granville County village of Stovall. It identified the homesite of John Penn, one of the state's three signers of the Declaration of Independence.

Since then, markers have gone up for the other two signers, William Hooper of Hillsborough and Joseph Hewes of Edenton (Hewes died in Philadelphia while serving in the Continental Congress and was buried in an unmarked grave there; the Edenton marker is located near the store he operated).

In addition to denoting the birthplace, home or gravesite of prominent Tar Heels, the markers take note of duels, cemeteries, schools, shipwrecks, trading paths, gun factories and a host of other subjects, including the gravesite of the celebrated thoroughbred race horse "Sir Archie" in Northampton County.

Under the guidelines developed for markers, Governors and U. S. Senators automatically qualify for one, but like all individuals so honored, the markers cannot be erected until the honoree has been dead for 25 years. Congressmen, whose constituency isn't statewide, aren't marked automatically.

One marker in Rocky Mount notes a stopover in 1836 by P. T. Barnum, showman and author of the storied comment that "a sucker is born every minute," and another marker there records that Olympian Jim Thorpe played his first professional baseball game in a local ball park. A Fayetteville marker commemorates Babe Ruth's first home run.

Tar Heel natives who gained fame elsewhere, such as first lady Dolley Madison and House Speaker Joe Cannon, have earned markers. So have Stephen A. Douglas and Horace Greeley, who were married in North Carolina, and poet Sidney Lanier and Annie Carter Lee, a daughter of Robert E. Lee, who died in the state.

Supervisor Cashion has to use all of his diplomatic skills in fielding suggestions from the public about the designation of markers. "Each person thinks his nominee is most deserving," he said. A committee of Tar Heel historians advises about historical authenticity, comparative merit and the appropriateness of proposed markers.

Local governments are consulted before markers are installed, and they have veto power, though it rarely is exercised. Discussions are now underway with Gastonia about a proposed marker for the bloody 1929 Loray textile strike there.

Any reader who has a candidate for a marker may write to Research Branch, Division of Archives and History, 109 East Jones Street, Raleigh, N. C. 27611.

Editor's Quote Book

A man should be taller, older, heavier, uglier, and hoarser than his wife.
E. W. Howe

American Viewpoints

Man is a piece of the universe made alive.
Ralph Waldo Emerson

Courthouse Squares



Mary Catherine Harris

The Bridge On The Table

Our daughter moved the North Bridge yesterday from our dining room to her history classroom at Warren County High School, where it awaits evaluation by her instructor.

History buffs may recognize the North Bridge as scene of the first patriot victory in the American Revolution, scored not long after the "shot heard around the world," fired at Lexington. The bridge constructed by our daughter for a class project and housed in our dining room for a time is a small replica of the historic crossing near Concord, Mass.

A bridge certainly does not belong on a dining table, anyone will agree, and this one rested there only because it seemed the most convenient place to construct the model. When the first pieces of plywood were laid on the table and the seating arrangement for mealtime was first altered to accommodate construction, there was considerable talk among the family about the inconvenience. But before long, the bridge in the dining room mattered hardly at all and by the time the project was completed, it seemed almost to belong there.

That's the way it is when things deviate from what has become normal. The passing of time tends to obscure their presence until they begin to blend.

That's why only this week did I notice in our kitchen one last holiday decoration I had neglected to pack away. The little wooden Christmas tree had ceased to attract our attention as a novelty and had appeared to belong on the window sill.

I'm glad for the American patriots—one out of every three colonists, we're told—who kept their eyes on the unpalatable measures of the Mother Country and refused to let them blend into their efforts to build a new nation, and that on April 19 of that year their minutemen at the North Bridge thwarted a British drive to capture gunpowder and supplies stored at Concord. It was the first taste of freedom.

Our daughter's history assignment was no doubt intended to increase her appreciation of the heroic efforts of her forebears.

I hope she will appreciate their sensitivity to things out of place and their determination to set them aright.

Looking Back Into The Record

January 10, 1946

Lt. Col. Harold R. Skillman of Warrenton has been named commanding officer of the first battalion, 119th infantry regiment of the 30th division of the reorganized National Guard. At the same time, Maj. Frank Banzet of Warrenton was named to serve with S-2 (Intelligence) of the 119th Infantry regiment and Capt. John Ernest Floyd of Norlina was appointed commanding officer of Company B. Col. Claude T. Bowers is commanding officer of the 119th Infantry regiment.

The old adage that a man who is his own lawyer has a fool for a client may have received some support in Warren County Superior Court on Tuesday afternoon when it took a jury less than 10 minutes to decide that a defendant, who acted as his own lawyer, was guilty of assault with a deadly weapon.

William R. Brauer of Rt. 1, Norlina, was featured as Producer of the Month by Carolina Milk Producers Association in the December issue of CMPA News, its monthly newspaper.

January 13, 1977

The Warrenton Board of Commissioners moved Monday night to reduce speed on Highway 401 (South Main Street between Marshall and Plummer Streets) from 35 miles per hour to 20 miles per hour after a near fatal mishap last week.

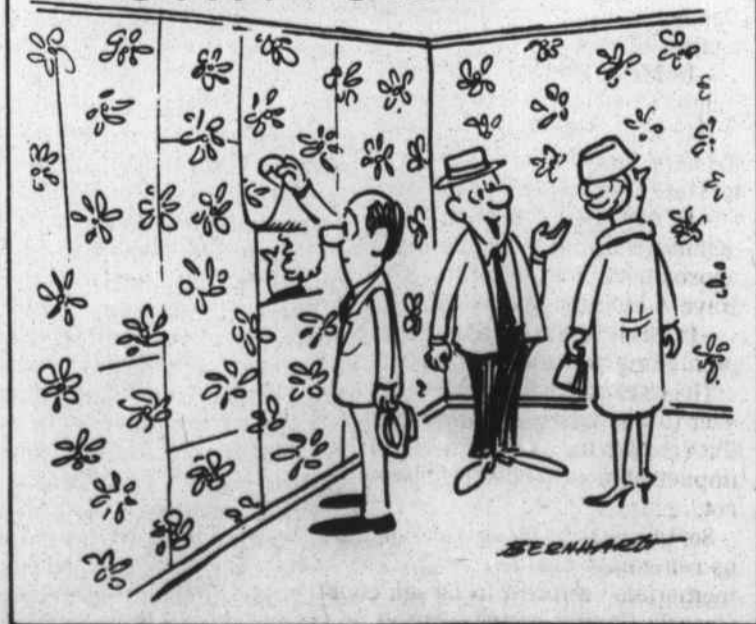
A county hospital for Warren under the plans outlined by the State Good Health Association was endorsed by the Warren County Medical Society at its Monday night meeting.

Sales have been light since the market reopened after the Christmas holidays, and one tobacco buyer was heard to remark a week ago that every pound of tobacco in the county could be sold in one day if it all were brought to Warrenton at one time.

The Warren County Board of Education confirmed Monday night the sale of the Littleton High School for \$38,324. The money will be used toward the purchase of a site for a consolidated high school.

Warrenton commissioners Monday night stood up in defense of a place for townspeople to sit down as they discounted comments that the purchase of park benches to be used in front of the Court House would increase litter and add to congestion. The use of benches is believed to fit into the scheme of beautifying the town.

FUNNYSIDE



"And note the sturdy construction of these condos..."