

THE PILOT

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Too Few Names On Municipal Books

The revelation made last week that the municipal registration books contain the names of only 466 qualified voters speaks poorly for the interest of Southern Pines citizens in their local government. This is all the more astonishing in that the census figures recently released show that 4,179 people reside within the city limits, of which certainly 3,000 are old enough and otherwise qualified to vote.

Of course, the old caucus system of electing the mayor and town board means that many have voted for their town officials, some for all their adult lives, without once getting their names on the registration books. At the caucus a check of the books is made only to make sure that nominees are legitimately registered citizens. The vote is by secret ballot, tallied at the time. The official election which follows within a few days is merely a form, with few taking the trouble to go to the polls.

However, other matters come along from time to time which call for an expression of citizen opinion, and certainly there should be enough registered voters to make sure that the decision at the polls is truly representative. If it is not, those who are not registered, and do not vote, certainly should have nothing to say one way or the other.

Southern Pines never gives the impression of apathy at such times. There is much discussion pro and con, and strong opinions freely and frankly expressed. Our citizens have never been averse to saying what they think in loud clear tones, and differing from each other if it suits them.

This is a healthy sign, and in the true American tradition. However, it would appear that just a few are presenting the illusion of a whole community stirred with interest, or else that many join in the battle of opinions without ever taking the trouble to register, and vote.

There is just one way to argue a municipal issue effectively: with the ballot, at the polls. Municipal books are now open on Saturdays, and will be open daily for the week preceding August 5, for new names of voters on the issue of an appropriation from general funds for advertising and promoting Southern Pines as a resort and business center. The other issue to be voted on August 15, a recreation levy, calls for a new registration good only for this one vote.

In the advertising fund election, the placing of many new names on the town books is called for. There are numbers of citizens now talking on this matter who will be surprised to find that they aren't on the books, if they take the trouble to check.

In the recreation levy vote, at the very least all those qualified voters who petitioned for it should register at once, also all those who signed the petition thinking they were registered but who weren't.

Easier To Criticize Than To Do

Criticism of the State department for unpreparedness at the beginning of the current Korean war can have only one purpose and one result, the weakening of confidence in our leadership at a time when this confidence is of extreme importance.

Senator Robert A. Taft and other Republicans, who are of isolationist tradition no matter what they are saying today, have been understandably disconcerted at the unanimous support accorded President Truman in his instantaneous move to meet the threat, also the accord to be found within the United Nations at this time. This is politically menacing to their future plans, and they are out to muddy the waters while they can.

As a matter of fact, we believe the State department and the Allied Command were aware of what was going on and what might happen, as they no doubt know of situations in other parts of the world which are also explosive in nature and must be delicately dealt with lest the fuse be lit. Knowing does not mean they can prevent, or always be prepared. Korea has been recognized as a touchy spot for a long time, and it has also been known that if "it" was going to break out anywhere any time soon, it might be there. There are other places where it seemed more likely to break out, and probably would have if the 38th parallel had been militarily sealed.

We are dealing with an enemy who, wishing to make trouble, has a wide choice of spots in which to do it—spots over which Senator Taft would be among the first to resist clapping on the lid of full military force without any overt act.

What the Senator is doing is far more detrimental to our country at this stage than the recent McCarthyisms, which now pale to relative insignificance.

This is no time for playing politics. It may be true our espionage system is far from perfect; it is undoubtedly true that we are in no shape to meet a major conflict at this point. However, it is also well known that the State department has had many problems of no easy solution, and in surmounting vast obstacles has had to face numerous difficulties, of which Senator Robert A. Taft is none.

A Wall For Bethesda

There is a grave danger that the lovely old part of Bethesda Cemetery, one of the most historic possessions of Moore County, will vanish away unless it receives attention very soon.

The fence disappeared a while ago and many of the old trees which served as a boundary line were burned in the fire that swept that area. Already many of the oldest gravestones are broken and crumbling away; the sites of the earliest graves are nearly, if not entirely, lost.

This is a great pity. The old graveyard is a solemn and beautiful place. In it are buried many of the leaders of our pioneer families, ancestors of some of our leading citizens of today. There are also, at Bethesda, the graves of some of the early Huguenot settlers. These were marked by terra cotta headstones whose fragments can be found, still, crumbling in the rank grass.

Old Bethesda is the descendant of the church at the head of the Rockfish, earliest of places of worship of which we have a record hereabouts. It is dear to the hearts of all Moore County people, while, all over the country, there are descendants of our Scottish families who think of it as their spiritual home.

No Moore County project is more important, from a historical and sentimental, in the good sense of the word, angle than would be the preservation of the old cemetery. A wall, made of old bricks, should be built around the old part as soon as possible. At the same time it is to be hoped that the oldest graves could be located and their headstones reset. If, then, a simple gateway in the classic colonial tradition could be erected, this would be, we submit, a fitting tribute to the early settlers who lie there, and who did so much to make our country what it is today.

Joseph A. Spence

Joseph A. Spence of Asheboro, former mayor, oldest Randolph County attorney at law and until the last four or five years an outstanding duckpin bowler and contract bridge and setback player, is dead at 81.

And yet until his last illness, which had endured for a couple of years or more, nobody in his home town had looked upon Lawyer Spence as an old man. He has a brother, Union L. Spence of Carthage, who is a year or two older and of the same ageless type. Both of them practiced a lot of law with Associate Justice A. A. F. (Flowers) Seawell of the North Carolina Supreme Court who gives the impression of still being able to jump a 10-rail fence if occasion called for it.

There is, we truly believe, something about practicing law in a quiet North Carolina county seat which results in longevity. Much depends on the practitioner, of course—we have known small-town lawyers to burst a blood vessel in far less time than is required by a brother barrister seeking to impress the Supreme Court—but we are talking now about Spences, Seawells and the like who take the law and the world in a stride which has no resemblance whatever to a lope.

Joseph A. Spence will, we are confident, in the memorial prepared by his bar association be termed "an ornament to his profession." We think he was more than that. He lent dignity to a needed service to his clients which was thorough without being pretentious.

It could be wished that the North Carolina Bar could find some way to promote the growth of the sort of all-around lawyer Joe Spence was, even at the expense of doctors or jurisprudence.

—GREENSBORO DAILY NEWS

The Wilderness Appeal

"Natural beauty is the ultimate spiritual appeal of the universe," quotes Newton B. Drury, Director, National Park Service, in his recently issued annual report to Secretary of the Interior Chapman. The quotation is from G. M. Trevelyan, British historian; the words have a basic application to all men in any land. Tremendously armed by science and machinery, man is now capable of destroying natural beauty at a constantly increased rate in what are accepted courses of business and economy. It thus becomes, as the report of the National Park Service points out, the responsibility of civilized human beings "to examine all proposals to effect extensive modifications of the American landscapes"—modifications which would harness waters, cut down forests, and, in sum, invade destructively a wilderness whose worth cannot be expressed in terms of money. Our nation, says Director Drury, is not so rich it can afford to lose its wildernesses.

In its last fiscal year the National Park Service reports that it received appropriations of \$1,652,350 for physical improvements, \$3,110,000 for roads and trails, and a contract authorization for parkways amounting to \$2,680,000. A contemplation of these sums in comparison with some current Federal expenditures gives one to ponder if "the ultimate spiritual appeal" of America's nationalized natural beauty of some 21 million acres is being properly heard along the well-tamed Potomac.

—GREENSBORO DAILY NEWS

The Korean situation has caught some broadcasters flatfooted, and they'd better start re-writing some of their scripts. That one, for instance where the news commentator says, "Now, for the real IMPORTANT news," just before he gives the commercial.

Grains of Sand

GRAINS OF SAND respectfully dedicates its column space this week to Bessie Cameron Smith, with the following reprint of **JUNE IS ENDED . . . AND THE SOCIETY EDITOR IS ABOUT FINISHED, TOO** (Zoe Brockman in The Gastonia Gazette)

Another tired leaf has dropped from the calendar, and June has been relegated—not to the moth balls, but to a pot pourri of faded orange blossoms. That gusty sigh you hear emanates from society editors all over the land who lie limp as dishrags, on innumerable news room floors. Indeed, if these wildeyed dsheveled, exhausted characters were laid end to end, they'd reach all the way to Korea, but they'd be no good to anybody.

As a matter of fact, until they recover from the fierce onslaught of June, they are liabilities rather than assets to any newspaper. They limp about taking a very dim view of any and all things, and they tell constantly of how tired they are, and hint vainly that a little extra vacation time is plainly indicated.

But the hearts-and-flowers theme is by no means exhausted. The show will play to packed houses throughout the summer. Society editors long ago learned that August can be as hectic as June, and there are hordes of fond and hardy lovers who think nothing of heading for the altar in July. Then, no later than October, the Bridal Chorus starts up again, and gliadioli gleam whitely around countless chancels.

Society editors love weddings—weddings are the window dressing of the society page—and they love brides. But they are by no means certain that brides love them. If they did, they'd trot their lovely selves in bearing wedding writheups and angelic pictures, a few days ahead of the nuptial hour, and thus spare the society editor and the engraver a lot of headaches.

We want the stories to be right, and the pictures ditto. But getting them that way is not quite as simple as scrambling the breakfast eggs. It takes a little time and quite a little doing.

Society editors knock themselves out trying to get the thing done the way the bride and her family want it done. They hope the picture is going to print up clearly and beautifully. They check proofs of stories after the proof-reader, but they still live in terror of the gremlins that infest all newspaper offices and delight in turning a bride into a bride.

When there is a plethora of Saturday nuptials, she can't sleep at night for fear she may have got her bride and brodegrooms scrambled. She checks and double-checks. Then, when the first inky copies of the paper slither off the press, she grabs one, at the same time breathing a prayer that all is well and that no glaring errors will jump out at her from the printed page.

It's fun to work with brides. They're so young, so lovely, and so radiant. And, if there aren't too many of them all at once, it's like a booster shot to emotions that have long since quieted down. You'd like to have time to really visit with the bride, ask her a lot of things that don't properly belong to the story, absorb some of her enthusiasm, bask in her happiness. But, mostly, there isn't time for anything but the strict business of the moment.

It might be a surpris to the brides themselves to know that, to the odd type behind the desk, weddings are never really routine. You wish to heaven that there was a greater variety of words suitable for describing the same thing—white satin, lace, or marquisette, altar decorations, et cetera. You even wish sometimes that weddings weren't so traditional, so that a few new quirks might be introduced into the story.

You'd like, maybe, to lead off with "That little black-headed girl who always had so many beaux has made final choice in favor of one of them. He's the red-headed, loud-voiced buisner whose jeep used to wake the neighbors up when he decided to stop courting and go home." Then you could go on from there. But that would be no kind of a story for a bride to paste in her book for her grandchildren to read. The society page, after all, isn't the Police Gazette.

It's my considered opinion, however—and one not shared by

any male editor alive or dead—that all society editors should be automatically given a long Fourth of July holiday, and no questions asked. After all, with a red-hot June just behind them, the wenches should be turned out to graze for a spell where the fire-crackers are a-poppin' and the hot and cold running firewater is abundant.

This, at some future time, I mean to take up with the North Carolina Press association—not to be confused with the North Carolina Press Women, from which latter group there would be no argument, but loud and ardent salvos instead.

And here's where one society editor takes time out to go soak her head.

The Public Speaking

To The Pilot.

A JAY IN THE ROAD

I didn't see him as he took leave of the trees and alighted on Broad street—that pompous little fellow with white-tipped brilliant blue feathers. A glance told me he was quite young. His little black legs were planted rather unsteadily in support of his majestic body, and he looked about curiously as was his nature to do. As I have said, I didn't see him alight, he was just there, and behind him three cars moved slowly. Within the instant of knowing how young he was I knew, too, what might be his fate, unless—surely the driver of that first car saw him. Wouldn't he stop and give the little fellow a chance to live in the world he had found so big and so interesting? He could stop!

Our cars passed as I looked ahead with a pang in my heart. Then, through my rear view mirror I saw two cars casting their shadows over a heap of blue feathers. That person hadn't stopped, hadn't cared about saving a living thing he could neither create nor adorn with such beauty; thus, another of God's wonderful gifts was forfeited upon the altar of Man's indifference.

A BIRD LOVER

To The Pilot.

Referring to Julian Bishop's letter in your issue of last week, I would like to ask him:

When did it become "unsportsmanlike and uncalled for" for a citizen of this free country to express his opinion of a political campaign and its result? If this is a legitimate accusation against me, then you and thousands of other Republicans have been equally guilty in every campaign beginning with and since 1936, excepting 1946. Every newspaper that has written editorials commenting critically on election results has also been guilty, along with me, you and your fellow Republicans. Always excepting 1946, there hasn't been an election in the past 14 years in which you Republicans have not commented bitterly upon the tactics used by the opposition. It seems that when you and your group are handing out the criticism, it is a God-given right reserved to yourselves. When someone else is dishing it out against you and your group, it is "unsportsmanlike and uncalled for."

Do you remember when you threatened to leave the country and go elsewhere if FDR was re-elected? Did I call your action "unsportsmanlike and uncalled for"? I, with others of your friends, thought it was a perfectly silly remark, and that you had placed yourself in an impossible situation. Actually you are still in this country and so far as I can see your standard of living hasn't deteriorated.

ELMER T. SIMKINS

In Bygone Days

From the Pilot files:

TEN YEARS AGO

Mrs. Magruder Dent of Greenwich, Conn., purchases tract in Knollwood, for building of a winter residence.

Sandhills Softball League gets off to good start with game between Pinehurst Stars and Southern Pines All-Stars (6-4 Southern Pines).

Seaboard Air Line announces a popular-priced weekend excursion to Virginia Beach.

TWENTY YEARS AGO

Two new tennis courts were built at Pinehurst Country club.

Last services held at Pinehurst Community house as new church building is almost completed.

Town turns on public shower bath for youngsters, at corner of

Pennsylvania and East Broad. One hundred and ten carloads of peaches have been shipped from the county so far, a 92 percent increase over the comparable period last year.

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