

THE PILOT

Southern Pines North Carolina

"In taking over The Pilot no changes are contemplated. We will try to keep this a good paper. We will try to make a little money for all concerned. Wherever there seems to be an occasion to use our influence for the public good we will try to do it. And we will treat everybody alike."—James Boyd, May 23, 1941.

On Right Road With Language Studies

It is gratifying to hear that Southern Pines elementary school students will receive preliminary training in or familiarization with foreign languages this year. Students, it is announced, "will be exposed to expressions of foreign tongues in several ways." These will include recordings, simple translations on the blackboard, visits to the school by local people who speak foreign languages, and other methods.

All this strikes us as most praiseworthy. We think that the presence in classrooms of persons who speak foreign languages will be a wonderful aid to appreciation and stimulus of interest on the part of the students. We urge persons who feel they are qualified to assist in this program to make themselves known to the school. This is a clear-cut opportunity for citizens to make a voluntary personal contribution to the betterment of our educational system. It is another illustration of a point we have often made on this page: citizen interest is the chief key to improving the schools. Here is a direct chance to help.

In the "Topics" column of the New York Times last Sunday, the importance of language studies for Americans is stressed. Less than 15 per cent of American high school students are enrolled in modern language courses of any kind, it is pointed out, while

students in European nations and Russia normally begin foreign language studies in elementary school. Many thousands of Russian students are learning English each year, but only about a dozen American schools offer courses in Russian.

According to a study by the United States Office of Education, the ability of Americans in foreign languages, even after two years of study in high school, is very slight. Of all the major powers, the United States is, says the Times, "linguistically the most ill-equipped."

The Times sums up the indictment like this:

"To address a man in his own language, however imperfectly, is to flatter him with the implication that you are interested enough in him to make an effort at direct understanding. If the best road to understanding involves the ability to communicate—both on the diplomatic and personal levels—then far too many Americans are forced to stumble along in darkness, blindfolded by lack of knowledge and indifference to the vital tool of language."

The new program in the Southern Pines schools is a step toward removing that blindfold. We wish the program full success and hope that it forecasts new interest in and emphasis on languages in all American schools.

For Direct School Board Elections

The method of naming county school board members over the State is, like the weather, something that everybody has been talking about but nobody has done anything about—nobody, that is, until State Rep. George Watts Hill, Jr., of Durham recently announced that he will introduce in the 1959 General Assembly legislation that would provide for direct election of school board members in his county.

Mr. Hill, who might expect brickbats for tampering with the long-standing system whereby every county in the State gets a Democratic school board, is being acclaimed by newspapers and other observers for his good sense. But why not, asks the Greensboro Daily News, make the new law state-wide? Why not indeed? If the proposal makes sense in Durham, is it any less valid in Moore?

Under the present state-wide plan, county school board members are nominated in primary voting (normally referred to, however, as their "election") and the names of Democratic or Republican nominees are sent to the following year's General Assembly for confirmation. There, the Democratic slates are always confirmed because of the overwhelmingly Democratic membership of the legislature.

This is the system that Rep. Hill wants to

change—not, we are sure, in the interests of the Republican party, because he is personally not of that political persuasion, but in the name of common sense, justice and small-d democracy.

We think it would be to the vast advantage of North Carolina if county school board elections were on a non-partisan basis throughout the state, just as are most municipal elections. While the Pilot is a big-D Democratic newspaper, we consider it no violation of party loyalty to speculate that there might be Republicans in any or all of the State's counties who are capable of rendering exceptional service to the schools but who are now totally and eternally blocked from such service.

Most municipal elections in North Carolina are non-partisan—and we think North Carolina's towns are better off that this is so. The schools, it seems to us, are even more deserving than our municipalities of non-partisan direction. And we suspect that an electorate wedded to this conception of school administration would soon eliminate at the polls officials who attempted to use their school board positions for partisan influence or advantage.

We hope that the people of North Carolina will talk up Rep. Hill's proposal in their own counties and pressure their representatives to make his proposal state-wide law in 1959.

What About That 'Valley of Humility'?

To what extent does Hugh Haynie's cartoon on this page today represent a depiction of reality? Perhaps it is not meant to represent an existing situation but rather a goal, an ideal for the State to aim at.

It is a fact that North Carolina has open schools, though in only a handful of them has there begun a token racial integration. But how many Tar Heels have open minds—taking "open minds" to mean a realization that there must be a working compromise between the volcanic extremes of mass integration and segregation, as pictured in the Haynie drawing. And the compromise, under this viewpoint, will eventually have to include a measure of good faith compliance with the Supreme Court's school segregation directives.

What do Tar Heels think? In his "People and Issues" newspaper column, Cliff Blue, Moore County's representative in the General Assembly, says that "a good many people who gather at filling stations and talk" feel that Governor Hodges has "softened" on segregation. Then the shocker: "They point to Governor Faubus as a courageous leader. And to more people than you might think, Faubus is a real hero here in North Carolina."

Mr. Blue notes that the "people who gather at filling stations" admired Governor Hodges for his "rousing campaign for the Pearsall segregation proposals"—a statement that recalls our attitude toward the Pearsall proposals while they were being debated throughout the State two years ago, just before they were overwhelmingly approved by the people in a referendum.

In opposing the Pearsall Plan at that time, we felt that the Plan, with its provisions for closing public schools and opening private schools simply served to delude the people, holding forth the hope that somehow segregation of the races in schools would be indefinitely preserved.

This delusion seems to have been retained in the thinking of Mr. Blue's "people who gather at filling stations." Their thinking today, reinforced by the defiance of Governor Faubus, lends weight to our contention of two years ago: that the people of North Carolina would have been better off to face the inex-

orable question of compliance at once. Delay, as with a tooth that needs to be pulled, only makes the eventual crisis more difficult and painful.

Before adoption of the Pearsall amendments, Irving Carlyle, prominent Winston-Salem attorney, advanced alternative proposals that faced the question of compliance head on and provided for gradual good faith progress toward that end. He said at that time that there may be in North Carolina more people of good will than we know, or words to that effect—more people than our political leaders estimated who would be willing then to tackle the problem head-on in frank and open cooperation with Negro leaders, for the preservation of the schools and the well-being of all concerned.

Does North Carolina, then, really walk in a valley of humility? How open are minds to which Governor Faubus is a hero? And what proportion of our population feels that he is such?

What are the secrets revealed in the volume that the old gentleman in the cartoon is carrying: "How To Keep Open Minds and Open Schools"?

Whatever else may be written therein, we are confident that neither minds nor schools will be kept open while we think only in terms of defiance and resistance on the school segregation question.

Three Observations

Adlai Stevenson's three general observations, on his recent return from Russia:

1. "The people of the Soviet Union, like those of America, genuinely desire peace and friendship."
2. "I regret to say I found a depressing lack of knowledge and understanding of the United States, our way of life and our purpose."
3. "I have been struck by the scope and energy of the industrialization everywhere in the eastern areas of the Soviet Union and the drive to bring millions of acres of new land into production."

gone to seed. The pinks, blues and other delicate, warm colors of Summer have been supplanted by the final yellows of a fading season. And have you ever noticed how dull, spent and burnished Fall yellows are in contrast to the resurgent yellows of the jonquils, buttercups, forsythia and the first breath of spring? It's the difference between sunrise and sunset.

The fields are mostly dun and fallow. In cotton country the stalks have gone largely to boll. Corn stands like endless battalions of scare-crows, waiting to have their arms and legs plucked for fodder or for silage. In fields once green with waving tobacco only the stripped, spiked stalks are left, looking for all the world like tank traps in endless disarray.

It's the in-between season. Winter grains have not yet been put in; and the stubble, brown landscape is an unbroken monotony.

Fortunate are those who have grape arbors, as the insurpassable scuppernongs begin to bronze and the James grapes turn a tantalizing purple. Back



'YOU KNOW IT INSTINCTIVELY'

September: Fall Is On The Way

H. W. Kendall, editor of the Greensboro Daily News, recently pointed out North Carolina's signs and portents that Fall is on the way—incidentally mentioning the Sandhills and Southern Pines. It's a mood felt by many of us: "It's in your bones; you know it instinctively," wrote Mr. Kendall. Here is what he had to say:

All along North Carolina's countryside, if one will only get off the superhighways and drive leisurely along secondary roads to note Nature's omissions, there are signs and portents that Fall is just ahead.

The lush growth of field and forest has gone. Leaves have lost their sheen and pristine greenery. Now they are seared, tired looking, weary from the Summer's sun and ready for a final spurge of glory that sends them into funereal Winter.

Weeds and flowers alike have

wound itself had to grow. Even persimmons are in the making, as hard green balls which weeks from now will be given their finishing, flavorful touch by the Fall's first frost. Then Burke Davis and Pete Ivey will drag out their pudding punditry.

Yep, Fall's a-coming, and none knows it better than the birds. For them the molting season is all but over. For the past few weeks they have been quiet and relatively unseen. But a feather picked up here and there and a glimpse of catbird, wood thrush, robin or thrasher in thick shrubbery or beneath the foliage attested to what was going on; theirs was the trying, strength-taking experience of refurbishing for the seasonal trip south or, among those birds which stay with us the year around, donning of a new, thick, warm coat for the colder months ahead.

These last few days I believe I've seen more birds in my neighborhood than any time this past Spring and Summer. They've come out from their hiding places fresh and clean, their new coats shining. They gather in knots, chattering away as if discussing where each is going for the Winter, which to faraway Central and South America, which to Florida and which to warmer spots much nearer home. The robins and brown thrashers, for

instance, may stay as close as the Sandhills or North Carolina's thermal belt over in the Tryon area.

You can see robins hopping around Pinehurst and Southern Pines all the Winter. Their chattering now may have to do with their decision as to where they'll gather, literally by the thousands, in thick woodland roost, foraging over wide areas during the day but coming in by clouds for the togetherness and warmth of a protected nocturnal resting place.

It's moving day for the birds; and one by one they'll take off until finally around your bird bath and feeding station will remain only the all-timers—the mockingbird, the seasonally faded cardinal, the trim towhee, the raucous bluejay, the unrecognizably drab goldfinch, the acrobatic tufted titmouse or chickadee, the eternally cheerful wren, the nuthatch weaving his way down a tree trunk, the woodpecker or flicker weaving his way up or steadily drumming away at hidden food in decayed limb or bough, and finally the juncos which come down from the mountains to the low lands for the kind of weather which only Winter can offer "snow birds."

September's here. It's in your bones; you know it instinctively. Overnight the kids in the park shift from baseball to football; and spiders, deceptively beautiful, swiftly weave their entrapment webs in all sorts of surprising places.

It won't be long until one night as you put up the car you'll note your breath congealing in the crisp air.

ALAS FOR THE SUMMER!

"Monday, August 22 (1842) . . . Alas for the summer! The grass is still verdant on the hills and in the valleys; the foliage of the trees is as dense as ever, and as green; the flowers are abundant along the margin of the river, and in the hedge-rows and deep among the woods; the days, too, are as fervid as they were a month ago; and yet in every breath of wind and in every beam of sunshine there is an autumnal influence.

"I know not how to describe it. Methinks there is a sort of coolness amid all the heat, and a mildness in the brightest of the sunshine. A breeze cannot stir without thrilling me with the breath of autumn, and I behold its persuasive glory in the far, golden

gleams among the long shadows of the trees. The flowers, even the brightest of them—the golden-rod and the gorgeous cardinals—the most glorious flowers of the year, have this gentle sadness amid their pomp. Pensive autumn is expressed in the glow of every one of them.

"I have felt this influence earlier in some years than in others. Sometimes autumn may be perceived even in the early days of July. There is no other feeling like that caused by this faint, doubtful, yet real perception, or rather prophecy, of the year's decay, so deliciously sweet and sad at the same time . . ."

—NATHANIEL HAWTHORNE in "The American Notebooks"

Grains of Sand

Still Reeling
That staggering mid-street policeman who, with ever-smiling countenance, directs traffic at the corner of Connecticut Ave. and Ashe St. is still reeling. Think it's been about a year and a half since we first pointed out to his superiors that he's apparently in no shape to be on duty in the street.

Despite a few dents in his exterior, the policeman (we're told it's not nice to use "cop" any more: it's one of that growing list of words which are taboo because they might hurt somebody's feelings) is perfectly dressed, as always, though perhaps the blue of his uniform has been faded a bit by the sun and rain.

A soft drink advertisement still adorns his back, though judging from his stance it might more appropriately be for a stronger beverage.

In a way we'd hate to see the leaning officer straightened up again: he's been so happy in his present pose for so long. As with a town drunk, there is a certain familiar charm in his perpetual grin. It can't be too bad a world, one is led to conjecture, if this man who can't even stand up straight—finds it continually amusing.

Do you suppose he really might stop smiling, if somebody straightened him up?

How's That, Miss?

The new Miss America, Mary Ann Mobley of Mississippi, must have caused many a groan and shudder across the nation because of her post-contest interview with the press.

How young women must have groaned and young men shuddered in reading that Miss America has one special boy friend, among several others, but says she hasn't been able to "trap" the special one into marriage yet.

For that matter, how unnerved that fortunate young man himself must have felt on reading this . . . provided he knows that he's the special one and not just one of the others. If he's picked as the trapping victim, of course, maybe he doesn't know.

What shook us most about Miss America's statement was the ease and matter-of-factness with which she used that word "trap." Is that the way all unmarried young women look at the matter? Would any of them, caught off guard, speak naturally of "trapping" a man?

There's this much to say about Miss Mobley's hunting expedition: however she may plan the kill, she's not lacking in bait for the trap.

But what a word for a gracious young lady to use—"trap." You see how it is, fellows. Run, run, run while you've got a chance.

'Daffynitions'

Boy's Life, a magazine which we peruse nostalgically now and then when the world seems too much with us, has added a few gems to our list of unconventional definitions, such as those of the California first graders we published a few weeks ago.

Boy's Life calls them "daffynitions" and they are sent in by readers of the magazine:

Psychiatrist—A man who doesn't have to worry—as long as other people do.

Tennis racket—A bunch of holes strung together.

Hatchet—What a hen does to an egg.

Soap opera—Corn on the cob.

Party Report

Latest Southern Pines' small fry utterance is from the preschool boy who went to another boy's birthday party and gave this report when asked what he'd done there:

"I gave him a shirt and hit him on the head."

That's what we'd call a factual and concise report.

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