

# 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.

## School Opens: The Biggest News

What Ike was saying in Europe and what Mr. K. was doing in Moscow took a back row in the news with us this week, compared to the opening of school.

School is such a routine thing—it goes on and on, day after day, year after year; why should there be such a thrill about opening day? But you can't deny it; it's there, even for those of us who aren't in the habit of sentimentalizing about much of anything any more.

Is it partly memory—a day full of wonder and dread and the smell of newly oiled, scuffed wooden floors (they don't get that any more but we suppose there is an equivalent school smell that is like nothing else in the world and kind of gives a kid butterflies in the stomach on opening day)?

Is it that school opening floods the town

with children—their voices, their movements, their wonderful, implacable growth-potential—so that we see the future out there in the streets, skipping or dawdling, and we realize that what happens to them is literally everything; we have very little else to give to the world?

Is it gratitude: an immense thankfulness for civilization, for the mind, for knowledge, for a way of life that denies education to no one; for everyone who has fought, toiled, studied and planned, so a child, anywhere, can go to school?

In another week or so it will all be back to the level of getting breakfast early, helping with homework, bruised knees, good or bad grades on report cards. That first-day magic will be gone; but the truth of its meaning remains.

## Carnivals Spoiling County Fairs

A Raleigh News and Observer editorial lamenting the decline of the county fair as a home-grown institution and lambasting the cheapness and tawdriness of the carnivals that have come to dominate fairs, strikes a sympathetic note with us.

Good citizens, the police and we fear, alas, newspapers also in small towns have been hesitant to write these carnivals off as the larcenous events they are because fairs, with their accompanying carnivals, now are usually sponsored by some civic organization for a noble purpose. To throw a wrench of any kind in the machinery of any part of the fair is considered antisocial.

"Today," noted the News and Observer, "there are seven gambling devices for every jar of jelly" at a county fair. We'd put the proportion at Moore County fairs of recent years as a little more in favor of the jelly, but the fact remains that the gambling wheels and girly shows overbalance the agricultural and home exhibits.

The reply, of course, is: would anybody come to a fair just to look at the pumpkins

and jelly? Probably not—nor do we ask such austerity. Let there be entertainment—but why not entertainment of our own devising: square dances, talent shows, Boy Scout skill contests, local bands playing and such like? For that matter, let's set up our own gambling wheels and "games of chance and skill" and turn the proceeds over to charity. As it is, thousands of dollars move out of the county when the carnival folks hit the road.

We have no objection to such shows as daredevils who dive off a tower into a tub of water, merry-go-rounds and other rides, balloons, hot dogs and such trimmings. Flimflam artists and girly shows (one put on in Moore County a few years ago could have come right from the back alleys of Paris or the docks of Marseille) create an atmosphere that corrupts an institution that used to be the best day of the year for a family outing.

Their motives may be of the best, but we think civic organizations should reexamine their policies in promoting fairs and other celebrations that bring in carnivals. Some pressure from the public would help.

## Waking Up To Nuclear Problems

It is gratifying that the United States has extended its suspension of nuclear weapon tests beyond October 31 to the end of the year and that the Soviet Union has stated that it will refrain from such testing so long as the Western powers do likewise. There is, too, the statement of Great Britain that it will not conduct tests as long as talks among the three nuclear powers, on a suspension treaty, show some prospect of success.

The Geneva negotiations are now in a six-week recess, following months of discussion from which the news was sometimes encouraging, sometimes discouraging. It is to be hoped that resumption of the talks will find all the powers genuinely seeking agreement.

It is a great pity that the matter of nuclear testing has been presented to the people of the United States in such a confusing fashion. When top atomic scientists can't agree on the danger from fall-out, present and future, and make conflicting statements, the layman has simply had to pick his side of the controversy by hunch or prejudice—or more likely, only retire to a worried neutrality.

Despite the soothing syrup dosed out so

generously for some time by the Atomic Energy Commission, the public, it seems to us, is becoming much more alarmed about testing and fall-out. This is good—for no matter where the truth lies, if we must err, it should be on the side of caution.

Several months ago, marking the end of the out-and-out soothing syrup era, the Atomic Energy Commission finally admitted a "real concern" about fall-out. Dr. Willard F. Libby who made the "real concern" statement, then resigned from the AEC and Dr. Edward Teller, who had also minimized fall-out danger and tried to block a ban on testing, left his advisory position with the Commission. The U. S. has not tested a nuclear weapon since August 22, 1958.

A continuing, world-wide ban on testing, as great an achievement as that would be, is only a prelude to the real goal: ending the nuclear arms race. We hope that the renewed interest of the American public in the fall-out problem (of which the current Saturday Evening Post articles are both a symptom and a cause) will lead to more and more persons abandoning an attitude of confused neutrality to this paramount problem of our age.

## The Big Picture In Court Reform

An article on this page last week concluded our printing, in three parts over as many weeks, a speech by J. Spencer Bell, chairman of the North Carolina Bar Association's Committee on Improving and Expediting the Administration of Justice.

Mr. Bell is also a member of the General Assembly and led the unsuccessful effort to enact legislation this year that would set up a state-wide uniform court system. Mr. Bell laid the defeat of the proposal at the feet of those legislators who insisted on maintaining control of the state's courts in the General Assembly, rather than turning control over to the State's Supreme Court and its administrative machinery.

All through our support of the Bell proposals and the considerable space we have given to explaining them on this page for some months, we have been conscious of the fact that the lower courts of Moore County, including the justice of the peace courts, are probably above the average. The justices of the peace in this county are certainly not in the large group to which Mr. Bell refers "who can hardly read or write." We think most of them know a good deal of law and that they possess, by and large, a shrewd judgment of human nature that often results in fair judgments under the circumstances.

Whether or not any Moore County justice of the peace would, as in a case cited editorially by the Charlotte Observer, refuse to allow an appeal, in a civil suit, by a defendant against whom he had ruled, we cannot say. The Charlotte jaypees, when called to task on

this ruling by a Superior Court judge, said he didn't know that any defendant in a Jaypee court had as much right to appeal a verdict as in any other court. Whether he was truly ignorant of this basic principle of law, or whether he feigned ignorance to mask his denial of a defendant's right, the jaypee in question comes out as a very poor person to have sitting in judgment on anyone.

We cannot, however, base a conviction about court reform on conditions at our back door. Reform, it seems to us, must be uniform and must be state-wide. A system of courts, such as the jaypee courts, in which the judge earns no fee unless he finds a defendant guilty, is so glaringly susceptible to corruption that we don't see how the good people of the state can tolerate its existence. We are sure that there are many jaypees who are scrupulous about not tempering their justice to their pocketbooks, but it is obvious the system itself is ridiculous—and vicious, to boot, when you have ignorant "judges" trying still more ignorant defendants, against such a background.

The jaypee question, of course, is only a small part of the Bell report and the Bell proposals for reform at all levels of the courts. We bring it up here to emphasize this point: though we here in Moore County may personally know honorable and intelligent jaypees, and though we may see no glaring abuses in the operations of our courts on other levels, we must view the larger picture—a picture of incredible inefficiency, injustice and confusion—that was outlined in the Bell report.

## A SEARCH FOR UNDERSTANDING

### The Quiet Force In The South

(From The Wall Street Journal)

The other day four Negroes went quietly to class at two high schools in Little Rock.

On the day of registration a small mob gathered in the center of town and marched on Central High to protest the Negroes' presence at that formerly all-White school. The police, acting firmly, soon dispersed them with no casualties other than some torn shirts and a few bruises. At Hall High, located in one of the "better" residential sections, there were no incidents at all.

It is hard to escape the feeling that this is the way things might have gone two summers ago if the world had left Little Rock alone. That was the opinion then of the mayor, the school board and the chief of police of Little Rock; and that is the way things did go, in like circumstances in other Southern places. Disapproval, resentment, even anger perhaps; but in the end a regard for peace and order, honor and propriety.

#### High Price

But the Governor of Arkansas would not leave Little Rock alone, and he put soldiers around to keep the Negroes out. Nor would the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, fanning the flames by saying it would not content itself long with modest steps. Nor, finally, could the Government of the United States leave Little Rock alone. And the price, for a sad year, was no high schools at all, for Negro or for White. Now we know there are those, North and South, who say this racial problem is an irreconcilable conflict. In the South they make up the mobs that march on the Central Highs. In the North they are the voices clamoring for total and instant change in ancient mores and cheering the sight of bayonets to force the change. The one says all must change; the other nothing.

But it seems to us that Little Rock shows there is another force, and that it is not weak.

Mr. Faubus is still the Governor of Arkansas. He is unchanged in his political ideas. He can still arouse in a great many people all the old emotions. But no one supposes any longer that in Arkansas he can still go his untrammelled way.

#### Find A Way

We do not think the explanation for this is hard to find. In the midst of the crisis, two years ago, this newspaper's Mr. Gemmill and Mr. Guilfoyle went walking among the people of Little Rock and wrote of the quiet force in Arkansas—the ordinary decent citizens of the community who were fearful of what the Supreme Court was doing to their schools and their way of living but who were, silently, even more fearful of what others were doing to them. Today it is clear that it was these people who, slowly and painfully, have reopened the schools of Little Rock and who will find a way to reorder their lives.

And there are many like them, we believe, elsewhere in the South. The rest of the nation, knowing but little so far of the problems involved, cannot expect them to welcome a social upheaval. But it blunders terribly if it supposes that the voice of the rabble-rouser, white or black, is the voice of the South.

Whenever people are disturbed by deep emotions over what ap-

pear insoluble problems, extremists can gather a following. And we do not suppose that just because the schools are open in Little Rock there will now be an end to the clamors of the extremists, the one for no change at all and the other for instant and total upheaval.

But there always comes a time in this country when the ex-

tremists look around and find themselves followed by a dwindling crowd. The people have left to join the quiet force—which here, is the thoughtful Negro and the thoughtful White who have been living side by side in the same land for three centuries. These will not be turned aside from the search for sympathy and understanding.

"And So, F-fellow C-citizens, L-let Us F-face The F-future With C-courage, A-and—"



## Afternoon Of Summer

Henry James thought that the two most beautiful words in the English language were "summer afternoon." And summer afternoons become progressively more beautiful in the afternoon of summer.

As August arrives we know that the season has passed its high noon. The morning's pleasant chores are over. The remainder of the midday meal is cleared away from the table whereon sunlight and shadow laid a damask of leaf pattern.

The magic cloth will disappear of its own accord by the time the dishes are dried. And if we pull our chairs up to the table again later, its top will wait, uncluttered by design and smooth of prejudice, for books, papers, or even a little radio.

June, if we believe Lowell, has rarer days. They are piquant with promise. But they lack, for that very reason, the poignancy of mid-summer hours bounded by the inexorable dimensions of "nowness"—boundaries dismiss-

ing past as mere preparation and future as irrelevant.

In every afternoon of summer there comes some moment strangely close to fulfillment—some sense of welcome inevitability. This is apart from all the rest of the year's experience. It does not depend on what good or what bad we may suppose has marked some other season.

A flight of birds wheels round in a brazen sky, their wings catching and shedding the sunlight and making the mass seem like a shimmering cloud borne on a veering wind. The rough bark of the bole of an oak appears as a vast valley system through which busy insects hasten their caravans.

So one touch of sudden unexplained contentment makes the whole jumble of human calculations, misgivings, possibilities, merely the overwrought and impertinent frame for "Summer Afternoon."

—The Christian Science Monitor

## Wire Grass: A Botanical Mystery

(From "Natural Gardens of North Carolina," University of North Carolina Press)

To local folk in the sandhill country it is a familiar observation to note how fire stimulates the production of the slender fruiting stalks of the wire-grass. Where a road has passively functioned as a fire guard, one may ride along for miles in the fall of the year and see the grass fruit-

ing on one side and not on the other, in relation to the presence or absence of preceding fire.

Before leaving the discussion of wire-grass, mention must be made of a mystery concerning it. Once it is plowed up, as it has been over thousands of acres, it will not return when the field is abandoned. Cotton patches and peach orchards abandoned over ten to twenty years ago show no trace of it coming back; yet it will be thick in the adjoining woodland right up to the old field edge.

Here is a botanical "believe it or not" which needs investigation. Its place is taken by a thin stand of depauperate weeds, not the least important of which is the barefoot boy's enemy, the sand-bur.

"Why, That Crazy Thing Is A Hybrid!"



## LOOKING AHEAD

"For it is inconceivable, to cite a few examples, that a country which can spend what we spend on luxuries should tolerate much longer the shameful neglect and starvation of public education. It is inconceivable that this country will put up with inadequate medical care, with blighted areas in its big cities, with the pollution of air and of water, with inadequate airports and failing railroads. The public facilities of this country are not keeping up with the growth of the population, the congestion in the cities, and the rising standard of private life. It is as sure as anything of this sort can be that in the decade of the sixties there will be a great modernization and expansion of public facilities."

—WALTER LIPPMANN

## Grains of Sand

**Definition**  
A visitor to the office informs us that the definition of "clear conscience" is "poor memory."

**How It's Done**  
We've sometimes heard parents wondering how school children are assigned to classes—that is, when there are two or more classes in each grade. (It happens that this year there are three classes in each of the grades of the elementary school.)

So we asked about it and got this reply:  
The complete roll of each grade, in an alphabetical form, is numbered: one, two, three; one two three; and so on from the top down. Then one teacher takes all the "ones," another takes all the "twos" and a third takes all the "threes."

So that's why Johnny happens to be in the class he is in. Neither pupil nor parents have anything to say about it.

**Miracle**  
We know a man who swears he has found somebody who will bring him a full, measured cord of firewood.

Anyone who has, over the years, become experienced in the negotiations of wood-sellers—a breed that was immortalized about 25 years ago by the late Struthers Burt of Southern Pines in his essay, "The Woodchoppers of Nass"—will know how much this business of a full cord means.

Long ago, this ancient and honorable unit of measurement was abandoned by most wood-sellers. They deal in an amorphous unit known as the "load." A load depends on how big the truck is, how much the seller feels he should put on the truck, how much he feels he can get for what's on the truck and other factors. We have also seen a "load" of wood delivered that shrank about one-third in size right before our eyes when it was unloaded because it had been piled on top of debris in the bottom of the truck.

Imagine, then, the joy and wonder of our friend when a man says to him, "I will deliver you a full measured cord."

This fortunate gentleman has set up stakes between which his measured cord will be piled and a beautiful sight it will be to see the space between them filled.

Of course, he hasn't got the wood yet (he says the folks who will bring it are working in tobacco now), but he has the utmost confidence the deal will go through.

Viewing this man's happiness, only a most vicious cynic would spoil the spell by recalling that many ghostly loads, if not cords, of wood have figured in dealings hereabouts.

Negotiations about wood can go on for weeks, without any wood actually being delivered. Mr. Burt's essay related a number of such frustrations: the wood that was paid for but not delivered and what's more couldn't be delivered until the seller could repair his truck and unless he was lent the money to do that (by the wood purchaser, of course) there would be no telling WHEN the wood would appear.

The big problem, in wood deals, is to come out even—with the wood, the loans, the partial deliveries, partial payments and so forth all accounted for. It's a fanciful, surrealistic world, this wood business. There are ghosts of wood, ghosts of money, ghosts of thousands of words of talk, everywhere.

Maybe our friend really will get that measured cord. But already those neatly spaced stakes in his back yard, ready to receive the coming miracle, are looking somewhat improbable and not a little ghostly, come to think about it.

## The PILOT

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