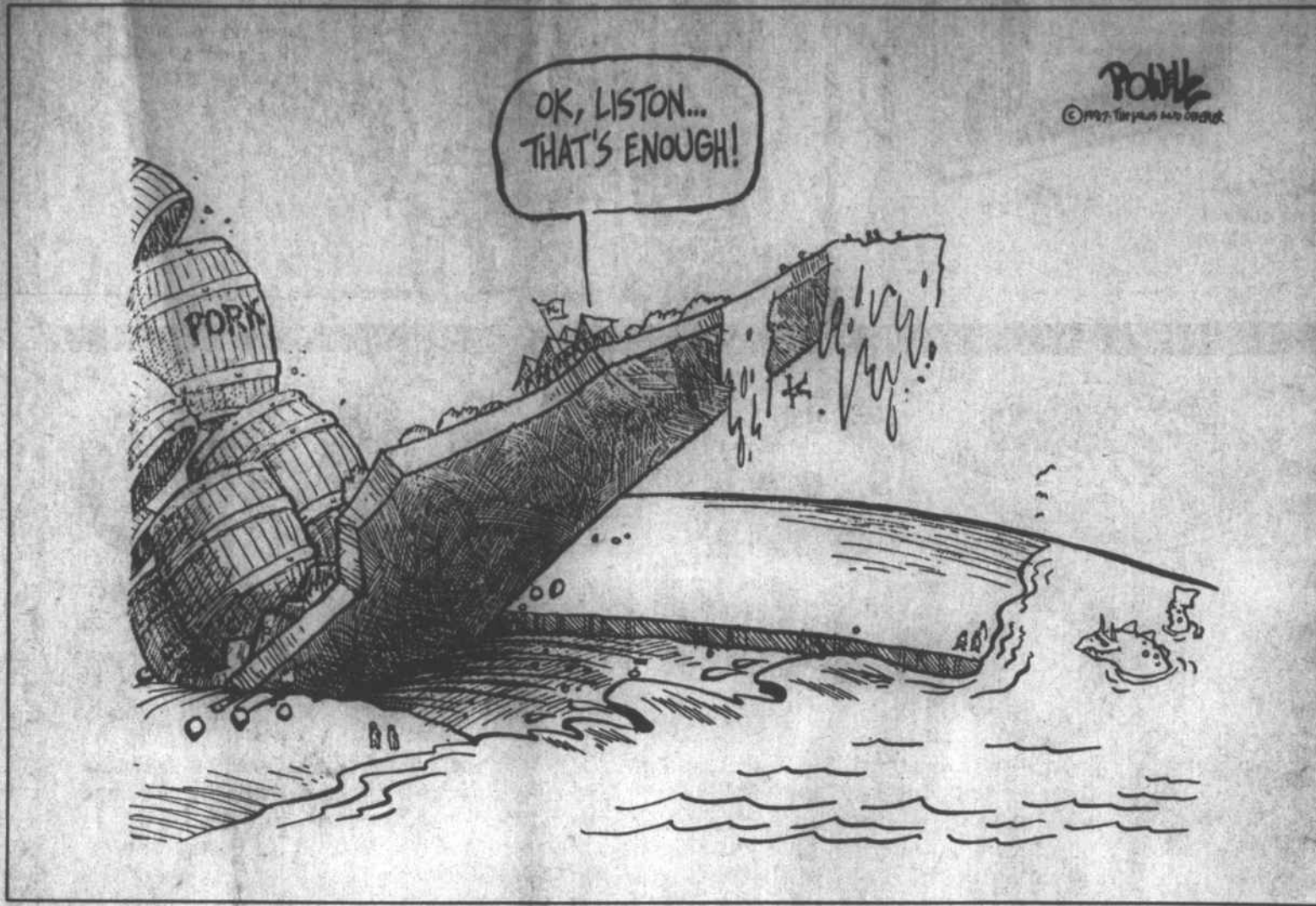


Commentary

THE NEWS RECORD



Editorial

No More Hind Teat For WNC

Madison County's favorite son, Liston B. Ramsey, has been drawing a little criticism lately. It seems that some folks think the Speaker of North Carolina's House of Representatives has been sending too many slices of the state's financial pie back home.

Ramsey has been charged with dipping into the General Assembly's pork barrels, grabbing millions of dollars and dispersing them among the counties of Western North Carolina.

Even our compatriots at The News and Observer in Raleigh, with whom we almost always see eye-to-eye, say that Liston has sent too many dollars "to the loyal voters of his district." (See cartoon)

Sorry, guys. We don't see it that way.

Sure, Ramsey may have used his clout to spoon some extra servings of "pork" for Western North Carolina. But mountain counties have historically been the red-headed stepchild of the state. The needs of WNC's poorer, less-populated counties have for far too long been ignored by legislators from the highly populated counties of central and eastern North Carolina.

For decades, Western North Carolina went without adequate highways, without state-funded institutions of higher learning, without well-funded community colleges, without modern water and sewer facilities. It has only been through the efforts of Ramsey and other mountain legislators that the highways connecting WNC to the rest of the state have been built, that the University of North Carolina at Asheville has

become a respected institution, that thousands of mountain folks have been able to enroll in technical colleges, that indoor plumbing and hot-and-cold running water have become the rule rather than the exception.

Among the pork barrel items that Ramsey has helped fund during the 1987-89 biennium are funds for water and sewer projects in Marshall, for a domestic violence program in Madison County and for an even bigger and better Madison campus of Asheville-Buncombe Technical College than originally planned.

Also receiving pork barrel funds in WNC were Southwestern Technical College in Sylva, the Western North Carolina Agricultural Center in Arden, the Farmers' Market in Asheville and a high-technology center at Haywood Technical College. The city of Asheville's Park Place project, a art and culture center under construction in the downtown district, got a \$3 million slab of pork.

Western North Carolina may well have grabbed more than its share from the state's pork barrels on this go around. Although Ramsey may have served up a healthy portion of pork for WNC from the deep barrels in Raleigh, that does not make up for years and years of suckling at the hind teat. We've still got some catching up to do.

Someday, the state's legislators may come up with a formula through which they will equitably distribute pork barrel funds. But until that day comes, Western North Carolina residents should hope and pray that Ramsey keeps winning reelection and keeps being named House speaker. It's about time that some of those barrels started rolling this way.

Get To Know French Broad River

For hundreds of years, the French Broad River has had a major impact on the lives of the people of Madison, Buncombe, Henderson and Transylvania counties.

The river provided food and water to the pioneers who settled alongside her banks. The French Broad also provided a somewhat easier route of transportation through the mountains, carving a passageway through rugged territory for early Western North Carolinians. The river has been used as to generate electricity, providing power for homes across WNC.

In recent times, the French Broad has become well-known for its recreational opportunities, from white-water rafting and lazy canoe trips to fishing. And, unfortunately, the river

has also become somewhat of a dumping ground for modern man, who litters its banks with debris and sends sewage into its waters.

Residents living in the four counties through which the French Broad flows will have a chance this week to pay tribute to this river which has had such a profound influence—whether they realize it or not—on their lives. Saturday marks the opening day of the 11th Annual French Broad River Week, nine days of festivities and events designed around the theme of "Celebrate The French Broad."

There are numerous events on tap for the week—everything from white-water trips and canoe rides to music and dance. Take a ride on a steam locomotive, or travel in a horse-drawn cart. Watch as expert kayakers and rafters show their stuff. Participate in cleanup campaigns to rid the banks of the river of garbage. Tour facilities on the French Broad which generate the electricity that enables you to read this newspaper late at night.

So many special events are scheduled that we can't begin to list them all here. The extravaganza is sponsored by the Land-of-Sky Regional Council and the French Broad River Foundation, and those organizations—as well as the numerous cosponsors—are to be commended for their efforts.

We encourage residents in the four counties of the French Broad River Basin to take advantage of some of these special events, displays, entertainment opportunities, athletic events and other festivities. After all, it's your river, too.

The French Broad River is a special lady. Take some time during the coming week to get to know her a little better.

Folkways And Folkspeech

It's So Dry

Mountaineers Searching For Nature's Signs Of Rain On The Way

By ROGERS WHITENER
I can't speak for flatland conditions, but in the mountains it's so dry that ants have taken to the shade, moles have given up tunneling and robins are seeking chiropractic manipulations for aching backs incurred in attempting to pull red worms from sunbaked lawns.

It's so dry that oldtimers are scouting around for traditional signs of rain.

A multitude can be found.

Start, for instance, with the appearance of the heavens, the nature of clouds, sunsets and the direction of winds.

A traditional bit of forecasting is seen in the following quatrain, widely quoted in days gone by.

"Evening red and morning gray
Help the traveler on his way
Evening gray and morning red
Bring down rain upon his head."

The appearance of the sunset may also foretell rain—or the lack of it. If the sunset is red, fair weather is in order; if yellow, then rain may be expected. Clouds which obscure the sunset are also a sign of rain.

The moon is a faithful weather prophet in the eyes of the folk. A circle around the moon is a sign of rain (sometimes snow), and the number of stars around the moon indicates the number of days before rain will fall. The moon in a tipped position may mean that a deluge is on the way.

Weather signs associated with the sun usually point to fair weather, but there is at least one exception. When the devil is beating his wife (light rain while the sun is shining), there will be a good rain the following day.

Wind from the north is also a good sign of rain, but there's a catch—it must blow for at least 24 hours.

Many signs of rain involve the

behavior of birds and animals, both wild and domestic. When crows, owls, swallows, cardinals and jaybirds become overly agitated and noisy, rain is on the way. When roosters begin to crow at night, when ducks flap their wings excessively, when chickens gather to preen their feathers on high ground, rain is in the air.

When cows attempt to scratch their ears and when they refuse to drink water in dry weather a heavy rain can be expected. A like result can be anticipated when dogs get indigestion from eating too much grass. The continued sneezing of a cat also indicates rain.

The appearance of an unusual number of field mice in the open may denote rain, and rabbits cavorting along dusty roads are a sure indicator of the same.

The behavior of insects can also be studied to predict the weather. When fleas bite especially hard, when gnats are difficult to brush away, when flies are most bothersome to the housewife, rain is imminent.

If all the signs are wrong and only dry weather seems in prospect, then it is up to the individual who desires rain to do something about it.

Folk tradition holds that if only a shower is desired, the thing to do is kill a toad frog and let it dry in the sun. But if a body is after major relief, there is only one answer: kill a black snake and hang him on the barn door with his belly to the sun. Then head for shelter, for this is guaranteed procedure to produce a gully-washer!

Readers are invited to send folk materials to FOLKWAYS AND FOLKSPEECH, Department of English, Appalachian State University, Boone, N.C. 28608.

The Way We Were

A Look Back Through The Pages Of The News Record

Seventy-eight years ago this month, The Madison County Record reported the resignation of the mayor of Weaverville, a Mr. Lotspeich. He was replaced by Major Greenlee.

An Alexander man was charged with taking indecent liberties with his 21-year old daughter.

N.W. Anderson of Paint Fork sold 10 steers to John O'Donnell of Asheville for \$32.

Editor J.R. Swann moonlighted as an oil inspector. He also did job printing and sold brick to supplement his income.

Railroad magnate Edward H. Harriman died in New York at the age of 62.

A Page 3 story on Sept. 19, 1900, detailed Commodore Perry's exploration of the North Pole.

President Howard Taft was on a tour of Midwestern states. He visited Minneapolis and attended a baseball game at Wrigley Field in Chicago.

Sixty-seven years ago today, The News Record reported the murder confession of a Runion man accused of killing his wife. Frank Henderson told Buncombe County authorities he choked his wife on Aug. 24, 1920 following an argument. Mrs. Henderson had five children, the oldest of which was 5 years old.

Advertisements and testimonials proclaimed the benefits of Lydia Pinkham Vegetable Compound, Doan's Kidney Pills, Wintersmith's Chili Tonic, Pe-Ru-Na tablets, Stella-Vitae Tonic, Gold Medal Bacterem Oil, Manine treatment for morphine

addiction and Bayer Aspirin. The Marshall Pharmacy installed a telephone and urged customers to phone orders in. Apparently telephone service had just arrived in Marshall. The pharmacy's telephone number was 6.

Dr. C.N. Sprinkle and his wife were injured in an automobile accident on Reems Creek. Their car was hit by a truck at a road crossing.

Plans and prizes for the annual Madison County Fair were announced.

An outbreak of typhoid fever was reported in Marshall. Tennessee legislators voted against women's suffrage.

Pope Benedict became the first pontiff to pose for a motion picture camera.

Twenty-eight years ago today, The News-Record reported that 12-year old Herbert Clyde Peek Jr. was seriously injured in a collision in Mars Hill on N.C. 213. Three teenagers and the boy's father were injured in the wreck.

Marshall and Edneyville played to a 0-0 tie in the opening game of the football season.

The Rev. Erskine Piemmons was named as pastor of the Weaverville Baptist Church.

The Madison County Babe Ruth All-Stars swept a three-game series from North Buncombe.

Work on the Marshall by-pass was nearing completion.

The News Record Invites Comment

The News Record invites its readers to share their views on subjects of public interest.

Letters, which are sub-

ject to editing, should be addressed to The Editor and mailed to The News Record at Post Office Box 369, Marshall, N.C. 28753.

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