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Remember: Babies Are Real People

By CYNTHIA LOWRY
AP Newsfeatures Writer

With a sharp eye on "Baby Week," it might be a good idea to suggest that infants are future people and, therefore, have certain rights.

Parents, grandparents and admiring friends have a tendency to take advantage of these helpless citizens. They evolve fantastic names for them, which the children subsequently hate but can't do anything about. Oh, sure they can go to court, or they can use nicknames. Frequently parents call children by nicknames which dog said infants through to senility.

They take pictures of children in poses which embarrass them all through life, particularly if the infant grows up to be famous or notorious.

And they talk baby-talk to them.

In the event I were a member of the Committee on Babies' Rights, an organization I'm now toying with establishing, I would have a mandatory rule that babies be given a temporary name. At voting age, the individual would be given a chance to take a long look at his own name and some others he's heard and decide how he could be tagged for the rest of his life.

I would impose harsh punishment on parents who immediately nickname their first man-child "Butch." It really seems years since I've seen a proud parent of a boy who wasn't fondly called "Butch."

Little girls should be equally well protected from parents who give them boys' names. I know a nice little girl named Christopher and boy, is she going to be sick and tired of that one by the time she's of dating age.

I would also make rules against family names, except maybe an occasional "Junior" if no one called him by that alone. In my own family, which runs to fancy names for the girls, we have a grandmother, daughter and grandchild all named "Priscilla." As far back as I can remember there's been "Big Pris," "Little Pris," and when the baby comes along it was impossible to call her "Little Pris," so they had to evolve a nickname. And that has turned out to be "Kitsy." We also have a series of "Johns" which has resulted in a six-foot-two young man who drives a golf ball thousands of yards and has been out of college for years—and still is called "Little John."

My committee would sternly suppress pictures of nude children, on or off bear rugs. It may seem cute at the time to pose Willie in the altogether, maybe carrying a pail of sand. But it will turn him crimson with embarrassment when his best girl spots it in the album when he's an impressive 18. And he'll turn blue with sheer fury when it turns up in a national magazine the year he's planning to run for president. The committee would insist that baby pictures depict babies garbed for play or sleep and looking dignified.

Baby-talk, of course, would be outlawed. I suppose it really doesn't do much more than make children bored, but it certainly makes idiots of their adorers. Children should grow up admiring their elders, because they will be elders themselves some day. The committee would preserve baby-talk for lap-dogs and kittens who don't understand it, either.

In the interests of children's welfare, provisions undoubtedly should be made to protect those adults who can take children or leave them alone. That will prevent the formation of an Anti-Children's Committee in this highly organized world.

As things stand, any adult who isn't fanatically fond of children stands a good chance of being regarded as an inhuman fiend.

The Committee on Babies' Rights would insist that fathers with candid cameras and a wallet full of snapshots keep said wallets in their hip pockets except when it is necessary to extract money therefrom. Only grandparents enjoy exclaiming over pictures of other people's babies.

Mothers of young children would be required to limit their visits to non-baby houses to 30 minutes. This will make for better human relations the world over.

When two parents of young children are in the company of nonblessed adults, the conversation should be permitted to touch on non-baby subjects once or twice in the course of the session, and diaper-conversation during bridge sessions should be limited to the usual post-mortem period between hands.

Anyone want to volunteer for Committee service?

Four Young Haywood Citizens

Carolyn Covington, 16 months, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. W. H. Covington, Clyde, Route 2.

Robert Lee Underwood, III, 2½ years, son of Mr. and Mrs. Robert Lee Underwood, Jr., Waynesville.

James Underwood, 14 months, son of Mr. and Mrs. James E. Underwood, Sr., Waynesville.

John Thomas Morrow, 18 months, son of Mr. and Mrs. Carol Morrow, Waynesville, Route 2.

These pictures are the 36th in a series of pictures being published by The Mountaineer, and all photographs are by Ingram's Studio.

County Farmer Shows How To Get Most From Limited Land

Intensive use of available cropland and pasture has made dairying a profitable enterprise on many small farms in western North Carolina, says T. K. Jones, farm management analyst at State College.

According to Jones, the F. L. Leopard family of Ratcliffe Cove community, Haywood County, provides a good example of what can be accomplished with limited land resources.

Mr. Leopard was operating a dairy with seven cows—all that his farm would support when he agreed in 1936 to begin a demonstration on the value of high analysis phosphate fertilizers in an improved farming system. The Tennessee Valley Authority furnished the fertilizer materials while the Agricultural Extension Service provided information on the use of approved practices.

Since that time, all the cropland and pasture have been treated with both lime and phosphate, with the result that the grazing season has been lengthened and the grazing capacity of the pasture land has more than doubled. In addition, alfalfa is grown to provide the bulk of the hay needed.

Leopard's herd increased to 16 cows by this winter. Production per cow has doubled, partly as a result of improved quality roughage and partly because of better quality cows. The animals are now bred artificially and further improvements are expected.

The family has been making home improvements at the same time. A four-room frame house has been replaced with a modern eight-room brick structure, complete with bath, refrigerator, and other conveniences. An acre of longleaf pines planted in 1934 provides a pleasing background for the home. These pines, incidentally, were the first ones planted in the county.

The Leopards are active members of the Ratcliffe Cove Baptist Church. Two daughters now in high school are leaders in 4-H Club activities. Leopard attends farm meetings regularly and takes an active part in community affairs.

Placque To Mark Site Of Edison Discovery

CHEYENNE, WYO. (U.P.)—A Wyoming plaque soon will mark the spot where Thomas Edison, on a fishing trip, got the idea for filament in the incandescent lamp.

Edison, the story goes, was camping at Battle Lake when he decided to try the fiber of his bamboo fishing pole as a filament. He found it was the answer to his problem when he returned to his laboratory in the east.

The Wyoming historical landmark commission decided to place the plaque on a boulder on the road between Encampment and Savery ynear the Continental Divide.

Today's automobiles have between 24 and 30 light bulbs.

Man Who Came To Sleep Stays 60 Years in Home

BOSTON (UP)—When 85-year-old Oliver C. Elliott went to the Boston Industrial Home he was broke, hungry and in need of a bed.

Authorities there took him in and let him chop a pile of wood for his first night's rest.

That was in 1889. He's still there.

Elliott worked up to be superintendent in 1903 and is now celebrating his 60th year in the home.

Bulletin About Yards Published

What Makes Your Yard Beautiful? That is the question asked by John Harris, horticultural specialist at State College, in a new bulletin just released by the Extension Service.

The new publication was printed in four colors to better picture the necessary improvements toward home beautification. To illustrate the content of the four-page bulletin, Mr. Harris has included the picture of an old farm place with unpainted buildings and badly eroded and unkept yards. With about six or eight changes, as emphasized by the author, the same farmstead is completely renovated. This is shown in another four-color picture.

Some of the steps in home beautification as listed in the bulletin are: Paint and underpin the dwelling house. Plant a few shrubs around the foundation. Remove junk from the yard. Use as few drives and walks as possible and place them only where they will be used. Grade and smooth yard, haul in topsoil if necessary, and seed to recommended grass. Plant trees to furnish shade and background.

These are only a few of the recommendations offered in the bulletin. If you would like to receive a copy, see your county agent or write to the Agricultural Editor at State College. Ask for Extension Circular No. 335, "What Makes Your Yard Beautiful?"

4-H Clubs Work To Cut Farm Accident Toll

More than 1½ million farm residents took enforced vacations last year due to accidents. In short, one out of every 17 farm people suffered a disabling accident.

Motor vehicle accidents now head the list of causes of fatalities to rural people, 7,300 of whom were killed due to collisions, blowouts and other highway mishaps in 1948.

The annual economic toll due to all types of farm accidents is now nearly one billion dollars!

In an all-out attempt to reduce these staggering figures, 4-H Club members throughout the nation are already engaged in the 1949 National 4-H Farm Safety program, reports Guy L. Noble, director, National Committee on Boys and Girls Club Work.

Daily safety practice is stressed in farm buildings and yards, in use of farm machinery, handling livestock and in driving or walking on highways. Through county extension agents and local 4-H Club leaders, rural boys and girls are encouraged to check and remove conditions likely to cause accidents and fires, and promote safety practices in farm life. They are also taught to cooperate in community safety activities. The entire program is under the direction of the Cooperative Extension Service.

As added incentives to produce good safety records, General Motors is again donating awards. Five sterling silver medals of honor are presented members in each county for best safety achievements. The state winner is given an all-expense trip to the National 4-H Club Congress, and also an opportunity to be selected for national honors and one of the eight $300 scholarships. The county reporting the most outstanding safety program in each state receives an engraved plaque of merit.

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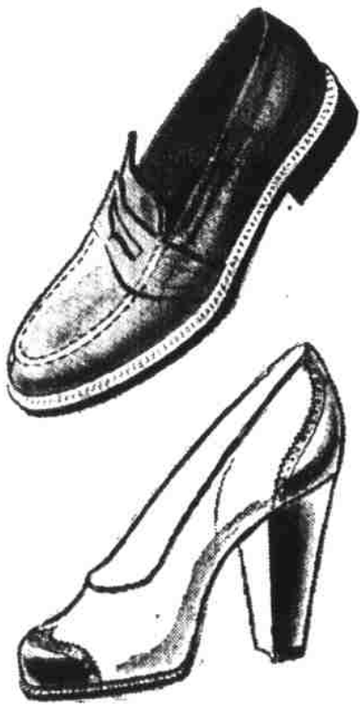

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