

The News - Journal



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Opinion and commentary

by Paul Dickson

Very few of us will have occasion to hear a patriotic speech next Sunday for the 195th birthday of our country, but it might be interesting to stop for a minute and think about our country and the first 195 years. Will there be a 200th birthday? How about a 400th? Do you reckon the United States will survive six or seven hundred years as did the Roman Empire, after a fashion?

There are many of us who can see no hope for long survival of our civilization - the communists are going to ruin us, the labor unions are going to ruin us, inflation will get us, we are going to destroy our environment and have no place to live, one of the world's nations is going to blow up the works with atomic bombs, the younger generation is going to hell and taking the rest of us along, we are going to turn the country over to minority groups and they are going to ruin it, and on and on and on.

Whichever one of these do you pick as the sure and certain road to our ruin? I have a couple that I can get started on easy, as you recognize, but do you really believe these, or any of them are going to destroy our country? I talk of dangers a lot, but down deep I have to believe we have a lot of strength that we haven't begun to call on yet for our survival, and that we are going to be here a long time. Uncle Sam isn't always the most handsome fellow in the world, but he is one of the toughest, and when the chips are down, we, you and me, roll up our sleeves and put first things first.

Since Tom Paine and others two centuries ago wrote of times that "try men's souls" we have had scoundrels among us who would bankrupt the nation if they were not stopped; we have had robber barons, crooked politicians, a civil war, divisions caused by national origin, race, religion, custom, climate and about everything conceivable over which men could disagree, and we have disagreed over every one of them. The point is, we are still here, and we are still disagreeing, violently in many cases.

I closed last week with a promise to write of sweetness and light and hope, and with a comment that adversity breeds strength. Isn't this country living proof of that? And doesn't every battle that we fight and resolve among ourselves make our nation and our civilization stronger and better prepared for the next battle?

I find considerable comfort in the fact that great private institutions in the country such as The New York Times can challenge the highest levels of our government on matters of principle and national welfare and receive equal treatment with the government before our highest courts.

We may feel from time to time that the executive branch of our government is going to run away with things and ruin the country, and then our gloriously free legislative branch raises its always raucous and frequently unattractive head and starts to view things with alarm.

The effects of our legislative, judicial and executive branches on the life of our country seems in some ways like trying to drive three horses to one vehicle. They never seem to be pulling together. Each seems to go out on its own for a while and then it gets back in line and another one is out pulling by itself. And yet together they manage to keep the vehicle moving easily, with strength to spare.

The independence, and the interdependence of the three branches of our government make it strong enough to be here a long time. The jealous way the court, the executive and the congress each guard their prerogatives is great protection for us all. We do seem to have a way of getting the special interests pushed aside when the national interest gets involved.

And so, as we celebrate the 195th birthday of the good old USA, let's make an effort not to make it our own individual, last day. We could take a minute, too, to try to figure where in the destiny of our country the one 200 millionth that we are fits in. For Uncle Sam is the sum of us all, really, and each of us makes him a little stronger or a little weaker.

Each of us must decide which.

Browsing in the files

of The News-Journal

25 years ago

Thursday, July 4, 1946

The board of commissioners have made an appropriation for forest fire control in the county for the coming year.

Archie Stevens lost a tobacco barn Tuesday night by fire.

Seaman 2C James Alexander has recently been separated from the navy and arrived home Tuesday, just after arriving from Kodiak, Alaska where he had been stationed since February.

The United States district engineer in Wilmington has advised the board of commissioners of Hoke County that a public hearing will be held in Fayetteville at a date to be announced within the next 90 days with a view of determining the need for flood control measures in the Cape Fear watershed.

In recorder's court Tuesday morning eight defendants faced Judge Henry McDiarmid.

Seventeen Hoke County 4-H Club boys attended 4-H Camp at Camp Millstone during the week.

15 years ago

Thursday June 28, 1956

Hoke County Agricultural workers have returned from an area meeting where they were armed with details on the Administration of the "Acreage Reserve" phase of the Soil Bank Act.

Thomas B. Upchurch, Jr. of Raeford, president and general manager of T.B. Upchurch, Inc. and president of the North Carolina Cotton Growers Cooperative, is the new president of the N.C. State College Alumni Association.

'What we want from you, Mr. President, is the exact time we'll be out of this mess'



By LAURIE TELFAIR

Family Takes Up Jogging For Fun

My family has joined the legion of joggers -- those hearty souls who trot around the country side in the name of good health and physical fitness.

We have been running for about a week now and the muscles still ache. I thought the pain would go away eventually but have decided that, instead, I must learn to live with it, or quit jogging.

Jogging is certainly not new. It is popular, I understand, with a number of residents around here. But up to now, I have managed to resist the urge to join the great sweating group.

It all started, as many things do, with an innocent statement. I have a puppy that I plan to show in dog shows and, since it is distracting for the human at the end of the leash to be having a coronary while the judge is trying to watch the dog, I decided that I would have to get in good enough condition to run the animal around the ring without dying. Show dogs, like race horses and other athletes, should be in good muscular condition also, so it seemed like the best idea for us both if we ran up and down the field behind the house a few times each day.

But it didn't end there. Since German Shepherds sometimes are trotted in the ring for nearly an hour at a time, I said I ought to learn to run a mile without collapsing. I had momentarily forgotten that I was married to a latent physical fitness nut. He firmly believes in the

Puppy Creek Philosopher

Dear editor:

I had always thought that "Classified" was something you paid for in a newspaper's Want - Ad section and wanted people to read, but like everybody else in the country who has seen a newspaper or watched television recently I've learned that Classified means something the Pentagon considers secret and doesn't want anybody else to read.

However in the uproar over the publication of the Vietnam classified documents from 47 volumes (some people wonder what the Pentagon needs with 50 or 60 billion dollars a year but they don't understand the details; have you ever figured up how many rubber stamps it takes to stamp 15 sets of 47 volumes containing 7,000 pages with the words Top Secret - Classified?) there's one point it looks like everybody is missing.

The point is, how come the Pentagon is the only outfit with the right to stamp something Classified and thereby make it against the law for outsiders to see it?

Personally I'd like to see this right extended, even if a man has to buy his own rubber stamp. Probably could get one at a government surplus sale.

For example, take a man's credit rating. If anything ought to be classified, that should. When a mail order house wants you to buy something on credit and you'd like to too but it first insists on seeing your credit rating, you ought to have the right to say you're sorry but that information is classified but go ahead and fill the order.

If there was some way I could stamp my bank balance Classified and keep some bookkeeper or computer from looking at it, I wouldn't care how high taxes got or how far inflation went.

Boxed in with a hard question about where you were Saturday night? Mark it Classified and restore peace in the family. The Pentagon is on to a good thing and I'm in favor of passing it around.

Yours faithfully,
J.A.

virtue and character building power of physical exercise to the point of exhaustion -- "If it doesn't hurt, it isn't good for you." -- but he is lazy also and frequently finds other things to do than to exhaust himself on the handball court, or tennis court or what have you. But then he feels guilty.

Now it has saddened him for years that my idea of a lot of exercise is to walk up two flights of stairs. So, he immediately seized my ambitious statement and offered a bribe. If I learn to run a mile within nine minutes -- a reasonable time -- he will pay half my way to the national German Shepherd dog show this fall in Detroit. The Army is starting a new program at Ft. Bragg to encourage more people to run. Its called "Run For Your Life." My program is called "Run For Detroit."

So I began. His guilt feelings got the better of him, and my husband joined me at the track. The kids come along because they think its fun to watch Mother turn red and gasp. Now the dogs are in on the act because the puppy has to be exercised and if the whole blasted family is out there running their heads off, I'm not going to let the older dog stay home in the air conditioning. So far the cats have escaped, but they don't behave well on a leash.

The quarter-mile track near our house is fairly crowded anyway, as running is a popular form of exercise. Lately, since we've added the dogs to the act, the number of spectators has increased. It took a few days after I started running with the dogs for my husband to admit he was part of the group. We still go in separate cars so he can disavow any connection with the nutty woman who runs with two German Shepherds.

So far, the program is working out well. It doesn't take very long to run a mile -- even though I can't make it through an entire mile at a run yet. The exercise is beneficial to all and, after a week, the pain is not too bad. I keep hoping to see some results in my waistline, but at any rate, the dogs are looking fit.

So as much as I hate to admit it, there is virtue in physical exercise. Maybe that is one of the reasons that keeps people jogging along.

SENATOR SAM ERVIN SAYS

WASHINGTON - The controversy stirred by the publication of the classified Vietnam war study which discloses certain information about U.S. involvement in Southeast Asia raises momentous questions in respect to freedom of speech and national security. At that moment, the courts must say whether the newspapers can print the so-called "McNamara Archives," and it is not the purpose of this commentary to attempt to decide these cases.

It does seem to me, however, that it has now become the duty of Congress to review the functioning of our intricate system of laws, rules, regulations, orders, and procedures governing the classification and protection of information relating to the national security. For the first time, we are faced with the necessity of determining whether the secrecy system we have established during this century is necessary, appropriate, and consistent with our need to protect the security of this country, and with the right of the people to know pertinent information about their government.

On June 24, I cosponsored a bill introduced by Senator Roth of Delaware to establish a National Commission on

People & Issues

CLIFF BLUE ...

JUST A YEAR -- Think of it: In less than a year North Carolina Democrats and Republicans will have selected their candidates for governor, and their delegates to the national political convention!

LEO JENKINS -- Many people have thought all along that Dr. Leo Jenkins of East Carolina University was not really serious about running for office -- especially in 1972. Leo Jenkins may, or may not run, but the East Carolina educator has not been taking the talk about his political future lightly.

One thing Leo has in favor: When people discuss the political possibilities surrounding the East Carolina educator, they don't refer to him as "Dr." Jenkins -- it's "Leo" which indicates the common feeling they have toward him. When we say "common" we meant it in the manner of common touch, not in any way connoting inferiority.

In view of the upgrading of the lieutenant governor's position -- making it a full-time job with a good salary, some say that Leo may run for lieutenant governor instead of governor in 1972 and wait until 1976 to try for the number one position.

Anyway, whoever is nominated and elected lieutenant governor in 1972 will likely be aspiring for the governor's mansion come 1976.

COMMONER -- Speaking of the word "common" the title given one of the great men of this nation was just that of the "Great Commoner" -- William Jennings Bryan. Abraham Lincoln was sometimes called the "Commoner" because he, like Bryan, represented and spoke the language of the common people. Writing of Lincoln in the book, "Our Presidents", James Morgan has this to say about "Honest Abe": "One night he dreamed that he was in a crowd, when someone recognized him as the President, and exclaimed in surprise, 'He is a very common - looking man.' Whereupon he answered, 'Frind, the Lord prefers common - looking people. That is the reason he makes so many of Them!'"

Bryan, by the way, for 22 years beginning in 1901 published a weekly publication in Lincoln, Nebraska which he named "The Commoner."

LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR -- With the lieutenant governor's office being boosted into a full-time \$30,000 per

year position -- a larger salary than the governor received only a few years ago we feel that Senator Frank Patterson's move to take the power of Senate committee appointments away from the position and give the authority to the president pro-tempore of the senate is worthy of serious consideration. If this is done the president pro-tempore of the Senate will be of almost equal importance with the Speaker of the House. The major difference would be that the House Speaker not only appoints the committees but also presides over the House which the president pro-tempore would not do under Patterson's plan. Patterson's proposal would make the lieutenant governor about the same in state government that the vice president is in the federal government.

JOHN BURNEY -- It is beginning to look as if "Big John" Burney, senator from New Hanover will have been the potent man as well as "Big John" in the State Senate when the curtains of the session are pulled.

PENTAGON PAPERS -- We do not believe that the New York Times, the Washington Post or the Knight newspapers would deliberately publish a story which the publishers felt would in any way that would do injury to the security of the United States. Gene Smith, Havelock Progress editor put the matter pretty succinctly last week when he said: "Still, the government is trying to cloak the reports on Vietnam as well as other reports under a veil of secrecy by using the excuse of 'national security'. If the government does not want the truth to be known, thank God for people like the Times and Post editors who still feel the public deserves to know what its government is doing. Why should anyone fear the truth, except those who are damaged by it."

PRESIDENTIAL PRIMARY -- We understand that former governor and now Lieut. Governor Lester Maddox of Georgia may enter the presidential primary in North Carolina next spring. Maddox who is very popular in Georgia would be expected to draw considerable support in North Carolina from the George Wallace supporters. Wallace pulled more votes in North Carolina than did Hubert Humphrey, although Nixon was top man in the race in 1968.

Just One Thing After Another

By Carl Goerch

It has always peeved me a little when people spell O. Henry's name with an apostrophe and without the period. This little clipping was handed me the other day by a friend bringing back my pet peeve to me.

Irish Accent

Asheville - April 2 - O. Henry was not an Irishman but Asheville's city fathers made him one today.

One thoroughfare here is named for the famous short story writer, but newly-erected street signs spell his name O'Henry (with an apostrophe) instead of O. Henry (with a period)!

Incidentally, O. Henry - William Sidney Porter - is buried in Riverside Cemetery here.

The other night I read this anecdote about the well-known actor of yesteryears, De Wolf Hopper.

Hopper, so the story says, once protested to Frank Case, manager of the Hotel Algonquin in New York that nowhere in New York could he find his favorite dessert, brown Betty. Case told him he would serve it if there appeared to be a reasonable demand for it.

"You put it on your menu tomorrow night," Hopper proposed, "and I'll see to it personally that the demand develops."

The next night brown Betty appeared on the menu. Hopper, much gratified, made a personal tour of the dining room, stopping at every table. "I am De Wolf Hopper," he would say to the astonished

patrons. "I personally recommend that you sample the brown Betty this evening. It is delicious!"

The actor then returned to his table, devoured a beefsteak and trimmings, and then summoned the waiter. "Now," he said eagerly, "you may bring me a double portion of brown Betty."

The waiter went out and was back in two minutes.

"Very sorry, Mr. Hopper, but it's all gone. Unusual demand for it tonight, sir."

If you get up earlier in the morning Than your neighbor And work harder and scheme more And stick more closely to your job And stay up later Planning how to get ahead While friend neighbor is snoozing, Not only will you leave more When you die than he will But you'll leave it A helluva lot sooner!

We saw a little item in a magazine a few weeks ago that is well worth passing along to you. It told about some kind of an award that has been given to a lady motorist who had driven 117,000 miles without an accident of any kind. Someone asked her to what she attributed her record. Her reply was this: "Whenever I'm out in my car, I try to drive as though everybody had the right of way except myself."

role in this duty to inform and to criticize, and is a fundamental part of the whole system.

What makes the task of Congress and the Nation difficult in today's context is that there is an extraordinary feeling that we have not been told enough about how we got bogged down in a war that up to now we have been unable to win.

All this goes beyond the bounds of a war and the chronicle of events that led us into it. Governmental secrecy is as old as the Republic, and for that matter as old as nations, but the real test is whether the practice serves or harms the country. The purpose of the Commission would be to examine the system of controlled information that has grown up for the most part since 1940 to see if it now comports with national needs, and, if not, how we ought to improve it. If Congress approves the bill to establish this Commission, and I hope it will, it will then be incumbent on the President, the Vice President, and the Speaker of the House, who have the power to appoint the Commissioners, to see that those they choose are uniquely qualified to serve the national interest rather than partisan political concerns.