

The News - Journal

NATIONAL NEWSPAPER
 1918-1921
 1921-1971
 1971

North Carolina
 PRESS
 ASSOCIATION

Published Every Thursday at Raeford, N. C. 28376
 119 W. Elwood Avenue
 Subscription Rates: In Advance
 Per Year - \$5.00 6 Months - \$2.75 3 Months - \$1.50

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Second-Class Postage Paid at Raeford, N. C.

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 11, 1971

Opinion and commentary

by Paul Dickson

The situation in our courts which at best allows for the practice of what has come to be called "plea bargaining," and at worst is nothing but case fixing is deplorable and if allowed to spread and continue must result in great loss of respect for the law as an institution.

"Plea bargaining" must be noticed by any who give even casual attention to accounts of court sessions. It has taken place in every case in which the state has accepted a plea of guilty by a defendant to an offense less serious than that of which he was originally charged. It happens most often in our Hoke and Cumberland courts in cases where the defendant, charged with driving drunk, is allowed to plead guilty to careless and reckless driving.

The presumption in such a situation is, or has been, that the prosecutor (either the solicitor or a member of his staff) has examined the evidence in the case and has decided that it is insufficient to get a conviction on the original charge, and that he will save the court's time by accepting the plea of the lesser charge, which is all he could prove anyway. The alternatives to this presumption being what actually took place are not pretty, as they involve the fix, collusion between the office of the prosecutor and some unscrupulous attorney who is going to get his client out of the original charge and keep his driver's license at any cost.

The mere pointing out that such a possible alternative is very serious, but it must be considered in the light of the great number of cases in which pleas of guilty to reduced charges are allowed. The only other way these could come about, you see, would be for our peace officers, policemen, deputies and State Highway Patrolmen, to be arbitrarily and capriciously arresting Tom, Dick and Harry and charging him with driving drunk and having no evidence to support it. It is our opinion that this is not the answer.

In Cumberland County Superior Court right now the framework of a case fixing apparatus is being charged by the district solicitor, and here in Hoke County last week Judge Joe Dupree and a prosecuting attorney had harsh words over what the judge considered to be irregular handling of a case by the prosecutor.

Next to the family itself, the law is about the most ancient and respected institution of our civilization, and it is certainly the keystone of our society. To allow it to be weakened and watered down is to tamper with the very existence of our way of life. We are taking a dangerous course when we laugh off the fact that someone we know to a moral certainly was driving drunk managed to get out of it.

How long do you suppose our peace officers are going to keep making fools of themselves by charging offenses and having the defendants get out of the courts with a "not pros" or a reduced charge? Where are we, the public, going to be when a large proportion of these officers start looking the other way at offenses and saying to themselves, "What's the use?"

I don't know the quick and easy solution to the situation, but maybe Judge James H. Pou Bailey, Judge Joe Dupree and Solicitor Jack Thompson are beginning to move in the right direction. Let's watch them and see.

Another sad situation which we all wish we could sweep under the rug and forget is that Southern National Bank has discovered what an official referred to as "problems" in the branch in Raeford and that the bank has accepted the resignation of C.D. Bounds, its executive in Raeford and a vice president. Investigation of the "problems" is continuing, according to the official at the bank's home office in Lumberton.

We can't sweep it under the rug, though, and we'll have to make the best of it. It might be well to remember that Bounds leaving the bank doesn't make him guilty of anything, in spite of rumors, and that he is certainly entitled to be considered innocent of anything until proved guilty. That's the American way and the right way. On the other hand, Bounds was elected president of the Chamber of Commerce as a business executive in the community. He should seriously consider, we believe, whether he can effectively serve the Chamber and community as president after terminating his business connection.

By such consideration he might lessen the awkwardness of the situation in which his fellow members of the Chamber board of directors find themselves.

Browsing in the files of The News-Journal

25 years ago

November 14, 1946

H.L. Gatlin, Sr. treasurer of the Raeford Baptist Church, stated yesterday that the special Building Fund drive conducted by the church last Sunday had been highly successful and that over \$4,000 in cash and pledges was contributed last Sunday.

With the following hostesses the high school teen-age boys and girls were entertained at a square dance at the gymnasium last Friday evening: Mesdames R.A. Matheson, R.B. Lewis, K.A. MacDonald, I. Mann, W.T. Gibson, L.M. Upchurch and Dwight Brown.

In its report to the judge the Hoke County Grand Jury this week recommended that the "proper authorities" be instructed to complete the service honor roll which was begun in

front of the armory and that names of all Hoke County persons serving in the armed forces in World War II be included thereon.

Rev. W.L. Maness, pastor of the Raeford Methodist Church, and Roland Covington, church trustee, attended the North Carolina conference of the Methodist Church in Henderson last week.

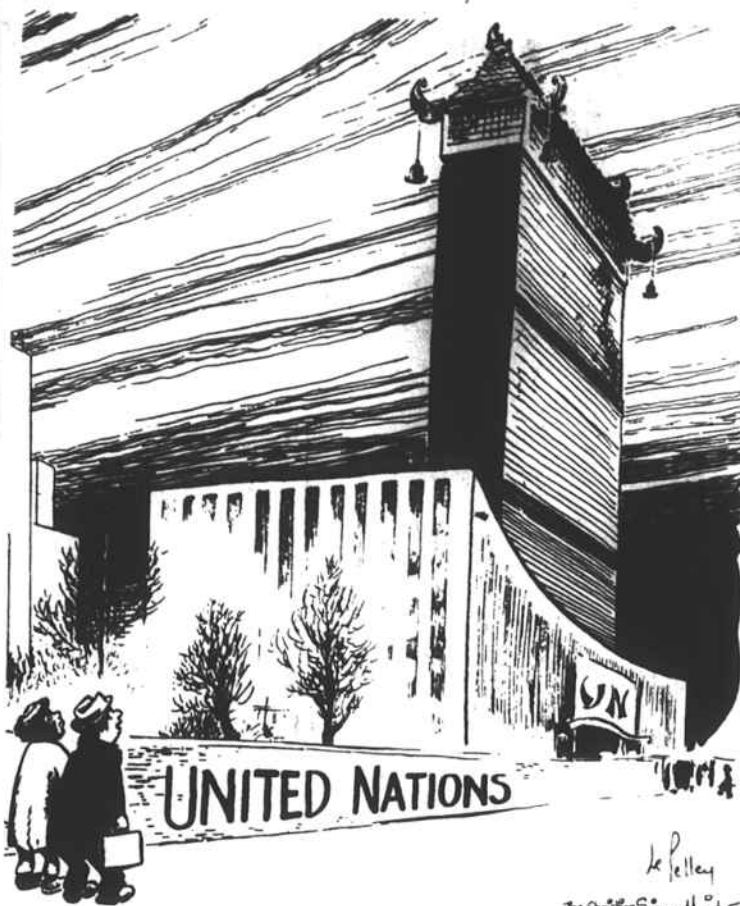
From Poole's Medley:
 A calf a day old will not go near a well without a curb, but a year old baby will walk or crawl into the ugliest dungeon.

15 years ago

November 5, 1956

Campaign chairman Harry A. Greene, of the 1956 Hoke County United Fund drive reported today that the drive had practically reached the halfway mark in its effort to raise \$7,844.87 for charitable and public organizations.

Oh, I suppose it's reasonable to expect a few small changes'



By LAURIE TELFAIR

How Do You Make A Left Turn?



I saw a driver make a proper left turn the other day and it startled me so I forgot to look at the license tag. But I'll bet it was an out-of-state car -- some Yankee down here showing off the ways of the outside world.

It's not that I am some driving expert, as a rather distressing driving record will verify, but rather it's just that nobody around here makes left turns the way my mama always told me to do it.

I was about to doubt my mother's wisdom, after all a few million North Carolinians can't be all wrong, when I asked a Highway Patrolman how to make a left turn. Backwards from the way everyone around here always does it, he said. So there.

Okay, how do I say you should make a left turn at a stop light that doesn't have a left-turn signal? I contend that the driver should come to the center line of the intersection and turn left into the lane closest to the centerline of the street onto which he is making the turn. Now here's my beef with North Carolina drivers: If two cars are making a left hand

turn at the same time, they should go behind each other.

There are several advantages to this system. First of all, two cars can turn left at the same time without running over each other. Second, by coming all the way to the center of the intersection before turning, you end up in the correct lane of traffic. If you begin your turn before you get to the center of the intersection, you end up in the opposing lane of traffic on the street onto which you are turning.

The prevailing custom of left turns in this area decrees that the cars turn in front of each other. This doesn't work very well for several reasons. First, since to turn in front of another car you have to place your vehicle sideways to his oncoming car, you have to trust his signal that he too is going to turn left. Since drivers have been known to lie, a prudent driver will allow the other driver to turn left first. This could leave you sitting through several traffic light changes if you are the suspicious sort. By both drivers turning behind the other, each car can make the left turn without getting in the way of the other.

Another reason why it doesn't work very well to turn in front of another car is unless the other driver waits back at the stop light for you to complete your turn, you must turn before you get to your proper lane. This either puts you on the wrong side of the street after you make the turn or you are in danger of clipping the front of cars to your left as you cut across their lane to get to your own lane.

All this explains, if you've ever tried to make a left turn in front of me on Main Street about 5 p.m., that I was not really trying to run over you at all. Honest. I was just trying to move out far enough to make my turn and give you room to turn behind me if you wanted to, although I knew in my heart that you were really cussing me for not giving you room to turn in front of my car.

Regional driving differences, like accents and food, are really quite striking. I have decided after a couple of brief looks that I'll never drive north of Richmond.

When we first arrived in North Carolina, I was hurt and puzzled at the number of people who blew their horn at me as they passed. I couldn't see what I was doing that would upset so many people. In Memphis, long known as the quietest city in America, it is illegal to blow a horn outside of an emergency and a whole generation of drivers have grown up there hardly knowing what an auto horn sounds like. It was months before I learned that North Carolina state law requires drivers to sound their horn in passing.

When we were in Texas, we noticed a distinct tendency of drivers to pull out in front of approaching motorists on the calm assumption that they would stop in time and also the penchant for building four-lane highways and then driving on the wrong lanes.

Probably the sanest driving we have found was in Omaha, where residents handled blizzards and storms with calm, capable driving. I don't know what the accident statistics for the state are, but I found that Mid-West motorists seemed to combine the courtesy of the Southerner with the efficiency of the Yankee. On the roads, that's a pretty good combination.

Just One Thing After Another

By Carl Goerch

Several years ago we ran a contest in our magazine asking readers to report on the "Interesting and Unique People" they have known. Several good reports came in. For example from Mrs. Karl E. Sherrill of Lowell, came the following:

The most interesting and outstanding character of my acquaintance is Harold "Wayside" Brown, who lives in the house by the side of the road," Wilkerson Boulevard in Charlotte.

Formerly a member of the theatrical profession, he was stricken with arthritis and gradually became hopelessly crippled. Did he whine and complain or wait for the world to give him an unearned living? Indeed he did not. From his wheelchair in Charlotte he started several years ago on the proverbial shoestring sending out encouragement and cheer to shut-ins, making his own living by his writings while furnishing work and comfort for others. His work has spread and today there are few men who are better loved -- not only among shut-ins, but by everybody. He is one of the most cheerful persons I have ever met.

From Mrs. W.E. Crosland of Rockingham:

Mrs. Hunt who lives in our town, was one of triplets born on a small island off the coast of Italy. When her Italian mother died, her North Carolina father brought the small child to this state and placed her in an orphanage where she was reared. Mrs. Hunt married young, but had no children. A child was found in a shoe-box on a trash pile and she adopted it. Since that incident, this remarkable woman has adopted and raised six more waifs, although she, herself, is very poor.

Nevertheless, regardless of her poverty, whenever she finds that some little tot has been cast aside or is without a home for some other reason, Mrs. Hunt takes it in.

The first children are all grown now and have established homes of their own. Mrs. Hunt's bright Italian eyes glow with pride as she tells friends that none of them ever has given her the slightest trouble in any way.

And from Mrs. Maurice J. O'Neil of Harker's Island:

I have met many interesting people in this section of North Carolina, but outstanding in my mind is Mr. Cleveland Davis, who for 35 years has carried the mail from the island to the mainland. He began at the age of thirteen and carried the mail in a sailboat to Beaufort, with a load of fish on to Morehead City. In fair weather and foul, in stormy weather and calm, having to cross the Beaufort bar on every trip. Mr. Davis during his 35 years of service never missed a schedule except once when he was capsized in a storm. However, he managed to save the mail, and also his boat, but he lost his load of fish. The next day he made his regular scheduled trip.

A sailboat, as everyone knows, is dependent on the wind. But during periods of calm weather, Mr. Davis would row his boat across the sound. There never was a storm along the coast which kept him from maintaining his regular schedule. When he was 17 years old -- four years after he started carrying the mail -- he had an engine installed in his boat. It didn't always work, however, so he would have to rely on his sail again.

SENATOR SAM ERVIN SAYS



WASHINGTON -- Foreign aid is in serious trouble in the Senate after the 41 - 27 vote to reject the \$2.9 billion economic and military authorization measure to continue a program which began a quarter of a century ago. If this Senate action stands, it would mean the end of an era which has cost the American taxpayers more than \$143 billion in giveaways to other nations.

In spite of the Senate vote, the program is likely to linger on for some time. There is still \$4.7 billion in unexpended appropriations in the aid pipeline. Moreover, the Senate Foreign Relations Committee seems to have revived the program by favoring separate economic and military aid bills which would total about \$600 million less than the omnibus measure the Senate rejected. Nevertheless, the Senate action does force the nation to take a hard look at the money commitments we have been making to other nations.

I have opposed the foreign aid program over the last sixteen years because I think much of the money has been expended under the naive concept that we can buy friends as a substitute for the drudgery involved in creating good relations with other countries. Much of this U. S. money has actually done harm to the people of those countries into believing that we can solve their problems without much effort on their part.

There has been little enthusiasm for the program in recent years. Some American businessmen have supported it because it has increased their sales, but there is increasing recognition that with a \$28 billion deficit likely in the Federal budget for the current year, business may lose more than it gains in the long run

from such a subsidy.

One of the major problems of U. S. foreign aid has always been that even its most ardent supporters have differed greatly as to what the program proposes to do for other nations. Some take the position that we ought to base aid upon the lofty concept that America has the mission of lifting the world to our standards, whatever that may be at the moment. Others have supported the program because they deemed it necessary to "buy friends" for our national interest. Between these two philosophies, there are many shades of opinion about the wisdom of meddling into the affairs of other governments. All this was certain to lead to confusion in the administration of projects in virtually every nation of the free world, and this may have contributed to some of its monumental absurdities like the building of an expensive highway in the jungle that led from nowhere to nowhere.

As bad as the waste has been, the ingratitude of the nations that we sought to help has been even more galling. I have always been of the opinion that those who voted for the program expected too much. History shows that nations never let gratitude linger long when it conflicts with self-interest.

The truth of the matter is that times have changed greatly since we began the Marshall Plan. Most of the nations we are helping could do more for themselves if they would try. We are now beset by many economic problems that have been the result of our giveaways, and there is greater appreciation today that there is a limit to what we can do in the world if we are to remain strong ourselves.

This is the crux of the battle now going on in the Senate over foreign aid with high stakes for all of us.

NOTICE

Note to the editor: H. Clifton Blue suffered a heart attack just before noon on Friday, November 5, 1971. At the hour of this note, 10 p.m., November 6, 1971, the prognosis is guarded.

I have been authorized by Mrs. Blue and H. Clifton Blue, Jr. to notify you that Mr. Blue's column will not be written this week. His column will resume next week.

All of us hope and pray for Cliff's complete recovery.

Raymond A. Stone
 Pinehurst, North Carolina.

STORIES BEHIND WORDS

By WILLIAM S. PENFIELD

Machiavellian
 Niccolò Machiavelli was an Italian student of politics who lived during the time of the powerful and unscrupulous Borgias and De Medici families.

Machiavelli was well acquainted with the political machinations of these two families, for he held a government position until he was dismissed by the De Medici.

He started writing and turned out "The Prince" a book that outlined treachery in statecraft -- a quality for which the Borgias and De Medici were famous. His critics charged that Machiavelli espoused unscrupulous politics. Therefore, the word "Machiavellian" was used in referring to political treachery.

Scruple
 Anyone who has had coarse grains of sand or a tiny pebble in a shoe is aware of how uncomfortable it feels.

In Roman times the chances of getting sand or pebbles in footwear were greater than today, because the Romans wore sandals.

The Latin word for a small, sharp pebble was "scrupulus." The Romans compared the pricking of one's conscience with having a pebble in a sandal. This mental uneasiness was described as "scrupulus," which became "scruple" in French and "scruple" in English.

Sirloin
 Some fanciful stories have arisen about the origins of words. "Sirloin" is an example. In this case a fictitious story caused a change in the spelling of the word.

The story arose that a British king -- Henry VIII, James I or Charles II, depending upon the version -- was so pleased with the taste of a roasted loin of beef that he knighted it, calling it "Sir Loin."

That is not the origin of the word. Before the story became popular, the word was spelled "Surlion."

"Sir" was borrowed from French and meant "over" or "above." Sirloin, therefore, is that cut of meat above the loin.