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THURSDAY, DECEMBER 15, 1977

## Holiday donations

For most citizens this is a joyous season. For hospital patients requiring blood, however, this is a far different season. Their lives have been touched -- saved, even -- by the generosity of strangers: volunteer blood donors. What prompts strangers to donate blood so that others might live? Richard M. Titmuss explores this question in his book *The Gift Relationship*. Consider this excerpt: "There is a bond that links all men and women in the world so closely and intimately that every difference of color, religious belief and cultural heritage is insignificant beside it. Never varying in temperature more than five or six degrees, composed of 55 per cent water, the life stream of blood that runs in the veins of every member of the human race proves that the family of man is a reality."

In our community we believe in this reality. Donors prove it every day. Their generosity enables the Red Cross Blood Center to provide blood and its components for every resident needing it -- every day of the year. But the job is a critical, demanding, never-ending one. Holidays make it even more difficult. And, blood is available only when each of us takes the time to roll up his sleeve and donate. During this season of giving, consider sharing a part of your life -- blood. Someone's depending on it. Today.

## Take the 'X' out

One day someone phones from Chicago to claim widespread cooperation there in his 10-year, one-man crusade against the abbreviation "Xmas." The next day a letter to the editor of a Boston paper defends "Xmas" in what he calls the "seasonal silly" debate of "Xmas vs. Christmas."

It's true that the essence of Christmas does not depend on the way it is written. Yet this essence is so often neglected anyway that who doesn't at least need the reminder provided by keeping the "Christ" in "Christmas"?

The respectable early history of "Xmas" began with the "X" representing the first letter of the Greek spelling of "Christ" and then being taken to stand for the whole syllable. Even such a scrupulous wordman as the poet Coleridge was not above using "Xmas," at least in a letter.

But how many Americans think "Christ" when they see "X" now that "X" has lost connection with the Greek language and become synonymous with movies from which children, those central characters of Christmastime, are excluded? "Xmas" has simply become part of the secularization of a season that doesn't need any more secularizing.

We're glad to hear of the Chicago hotel that responded to suggestions by changing "Xmas" to "Christmas" on its marquee. We're glad to hear of the greeting card company that has a policy of sticking to "Christmas." Which is what we intend to do, wishing you all a very merry one. --*Christian Science Monitor*

## Browsing in the files of The News-Journal

### 25 years ago

Thursday, December 11, 1952

Congressman C.B. Deane informed *The News-Journal* and the Hoke County Commissioners last week that the Army does have money to buy more land, that they are making surveys preparatory to buying more land and that they want to own a corridor between Fort Bragg and Camp Mackall.

Judge T.O. Moses was sworn in Tuesday morning as judge of Hoke County recorder's court and went to work on a docket that kept him on the job until six that night.

The Hoke Democratic Executive Committee met last week for the purpose of recommending someone to fill the vacancy as Raeford Postmaster caused by the recent death of Lacy Clark. The committee voted to recommend Charles E. Morrison to Congressman C.B. Deane for the temporary appointment.

The Hoke County board of commissioners held a special session Monday to meet with representatives of the State Highway Commission about a proposed "connecting county road" to make it easier for heavy traffic on U.S. Highway 15-A to get through Raeford.

### 15 years ago

Thursday, December 13, 1962

The commanding general of the famed Old Hickory, North Carolina's 30th Division Army National Guard, told a military audience in Raeford Monday night that "we either play on the first team or we don't even suit up for the ball game."

Merchants, banks, churches and at least one crap-shooter reported this week receiving "a whole boatload of \$2 bills," in the wake of an \$80,000 payroll last week at the Raeford Worsted Plant that was exclusively in bills of the unique \$2 denomination.

The grass is dry as powder, men of the Rural and Raeford Volunteer fire departments reported this week.

The Rev. Vance Baucom has accepted the call of the Bethel and Shiloh Churches, and moved to the manse at 203 Wright Street.

About 400 students at Hoke High went through a day-long "Career Day" program a week ago Wednesday, with representatives from 33 colleges and 23 occupational fields.

'Oh, dear, mugged again by some nasty foreign currency'



## HOKUM

By Charles Blackburn

Whenever I want to know something, I check through half a dozen reference books, and if I can't find what I'm after, I call up Thad Stem, Jr. in Oxford. As far as I can tell, he knows everything worth knowing. He's much more than a writer. Thad Stem is that special kind of tour guide who gives you the inside story on his colorful and vibrant world. And I don't think he has forgotten a single phrase or impression since that first day his loving relatives admired him in his cradle.

Climb the long flight of stairs next to Hall's Drugstore on Oxford's Main Street and you'll find him in an office down the hall. Just follow the sound of the typewriter. He's working on an editorial for the *News and Observer* (he has been writing them for twenty years), or a column, a short story, a poem, criticism, or a book. He might be writing a letter -- every one he writes resuscitates that dying art. Whatever he is working on, you can count on it being informative, often lyrical, with a large measure of humor, and thoroughly entertaining.

He has been acclaimed as the last great poet of small town life and will tell you proudly that he still lives on the same street on which he was born. Yet the scope of his learning is such that he can easily disarm critics like Gene Shalit, as he did when he appeared on the *Today Show* to talk about Senator Sam Ervin's *Best Stories*. In recognition of his contributions to his state and his art, Stem was awarded the prestigious North Carolina Award for Literature in 1974.

His office is hardly bigger than a closet, but when you consider the realm over which his imagination rules, you begin to think of it as a depot, where, through conversation, you are transported to a magical kingdom that makes Disney World seem as ephemeral as cotton candy. There are two chairs for visitors, a sizable armchair that makes you glad you weren't there when it was being toted up the stairs, and a cane-bottomed chair. If you want to sit in the armchair, nine times out of ten you have to move several pounds of manuscript and books before you can get to it. The table next to the chair is heaped with literary clutter that piques your curiosity, but you hesitate to disturb it, suspecting that it has all been arranged according to some ingenious system.

Mr. Stem has been typing away while you made yourself at home. He works at an old desk that looks like it might have been stolen from a schoolmarm. Completing a paragraph, he lights another Camel and starts to talk. The journey has begun.

Someone once said that Thad Stem was the only person he knew who wrote just like he talked. His 16th book, *Ransacking Words and Customs* (Moore \$8.95), arrived in the mail last week, and it brings to mind many conversations in his office above the drugstore.

*Ransacking Words and Customs* could be called a reference book, but that narrow label does not convey the charm and wit Stem brings to a story. The book is not a collection of definitions; it is a narrative divided into fifteen categories, such as: Food and Drink, Of Time and Superstition, Games and Gambling, Names of States and Towns, and Ships at Sea. As in all of his books, Stem manages to instruct and entertain simultaneously. He says that the contents reflect interests that have fasci-

nated him throughout his literate years; and, indeed, hundreds of his editorials and columns over the span of his career have been devoted to folklore, customs, and the origins of words and sayings. That's what you'll find in this book. For example, under Food and Drink, you'll learn that:

The various clam chowders ("clam," or "clump," originally, and "chowder," meaning "hot," from the French *chaudiere* for "cauldron") and oyster soups (from the Greek *ostreon*, through the Latin *ostreum*) are universal. Americans picked up avidly on the alleged aphrodisiac properties of oysters, especially raw oysters. (Despite King Jame I's being credited with saying, "He was a very valiant man who first adventured on eating oysters.") Richard Sheridan, Lord Byron and others wrote about the quirk that causes some species of oysters to contain two sexes in a single oyster. As Bergen Evans said, "This must lead to frustrations and complications of so remarkable a nature that human beings, considering the difficulties they have with a comparatively simple system, should charitably refrain from comment." If you wonder about the origin of things so diverse as "O.K.," "cocktail," "twenty-three, skidoo," "Mason and Dixon Line," "Dixie" (the region), "bring home the bacon," "wine," "barbecue," "two-bits," "kissing cousin," "Simon-pure," "the real McCoy," "smart as a Philadelphia lawyer," and scores of others, this is the book you want to keep.

The final section of the book is devoted to "Christmas and Saint Nicholas," excerpts of which will appear in future columns.

### Puppy Creek

## Philosopher

Dear editor:

A lot of people, including some scientists, are alarmed over what science is doing in the field of human life, the cells, the genes, the chromosomes and things like that which I don't know anything about and don't intend to learn, any more than I intend to learn the metric system.

In fact, some reputable scientists want those exploring scientists to stop, saying it's dangerous and may lead to no telling what, maybe an entirely different type of human being.

Here we are, nearly 500 years after Columbus discovered America and proved the world was round, and, like those thinkers in Spain who argued that the world was flat and Columbus would sail off the edge if he kept going, we still have fraidy cats.

Incidentally, I've often wondered why some school-boy back then, on being told you'd plunge off the edge of the earth if you kept sailing outward in a straight line, didn't raise his hand and ask his teacher if that was the case, then what kept the ocean from flowing over the edge and completely draining itself? You mean schools in those days weren't any more successful than schools today in teaching the kids to think?

On the other hand, most of us today still believe pretty much what we're told. For example, everybody wants to save gasoline, so companies have now come out with tires and special brands of oil they claim will save gas. I myself am now trying to invent gas - saving rear -



## Report To The People

by Senator Robert Morgan

Congress has been agonizing recently on what to do about helping the financially troubled Social Security System. In order to place it on a sounder basis, both Houses have passed legislation that would raise contributions in the years ahead.

The fact is that the nation's population is getting older, more people are drawing benefits and it is taking more money every year to pay those benefits. Contributions, on the other hand, have not been keeping pace.

In discussing this with friends and constituents in North Carolina, I was asked if I paid into the Social Security System. The fact is, I do not. No member of Congress pays nor do the 17,000 employees of Congress. Except for the military, no federal employee is under Social Security.

Federal workers, including those who work for Congress, have a separate pension plan. They pay seven percent of their gross salaries toward their retirement, and the benefits are generous.

Because they are under such a retirement system, civil servants and Congressional employees have argued that there is no reason for them to join Social Security. They have their own retirement plan, so why should they have to contribute to Social Security?

But there is a problem with their argument. Millions of Americans working in private industry also have very good pension plans yet they are required to pay Social Security taxes. Even those whose investments bring them a good income pay Social Security all of their working lives, and become eligible for benefits when they

reach the prescribed age.

To understand why this must be, you have to look at the reason Social Security was started back in the 1930's. It was not meant to be a straight pension, but a supplement to other retirement income. And to make it work, everyone has to participate. It can't be an optional matter.

I feel people outside government have asked me a very good question when they want to know if I pay Social Security taxes. If we in Capitol Hill don't have enough confidence in Social Security to participate, how can we expect others to?

I feel it is time we corrected that and I have introduced legislation that would bring members of Congress and the 17,000 people Congress employs under the Social Security System. This would not apply to civil servants or Postal Service workers because that would be a massive shift that would require too much time and too many details to work out.

We don't know what level of deductions would be reasonable for Congressmen and their employees, in addition to the money they now contribute to their own retirement system. We can determine that without too much trouble. The hard fact is that Congress should take a leadership role in supporting a program on which we all depend.

We are going to have to make some hard decisions in providing Social Security with adequate financing.

When we face that issue, I believe we should be in a position of doing something that will affect us as well as our people back home.

## CLIFF BLUE ...

## People & Issues



### COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

Boards of County Commissioners over the state held re-organizational meetings Monday, November 5th.

In Richmond County where a law, enacted under the leadership of State Rep. Tom Hunter went into effect, providing for six commissioners, with the provision that the chairman could vote only in cases of a tie, Chairman Richard Conder reluctantly accepted re-election as chairman. Conder had opposed the change which stripped the chairman of a vote except in case of a tie.

In Mecklenburg County incumbent Chairman Liz Hair was ousted as chairman by Pete Foley, assisted by Bill Booe and Bob Walton. Supporting Mrs. Hair was Commissioner Peacock. *The Charlotte*

*Observer* has been real critical of the trio who ousted Mrs. Hair from the chairmanship.

In Randolph County the commissioners elected their fourth new chairman in as many years. Chairman Frank Auman had announced to his fellow commissioners that he did not want to serve another one-year term as chairman due to personal business affairs. At the re-organizational meeting the Randolph commissioners elected its first woman, Matilda Phillips, as chairman with Logan White as vice chairman.

**STUDENTS FAIL ...** In an address before the Asheboro Kiwanis Club recently, Dr. David Bruton, chairman of the State Board of Education predicted that a significant number of 11th grade students will fail the competency tests which will be given state-wide next spring. Dr. Bruton pointed out that the competency test is merely a guideline tool to find out what the student needs and then to provide remedial help in reading, math and the language skills.

**WEAKENING PARTY SYSTEM?** Some are wondering if Governor Hunt's judicial committee which he appointed to recommend superior court judges over the state will weaken the Democratic Party structure which already has a judicial committee in every county in the state as well as a congressional, senatorial as well as representation on the state executive committee.

**MORATORIUM ...** Editor L.T. (Nudy) James of the *Montgomery Herald* in Troy suggests a moratorium on some of the programs being financed with federal funds from local taxpayers from all over the nation. Here is a quote from Editor James' editorial:

"There is something drastically wrong when federal programs are accepted on the local level, not because of any good the programs might do but rather because if the money isn't used here it will go to some other community. Yes, this continues to happen and the action is defended with the oft-used statement, 'If we don't take the money, someone else will.'"

Citizens might speak to their Congressmen and U.S. Senators about this phase of government while they are home for the holidays.

**ANWAR SADAT ...** From this corner we suggest President Anwar Sadat be given top billing as the "Man of Peace" for the year 1977.

It is encouraging to see the great support the people of Egypt are giving their president in his leadership for peace in the area



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