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PAUL DICKSON Publisher—Editor
 SAM C. MORRIS General Manager
 BILL LINDAM Associate Editor
 MRS. PAUL DICKSON Society Editor

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THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 19, 1981

Back tax payments

A headline in last week's edition of *The News-Journal* reads: "Failing To Pay Taxes Costly."

That's as it should be. The Hoke County commissioners have approved a new system which provides a starting penalty of \$200 in legal fees against property owners who fail, after receiving a 30-day notice, to pay their back taxes. Unpaid taxes assessed for a current year won't become delinquent, however, till January of the following year.

The new policy was designed primarily, apparently, with the property owners in mind who have failed to pay taxes for several years. Notices sent out periodically have been met with promises to pay, promises which haven't been kept, or with silence.

As county tax people have pointed out, the county letting unpaid taxes go isn't fair to the property owners who conscientiously pay, even when it is a hardship, as in the case of people whose only income is a monthly Social Security check.

The statute of limitations, also, frees people from the obligation of paying if they have not paid in 10 years.

Local governments are inclined to write off unpaid taxes as being not worth the expense of collecting. The new Hoke County policy, however, has the delinquent property owner paying the cost of collecting. The \$200 legal fee furthermore, can be only the beginning for the unpaid tax. If the taxes are still unpaid before the title search and complaint are completed, the cost to the delinquent will be increased to \$350 to \$400, and in many cases substantially more, the Tax Department announcement says.

Failure to pay these costs and the back taxes will mean the property will be taken from the owner and sold at public auction to pay the bill.

Money to allow the county to provide government services to the people has never been abundant, and now with federal and state assistance cut down and, in some cases, eliminated, writing off several years of unpaid taxes is a luxury the county can't afford.

Furthermore, even if the county could afford to provide write-offs, the system wouldn't be fair to the conscientious.

Making failure to pay taxes expensive is the effective way of getting back taxes paid, though it's unfortunate that this policy is necessary.

--BL

Just Do It, Don't Gripe About It

Republican leaders have been upset by Budget Director David Stockman expressing his doubts publicly, not that Stockman has doubts.

Stockman made his critical remarks in an article published in the December issue of *Atlantic Monthly*, a magazine with nationwide circulation.

What emerges from the flap is Stockman was doing his job, in working up and then promoting to congressmen the economic program he knew President Reagan wanted, even though Stockman privately had his doubts.

If he hadn't expressed his doubts to a reporter in an interview for the magazine article, nobody besides a few close friends of Stockman would have known how he felt.

Stockman has been described as brilliant, a dedicated, conscientious, hard worker. Unfortunately, he felt, or someone at the top of the White House heap made him feel that his job was to give the President what the President wanted, regardless of how Stockman felt about it.

In that case, financial technicians skilled in preparing budgets but with no strong feeling would have sufficed to serve as budget director. The special talent of a man like Stockman is wasted if he is not permitted to use it.

Stockman seems to be in the position of the unemployed school teacher who was being interviewed by a member of the board of education for a job.

"Do you teach the earth is round or do you teach that it is flat?" the member of the board asked him.

"I'll teach it any way you want," the applicant replied. "I need the job."

What the Reagan faithful seem to be telling Stockman was, "Put your mouth where your money is."

We suspect that many a government leader makes remarks in private conversation that would cause at least as great flaps if they were quoted in news stories.

We can just hear Reagan now, for example, talking about his secretary of state, in the late-night privacy of the White House with nobody but Nancy around: "Suppose I just ship Alex out to investigate the Red menace on Pago Pago for the next five years?" Or, "You got any ideas how I can get that retired yard bird to quit?"

The Stockman affair, from another viewpoint, reminds us that key subordinates making controversial remarks constitute an occupational hazard for presidents in general. Jimmy Carter, for example, had his Andrew Young and Joe Califano.

--BL

Tell us the part again about your 6 1/2 percent mortgage



CLIFF BLUE... People & Issues



HOLIDAYS -- It appears that many of our holidays turn out to be largely for government workers. Take Veterans Day, it seems that most people, working people continued to work except Government employees Federal, State and County, and possibly municipal. We noticed that local children were out of school, which gives school day, a day off.

BILLY GRAHAM -- It appears that some in the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association want to ease their spokesmen out and maybe, bring in William Franklin Graham, III. But Billy, himself, isn't thinking of retiring just yet.

REAGAN -- President Reagan is taking a lot of criticism these days. As a Democrat, I think he is doing the best he can. He found the nation in awful shape, and anybody who tries to pull a suckling calf from its mother is going to find it hard to do and so do many of our people when it comes to balancing the budget, which must be done, sooner or later.

TOM GILMORE -- Former Representative Tom Gilmore, now Deputy Secretary of the N.C. Department of Human Resources, is returning to his nursery and landscaping business. Tom has been mentioned as a candidate for lieutenant-governor and governor. He says he plans to campaign against the proposed North Carolina constitutional amendment which the early session of the General Assembly this year quietly voted to send to the people at the next state-wide vote.

Many people will likely agree with Gilmore that our present constitution should not extend to the General Assembly terms from two to four years. Two years is long enough, and four years is too long without a vote by the people.

BOB JORDAN -- State Senator Bob Jordan is quoted in his home county newspaper, *Montgomery Herald*, as saying:

"The best and quickest way to raise the average hourly income level workers in North Carolina is to improve the operating climate

and incentives for existing industry."

An incentive has lots to do with any ambitious person.

GEORGE PENNY -- George Penny, managing editor of the *Montgomery Herald*, says: "A deputy sheriff in an eastern county of North Carolina has lost his job for firing a revolver at a woman in his residence, reportedly 10 times, and missing."

"Any law enforcement officer who can't aim a weapon any better, should be fired in incompetence."

STOCKMAN -- We can understand President Reagan becoming angry with David Stockman's quotes in the *Atlantic Monthly* about how to lead the country out of deficit spending.

We doubt that Stockman will be a part of the Administration three months from now!

KILLING -- Almost every day you pick up a newspaper and read where some person has been killed for no reason at all. Cold-blooded murder! We cringe at the thought of putting a person to death, but when a person is sentenced, and often learn that he has been paroled in a few years makes you wonder -- wonder if it will take capital punishment to remedy the situation.

Here in Southern Pines a convenience-store operator was killed, with some \$400 in money taken. Two 19-year olds are in jail.

TOWN DRUNKS -- Tom I. Davis, publisher of the *Johnstonian Sun*, has a column about town drunks. I can't recall one in Aberdeen now, but glancing back a few years I can agree with Tom.

Tom quotes one as saying: "Recently a local citizen was asked why he didn't sober up once in a while. He said 'I would but with the price of cheap whiskey, it would cost too much to get drunk again.'"

CORRECTION -- In this column last week we made an error in the paragraph, "Harnett". We referred to "Hoover Taft" when it should have been Hoover Adams. Thanks to Frank Jeter of Raleigh for calling this to our attention.

Letter To The Editor

EDITOR, *The News-Journal*,

On behalf of the American Lung Association of North Carolina, Mid-State Region, I would like to express our sincere gratitude to the many individuals who gave their time, effort and talent at baking to have a very successful "Bake Sale" for the Lung Association on Friday, November 6, in Raeford.

Headed by Mrs. Richard Neeley, this group of dedicated people raised \$493.50 for the Mid-State Region of ALANC to be used in the patient service work at McCain Hospital and also health education projects for the local area.

A reminder to the residents of Hoke County: the Lung Association is now conducting its annual Christmas Seals Campaign during the months of November and December. Please support your

local Lung Association (ALANC, Mid-State Region) by responding to your Christmas Seals Appeal Letter. Your contribution will be put to work right in your own home county.

Hoke County's Honorary Christmas Seal Chairmen, Mr. and Mrs. Harold Stone, and Regional Board members from Hoke County, Mrs. Lynette Norton, Mrs. Richard Neeley, D. Ralph Huff, III, and Kenneth L. Witherspoon, join me in expressing sincere thanks to the many people of Hoke County who support the American Lung Association of N.C. Mid-State Region.

Mary Jane V. Knight (Mrs.)
 Regional Director
 American Lung Assn. of N.C.
 Mid-State Region
 (office in Southern Pines, N.C.)
 tel. 692-3981)



Mother sent me to Mrs. Marvel's Bake Shop for two dozen sugar cookies. Mrs. Marvel carefully counted out a dozen cookies, then added one more. I watched uneasily as she placed a sheet of waxed paper over the cookies and counted out another dozen cookies. Again the extra cookie was added.

"I think you've given me too

It's a Small World

By Bill Lindam

Here are a few quotes I ran into while reading one thing or another the past couple of weeks.

Bertrand Russell: "When I was young, I liked mathematics. When this became too difficult for me I took to philosophy and when philosophy became too difficult I took to politics."

Theocritus of ancient Greece said Poverty alone awoke the arts, and was the teacher of labour. Since I don't read Greek I had to lift this from the preface to "The Complete Nonsense Book," by Edward Lear, the author of "The Owl and the Pussy Cat" and "High Diddle Diddle," along with a thousand other poems. Another was thousand other poems. Another was the one that starts: "The king was in his counting house, counting out his money."

Lear died 93 years ago (at the age of 76), but the Upchurch Junior High School librarian Jacqueline Gladney, told me, after I asked her, that his poetry is still popular with school children.

...

I happened to get involved with Lear weekend before last, while browsing through "The Smithsonian" for September 1981. I ran across an article written by Joseph Kastner under the headline, "The runcible life and works of the remarkable Edward Lear." That's when I learned -- well, better late than never -- that Lear was the author of those children's poems I mentioned and which I'd become familiar in my own early childhood.

Lear wrote sheer nonsense, and brought nonsense writing to the state of an art (so did Lewis Carroll, of "Alice in Wonderland"). Lear wrote nonsense, and illustrated his poems, as well as for the amusement of children. But many people take him seriously. In fact, says Kastner, the best collection of Lear's work is in Houghton Library of Harvard University. Houghton also owns Lear's diaries, "and has become the main center for Lear scholarship," Kastner adds.

Lear was a serious artist. He did many water color paintings of wildlife to illustrate books. His work was exhibited in museums.

...

But to get on with quotes.

"Chacun a son chose," -- old maid after kissing cow, replying to a passerby's question. As everybody knows, the literal translation is: "To each his own thing." Loose translations, however, include: "It's all a matter of taste" and "one man's meat is another man's poison."

Then there's this serious one William O. Douglas: late justice of the U.S. Supreme Court, has in his autobiography.

Referring to his associate, Justice Henry Brandeis, he writes:

The computer world would have depressed Brandeis.

"He saw the forces of disintegration gathering early in this century and it made him sad. The automobile was part of what he disliked. He spoke to me many times about the transformation it was making -- not in urban sprawl alone, but in the character of people. An automobile desensitized the driver, making the polite person crude and aggressive."

"It is the same with any machine. One person in a bomber high above the earth can wipe out thousands of people without sight of blood and without hearing a child's whimper."

Then Douglas follows with this thought:

"Man becomes transformed when a machine separates him from his fellow-man. Man is at his best when he stands on his own feet -- accountable to family, to neighbors, to employers, to God. Man is at his worst when he is running with the herd, for then individual responsibility is ignored and individual achievement is not put to the test."

...

A news story published last week tells of a reunion in Paris of American flying aces of World War I. They flew when a fighter pilot could expect to live no more than 21 days. Forty of the 85 surviving American veterans were physically fit enough to accept the invitations of France's President Mitterand to attend.

Some of these pilots probably were among the Americans who

flew for France before the United States got into the war. Those were the men of the LaFayette Escadrille, composed entirely of American volunteers.

One of them was Killin Rockwell, whose home was in Asheville. He was the first American pilot -- perhaps the first American -- killed in action in World War I. A historic marker to him stands on Merrimon Avenue, the main street running north from the middle of town. The marker is about a mile north of the edge of the business section. His brother, Paul, still known as "Colonel Rockwell," a World War I veteran also, was still living in Asheville while I was working on *The Citizen* in the 1960s. He used to come by the office every now and then the perfect picture of the honorably retired officer veteran, immaculately dressed, and wearing his brush moustache, then white, in the French Army style of World War I. I didn't get much of his background than except that he had served as also in World War II, as a liaison officer between the American and Free French forces in North Africa.

Funny thing is I can't find anything in books about Kermit Rockwell. One has a brief mention of his name, in connection with the Escadrille, listing him in the same breath, as it were, with the famed Raoul Lufberry, the Escadrille's commander, and the man who became known as the "balloon buster from Arizona," for the number of German observation balloons he shot down, in addition to the German planes he demolished. The Balloon Buster, incidentally, was the son of Germans.

I even wrote to the State Department of Archives and History, addressing the letter to the "World War I Section," asking for information about Kermit Rockwell, about a month ago, but haven't gotten an answer yet.

The Balloon Buster, incidentally, died dramatically. Returning to his home base in his crippled plane, he saw a town's street filled with enemy troops. Immediately, he flew low, strafing them with his machine guns.

Shortly afterward, unable to keep his plane in the air any longer, he landed in enemy-held country, drew his pistol and climbed out of the plane. Immediately he was surrounded by German troops. But when he was ordered to surrender, he started firing. He was killed by the responding rifle fire.

...

I had the privilege of meeting a World War I veteran of the air wars. He was a retired general named Connell, and when I met him he was settling in Highlands, the old resort town in the mountains of Macon County, and about 80 miles southwest of Asheville. He was putting together an old mountain turn-grinding mill just outside Highlands, on a mountain creek. He'd been collecting sections here and there in the mountains, and had it all put together, including the big old water wheel that operated the rest of the machinery when the wheel was allowed to be turned by the stream. He also had put up a small cable car, big enough for three people, which ran from one bank of the stream by the road to the other high above the river.

General Connell flew DeHavilland bombers out of England in the Great War.

The DeHavillands, I learned only a couple of weeks ago, were called by their crews "flaming coffins."

General Connell spoke in a roar most of the time, and I guessed it was a habit he'd acquired from World War I days, when one man had to speak in a roar to make himself heard above the noise of the plane's motor.

I got a long-distance call at the office from him one day. He was telephoning from Highlands.

After I hung up, the managing editor asked me, "Was he using a telephone?" The general was talking in his conversational manner, but I guess everybody in that big news room could hear him.

Wonder if his corn meal mill is still working? He had a bag of it he gave me and Betsy when we were there. The bag was specially-printed, showing a drawing of the mill and the name of his "company" on it.

Another thing about that mill that was unusual.

General Connell said he had the only corn meal in the world that had chestnut panneling.

love."

"Not until I was an adult did I understand the full impact of Mrs. Marvel's quiet Christian witnessing. She firmly believed that being a Christian should show in all of life's relationships. Day after day she gave all that was required, then, unflinchingly, she added a little more. She knew the joy of a life that was out of the ordinary."

"That's Mrs. Marvel's way," said mother. "She always gives fair value, then adds a little more for