

# Opinions

## Stupid thinking on old age is permeating our society

Gaines S. Dobbins was one of the most productive human beings I've ever known. After retiring from a faculty position at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Kentucky, he spent the next 10 years teaching at a seminary in California. Then he went to Hong Kong, where he continued his teaching career for the next two years. After that, he returned to the States and stayed busy as a writer, church consultant, and part-time professor in a variety of schools.

### Things That Matter

The clerk at the desk shoved the registration card toward his younger companion and said, "Would you like to sign this for him?" Bristling at the clerk's rudeness toward his guest, my friend said, "Listen, fellow, this man has written more books than you will ever read. He certainly is capable of signing his name."

Admittedly, the clerk's put-down was probably unintentional. But that merely adds weight to what I want to say here; that we live in a society which is permeated with stupid thinking about old age. We have such a universal cultural bias against the aging that the clerk didn't even stop to question his assumption that an elderly man would not be able to fill out a registration card.

Among our favorite myths about the aging is the assumption that old age brings a marked decline in intellectual powers. Contemporary psychological research has demonstrated again and again, that this simply is not true. The trite saying, "You can't teach an old dog new tricks," isn't even true of dogs, much less human beings.

Those who think old age inevitably brings on mental decline

should remind themselves that George Bernard Shaw was still an active playwright at 93, that Albert Schweitzer was still running his hospital in Africa at 89, and that Winston Churchill wrote his great work *A History of the English-Speaking Peoples* at 82. Then, of course, there is also George Burns.

Another popular myth is that every old person becomes senile if he lives long enough. The truth is, senility is a disease, not a result of aging. And it touches only 5 to 10% of Americans over 65. The vast majority live out their years unaffected by senility.

Then, there is that widely accepted myth that sexuality powers come to an end when people reach old age.

Experts on the physiology of aging agree that normal sexual expression in older adulthood is rarely the result of any physical limitations.

One researcher, interviewing older men and women with respect to this aspect of aging, asked a 90-year-old woman at what age she thought sexual activity ceased.

Slightly embarrassed, she told the researcher that he would have to ask that question of someone older than her.

By the time he reached 90, he had begun to experience a number of health problems. As his eyesight dimmed, he had to wear thick lenses and sometimes needed assistance going up and down steps.

Finally, his doctor insisted that he quit traveling all over the country to lead conferences. So, he spent the last years of his life writing eight hours a day, adding to his already impressive collection of writings.

I tell you all of this to help you understand why a friend of mine became so incensed on one occasion when he took Dr. Dobbins to check in at a local motel. Without even speaking to the elderly man.

## Bankruptcy is no joke

All of us have talked about bankruptcy at one time or another. We frequently joke about being forced into bankruptcy because of inflation and our natural desire to acquire more material things, even when we don't have enough money to pay for them.

Article I, section 8, clause 4 of the Constitution empowers the United States Congress to "establish uniform laws on the subject of Bankruptcy throughout the United States." It was this Constitutional grant of power to Congress that has resulted in four different national bankruptcy acts since the beginning of our nation.

The most recent bankruptcy legislation is the Bankruptcy Reform Act of 1978, and we presently act under the Bankruptcy Code which came out of that reform act.

One of the purposes behind our bankruptcy laws is to provide relief for the debtor who finds it impossible to pay his large bills from

### Law For Laypersons

his slim assets. Indeed, the primary purpose of the bankruptcy law is to "relieve the honest debtor from the weight of oppressive indebtedness, and permit him to start afresh, free from the obligations and responsibilities consequent upon...misfortunes." The bankruptcy law "gives to the honest but unfortunate debtor who surrenders for distribution the property which he owns at the time of bankruptcy, a new opportunity in life and a clear field for future effort." (Both of these quotes came from an opinion of the Supreme Court of the United States.) The hope, of course, is that the debtor after bankruptcy will be able to make a substantial contribution to society once he is given the chance to start afresh.

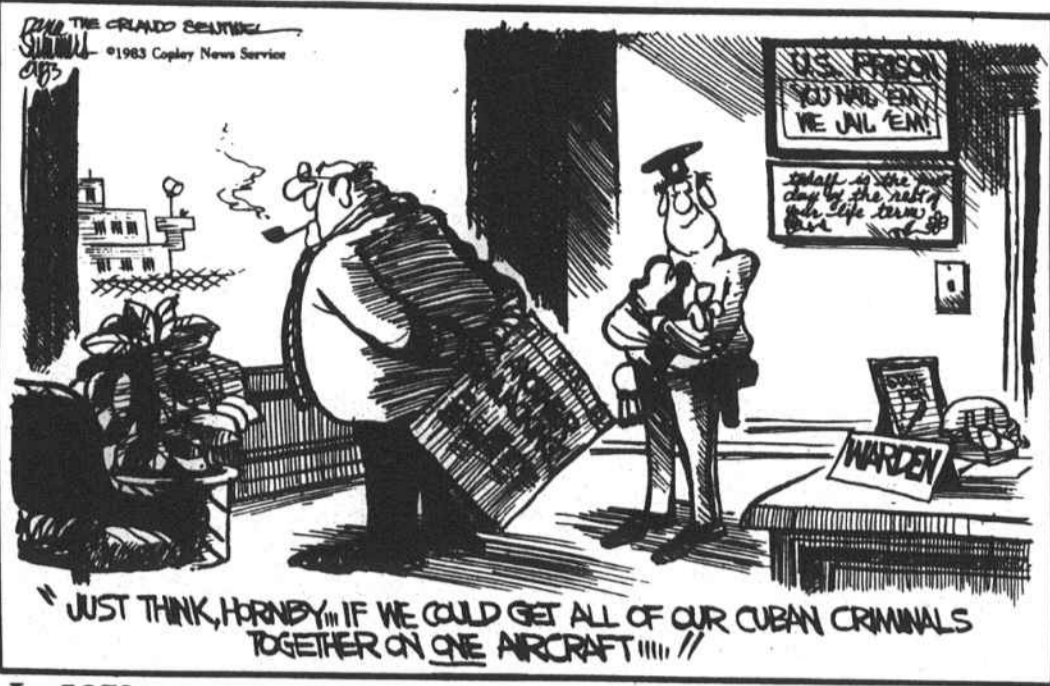
Creditors to whom a bankruptcy debtor owes money often feel that the debtor gets all the protection

under the bankruptcy laws. Actually, the bankruptcy law was intended to provide a remedy for creditors while it provides a relief for debtors.

Non-bankruptcy law, for example, gives the reward to the creditor who first gets to the debtor's property. Bankruptcy law, however, imposes an equality of treatment on the debtor's creditors.

The ordinary creditor under bankruptcy law will not be able to strip the debtor of all of his assets so that slower creditors will receive nothing. Bankruptcy law provides in most cases for a bankruptcy trustee to protect the property of the debtor until it is sold and the proceeds can be distributed in a fair manner to all of the creditors.

*Editor's note: This article is written as a matter of general interest only. It is not to be construed as legal advice, and you should rely on the statements made in the article to govern your actions in any specific case.*



In 1953

## Gamblers nabbed for poker

By Sherry Matthews

It was about this time 30 years ago on June 18 that *Three for Bedroom C and The Stogie* were playing at the Raeford Theatre. Eleven gamblers, arrested at the old Wonderland Theatre building, were sentenced in recorder's court. Here is a description of the trial and other events as recorded in *The News-Journal*:

Sheriff D. H. Hodgin and other officers went to the old Wonderland Theatre building in a northern section of Raeford Monday afternoon and broke up two card games and arrested 15 men on charges of gambling.

George Hollingsworth, who had the place rented, was found not guilty of gambling, but guilty of operating a place where gambling was allowed, a more serious charge. Judgement on this matter was deferred to a later time.

The 11 men pleading guilty to the gambling charge were sentenced to 30 days on the roads. Sentences were suspended on payment of \$10 and cost.

In the same issue of *The News-Journal*, it was reported that a 32-year-old woman was killed instantly after she fell from a truck loaded with "cotton choppers."

Ida Mae Davis, 32 year old woman of Red Springs, was instantly killed at about 6:30 last Friday afternoon when she fell from a truck loaded with cotton choppers. The truck was owned and

### About This Time

operated by Joe McCormick, and there were about 10 cotton choppers on it at the time. Witnesses said it was traveling at about 35 miles an hour.

It appeared from evidence at the coroner's inquest that there had been a fight in the cotton patch on Thursday and at that time Ida Mae Davis, the deceased, had hit a woman, Cary Lee McLaughlin with a stick.

There was no evidence at the inquest that the two had any trouble on the truck before the movements leading directly to the fatal accident.

In a signed statement to the coroner McLaughlin said "I went at her with my knife, and she jumped off the truck."

On July 23, 1953, *The News-Journal* reported a tragic accident that left five county youths dead. The headline read: "County Shocked By Death of Seven-Five Blue Springs Youths Killed in Wreck Friday p.m."

"The worst tragedy of any sort ever to hit this county in the memory of living residents struck suddenly at about 11:45 Friday night when a car carrying five Blue Springs lads collided with a truck carrying two Smithfield men and caused the death of all seven.

The wreck took place on the Laurinburg road three and one-half miles south of Raeford about

30 steps from the home of Mr. and Mrs. R.D. Easterling, and their son Robert, 15, was one of those who lost his life. The boy's father was among the first to reach the scene of the crash, and his mother, who worked at Para Thread Co. until midnight, arrived soon after.

Those who died were Robert Neill Currie, 16, James William Blue, 17, and his brother John A. Blue, 14, Billy Joe Clark, 14, and Robert Easterling, 15.

Patrolmen W.T. Herbin, who investigated the accident, interviewed other drivers on the road at the time. He said one told him that the car carrying the youths had passed him at a high rate of speed a few moments before it crashed into the truck.

Reports are that William Blue, oldest in the group and the only one having a driver's license, was driving the car. He was reported to have been driving it when the boys left an ice cream party at Bethel Church. At this time they had taken Clyde Leach, other lad of the same community, to his home. The others are said to have attended a movie in Raeford and were on their way home when the accident took place.

Officers concluded that the car had veered off the pavement on the right side, and then swerved across the road out of control, apparently turning over directly in front of the truck. The impact was so great that the motor from the 1950 Ford was thrown almost 50 feet."

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