

VIEWPOINTS

Grandchildren are forever

The five-year-old granddaughter walked in the bedroom of her grandparents, she said. "Granddaddy, were you on the ark with Noah?"

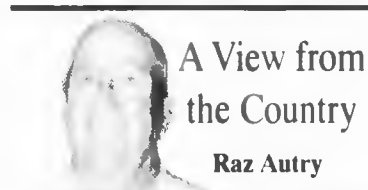
Startled, he replied. "No honey, I wasn't on the ark with Noah."

"Then why didn't you drown?"

I was enjoying such humor when I passed Wayne Collier Elementary school, on my way to see my youngest granddaughter play softball. There were a lot of places I preferred to be rather than at a softball game. Neither is ballet high on my list, needless to say I have been attending the final performance for 15 years. These are your grandchildren. Grandchildren can do a lot of things with grandparents. My three have me wrapped around their little fingers. All three of my grandchildren went to Wayne Collier School. My oldest used me anyway she pleased for show and tell. On one occasion when she was in the third grade, she insisted that I come to her room and make 32 wooden reindeer. Naturally I showed up. The following year she decided that it would be nice of if I made peach ice cream for the entire class. Which I did. When she turned 16 and her father talked to me about buying her a car, I told him I did not believe a youngster needed a car until they were 18 years old. You guessed it, I bought her a car when she turned 16. Unfortunately it lasted only four weeks. While driving in Hope Mills on a wet night, a car in front suddenly stopped... she rammed into the back and destroyed her car. Thankfully she wasn't hurt.

I preached to anyone who would listen, "I told you so." After four weeks I rounded up the money and bought her another. The 1993 Mustang did well and she drove it carefully. As her 12th year started coming to a close and the next step in her life was showing on the horizon, I knew it would be time to purchase another car. Her grandmother, who can squeeze a dollar, came through. I needed help on this one. Since I have two more coming along and the price of cars keeps going up, I can see a blessing in the mule and wagon. Besides people would look good on a Sunday afternoon going downtown, dressed to a tee, riding on a high seat wagon, pulled by a mule — although a mule this day and time would probably cost as much as a car. Remember they don't use gas.

Now I can understand that grand-



A View from the Country
Raz Autry

children can love grandparents more when they buy them cars, but all of us grandparents prayed our grandchildren will love us just as much for things we give them other than the monetary. It has been a wonderful experience, I just hope the peach crop holds up along with me until I can get the other two on their way. I must confess their mother, who is a wonderful mother and doesn't mind using tough love when needed, has been patient with me when I preached to them, "stand in your own shoes, you are judged by the company you keep — and my kicker, it is a long ways over fool's hill; some folks make it and some don't."

Pandy has told them all of this, but she let's me say it again. I would say something about their father, but since he is my son, I had better not brag on him too much; I will let his mother do that.

Parting thought

A cowboy rode into town and stopped at the saloon to quench his thirst. Unfortunately, the locals always had a habit of picking on newcomers. When he finished, he found that his horse had been stolen.

He strode back into the bar, flipped his gun into the air, and caught it above his head without even looking. "Who stole my horse?" he demanded forcefully, firing a shot into the ceiling.

No one answered. "I'm going to have myself another drink and if my horse ain't back outside by the time I'm finished," he said menacingly, "I'm gonna do what I did back in Texas and I don't want to have to do what I done back in Texas."

Some of the locals shifted restlessly.

He had another drink, walked outside and found that his horse was back. He saddled up and started to ride out of town.

One of the patrons wandered out of the saloon and felt brave enough to ask. "Say, pardner, what happened back in Texas?"

The cowboy turned back and said, "I had to walk home."

Letters to Editor policy

The News Journal welcomes Letters to the Editor and encourages readers to express their opinions.

Letters must be signed and include an address and phone number. The street address and phone number will not be published, but are required so we may verify authenticity. The name of the writer and the town the writer is from will be published at the end of the letter.

We reserve the right to edit letters for grammar, as well as those that exceed 300 words. We will not publish letters that we consider to be in poor taste or slanderous. In some cases we may add an editor's note as a post script when we believe a correction, explanation or amplification is warranted. We may also, at our discretion, limit the number of times an individual writer may submit a letter for publication.



Letters to the Editor

Fiscal management, Hurricane Floyd equal two natural disasters, says candidate

As a state and a nation we all shared the grief and suffering resulting from the Hurricane Floyd disaster. We should thank those public and private agencies and individuals who worked so hard to help people put their lives back together. I am sure it will take years for some to rebuild their financial lives.

When Governor Hunt called an emergency session of the General Assembly in December of 1999, his intentions were good. Our fellow citizens were in peril and action needed to be taken by our leaders. Unfortunately, the irresponsible management of your money is what I challenge. Governor Hunt and House and Senate Democrats shovled an \$836 million appropriation through the Legislature threatening Republicans who asked that basic question, "How are we going to account for the spending?" GOP leaders have inferred that they were made to feel like Darth Vader for even asking the question!

A John Locke Foundation letter dated November 22, 1999 (a month before the Legislators met) said "state spending will be far less than expected. The Hunt administration's emergency request for \$1.8 billion from Congress was inflated and its assumptions unrealistic." Gov. Hunt established a private relief fund with his office dictating how the money would be spent. Of those funds

Franklin County, in November of 1999, returned \$36,631 to Hunt saying "We do not have any unmet needs associated with damage from Hurricane Floyd." Other counties had to search for victims to spend the money on. Harnett, in November, had only three applications for this private money. Wake County officials launched a radio campaign to get the money spent and finally received 49 requests for a share of \$72,066 from "Hunt's fund." The SBA's Disaster Area Director, Michael C. Allen, said back in October, "I've got a whole bunch of disaster loan officers out there in 19 disaster recovery centers and three mobile recovery centers with nothing to do." All this took place even before Hunt's request for \$836 billion in December!

Five months later, it was reported to lawmakers that only \$127 million of the \$836 million the Democrats budgeted has been spent. Of federal dollars two-thirds of the \$2.2 billion (Locke had reported that the initial \$1.8 billion was inflated) budgeted is still unspent.

Hunt and the Democratic General Assembly should have allocated our money based only upon reliable fiscal data. Furthermore, they should have made sure that systems were in place to account for subsequent necessary expenditures. This is not

rocket science, but is just good accounting and stewardship of the taxpayers' dollars.

Let's do this. Let's envision a new paradigm. One that government's new and reduced role will be to administer justice while letting individuals and institutions (we already have for this purpose) administer compassion.

Rather than give tax dollars to the IRS and NC Dept. of Revenue, why don't we give that money directly to the Red Cross, our churches, and agencies that are better equipped to provide relief and account for their finances? Let's work on that.

Eddie Goodall
Candidate for NC Senate

'What books should I take with me on vacation?'

This time of the year we ask ourselves what books we should take on vacation.

Here are three suggestions of works by friends of mine who have "self-published" their work. Instead of finding an agent or a publisher, they have organized and arranged for the editing, design, printing, and distribution of their own work.

My first recommendation is "Locust Alley" a new novel by Don Evans,

an editor at the Chapel Hill News.

"Locust Alley" is a detective/mystery story set in Richmond during the Civil War. Evans has constructed a very nice plot around an assassination attempt. By itself it would hold your attention. But what makes his book extraordinary is his genius in bringing Civil War Richmond alive with characters and sub-plots from the Richmond constabulary, from its "red-light" district, its petty crime life, and

high Confederate government corruption.

If you ever read "Gorky Park," a detective story set in Cold War Moscow, "Locust Alley" will remind you of the way in combines a good story with an intriguing setting and characters.

"Locust Alley" has taken off in sales and is now available in many North Carolina bookstores. My second recommendation is "Flame-out" written and published by James Blackburn, one of the prosecuting attorneys who helped put Special Forces doctor Jeffrey MacDonald in jail for the murder of his wife and children at Fort Bragg more than 30 years ago.

Blackburn later became one of the state's best criminal defense attorneys, and then "flamed-out." In a severe depression, he deceived his clients and the courts. Ultimately, he went to jail and lost his license to practice law. "Flame-out" is Blackburn's story of his fall and his crawling back, holding his family together, working as a waiter at the 42nd Street Oyster Bar in Raleigh, getting help from friends and doctors.

"Flame-out" is a lesson for all of us that one of us or one of our loved ones could go off the deep end someday without warning. It is also a lesson that even when we have done terrible things, miracles are possible when we are able to face up to our failures and make a good future.

"Flame-out" has just been published, but it is already available at Quail Ridge Books in Raleigh. If your



One on One
D. G. Martin

local bookstore doesn't have it, I bet they will get it for you.

The third recommendation is "The Merchant of Venice." It is not exactly new and not exactly a book.

It is a small box full of the things a group will need to put on an abbreviated version of Shakespeare's play — multiple copies of the script, directions about how to assign and read parts, a few props. If you have a group of family or friends on vacation, this activity can make for a terrific evening together.

I have a special interest in the success of this version of "The Merchant of Venice" because my family used an earlier version to help have a great vacation several years ago. And I think our experience encouraged the "author" Carl Martin (no kin to me) to make a commercial version. "The Merchant of Venice" is for sale at the on-line gift store of Eliza Taylor at www.e-liza.com. Also, the Regulator Bookshop in Durham has just started to carry it. Your bookstore can probably get it for you, too, if you push them. And you can write Carl Martin directly at 1000 North Duke Street Apt #7 Durham, NC 27701. If you send him a check for \$38.61, he tells me he will send you the entire "The Merchant of Venice" production.

Spirit of jubilee is alive

The black church was born in the midst of turmoil, sorrow and extreme pain for both whites and blacks. Most African in America at that time did not desert their former masters during this time of depression and rebuilding and restoration. Most Africans in America remained in the South to hire out and help rebuild their former master's plantations, businesses and, of course, cultivate their own fields. There was no time for hating, only time for forgiveness, working and celebrating freedom.

The church was the only institution that Africans in America were in charge of. From the black church came schools, colleges/universities, and various social clubs, and political forces. Our forefathers left us a legacy of pride and dignity founded upon spiritual life and values. One such value embraced by the black church is the spirit of Jubilee.

The good book says, "And ye shall hallow the fiftieth year, and proclaim liberty throughout all the land unto all the inhabitants thereof; it shall be a jubilee unto you; and ye shall return every man unto his possession, and ye shall return every man unto his family." (Leviticus 25:10 KJV).

Jubilee is a Levitic Law that states, "every fiftieth year, Hebrew slaves were to be freed, alienated lands re-



All Together Now
Ray P. Owens

turned and restored and the fields were left uncultivated."

I am willing to bet that most Americans do not know that the above scripture is inscribed on the Liberty Bell, and that the British and the American legal systems of bankruptcy laws come out of the jubilee tradition.

Jubilee is a concept which advocates justice, freedom, restoration, and reparation. One well-known teacher announced to everyone, that his mission statement would be a statement of jubilee.

He noted six provisions in his mission statement that is worthy of mentioning; (1) proclaiming good news to poor folk; (2) heal broken hearts; (3) proclaim liberty to the captives; (4) restore sight to the blind; (5) to free those who are oppressed; and (6) to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord.

The spirit of jubilee is alive and well at Freedom Chapel Church as they celebrate 135 years actively living and sharing this spirit.

Quote of the Week

The family of Michael Angelo Holmes, missing for almost a week and believed to have been found dead in a Hoke County pond Friday: "We ask, if it is foul play that the commu-

nity help to see that justice is done so that no other family will have to go through what we've been through the last week and half."

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