

VIEWPOINTS

Sweat on top of sweat

My friend Sam talks about the weather in his column "Around Town." Those who meet in his office every morning to solve the world's problems have some smart crack to make about my weather statements. Regardless, none of them should have any comment about any statement I make, because they were reared the same way I was reared: the only difference, I didn't get above my raising.



A View from the Country
Raz Autry

I know beyond a doubt they don't take the weather predictions of Mighty Mike Maves seriously. Mighty Mike is giving advice about what one should do when it is hot outside. He insists that everyone stay indoors. That is good advice if everyone had been born with a silver spoon in his or her mouth. The wise one hasn't climbed in a tobacco barn when it was 100 degrees outside, neither has he primed tobacco on a day when you could fry an egg on your head. I doubt if he has ever been in a peach orchard when the humidity was so high you had sweat on top of sweat. Those who build houses would like to be in his air conditioned studio, but the man who pays the bill didn't promise air conditioning outside where they work. Strange world, with some strange people.

The weathermen with their advice sorta remind me of the 'ol mountain man who came home after several days of drinking white lightning. He was sick as a dog. Staggering in the door, he asked his wife to pray for him. She started off by saying, "O Lord, please help this old drunken fool." The man raised his head and whispered weakly, "Don't tell Him I am drunk, just tell Him I am sick." Some advice is better left unsaid. I recently read in another newspaper about wealthy couples who were getting a divorce. It seems when they started dividing property, some strange events took place. One couple couldn't agree on visitation rights for the two dogs they owned. This argument nearly scrapped the whole shooting match. One wanted the black lab, the other decided to take the golden retriever. The problem occurred when they started fighting about the weekends the dogs were to visit. If anyone knows anything about dogs, they are going to love the one who feeds them last.

Such goings-on caused me to reflect on what property rights Ireni and I would fight over if after 50 years we decided to part ways. Now that is not going to happen; if so, she wouldn't want the peach orchard. Everyone has heard her say, "If Raz dies first, I am going to take a chain saw and cut the trees down." Therefore, the orchard is out in a property settlement.

She probably would want the fixed-up cat. Not the goats, maybe the horse. Although he is so old he would be of little use to anyone. He does look better since his tail has grown out. The goats ate it right after I bought him. Once he discovered what they were doing, he picked up one of them by a horn and shook him; that broke up the tail eating.

My life mate probably wouldn't want the tractors; neither would she want the pickup with 255 thousand miles on it. The outdoor stove might cause some problems. It takes wood and sometimes the wood gets heavy to lift.

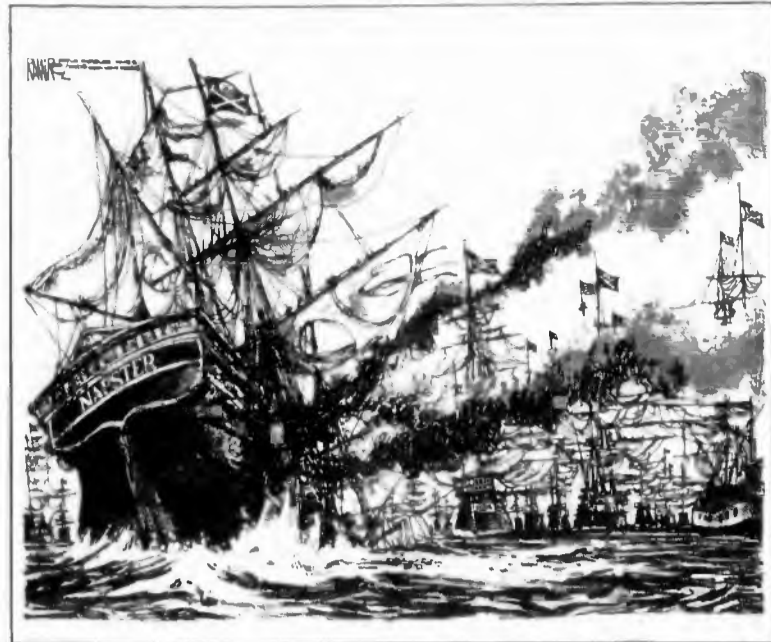
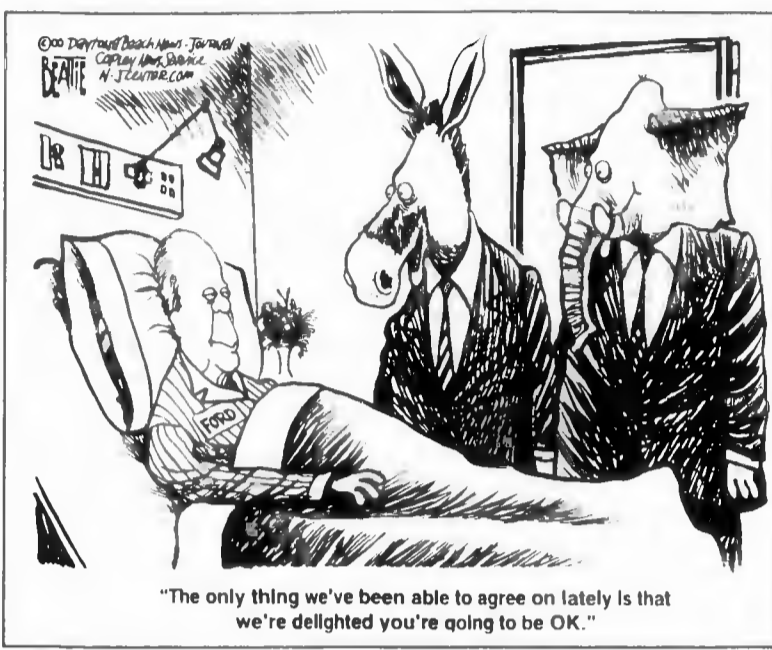
Oh well, we will stick it out, because she is the best friend I have in the world.

Having said this, I don't look for a divorce lawyer to come calling. If so, I would be like the drunk who was going across the graveyard when he fell into a freshly dug grave. It had been raining, so the mud on the side of the grave was slick; he kept slipping back when he tried to climb out. He yelled for a while and nobody heard him, so he finally got tired and just sat over in the corner and went to sleep.

Another drunk came along during the night and fell in there with him. He, too, started trying to climb out, without much luck. The first drunk woke up and watched the guy jumping, clawing at the mud, trying to get out of there, until the guy got tired and stood there in silence for a second.

The first drunk spoke from his dark corner, "Might as well relax, buddy, you'll never get out of this place."

But he did.
My parting thought — Think Doppler 5000.



Addiction: passing it on

Jeffery became irritated when his wife awakened him. He became doubly irritated when she reminded him that she had to go to work, and it was his responsibility to see that the children were awakened and fed before the bus picked them up for school. He still had a buzz on from last night's drinking bout with some of the boys.

"Get up!" he yelled as he shoved open the bedroom door of his 13-year-old son Junior. He did the same to his 11-year-old daughter Tammy. "Hurry up and wash up!" he screamed.

Jeffery opened the refrigerator and discovered only one can of beer and



All Together Now
Ray P. Owens

became even more irritated as he popped open the can and took a swig. Jeffery was an angry man. He was angry that his wife worked and supported the family. He was angry that he seemingly could not find the right job. He was angry because he thought that his wife and children considered him a bad provider, and less than a man. So he took his anger out on his son.

"You've been in the bathroom too long, boy!" he said as he grabbed his arm and snatched his him out of bathroom (bumping his young head against the door), "Let Tammy in there!"

Junior took his anger out on Tammy as they waited for the school bus to pick them up. He punched her on the arm and called her names. Tammy warned Junior that if he hit her again she would tell Dad that he had stolen two cans of beer from the fridge last night.

Junior stopped hitting her, but vowed to get even later. Junior drank one can in the school bathroom at 10 a.m. and shared the other beer with several friends at noon. At 1 p.m. Junior got into a fight.

Among youth ages 12 to 17, an estimated 1.1 million meet the diagnostic criteria for dependence on illicit drugs, and 915,000 are dependent on alcohol.

The month of September is National Alcohol and Drug Addiction Recovery Month. Over the next few weeks, I will present to you, the reading public, the challenge of Recovery, Get Ready! Get Ready! Get Ready!

Rabies threat continues to be real

By TOM SQUIER
Rabies is almost taking a back burner right now with so many people being concerned about mosquito borne diseases like the deadly West Nile Virus of New York and New England and Equine Encephalitis here locally and in the South.

Rabies is a very real threat. Surrounding counties have reported rabies cases in wild animals. A shortage of animal control personnel may actually be resulting in under reporting of rabies infected animals and threats here in the Sandhills. My wife, Frances, recently visited near Lenoir. There they have experienced some 37 rabid animal incidents already this season. In one situation, a rabid fox attacked a woman riding a four-wheeler and bit her on the foot. In nearby Raleigh, a rabid bat was found dead in a house.

That brings me back to a point made in the past — bats are usually pictured as carriers of rabies in anti-rabies campaigns. We rarely see a live rabid bat. These tiny creatures usually succumb to the disease before attacking people. More people are accidentally bitten by snakes than bats and the previous is a very rare situation.

People would do well to avoid contact with snakes and leave them alone. We would also be better off and safer if we didn't mess with bats and other wild animals found in the wild. Don't catch little baby raccoons and other animals. The threat of rabies has become so great in recent years that animal control officers cannot catch and transfer those raccoons that come around to eat the cat food you put out late in the evening to a better location. Raccoons can only be moved to a different part of the property on which they were caught or they must be "put down." It is against the law to bring raccoons in from other areas and release them to "hunt" with trained dogs.

With so much construction in the area combined with timbering operations eliminating forests and trees and still on fire, continuing their prescribed burns, this is a time we are very likely to encounter wild animals. They are showing up in our yard and we come face to face with animals

when we are fishing, picking wild berries and just hiking in the woods. As we see from the many nature shows on television, animals are supposed to act wild, but not strange. There is a subtle difference that we should learn to recognize and educate our children.

Animals and kids

We trust that when youngsters are at home or in the yard they will be safe, particularly from wild animals. It didn't work with me, but children, especially very young ones, should be taught to stay away from any wild animals they might encounter, and to also avoid any cats and dogs that they don't know.

Several counties have already reported as many rabies cases in pets or feral animals as they had all last season. "Feral" animals, by the way, are those cats and dogs that have been abandoned in most cases by their owners and have taken up living in the wild. Feral animals could also include offspring of abandoned cats and dogs or even lost hunting dogs from last season. Many of these wild born puppies are undernourished and though their parents may have been vaccinated against the rabies virus, they themselves are particularly vulnerable to this and other diseases. That is what we mean by strange behavior as opposed to being wild. Foxes and raccoons are generally not seen in broad daylight unless something startles them.

You may see a fox around dawn or dusk or when you cut on the porch light at night, but raccoons are virtually totally night time animals. When you see them in the daylight, that is a clue that something might be wrong. Often we unknowingly invite foxes, raccoons and possums around the home by putting out cat or dog food after work or supper. That is a good way to attract wild animals but not a smart thing to do on a regular basis.

Any animal will tend to be aggressive if you happen upon it while it is young of its own, but generally, wild animals won't come to people. They may be curious, but they don't investigate or approach people as a rule. If you have wild animals come to your picnic or back yard while you're still

there, it is a good idea to move away.

Rabid animals go through phases and they don't always look like the ones we see on television. When they get to foaming at the mouth, losing loss of their back legs or biting themselves, they are just about dead. They are easy to spot, but strange-acting wild animals should be avoided. Often rabid animals will be out in daylight and around people when they shouldn't be and they seem to be unaware of noises and other attempts to frighten them away. It is the bite or scratch of the rabid animal that breaks the skin and allows the virus to enter your body.

If you see suspicious animals in your area, you should call 9-1-1 and get out of harm's way. Even if the animal turns out to be rabid, you can find yourself in trouble for discharging a firearm in the city limits, besides it being dangerous. This doesn't mean don't enjoy the great outdoors or your yard, but use common sense and educate children.

Occasionally, you encounter rabid animals as just plain bad luck. A boy in Asheboro recently woke up to find a rabid bat attached to his toe. He caught it in a towel and put it in a box. It was tested for rabies, and now he is undergoing the series of shots to protect him. The only way to truly determine if an animal is rabid is to cut off its head and have the folks in Raleigh test its brain. That is why with pets we allow suspicious ones to be quarantined in a facility for two weeks after a bite or attempted bite.

Get pets vaccinated

The best thing we can do for our pets are to have them vaccinated against rabies and to have them spayed or neutered. Unwanted pets are a major problem in our area. Call the local Humane Society to find out when there will be a rabies shot clinic and take your dogs and cats. Also, ask which doctors participate in low cost spay and neuter programs.

Please advise your children not to play with stray dogs and cats and to especially avoid the temptation of picking up baby wild animals they may encounter in the yard or woods. Rabies is something we can beat.

Quote of the Week

Hoke Correctional Institution Superintendent Cordelia Clark after a fire drill at the facility which involved Hoke firefighters and other emergency and safety personnel: "It was a good experience. I take my hats off to you guys. I thought we had a tough job but you are volunteers... It feels good to know if we had a serious fire, we'd have people who'd come to our aid as quickly as you folks."

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Deadline,
Monday Noon

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