

**Doesn't He Know
Christmas Doesn't Come In January?**



EDITORIALS

*Never Forget That These Editorials Are The Opinion Of One Man
— And He May Be Wrong*

At Year's End

This will be the last whack at 1963 that this page has, and we're reluctant to let it slip into eternity without having this last few words.

Our nation and the world were stunned as the year neared its end with the tragic, wasteful, brutal murder of President John F. Kennedy, and all of us old enough to comprehend to any degree the enormity of this crime will surely remember 1963 for this reason if for no other.

But 1963 should not be remembered only as a year of great national tragedy, but should be remembered as a great and good year for us lucky Americans.

Inflation to some degree was kept under control in this year. In spite of all the stress and strain of both national and international affairs 1963 has to be judged as one of the most prosperous in the brief history of our country.

It was not perfect, but there never will be a perfect year. To our own small corner of

the world 1963 was blessed with good crop weather and this blessed our major industry: farming, which in turn blessed us all whose livelihood comes either directly or indirectly from the good earth.

Hurricanes threatened but didn't tear our section apart as they have done several times in recent years.

Despite tensions fostered by outside agitators our area has been spared any real damage and the relations between our white and colored citizens are no worse, and possibly in some respects are better than when 1963 started.

We had a great many problems when 1963 began, and as it ends we still have plenty that are demanding answers. But life would be dull, indeed, if there were no problems, if everything were perfect.

To this paper, 1963 was unusually good in many respects and we end the year by thanking each of you who has helped in any way to make 1963 the good year that it was.

Ingenuity Needed

To a rather alarming degree the banking of North Carolina in general and in East Carolina in particular is falling into fewer and fewer hands. This has good as well as bad points. On the bad side, of course, is the slacking off of competition.

But on the good side is the greater strength offered by larger banks. There is, however, some cause to wonder about the ingenuity of these big strong banks that now dominate East Carolina banking.

Well-heeled, they are. Dominant they surely are, but the leadership that is badly needed in the realm of farm credit is lacking. There are numerous directions in which these well-heeled banks could not only make themselves a little more well-heeled, but could also make it possible for other people to make more money.

Banks, of course, are bound to play their cards rather close to their chest, but profiting as they do from the business of East Carolina they should allocate some of their surplus to more risky projects.

Feed lot finishing of beef is an obvious

direction for the corn rich economy of East Carolina, but few farmers have the capital, and the gambling instinct to take a flyer in this direction, although the few who have in the past have made money doing so.

But for these huge banks, with their far-flung interests it would not be so risky, nor such a venture into the unknown to bring some of the surplus of feeder steers in West Carolina to the surplus of corn in East Carolina.

During the months of normal feed lot operation there is also sufficient farm labor to do the chores that have to be done if this venture succeeds. It dove tails with our tobacco economy, but lacks the "grease" on the wheels that ought to be provided by progressive bankers.

A few model projects of this variety, publicized and properly carried off would lead to an expansion of this income source, and this would add a bit to the income of our farmers, as well as to our bankers.

The banks may not need it, but our farmers do.

Minimum Acreage

For a long time our country has had a minimum wage law. We think it is time for designers of the farm program to give consideration to a minimum acreage base for tobacco farmers.

We are especially concerned for the veteran tobacco grower, whose acreage has been cut below the subsistence level. The new growers are a different problem, for they have gone into the tobacco growing business with their eyes wide open.

But there are thousands of small farmers, who never tried to use all the loopholes in the tobacco program to increase their acreage and who today stand reduced to an acreage that is impractical and unfair.

For much too long the tobacco program has been directed by the big acreage farmers, of from 50 acres allocation on up. It is past the time when some consideration ought to be given to the average size tobacco farmer, and especially to those veteran farmers in the below average categories.

Since the vast majority of tobacco farmers are small farmers it will be argued that in order for a cut to be of any real consequence it has to hit these small ones as well as the big ones.

Perhaps this is true, but if it is at all practical and possible their should be a minimum tobacco quota below which no family should be asked to try to survive.

Farm Credit

Elsewhere in this issue we reprint an editorial by Charles Shuman, president of the American Farm Bureau Federation, in which he urges that farm credit and farm planning both need major improvements to meet the challenge of this era. We commend it to our readers.

And we suggest that all owners of farms study the possibility of setting up their operation, and their estate in such a fashion that some long range planning may be possible.

As Shuman suggests, the change of ownership every generation under our present system confuses farm management because it prevents long range plans.

The farm should either be set up as a trust, incorporated or devised to one heir with other remuneration being allocated to other survivors.

Estate planning is relatively unknown to farms, either big or little; but it has been an accepted practice in business for a long time. Today farming is no longer a "Way of Life", but is a high investment, highly technical business that cannot hold its head above water on a hit and miss basis.

The farm owner who has only one son or one daughter has a simple answer, but this is the exception rather than the rule. When the farm owner with a number of children dies without estate planning he almost certainly imposes a break up of his farming operation. All of us in Eastern Carolina have seen farm after farm broken up because of this because it is a rare thing for two, three or more brothers and sisters to be able to agree on just how a farm should be managed.

Some want "out" and this imposes a sudden and large financial burden on those who want to stay with the farm. It hampers their credit at a time when they are most likely to need credit.

We urge all our farm owning friends to ponder this problem and to do something about it before it is too late, and it may be later than you think.

Sad as it makes the kids to read about snow to the south of us, snow to the west of us and snow to the north of us; it's nice for those of us who have to "carry the mail" to live down east here where the Gulf Stream protects us from all but the trickiest and meanest snow storms. If you happen to be a snowophile, we'll send you a post card with pictures of a lot of snow . . . Pretty, but oh, so messy.

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**PERSONAL
PARAGRAPHS
BY
JACK RIDER**

Last Friday in a radio editorial I suggested that both economy and common sense would be served by selling the old post office property on Queen Street, rather than giving it to the city and county for use as a library. This is a point of view that I have repeatedly voiced in the past months. It earned me the most severe tongue-lashing I have had in recent years from Librarian Lou Posey.

She asserted, "You're absolutely looney," and from that mild beginning she went on to explore the subject of my daftness in more detail. "You and the Free Press run around shooting off your mouth when you don't know what you're talking about! Why don't you call me and get the facts?"

Mrs. Posey also reminded me, "I don't run around telling you how to run Rider Printing Company!" At about this point my usual calm patience ran out and I reminded Mrs. Posey that Rider Printing Company was not supported by the taxpayers of Lenoir County and the City of Kinston, as she and her job were.

Now I'm not repeating this brief banter of last Friday just to scold Mrs. Posey publicly, but to point up a weakness that too many public servants suffer. Once they become entrenched in a given spot they assume that all of government, and a major part of life itself revolves around their own private sun. This is good up to a point, because it creates what we call "The Dedicated Public Servant". And that Mrs. Posey surely is. She is an excellent librarian, and has done a remarkable job to stimulate the growth of her domain in her tenure.

But Mrs. Posey in spite of her excellence as a librarian is a damned fool when it comes to public relations. For years she badgered officials for more money for her library on the basis of how much money was being spent on recreation—and at a time when the recreation department was keeping the grass cut around "her library". She finally found, I trust, that the way to get money for one's department was to sell that department's virtues and not to knock another department.

But she has not yet learned, on the basis of Friday's explosion to me, that it is NOT the duty of news media to determine the motives and the plans of any given governmental department. That is the duty of the directors of those departments. It is the duty of news media to inform the public of what is publicly done with public property and public money.

It is my unalterable opinion that the best interests of library service in Lenoir County would be set back 20 years by having the library tied for 20 years to the old post office site. It is Mrs. Posey's perfect right to have a different opinion, but she as the director of the library and as a public servant has the responsibility of selling her bill of goods to the public. The fact that both the Free Press and this paper oppose this move tends to indicate at the very least, that she has not sold her bill of goods to us.

And although in this day of reverse selling she may feel she has made her point by reminding me how "looney" I am and that the Free Press and I run around shooting off our mouths when we don't know what we're talking about; she has not yet sold me. Because epithetical attacks don't phase an ex-truck driver, ex-sergeant and present country newsman such as myself.

Months ago if there were any logic in the plan to renovate the old post office in its congested, parkingless area into a library Mrs. Posey should have done her missionary work. I'm afraid that she could not have converted me to her belief even with soft words and kind consideration and I know damned well that she cannot with insults.

We wish all our friends, and even some of our enemies the very merriest holiday season and hope they remember that among the nobler virtues is that of temperance, and temperance in all things, because too much to drink, to eat, or speeding too much can ruin any occasion.