

Mountain Musings

By Gene Byrd

Mr. Yellowjacket: dear readers as did the "jacket" venom in my "tired blood". Some people that I would not have suspected of doing such a thing have confessed to reading my column; it just took the yellowjackets to "smoke them out into the open". However, I warn you that it is dangerous to laugh at the old Muser. May I cite the case of one Shirley Davidson who did read my column last week and could be heard all over Lakewood laughing and laughing. She did forthwith step out into the yard where she was attacked and stung twice. I further refer you to the case of one Nell McAfee whose unrestrained guffawing and laughter over the pitiable plight of her former pastor almost caused a "local emergency". Perhaps there are

others who as yet have not confessed. To "frost the cake", one of my good members, Mae Burnette by name, greeted me at church with "Good morning, Mr. Yellowjacket." (By the way, Happy Birthday, Mrs. Burnette.) My "partner in crime" Boyce Biddix tells me that another winged demon tracked him down for another whack at him. **Echoes from Homecoming:** Due to the battle of the Byrds and Bees, I did not do full justice to Homecoming at Tabernacle. As always I enjoyed myself to the fullest extent with these old friends. People that I have known and respected from childhood were there; I met new friends and renews old acquaintances. The threat of rain hampered the attendance somewhat, but the hospitality was in no way affected. The absence of Oden Walker, Mrs. York and Mrs. Ella Byrd, who were present last year and since the Yellowjacket was a topic of discussion during the afternoon. John Burnett avowed that there were no better cooks in the world than at Tabernacle. Bascombe Burnett (I thank for the tomatoes, Bas) accused me among other things of being a little boy that it was a little bit of a "fuff". The prestige and sweetness of years was added by the presence of Nora Grant and Ella Kerlee; there were young ones to pick up the traditions. The pastor, the Rev. Blackwelder, graced the occasion with both his piety and wit. (I like you, Bascombe, with mine too, Brother Preacher.) The music was good; I like the Tabernacle Youth choir. Mrs. Hansen's solo fitted the occasion perfectly and somebody picked my favorite hymn in "The Sweet By and By" to close the proceedings. **December and May** There must be something in that spring water I have been drinking at North Fork. I drove to the Homecoming in "The Ark", my little Ford pickup, accompanied by my two daughters, Judy, aged 17 and Jackie, nearly seven. Now Judy is a somewhat poised and mature appearing young lady, but I was overcome by something I overheard. The Rev. Blackwelder in greeting Judy, I was nearby shaking hands and working up my best Homecoming appetite, quoth Mrs. Byrd in a dulcet tone, "Now is this, Mrs. Byrd or Miss Byrd?" I didn't catch Judy's response; I was exulting too much over the "turning of the worm". **Scandal on North Fork:** That Judy is going to get me in trouble yet. When we were expecting Jackie seven summers ago, Mrs. Byrd was having to stay home quite a bit and Judy was my "buddy", attending church functions and the like with me. The Ridgecrest Staff was conducting a revival at Mountain View church where I was then the pastor. One night at service Judy was sitting by me and I had my arm across the back of the pew. One of the ladies of the church, not realizing who I was sitting by, turned to one of her friends and said some-

thing like this, "That old preacher ought to be ashamed of himself. There his wife is at home, unable to travel, and there he sits with his arm around one of those Ridgecrest girls!" **Changes Made:** Owen High "ain't what she used to be". Our new principal, Fred Martin, has assumed the administrative reins laid aside by N. C. Shuford. He has taken a number of decisive steps that mark him as a man of courage and action. For one thing all smoking has been eliminated except at the lunch period and that only in the immediate area of the incinerator. A number of changes have been made in the schedule of duties of the various faculty members and the lunch schedule has undergone a drastic overhaul. The 10-minute "break" in the afternoon has been omitted and the periods equalized in time. Albert, Mr. Martin is a big man physically, and Mr. Shuford does not argue. Martin makes me think a good deal of Mr. Shuford before years and experience mellowed him into the man the students of today remember. (I was so scared of Mr. Shuford when I was a little boy that it was a five period day. They say that based on respect, and while I doubt if the students at Owen have learned to love their new principal in so short a time, I am sure they respect him greatly. As time goes on, I trust that affection will follow in a few years. The administrative post at Owen is not a place for a Mouse; I sincerely believe we have a Man. I like the way Fred Martin has stepped into a big pair of shoes. I know he has the best wishes and support of the Valley as he tackles the year's work ahead of him. **Out of the Rut:** I was somewhat shaken up when I saw the new schedule. Since we have been at Owen I have pretty consistently taught only U. S. history and economic-socialogy. In my two daughters' Judy, aged 17 and Jackie, nearly seven. Now Judy is a somewhat poised and mature appearing young lady, but I was overcome by something I overheard. The Rev. Blackwelder in greeting Judy, I was nearby shaking hands and working up my best Homecoming appetite, quoth Mrs. Byrd in a dulcet tone, "Now is this, Mrs. Byrd or Miss Byrd?" I didn't catch Judy's response; I was exulting too much over the "turning of the worm".

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Southern Bell Will Construct Relay System

Southern Bell Telephone company will begin construction soon on a new \$1,250,000 radio relay system between Charlotte and Asheville, M. C. Bowers, district engineer for the firm, announced today. Radio relay is a system that beams voice signals through the air without the use of wires, at almost the speed of light. The new system will serve as a major long distance telephone artery for the Piedmont and western sections of North Carolina. The new radio relay system, which will carry up to 3,000 simultaneous long distance telephone conversations, is being constructed to meet the increasing telephone needs in, and between, the Piedmont and western sections of the state. Because of this area's continuing rapid growth and development, present long distance facilities would soon be unable to handle the mounting number of calls in this section of the state, Mr. Bowers said. The system is scheduled to be in operation by the summer of 1960. An important feature of the new system is that it will provide a "weather-proof" communications system for the area. This is of major concern in the western part of the state where wintry weather can play havoc with aerial wire and cable.

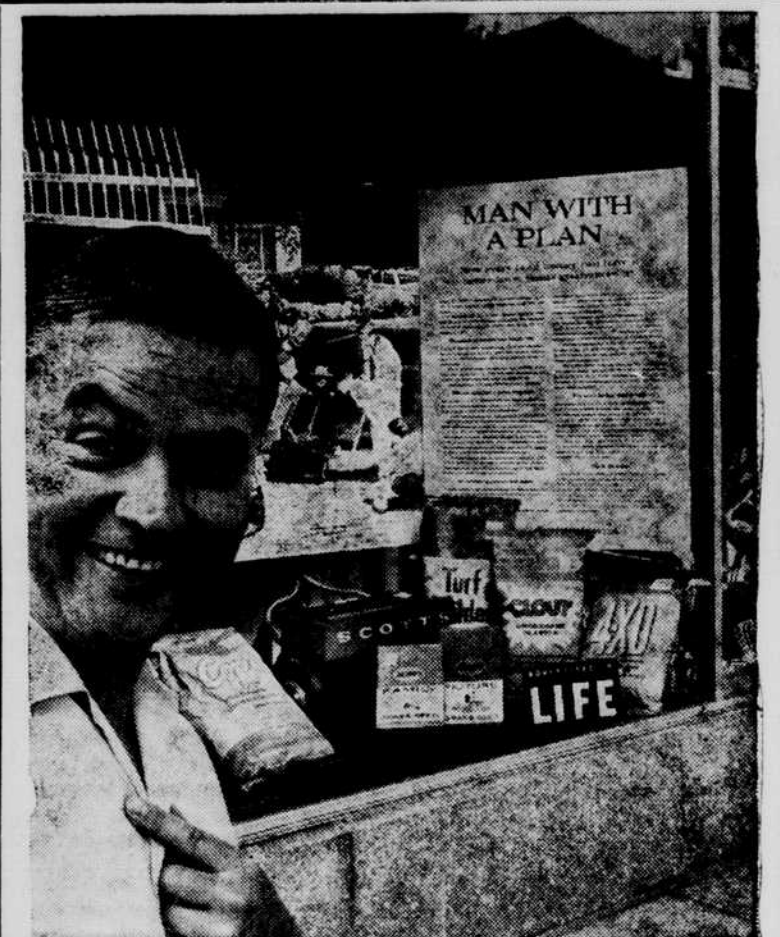
Farmers Still Rate High As Bank Customer

North Carolina's emphasis on industrialization has not caused the State's farmers to be pushed to the back seat when they go to their banks. In fact, Tar Heel bankers bet more heavily on their farmer customers in 1958 than in any previous year in history. The bet paid off—for both the farmer and the banker. At the beginning of 1959, North Carolina banks had almost \$75 million in outstanding farm loans—a seven per cent increase over the previous year. That meant that banks provided about twice as much money for farmers as any other institutional lender, including the Federal government. For example, insurance companies held about \$34 million in farm loans. Production Credit associations lent about \$30 million. The president of the North Carolina Bankers Association, G. Harold Myrick of Lincolnton, expressed pleasure at the news. Said Myrick: "It would have been short-sighted for our banks to have ignored the plain fact that agriculture still is North Carolina's biggest industry. We're making great strides in our industrial program in this State, but it's just common sense to maintain our interest and support of agriculture. We'd be foolish if we didn't." For more than ten years the North Carolina Bankers Association has led the nation in its farm program. The bankers' organization spends more money and devotes more effort to its agricultural activities than any other two phases of its operation combined. For example, the bankers operate a two-week school for young farmers each February. About 150 top-flight farmers attend the school, with all expenses paid by their hometown banks, to learn about latest developments in farm technology and credit. Numerous other farm programs, including a two-day farm credit conference attended by hundreds of bankers, are held each year. The NCBA is a joint sponsor of a statewide land judging program. Last year, an estimated 17,000 high school farm boys participated in that program. These things, NCBA President Myrick said, "are no mere contribution to farmers than to the banks. We realize that if the farmer suffers, everybody suffers in North Carolina. We intend to continue to do our part to keep that from happening."

On those Sunday afternoon drives during the summer months, your eyes open for cars darting out of side roads and driveways. Sometimes people who use the little-traveled roads grow careless because they are not used to much traffic past their homes.

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