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Folk-Ways and Folk-Speech

# Approaches to woodpile

by Rogers Whitener  
Slim Davis is a rhyming man from Kannapolis, and two volumes of his work which recently came my way indicate that he has also been a rambling man.  
Separate titles of his 40-plus years of writing include tributes to hoboes, cowboys, truck drivers, musicians and sundry other representatives of Americana whom he has encountered along the way.  
Also included are reminiscences of mountain life and the homely tasks and pleasures of rural boyhood.  
One poem in particular, which he calls "The Mountain

Drone," strikes an appropriate note for winter weather and the task of cutting firewood.  
The Mountain Drone  
King Winter breathes a warning to every wildwood tree,  
And moves with stealthy quiet across the browning leaf;  
He swells his mighty cheeks with a gentle autumn breeze,  
And sends an icy prelude with a light and nippy freeze!  
Oh, the denizens of the forest get busy with a will,  
And store up ample food against the winter's holding chill;  
The farmer garners harvest to feed each hungry mouth,

And shorter days ever lean the sun farther to the south!  
Dying leaves turn yellow and yellow leaves turn brown;  
They quiver with impatience and then come sailing down;  
Every child of Mother Nature knows exactly what to do,  
To live in cozy comfort the entire winter through.  
But fixin' wood don't suit me, an' I quit before I fire,  
And so in zero weather—why, I seldom have a fire!  
Although cutting wood may provide both exercise and pleasure for the Ronald Reagans of the world, the average man has always shied away from the job until neces-

sity forced him to do it.  
Somehow my dim memories of early boyhood days on a McDowell County farm had until recently led me to believe that most farmers set a time for cutting and sawing the winter's supply of wood for stove and fireplace, always by the sign and sufficiently early to guarantee dryness when used.  
No way, according to some of my oldtimer friends. Oh, there were the ant types who stacked their winter wood supply neatly in the shed or barn, but many were grasshoppers who were caught by cold weather and frequently

had to lay ax and saw to the nearest fuel at hand, be it a section of rail fence, a scrub oak or a valuable walnut tree.  
Something of this nature must have been on Edd Presnell's mind when he once complained to me that he was having trouble finding the right kind of wood to craft his dulcimers. "Heck," he said, "I'm paying outlandish prices for the kind of stuff I used to burn—if I can find it at all."  
It would seem that nowadays the woodcutter should have little trouble in maintaining a supply of fuel, armed as he is with the power saw, sometimes a power splitter,

scientifically designed wedges and a variety of axes. Even the novice should be able to down as much timber in a day as his grandfather could in a week.  
But, as Slim Davis would say, drones are still drones regardless of the tools at hand. And in some households today the woodpile dwindles and the fire goes out.  
Readers are invited to send folk materials to "Folk-Ways and Folk-Speech," Box 376, Appalachian State University, Boone, NC 28608.

## Are Americans optimistic?

Almost half of North Carolina adults polled this past October believe their lives will be better in five years, but only one-third think life for the United States will be better, according to the Carolina Poll.

The statewide telephone survey of 625 adults aged 18 and over was sponsored by the School of Journalism at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

Students from advanced journalism classes asked, "Do you think that five years from now your own life will be better than it is now, worse or about the same?" A separate question was asked about the future of the country.

Forty-six percent of the respondents said they thought their lives would be better in five years, but only 33 percent thought life for the country would improve in the same period.

"I'm starting out in life with a new job and a wife," said a 25-year-old male from Bladen County. He predicted his life would be better in five years.

A 48-year-old Mecklenburg County man who thought life for the country would be worse, said: "Young people don't care. No one wants to work and no one wants to fight."

The poll found that respondents' optimism about their future was related to age, education level and income.

Sixty percent of those under age 30 said their lives would be better, compared with 23 percent of those aged 60 or older.

In an interview after the poll was conducted, Dr. Wilbert Edgerton, professor of psychiatry and psychology at UNC-CH, said, "I think young people are generally . . . going to be optimistic. They're coming on professionally and so on."

"We're brought up in this culture to go on achieving things. Most older people are of a notion they've already achieved what it is they are going to reach."

Fifty-seven percent of the college-educated respondents said their lives would be better, compared with 45 percent of the high school-educated and 24 percent of the grade school-educated.

Only one-quarter of those with grade-school educations thought life for the country would be better. Almost one-third of the high school-educated said life for the country would improve.

"I think generally the opportunity to get ahead, to make a living, goes up with education," Edgerton said. "That, as much as anything, may account for it."

Income had a similar influence on optimism. Of those earning less than \$10,000 a year, 35 percent expected better lives in the next five years. But 46 percent of those earning \$10,000 to \$20,000 annually expected improvement. The most optimism (56 percent) came from those earning more than \$20,000 a year.

Dr. Darnell Hawkins, assistant professor of sociology at UNC-CH, said most people thought their lives would improve because American people are optimistic overall.

"People think things have to improve because of improvement cycles in the past," he said in an interview. "Generally, Americans are just very optimistic people."

Telephone numbers of the people interviewed were selected by a technique of random-digit dialing to include unlisted and new numbers. People without telephones are not represented. Results of the survey were analyzed through a computer and are considered accurate 95 percent of the time.

by journalism students  
of UNC-CH School of Journalism

## This is the law

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### Pre-need burial contracts

Mrs. Smith, an elderly widow with no children, wanted to make sure there would be money for her funeral and burial. In fact, she wanted to go so far as to arrange her own funeral and pay for it in advance.

What options are available to her?  
Of course, she could make the funeral arrangements with her funeral director, and she could set aside the money in her savings account.  
But North Carolina law also

provides protection for her if she wants to pay the money to the funeral director in advance.

If she makes the arrangements prior to death and also pays the funeral director, he must deposit the funds in a bank or savings and loan. If she later changes her mind, she may withdraw the funds.  
These so-called "pre-need burial contracts" are becoming more and more prevalent in North Carolina.

## Christians to be involved

Written and illustrated  
by A. Wayne Wilhelm

Our world is being torn asunder by war, crime and other acts of evil men. Jesus warned of times like these as signs of the end of the age. Which suggests that disaster lies ahead. In this context of foretold events, how possibly can there be, but there is, an attitude practiced today which emphasizes what religion will do for us, as if God's purpose is to keep us happily optimistic, with our piety never to be disturbed by the problems of the world? And when problems do surface despite our attempt to down play them, surely positive thinking will take care of them.

Little is said about God's demands on us. Voicing that would be negative thinking. To suggest that God does make demands upon Christians is embarrassing. Why bring that up? So let's avoid all these requirements, hook our hammock to a cloud in a paradise of our own making and be well insulated from the evil inclinations of fallen men. Involvement would disturb one's peace of mind.

However, the Bible does not advocate the easy life for the Christian, a life overflowing with God's goodies. It does state that disciples of Christ are to be co-workers and actively a part of God's plan of redemption—a plan which can change evil men of this world, so that they may be redeemed from their sinful ways through the sacrifice of His Son. Christians are to be implicated in this through prayer and action, which implies that legs should be put under those

prayers.  
Christians are an effective part of God's plan, and are with Christ—when they are willing to support every principle Christ taught. Unless they are striving for that supreme point of harmony and kinship

is happening is against the principles that Christ taught? These "happenings" should not be tolerated, no matter where found, in the secular world or in the church. When Christians are obedient to Christ, their religious convict-

wrongdoing.  
Between right and wrong there is a cleavage. To be neutral where evil exists is an impossible position. The Christian life demands decision. A neutral stance may be a way to retain an image of popularity in the eyes of the undiscerning, but God's opinion is more valuable than anything else. Although God mercifully loves all who sin, He loves with an everlasting love those who are faithful to His laws and principles.

The basic truth that God loves us has led many to neglect one important aspect of biblical teaching—God's wrath. There are over 580 references to God's wrath in the Old Testament, and the same concept of God's wrath persists in the New Testament. The love of God is not an insipid thing that operates without regard to the interest of those He loves. Rather, wrath identifies with His love by angry indignation against every evil inclination in the beloved. The pattern is an example for Christians to follow—to hate evil, but love the evildoer. How? By prayer, and then by gently admonishing, in a loving manner.

Christians, like Christ whom they are dedicated to serve, should share with Him a passionate concern for their fellow man. They are never to assume a passive "don't bother me" attitude. To be in God's will they must be intolerant of evil. And more importantly, let their intolerance be known by their courageous stand for Christ.



of purpose, they are, in reality, against Christ. He said, "No servant can serve two masters . . . You cannot serve God and mammon" (Luke 16:13).  
The Master requires an answer to an important question. What is a Christian to do in a situation where what

ion will get into everything they do and every choice they make, whether in the church, at home or work, in politics or social relationships. Their entire personality will be saturated with Christ, and they will be intolerant, as the Holy Spirit within leads, of any

## Reflections Inauguration Day

by Gretchen Corbett  
United States awaits with awe, wonderment and solemnity under the far-flung red, white and blue banners waving across the deserts, mountains and lowlands as the television screen sets the stage and thousands along Pennsylvania Avenue get ready for the Inauguration of the 40th President of its fifty union states.

Cheers will dissipate into yells, cries, shouts, hoorahs and back slapping with the signal of the United States Army Bands. The parade is on. Flashing beauties, prancing horses and stately dignitaries are the prelude to the Inauguration.

Flashbacks of previous inaugurations are frequent. Thoughts of the nation's first president, George Washington, reveal him with a heavy heart. He wished he could stay at Mount Vernon, the farm that he loved. Being the young nation's first president would be difficult. So many things would have to be started. So many ways of doing things to be decided upon. So many problems to be settled. If all these things were not done right the nation would come apart. With his worries and fears his fellow Americans gave him the assurance he could serve his country well and responsibly.

There were no rules or regulations to go by for the nation's first inauguration. There were those who wanted the ceremony to be elaborate, like a king coming to the throne. He thought the idea absurd. He did not know of anything he had done to make the people think he wanted to

become a ruler.  
The initial Inauguration Day was simple but kept dignified. It showed that the presidency of the United States was an important position, one that should always be treated with respect and honor. The building was splendid and beauti-



Gretchen Corbett

ful, luster on marble floors with the ceilings of sky blue with a design of the sun and thirteen states. A table covered with a red cloth was moved out on the balcony where the Bible was placed. The balcony was where the ceremony took place.

Washington dressed with care for the occasion. He wore a brown suit made of cloth woven in America, rather than a splendid uniform of a general. He did not want the people to think that the government was to be run by the army. Silver buttons with stamped design of the federal eagle trimmed the suit. So were the silver buckles on his

shoes designed. He had the look of the president of the United States, strong and sure. He was given the oath of office and served it well.

January 20, 1981, will once again hear the booming voice asking the President-elect Reagan these same words: "Do you solemnly swear that you will faithfully execute the office of the President of the United States, and will, to the best of your ability, preserve, protect, and defend the Constitution of the United States?"

Reagan, with his hands on the Bible, will answer solemnly, "I do."  
Should a pale thin face under a well-groomed head of hair shine through, it will reflect the thoughts of a man who committed himself back in 1980 to run a campaign to get himself into the White House and on Capitol Hill. Then and there he was telling the American people he would like his hand at taking some responsibilities in keeping it a "land of the free and the home of the brave."

Do we as citizens of this beautiful American country join hands and hearts with our elected leader that the continual fight for freedom and unity may ever prevail? God being our helper!



Robert E. Harris

### The Circuit Rider

It is easier to be wise for others than for ourselves.

### Letter to the editor

We are needed to encourage young men and women who have made some serious mistakes in their lives and are serving terms of various lengths in our nation's prisons. These prisons are not equipped for rehabilitation and statistics have proven that they do not rehabilitate.

In fact, often prison conditions are such as to have a degrading effect upon the ones confined therein. Recently a young prisoner wrote saying that his prison didn't supply them with towels, wash cloths or sheets. He was using the remnant of an old rug for a towel.

On one Death Row another prison only served two meals a day to the inmates on holidays. In one jail only two poor meals a day were served every day.

If the inmates file lawsuits against the prison and governmental officials for inhumane treatment they can usually expect personal retaliation against themselves by the authorities. This comes in a variety of ways from loss of privileges, lock-up periods and false charges to being moved away from their home area where they can receive family visits to an area far away.

One young man had drugs thrown into his cell so he could be charged with possession of these drugs.

As a way of protest against prison conditions, sometimes a few or more non-Christian inmates begin a prison riot with resulting loss of property and sometimes lives.

The only effective means of change in the lives of these people who have broken society's laws and are paying various penalties is the life-

changing power inherent in the gospel of Jesus Christ who came to save and transform sinners. Many have accepted Him and now they need Christian friends and spiritual mothers and fathers on the outside to encourage them in their attempt to live a new life right where they are—in prison. Many have no one on the outside world to care about them.

We can make a difference in whether they succeed or fail to lead Christian law-abiding lives from now on. We can do this by writing to them as interested and faithful correspondents. The blessings we will receive are greater than can be imagined.

The following inmates have expressed a desire to hear from someone:

Mr. Curtis Holbrooks  
CB-2-23-2  
1515 Gist Street  
Columbia, S.C. 29202

Mr. Frank McClendon  
No. 89408  
P.O. Box 351 H-4-A  
Haynesville, Louisiana 71038  
age 26 - a new Christian

Mr. James McMullen  
No. 84513  
P.O. Box 188  
La Grange, Kentucky 40031  
age 43 - a new Christian

If you have any new or used Christian literature—magazines, tracts, books or tapes they would be appreciated. Also, radios, tape players and other donations can be sent to Jesus for Prisoners, P.O. Box 416, Montreat, N.C. 28757 (669-7292).

Harrietta H. Turner  
Montreat



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