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## Is nuclear war a health matter?

A group of doctors in this country believe that a nuclear war isn't just a matter of politics or diplomacy, but that it is an issue of public health.

Why? Simply put, the doctors feel a nuclear attack on a city in the United States would be a medical catastrophe for which there is no known cure.

This is the greatest health hazard that humanity has ever faced according to Dr. James E. Muller, a Harvard heart specialist who is one of the leaders of a movement to arouse concern across the nation. Almost 3000 doctors have joined the anti-nuclear weapons group.

One doctor explained what would happen if a 20-megaton bomb fell on Boston:

The shock waves, heat and radiation would spread a circle of death four miles out into the suburbs. More than 90 percent of the people would die or need medical attention.

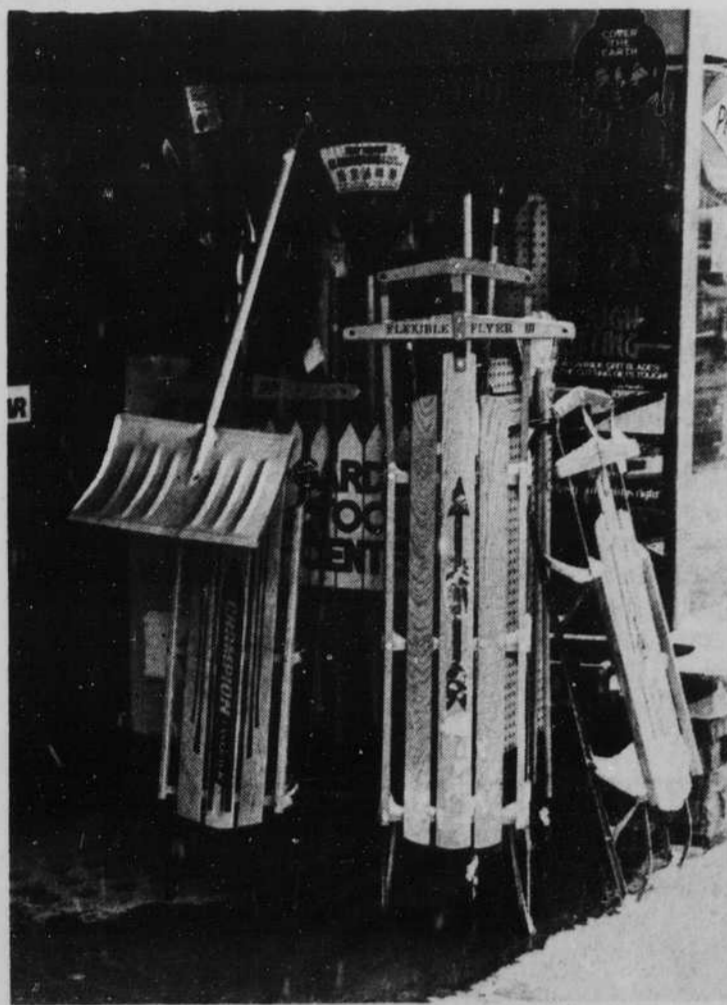
Unfortunately there would be only 650 doctors alive to treat them. If all those doctors worked for 16 hours each day, seven days a week, it would take 26 days to see each victim for about 5 minutes.

And of course, we have to remember that all of the hospitals would have been destroyed.

Once the carriers of plague and disease were rats and mosquitos, but today doctors see a nuclear war as being more deadly for all of us than the rodents ever were. They feel it is their duty to alert mankind not only of the danger of an attack, but to the fact that the nuclear arms race is diverting money from medical research.

Public health issue or not, it is one worthy of attention.

-Transylvania Times



Flexible Flyer and snow shovels stood waiting in Friday's snowstorm.

## This is the law

Sponsored by The Lawyers of North Carolina

### Status of missing persons

Sponsored by The Lawyers of North Carolina Missing Persons

True or False: If a person has been missing and unheard of for seven years, he is legally presumed to be dead.

The statement is false. Under the old common law, such was the case. But a North Carolina statute provides that absence for seven years or for any other period creates no presumption that the person is dead.

The length of the absence is

merely one factor to be considered. If during the absence the person has been exposed to a specific peril of death, this fact may also be considered in deciding whether the person is dead.

There are many reasons why the status of a missing person must be determined. For instance, the rightful ownership of his property needs to be settled.

The question is presented, and ultimately answered, by bringing a suit in court.

## Apropos

# Early birds, et cetera

Editor's note: "Apropos" is a new addition to this page of the Black Mountain News, and will appear here regularly. The author, columnist Edwin R. Andrews, lives in Black Mountain with his wife and daughter Laurie. He teaches history and religion at McDowell Technical College and is director of developmental studies there.

His son, Joe, attends the University of N.C. at Wilmington. A daughter, Marian, lives in Montana with her husband, Dr. Douglas Brenton, and their two children. Another daughter lives near Washington, D.C.

Andrews retired after 20 years in the army as a chaplain. While in the service, he wrote columns for Columbus, Ga. and Honolulu, Hawaii newspapers. While stationed in Viet Nam he wrote for the Winston-Salem Journal. He currently writes a column for a newspaper in Marion.

by Edwin R. Andrews

As I stirred instant coffee into the hot water, I glanced out the kitchen window into our small backyard. What I saw jerked me to full attention and made me spill at least an ounce of coffee. In fact, I was horrified!

I started to call my wife, but she was out of the house at the moment. She'd have had a fit! I then considered calling Roger Tory Peterson, but turned away from such drastic measures; he probably has an unlisted number anyway. But—to begin at the beginning. Maybe you can help.

The problem has come up because Sarita loves birds and is something of a birdwatcher. She has established a sort of avian soup kitchen in the backyard. A couple of netted potato bags are nailed to trees to hold suet—as the stuff is euphemistically termed. We have a couple of birdfeeders, too. One is a plain, homemade

one, the other a patented plastic job that we get in kit form at a discount. These are suspended by wires from tree limbs to insure that birds, and only birds, will benefit from our generosity. Oh, some of the outdated seeds are scattered on the cement tabletop for the more enterprising chipmunks to share with the birds; after all, it's getting on toward spring! But the real thrust of the project is to provide sustenance for needy birds.

And to watch them. A well-thumbed copy of Peterson's bird guide lies handy, and ever so often a hoarse whisper is heard: "Hey, come and see the whatever-it-is!" Life halts abruptly, water boils away, eggs and toast grow cold while markings are noted and compared and identifications established.

So far, you might say, no problem. You are right, unless one sees some moral element involved in inviting

birds in to feed without their knowing that they are being watched. But after all, it can be said that this is no reason to get feathers ruffled. The feeding is out of interest in them and for their own good.

Besides, maybe the birds know. They may have a sort of seed circuit established, and figure that being observed is a small price for a free meal. Indeed, heaven forbid, they may even get satisfaction and fulfillment from having people stand by to see their lovely plumage or their expert landings. I like to think of having creatures like that on our earth, but the whole bunch may just be Jonathan Livingston Seagulls with outsized egos.

I suppose we must say there's no problem here, either, unless the birds complain. After all, they don't have to come here to eat; that's their decision.

The real problem is much

more practical: our arrangements to limit our gifts to the needy birds just are not working. The scene that shocked me so was the sight of a squirrel—in the bird feeder, rapidly cleaning up the feed.

As I watched, fascinated, he made a careful estimate of the distance to the tree trunk, bunched his muscles and jumped, landing just ever so right, headed down the trunk. He scurried down and away, to sleep it off. Now I know where my birdfeed dollars are going! This is outright theft, I say. This guy can do for himself—if I can find a way to keep him out of the birdfeeder.

But when you come right down to it, the problem is not just squirrels. It's that there's a pecking order among the birds, too. Time and time again, all the peaceful, dun-colored itty-bitty birds are chased away from their nourishment by the spectacu-

lar arrival of a big, loud—and beautiful—cardinal or blue jay. The smaller birds flutter and squawk and yell fraud, and the blue jays answer that that fellow deserves to get what he can take. After all, big birds get hungry too. Must there be sympathy only for the under-bird?

So there's the problem in a nutshell. We have the matter under investigation here. If you have any ideas, please let us know. We want to run a really first-class bird feeding operation. If we all come up with something really practical, then everyone and every bird benefits. It's even been suggested that our Senator Helms just may be interested in our findings. That comes as a surprise to me; I didn't even know he was a bird watcher.

## Folk-Ways and Folk-Speech

# Tall tales and dialectual doggerel

by Rogers Whitener

W.S. (Slim) Davis, Kannapolis spinner of tall tales and dialectual doggerel whose "Mountain Drone" appeared in this column several weeks ago, recently added to our supply of mountain terms and expressions, along with pronunciations and meanings.

Under the heading of "Mountain Dialog or Vernacular," he offers the following:

"Ell, if that hain't a p'yore line, I've never heard one!" (P'yore, he explains, was originally spelled pee-yore.

Now the apostrophe gives the e sound.)

"Be dawg now if I don't crawl yore hump an' walk yore lawg!" (Dawg, he says in pronounced daw-ug; hump is back; lawg is body.)

"Be peaturkied if that's so!" (Nice way to call someone a liar.)

"I knowed better'n that with what little ignorance I've got," (Self-explanatory.)

"I'm go-nuh take my foot in

han' an' go impose to that gal!" (Walk down to her house and propose.)

"Talk like that and somebody'll peel you like tanbark!" (Back when I was a kid, Brush Mountaineers peeled tanbark off chestnut trees with a spud—an iron rod with a handle and a cupped up neck with an arrow tip point.)

"I'm the toughest feller ever tore an elephant apart with my bare hands an' lost the parts in the brush!" (Tough egg.)

"I've got a bone in my left hind-leg an' kin hardly walk!" (A hurting in the leg that disables it, maybe rheumatism.)

"Ell, if that don't beat the Devil whuppin' hisseff 'round a stump I'm a whistlepig's wife's fust cousin!" (Self-explanatory.)

"Ernie Lane war the toughest feller ever grinned the bark off a tough hicker-tree!" (Tough enough to peel a hickory tree with a grin.)

"O! Joe's livin' at home and boardin' there, too!" (Man would fly).

Queries E.G. Howard of Jacksonville, Florida, is in search of information about tobacco stamps. He writes:

"I am a native of Ashe County and remember a custom of giving tobacco stamps to be traded or used for money around 1916. Could you or your readers give me any information on this?"

A Winston-Salem reader is in search of the meaning of the following lines taken from a

collection of North Carolina folklore: "He that marries a widow with two daughters has three back doors to his house."

Responses may be sent to this paper. They will be forwarded.

Readers are invited to send folk materials to "Folk-Ways and Folk-Speech," Box 376, Appalachian State University, Boone, NC 28608.

## The Great Physician will cure

Written and illustrated by A. Wayne Wilhelm

A deeply concerned Isaiah was acrimoniously blunt when he read the riot act to his fellow Israelites. He called them "a sinful nation, a people laden with iniquity: they have forsaken the Lord, they have provoked the Holy One of Israel unto anger, they are gone away backward" (Isa. 1:4). Isaiah was accusing them of backsliding.

Describing their spiritual disease, Isaiah said, "... the head is sick and the heart faint" (verse 5). His accusation was directed to the nation Israel centuries ago. Little did Isaiah know that the same indictment can be made against the whole world of nations today. The world we live in is spiritually sick, sick, sick.

The word world as used in this article does not apply to the physical universe but rather to evil people and the things they consciously do. It is the sinful world where lying, gambling, stealing, illicit sex, drug addiction, alcoholic drinking and many other things are indulged, resulting in the destruction of the spiritual and moral aspects of the human personality. Such immoral practices are denounced, using terrible terms, in the Bible and strictly forbidden by God. Consequently, our civilization is in a dangerous collision course with God's judgment.

The cure for the world's sickness is beyond the capabilities of mortal men. Educators, scientists, psychiatrists, doctors, politicians and theologians have only touched the surface. These men have found no remedy for this evil sick world. The problem is still there for we still have the cause of the trouble—men, who with all their reputed progress are unable to change and live according to the law of life, a law which alone can solve their dilemma. Specifically, the problem is, will they ever be able to live with themselves, their neighbor and with God as they should? By their own helpless means the answer to these questions is NO!

The fatal sickness of the world's people will not be cured—UNLESS! Unless what? Unless man learns how to deal with sin. Nothing is more destructive than sin. Sin results in pain, tears, crime, war, disease. Unless the evil

of sin is faced up to, the world will become increasingly sick.

Psychiatry, law, medicine, sociology or economics are not the cure-all for sin. There is only one remedy. Only Jesus has the solution and the lasting cure. "He by Himself purged our sins" (Heb. 1:3). At this point God's mercy and love shone forth. God gave His Son, perfect and sinless, to take our place, that we might be free from the guilt of sin.

Humanity's global predicament is becoming increasingly obvious to all people. They are being forced to confront their evil hearts. The plight they face is one they have made for themselves. There is, however, a Biblical answer to their problem that must not be ignored. They do not have the choice of whether to believe what the Bible says; the choice only is what they will believe.

If they will not believe the truth, there is nothing left to believe but a lie (II Thes. 2:10, 11).

The truth is all must give up their false pride, humble themselves and seek God's mercy. He has already provided the cure for the sickness of people of the world. They must pray for forgiveness, repent of and forsake their sins, and accept Jesus as their Savior. As Hebrews 1:3 indicates, He has the God given power to purge them of their sins that they may be made righteous, spiritually healed, before the eyes of a Holy God.

That is the prescription that will cure a sick world, a provision made by God and pleasing to Him. When people conform to that solution, God then will heal their sickness.

## Reflections

# Who is a hero?

by Gretchen Corbett

Who is a hero? What makes a hero? A nation is forced to find an answer!

The cup of bitterness had been pressed to the lips of 52 Americans, a real test coming on the heels of success, adventure, culture and financial gain. They must drink it not to make them downcast, but prudent; not to make them repentant, but perceptive; not to make them hopeless, but by its darkness to refresh eventually, as the night refreshes the day; not to make them destitute, but to enrich them, as the breaking of the soil enriches the field and as the seed, by planting, is multiplied many hundred fold.

The hours and days and nights of conflict are over and mankind strives for a right understanding of the strife. There are those ready to exclaim, "I've never before been prouder to be an American!" With misty eyes and choked words reverberating around the globe comes, "Thank you America for your prayers, your love, your letters!" America, we are not the heroes but you here in America who survived the ordeal are.

With statue erect, instinct with magnetic life, eyes with slumbering fires in them, hair tossed, skin a warm cream, the lady returnee spoke with flashing vivacity. She had a driving energy and optimism. Her tone softened as she lived back through the struggles of 444 days: "I felt like my God had a purpose for me through it all and I asked that He direct me in it. I had many theological questions put to me."

A definition of one of God's heroes has been well spoken: "To live well in the quiet routine of life, to fill a little space because God wills it, to go on cheerfully with a petty round of little duties and little avocations; to smile for the joys of others when the heart is aching, who does this, his works will follow him. He is one of God's heroes."

A definition of one of a nation's heroes was well written in ink: "The heroes of history have been no less remarkable for what they have suffered than for what they have achieved. We cannot think too highly of our nature,

nor too humbly of ourselves. When we see the martyr to virtue, subject as he is to the infirmities of a man, yet suffering the tortures of a demon, and bearing them with the magnanimity of a God, do we not behold a heroism that angels may indeed surpass, but which they cannot imitate, and must admire."

Perhaps the world's battlefields have been chiefly in the heart. More heroism has been displayed in the household when the wayward, shiftless and useless child has stalked earth's darkness seeking for pleasures and self-satisfactions and the mother's heart is being broken to pieces but

finds a solace to mend the wounds. More heroism is performed within four walls and in domestic privacy when a growing son assumes the role of a father when the "suppose-to-be" father waddles in his own slimy, filthy, drunken stupor. What of the urchin who has breathed poverty and a loveless society for so long until one day he decides to overcome, not to be a victim of his environment, but a hero!

History may well record the homecoming of the former hostages as, "THIS WAS AMERICA'S FINEST HOUR!"

## A letter to readers

A letter to readers:

I have enjoyed serving you as editor and then publisher of the Black Mountain News. As I have expressed so many times, I sincerely believe in the value of the local newspaper as a vital part of community life. That's why it is with such mixed emotions I leave this work.

The NEWS has a very fine staff of dedicated newspaper people, and I trust you will continue to support them in their efforts to provide a good publication for the Valley.

My family and I will remain here, and I will continue to work in civic affairs, and especially in the church.

I've accepted a position with R. Frank Burke Builders, Inc., and will be doing planning and

estimating of new homes and home additions. Frank has been a close personal friend who I feel is making a great contribution to this community.

To the staff here—Cynthia Reimer, editor; Mary Mauldin, circulation; Cindy Mills, bookkeeper; Sharon Suttles Allison, advertising; Rennold Madrazo, sales representative; Anne Daimler, typesetting; Jimmy Cox, pressman; Dennis Harris, mechanical supervisor; Eunice Cox, binding; and Janet Clevenger, Mountain Living magazine circulation—may I just say thanks. It's been a real joy serving with you.

Ted Mahaffey

Something on your mind? Write a letter to the editor



**The Circuit Rider**  
Life is a long lesson in humility.  
Robert E. Harris