

Perquimans People

R.S. Monds — the preacher with his own brand of gospel

The sign on the wall of R.S. Monds' houseboat reads something like, "For those of you who don't like the way this boat is being piloted, the captain has a

sprig of mistletoe pinned to his coattails." Although his nickname is the preacher, Monds cannot be accused of being particularly reverent.

"I don't mind taking a stand," said Monds. "If I'm wrong, I'm wrong. I'll get on the other side of the fence. But you've got to prove me wrong."

The business of governing on the local level is often played out to a couple of rows of empty seats, except for the white haired gentleman with hawk-like eyes. That's Monds.

He sits and listens and watches, and makes a comment or two when he feels it is appropriate. He doesn't get much company in the spectator section, except when a controversial topic is on the agenda.

"It seems to me that most people aren't interested in local government. They don't seem to pay much attention to it, just gripe about this or that or something else," Monds said.

"You go to one meeting after another and nobody comes in to see what they're doing. They just criticize what's been done. They don't know why they (the board) did it, they just know they don't like it. But its always after the fact, not before.

"These people who are always criticizing ought to get out and run for office and see what has to be done and what you can do without," he said.

If anyone has the right to lecture on involvement, it's R.S. Monds. He spent 16 years as a county commissioner and continues to practice what he preaches. Monds is one of 60 board

members of the Albemarle Regional Planning and Development Commission, and a member of the Coastal Resources Advisory Council.

During the peak of his governmental involvement, he spent as many as 10 evenings a month at board meetings of one kind or another, and that didn't even include all the homework that came with such positions.

To some, all this meeting might have gotten old, but not to Monds. "I have an interest in the county," he said. "I just like to see what's going on — although I have no say-so, I still like to see what's going on."

What's going on, though, may or may not please him. "They get by," he said, but government should be more efficient.

"Government should be operated just as a business is operated," Monds said. "A lot of people say government shouldn't have a reserve of any kind. It should live hand to mouth. That doesn't make any sense. If the town (of Hertford) had any sense at all they would have had a reserve and they wouldn't have any problem."

Monds believes in a "pay as you go" kind of governing philosophy. For instance, the need for a major expenditure such as

a school building should be realized years in advance, taxes levied to pay for it, and the money tucked away each year to be drawing interest.

This is opposed to a bond referendum. "The interest alone would be as much as the school building if you do it by bond issue. But they hate to raise taxes."

My contention is that if people want services they've got to pay for them, and the only way to pay is through taxes," Monds said.

"It's gotten to the point that they want a Cadillac society when they don't have the funds for a Honda society," he said.

One program Monds considers "extra" is recreation. He feels there should be a county-wide vote, and if the taxpayers want to fund recreation, fine.

Monds, of course, has his own view of what he would like to see the county become in the future. Progress, yes, but progress means different things to different people.

"We're a rural county and I'd like to see us stay a rural county," he said. He agrees that there isn't much danger of the county's becoming anything else, at least for a number of years.

"Everybody's screaming 'industry, industry, in-

dustry,'" he said, but Monds doesn't join in the chorus.

Of course there are industries that could double the tax base with little increase in services, such as the nuclear power plant in Brunswick County. "But certain businesses cause trouble," Monds said.

"I'm perfectly happy to sit here and look at that river," he said. "Of course I realize that's a pretty selfish view."

According to Monds' way of thinking, the most prevalent threat to the county is shoddy development. "I think we're going to become a bedroom community for retirement," he said.

"If we're going to have development it should be nice development, and the only way to do that is to have zoning laws," Monds said.

You might say participating in and watching government is a hobby for Monds, though its far from his only hobby.

His houseboat is homemade with the exception of the pontoons, and Monds has carried out other construction projects at the Front Street home where he resides with his wife, Francis. "I'm what you call a Jack-leg carpenter," Monds said.

But more than that, Monds is a craftsman.

Wood inlays of various waterfowl adorn many of the walls of the Monds' home. The effect is like a painting, with different types of wood veneers used to create different textures and colors and the subject sunken into a plaque.

"See that wood that looks like feathers? That's Australian silk wood," Monds said. "You put all those things together and go over it with a coat of plain lacquer. The colors just pop right out at you."

For the past year, Monds has been involved in a new project, an extensive L-gauge model railroad. "I've been fascinated by trains all my life," said Monds in explaining his motivation for piecing together yards and yards of tiny track.

As a little boy corn cobs under an oak tree in the sand were his trains. Eventually, his model railroad will include landscape, tunnels and the like.

He and Francis have been married 39 years, and have two 34-year-old twin sons. Mrs. Monds was at one time the president of the North Carolina Parent-Teachers Association, and began teaching school when the boys were grown.

"She's the brains in the family," Monds said.

Maybe so, but for plain-spoken common sense, it's hard to beat the preacher.



R.S. Monds relaxes on the River. Monds keeps up with mind telling you where he back porch of his home government as much as any stands on the issues. (Photo by overlooking the Perquimans county citizen and doesn't MIKE MCLAUGHLIN)

People briefs

Mr. and Mrs. Dick Brewer have returned from a tour of the New England states.

Miss Linda Banks of Greenville spent the weekend with her mother, Mrs. G. C. Banks.

Dr. and Mrs. W. B. Tucker and family of Henderson were guests of Mr. and Mrs. G. R. Tucker on Monday.

Mr. and Mrs. Howard Matthews, Jr. and family of New Bern were weekend guests of Mr. and Mrs. Howard Matthews, Sr.

Mr. and Mrs. Dan Daneker and family from Oregon are guests of Mr. and Mrs. Charles Johnson.

Mrs. Fred Matthews spent

several days this week with Mrs. Fred Matthews, Jr. at Virginia Beach, Va.

Mr. and Mrs. Paul Baker and daughters, Kelly and Cybil, from Stafford, Va. were weekend guests of Mrs. Maude Lane.

Mr. and Mrs. James Wetzel and family of Richmond, Va. were weekend guests of Mr. and Mrs. J. E. Newby.

Tommy Sumner, III, from Raleigh spent last week with his grandmother, Mrs. T. B. Sumner, Sr.

Mrs. Clifton Hollowell and daughters, Laura and Mary, from Halifax were guests of Mr. and Mrs. Howard Matthews on Saturday.

Mrs. Robert Jackson from Nashville, Tenn. is a guest of Her parents, Mr. and Mrs. J. E. Newby.

Dr. and Mrs. H. B. Matthews, Jr. and family of Durham were weekend guests of Mr. and Mrs. H. B. Matthews, Sr.

Mr. and Mrs. W. G. Edwards spent last week at their cottage at Nags Head.

Mr. and Mrs. Charlie Johnson, Jr. and family from Belhaven were weekend guests of Mr. and Mrs. Charlie Wright at Jarvisburg.

Miss Gwen Trueblood, student at Meredith College, Raleigh, was a weekend guest of her parents, Mr. and Mrs.

Geroge Trueblood.

Walter Edwards, Jr. spent the weekend at Nags Head.

Miss Sarah Goodwin returned to Salem Academy, Winston-Salem, Monday to resume her studies after spending the summer vacation with her parents, Mr. and Mrs. Earlie Goodwin.

Mr. and Mrs. G. R. Tucker spent several days this week at Henderson with Dr. and Mrs. G. R. Tucker, Jr. and Dr. and Mrs. W. B. Tucker.

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78 Cougar, 2-dr. VB, AT, AC, PS, R. \$4,500.00	75 Granada, 4-dr. VB, AT, PS, AC. \$2,200.00
78 LTD, 4-dr. VB, AT, PS, AC, R. \$4,500.00	73 Montego, 4-dr. VB, AT, PS. \$1,350.00
78 Granada, 4-dr. VB, AT, AC, PS, R. \$4,500.00	73 Chev. Malibu, 4-dr. VB, AT, AC. \$1,250.00
77 Ford LTD, 4-dr. VB, AT, AC, PS, R. \$3,850.00	72 Chev. Impala, 4-dr. VB, AT, PS, AC, R. \$1,000.00
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78 Chev C10 VB, AT, PS, AC, LB. \$4,750.00	75 Ford F150 VB, AT, PS, R, LB. \$2,750.00
76 Chev. C10 VB, AT, LB. \$3,500.00	74 Ford F100 VB, LB, ST. \$1,600.00
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