

PERSPECTIVE

Frattie and the Healing Dog

Her slate gray eyes pierced my own as I stepped up on the rickety old porch that was partially shaded by the ancient willows growing around her house. For a moment I was a bit afraid of my first visit with her and hesitant about coming this far back in the woods alone.



But the feeling was a fleeting one, within only seconds I was enjoying the way her face wrinkled into a huge smile of welcome as she offered me a comfortable rocker in a cool breeze. The long skirt she wore, as well as a man's shirt, buttoned tight to her throat, created a rather formidable looking character, but her eyes were a dead giveaway to the very opposite with their warm, mischievous sparkle.

Half a dozen cats, stretched out at her feet, helped ease the transition for me, for I believe that cats always know a genuine free spirit when they see one.

"Your nephew said you wanted to see me?" I questioned hesitantly, as she settled into the twin rocking chair. "Supposed so," she stated in reply. "You write them there pieces in the paper, don't cha?"

I nodded my head in agreement and was about to say something else when she cut in rather abruptly. "Well then...you git to heah some prutty crazy stuff by and by I 'spect. This here one won't be much different I 'spose."

She paused as I uncapped my pen and positioned my note pad before she continued. "My

youngins said I ought to tell ya this 'un but I told 'em you wouldn't believe it. Half does. Half don't. Don't matter none to me WHAT they believe. I K N O W what happened. But if'n you decide to write this mess down, you'd better not use my real name in there anywhere, girl. You heah?"

She thought a minue and then suggested..."jest call me Frattie. Ma Frattie. Nobody living now knows me by that 'un. Some day I might even tell you the story behind THAT...if'n you keep your word and do me half right."

I waited patiently while Ma Frattie sat smelling the honey-suckles that crept in from the woods and threatened to take possession of her house. Finally, she patted her lap as a signal for the huge tabby cat to take possession of that, as well, and slowly began her recollection.

"My man...he run off and left me early on with a house of youngins to raise by myself.

Them days was hard 'nuff, but there come a year when on top of everythang else there was sickness going about. The fever. Killed folks left and right. W h o l e families wiped out. Took both my man and pa but only got one of my youngins.

"Thought that mess was finally over when the youngest girl got it too. She always was a weak little weed. She got pulled afo' she ripened, I always said. Anyways, I had to send the rest off to the neighbors. There won't but one doctor around here then, and he was near half dead hisself. Old'n most of the trees out here in my yard, he was. But he was seasoned, I

reck'n. Prutty good doctor for them days way back then.

"Him and me...we sit nigh on two weeks with that gal, but she

kept on failing, wouldn't eat nothing, burning up with the fever. Finally the doc jest give up and left. Said she'd be dead by the end of the week. I believed it too.

"I was making ready her burial dress from the chest at the foot of her bed when I heard the noise. Sounded like a door opening and shutting. I knowed eveythang was closed up tight, but I checked anyhow. Then I heard it agin...a door opening and closing real hard like. Finally I checked in the kitchen, and there...stretched right out on the floor in front of the stove was a big old black dog, a thing so shaggy I thought it was a bear first off. Dang nigh scared ten years off'n me! But he jest laid there and stared up at me with them big old sad eyes. I was scared, but I tried to make 'em leave out the side door. I tell ya...I got a real funny feeling looking at that dog, but he wouldn't leave. Acted like he belonged there, so I put something down for 'em to eat and went to check on the girl agin. She won't no different.

"Next morning I jarred awake from my noddin' to find that youngin a sittin' up in bed, hungry as a dog herself and rosiest cheeks you ever did see. I couldn't believe my eyes! Yes sir. A HEALING DOG."

Ma Frattie's tired old voice faded, then stopped. It was over. I slowly closed my notebook and stepped down from the porch of the tiny weatherworn cottage that was surrounded by old-timey petunias and brightly splashed colors of zinnias and dahlias.

She gently let the cat out of her lap and followed me a step or two, waving her goodbye as I headed for the car, thoughtfully. I opened the door and threw my notebook on the seat, glancing back to watch her amble towards the door. Then I thought of one last question. "Whatever became of the girl, Ma Frattie?" I hollered back at her.

She hesitated long enough for me to see the slight smile creep across her face just before she opened the screen door. "Oh, she's practicing some medicine of her own these days," she answered softly.

"Got herself a framed piece of paper and all saying she's a veterinarina." Then she disappeared into the house, but not until she had promised me another visit and another story from Ma Farttie.



This load of tires isn't as much fun as he said it would be

Another's love of water gets editor "all wet"

Some people have a natural-born love for water. You probably know the type, they just can't get around water without getting into it; and once they get wet they proceed to try and get everyone around wet too.



Morris Kornegay is one of those people. He was born without fear of water, which is a good thing since he spends so much time in it.

Morris, a long-time swimmer and member of the Hertford Rotary Club even won an award from the club earlier this year for his love of water; The Big Dip Award.

Morris' award came about after a long summer of excursions on the houseboat down to Rotary Point, where he proved that good swimming ability

doesn't necessarily mean you can walk. Morris constantly found himself falling overboard when walking down the pier enroute to the boat or the point. Giving Morris a little credit, that pier is a little tricky. It was built with a slant in it, possibly to test the agility of our Rotarians. It is also only fair to point out that Morris' trips over the side came when he offered his arm to help a lady, and generally it is dark when they're down there.

Anyway, in honor of his many unplanned swims, Morris was duly recognized, and to the best of my knowledge he has stayed away from the water since he received the award, until last week.

Morris has now found a way that's even better than splashing to get innocent by-standers soaked. He has had time to think about bigger and better ways, and last week he put his new ploy into action. Yours truly was his victim.

Morris is a member of the Hertford Volunteer Fire Department. I am a member of the press. We each respond to acci-

dents that occur in the county. After a recent accident the fire department was called on to water down the area as a safety precaution. I was on hand to take pictures, and was standing off to the side out of everyone's way, I thought. Morris was holding the fire hose to his side, and then turned his head in the other direction to talk to somebody else, just about the same time the water was turned on.

The rest is history. Naturally the hose was pointed directly to me, and needless to say, I got wet. I'm just thankful we weren't near the river, he'd have probably knocked me overboard.

Morris' love for water is unsurpassed by one. I hope that he'll consider installing a pool before the summer is over, then he could soak himself and his friends more conveniently.

If ever the occasion should arise when you have to complete a fund-raising task with Morris make sure it's not a car wash; Morris would fare much better with a dunking-machine (you would too); just make sure he's the rider.

Letters to the Editor

TO THE EDITOR
THE PERQUIMANS WEEKLY
Dear Editor,

I, along with the Perquimans County Commissioners and many other citizens, am concerned with our county taxes and our tax rate level.

I do disagree, however, with Board member Thomas Nixon in abolishing our county recreation department. I'm sorry to see that Mr. Nixon is so "out of touch" with his constituents and has no concern for recreation for our youth.

Being a member of the Recreation Advisory Board, and involved in many youth activities in this county, I see recreation as a positive step in stressing to our youth the importance of competition, helping curtail juvenile crimes, and developing a sense of importance within our community. I'm afraid rolling hires down the highway just wouldn't get the job done.

I consider Thomas Nixon a friend of mine but, I'm afraid that times do change and Mr. Nixon is reluctant to do so. This is not the 1940's - it's the 1980's and we're on the verge of entering the 21st century. It's time to start progressing, not take a step backwards.

I do, however, agree with one of Mr. Nixon's statements that I'll be sure to remember when he comes up for re-election. "I ain't got but one vote, but I'll vote against you."

Terry Williams
Route 2,
Hertford, N.C. 27944

TO THE EDITOR
THE PERQUIMANS WEEKLY
Dear Editor,

It is encouraging to read and hear about people who are speaking out against the recent ruling of the Supreme Court regarding prayer in the public schools. These people are from different areas. Some attend the church of their choice. Others believe in God but choose not to attend church. Some are married, others single. Some belong to the older generation; others are the youth of today. All agree on one thing - prayer does belong in public schools. These are the people of America speaking but the only problem is that many are not reaching the proper authorities.

Anyone who believes that prayer should be allowed in the public schools, please take a few minutes and write even one sentence to this effect and sign it. If possible, get some neighbors, friends, relatives, co-workers and anyone else to sign the letter. If you send it to me at the address below, I shall combine the letters and send them to Washington, D.C.

I personally believe that we can continue to build a strong America whose people trust in God. We must follow the example of our ancestors who worked so hard to make America a land where people are free to speak out for what they believe in. I would like to be counted in the number of those who believe prayer should be in the public schools.

Sincerely,
Kathleen Summers
144 M. Snug Harbor
Hertford, N.C. 27944

Press coverage may encourage terrorism

There's an old saying something to the effect; "If a tree fell in the forest, but there was no one to hear its fall, would it make a sound?"



While this may not be the exact original quote of this line, the meaning is the same. If there was little media coverage of worldwide terrorist activity, would these thugs be as apt to resort to such activity? I don't think so.

To be sure, the barbarians holding about 40 Americans hostage are enjoying all the attention. For days, their activity, or lack of it, has been the center of attention world-wide. Every major American news medium has focused most of their attention on the events in Lebanon.

As more and more attention is given terrorists throughout the world, such activity as the recent abductions is increasing. The surest way for any group or fraction to receive attention is by terrorism. They can be virtually assured of instant international attention.

Americans do have a right to know of developments in the world that affect our citizens. We should be informed of the dangers facing Americans in

many parts of the world.

Our attempts at promoting democracy worldwide have created many enemies. In many countries, crimes against Americans is the vogue thing. We can no longer depend on the governments of foreign nations to protect our citizens.

Americans must begin to realize the real threat to the safety of travelers and other individuals worldwide. Members of the

military have become favorite targets of terrorists. The presence of our soldiers in foreign lands has come to represent negative feelings on the part of many. We are often thought of as a threat rather than protectors of freedom.

There will continue to be risks involved for Americans living and traveling abroad, but we can narrow those risks with proper planning. We must begin

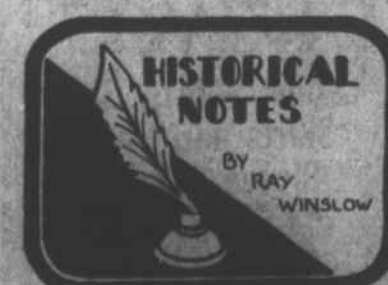
steps in that direction now.

We must also make a serious effort to remove the "circus" attitude often displayed by the media during such events. Terrorists live by recognition. Without it, they have no cause.

We must not continue to encourage their activities by making them so very visible. There are times when the world doesn't need to know.

Minister had tough time

If a mutual sympathy between a minister and his congregation be good for the church, the Rev. John Urmstone was never likely to be successful as a missionary in North Carolina.



Urmstone was the Church of England priest responsible for souls in three counties including Perquimans. He made his home on Albermarle Sound in Chowan County.

In a long, querulous letter to his English superiors in July 1711 he poured out a number of complaints. He did not find his parishioners to his liking.

Carolínians, he thought, were "libertines, men and women of loose, dissolute, and scandalous lives and practices. It is usually said our colonies are chiefly peopled by such as have been educated at some of the famous colleges of Bridewell, Newgate, or the Mint." (For "colleges" read "prisons.")

Some of them "after their transportation have been banished out of all or most of the other colonies or for fear of punishment have fled hither. This is a nest of the most notorious profligates upon earth.

"Women forsake their husbands, come in here and live with other men. They are sometimes followed. Then a price is given to the husband and the madam stays with her gallant. A report is spread abroad that the husband is dead. Then they become man and wife, make a figure, and pass for people of

worth and reputation."

The vestrymen charged with assisting in church government, supposedly men of substance and station, did not get Urmstone's approval. In one place while meeting they were, he thought, "very much disordered with drink. They quarrelled and could scarce be kept from fighting."

He never understood why men who labored at agriculture in the wilderness showed little respect for those who seemed to prefer an idle life at others' expense.

He failed to see that the distances and difficulties of travel which he so often cited as hindrances to the performance of his duties were equally responsible for many people's failure to attend church.

Besides, the church in Perquimans did not need a minister who was a public drunk.

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