

Perspective

Ma Frattie's 'lasses'

I found her, this time, out behind her smokehouse that had the appearance of melting into the ground below. The temperature was as low as a toad frog under a collard, but there she was, ninety years old...plundering around the back of her place with a pitchfork in one hand and a hand saw in the other. There was a perfectly organized little string of cats following a few feet behind her, and her old mule was resting against a nearby barn stall that was braced with poles, blowing smoke from her wide nostrils that made white puffy clouds in the polar air that surrounded us.



Buttoned to the gills, Ma Frattie was. I could count at least three sweaters under her coat, and the wool scarf she had tied around her head made a somewhat snugger fit for the old cap on her crown. She intended to stay warm.

"Whatcha want, youngin...things gettin' a tad dull at yore place?" she inquired of me as I approached. "Jest joshing, girl," she explained as she patted my shoulder. "These artificial food chews has got my mouth to aching so bad that I may as well give up the idy of eat'n and being sociable altogether." She laid her pitchfork and saw down on a tree stump and motioned me towards the back door.

"Ketch that cheer child," was her polite way of telling me to have a seat at her kitchen table a few seconds later as she washed her hands under the somewhat trickle of water that tried to spill from her faucet. Then, most gracefully, she threw her "store bought food mashers" in a rolled up nest of paper towels.

"That's more like it," she grinned toothlessly at me. For

me too, I thought. I always understand Ma Frattie much better with her teeth out rather than trying to compete with the "clicking and clanking" they make rolling around in her mouth.

"I just wondered what you were up to today," I sighed as I settled into place at her tiny table. "Thought you just might have something good to eat laying around here somewhere."

"Naw," she immediately responded. "Even iffen I did, you wouldn't want it. I don't care nuthin' for no store-brought mess. I do eveythang from scratch 'round heah. Ain't no short cuts at Ma's place. Youngins nowadays got to have all thet fancy stuff to eat. Don't even know whut homebrewed throat tickler tastes like enymore. None of 'em. They're so lazy that they wouldn't even scare up a coon iffen they was plum starvin' to death.

Got nuthin' to do, and don't even CARE thet they got nuthin' to do. Most of 'em move around like a bunch of waterbugs in slow motion."

Some days Ma Frattie doesn't take to kindly to modern ways or modern people, and today was one of them. I always step lightly on those days.

"Well, what HAVE you got, Ma?" I asked again. "A cold biscuit will do. You DO know how to make biscuits, don't you Ma?" I was kidding, of course, but I deserved every bit of that "squinty eyed" look I got in return. "Don't be givin' me no hassels girl," she fussed back at me. "Them teeth has 'bout done me in, and I ain't innerested in dispensin' manners today."

We talked a bit about several things for a few minutes, including how she was about to freeze to death on account of a rat nest that had suddenly appeared in her pile of best quilts. The quilts she used for "extras" in the winter months.

Then, rather abruptly, she yanked me by the arm so hard that I nearly fell out of the chair. "Lordy child, I plum forgot thet thar barrel out thar! Getcha self up from thet cheer and lets go! I

got jest whut you need out thar in thet smokehouse of mine!"

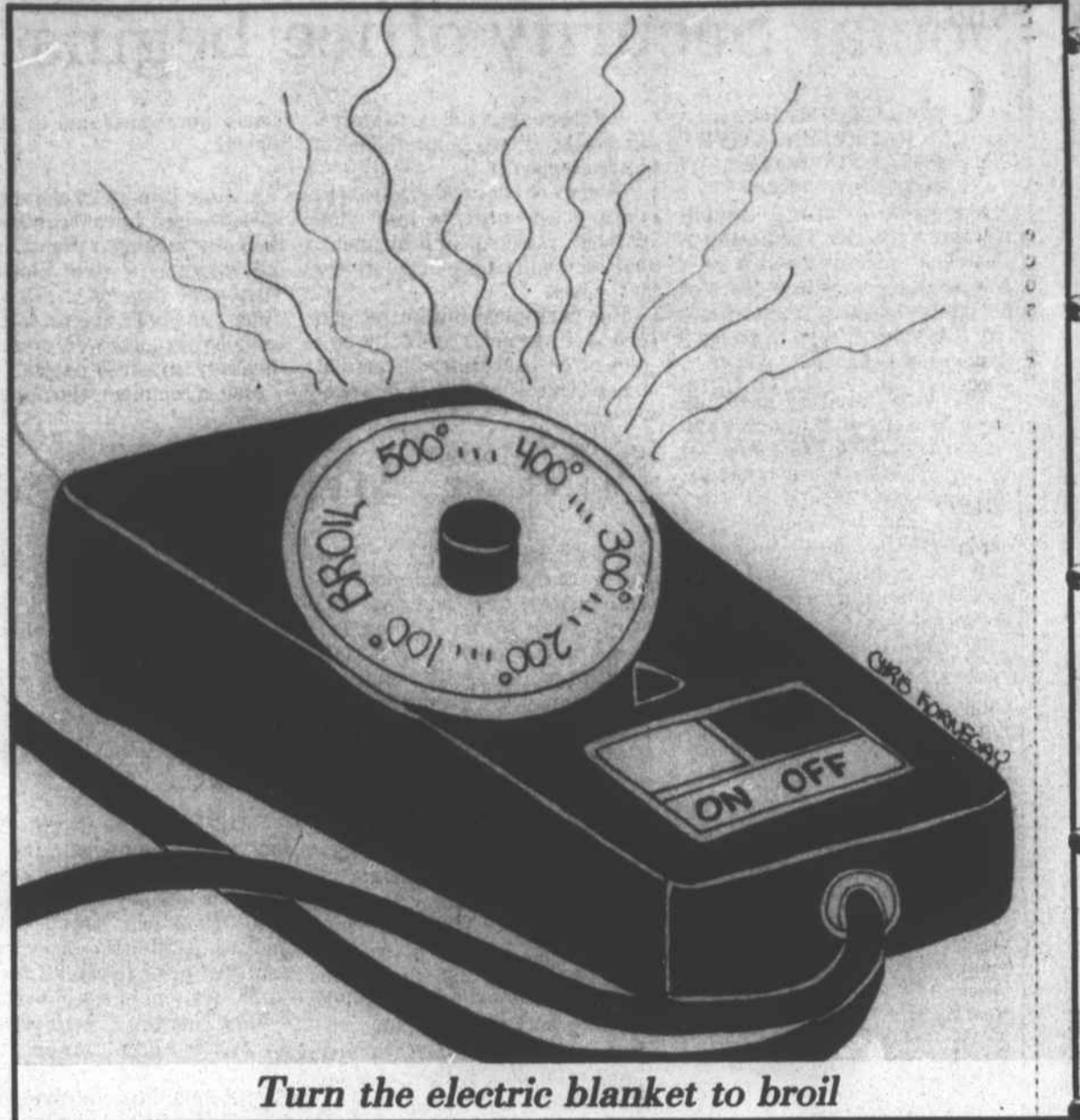
We loaded on enough clothes to brace the cold outside and proceed towards the shakly smokehouse that couldn't have been over ten feet square. The front door swung free at the first touch of the rusty, iron latch while the parade of cats simply entered by way of a hole in the wall. A few beams overhead supported a collection of fishing poles and tobacco sticks. Dusty quart jars in a cardboard box and two worn wash tubs occupied most of the floor space. Straw brooms were tied with string and resting against a pork barrel. The scent of an open bag of fertilizer immediately made me sneeze, during which time I knocked over a tin pail full of rusty wires of the type used to hang hams from the beams. Most of the inside walls were occupied by neat rows of "dirt dobber" nests and large nails from which strings of dried onions hung.

I watched attentively as she dug around in a small barrel on top of a table and eventually surfaced with a lovely corked jug. Her toothless grin made me feel warm all over.

The old stove in her kitchen was going full blast in short order, and soon the delicate aroma of freshly baked biscuits filled the house.

"I clean fergot thet 'lasses was heah," she confessed to me as she washed the matted flour from the paper-thin dough board and then removed the stone jug from the top of the stove where it sat warming. "This heah's the real stuff girl. Had my nephew search for it whilst he was gone the last time. Been savin' it up fer special times and then clean fergot it was out thar. Sit yoreself on down heah girl and scrub that 'lasses with them biscuits. Scrub it good now cause I intend to do the same. Ain't even got to put them choppers back in my head to do it neither."

And I did. And so did she. We scrubbed Ma Frattie's smokehouse 'lasses every which way those biscuits would turn. But we saved a little for another day...real soon.



Turn the electric blanket to broil

Teaching via lyrics ruled out

A conversation in our office one afternoon last week about child rearing turned towards the topics of education and grades rather quickly. You could almost sense that report cards had just come home a few days earlier.



Grades seem to be something that all of us down here agree on...anything less than an A is really not acceptable. B's are tolerable, but they just don't elicit the response from us that A's do.

Unfortunately, our children seem to feel that a mixture of A's and B's are totally acceptable, and they think that they should receive a medal of honor when they attain the A-B honor roll.

We've discussed the problem of grades, thus leading to discussions on homework, on numerous occasions, and as of yet we've found no miraculous solutions to the problems they present.

It seems that our "little dar-

lings" can spend six and a half hours a day in the classroom, only to come home and when asked what they learned say, "nothing." That always has bothered me. I'm sure it's not true because both of mine can read and write and even do arithmetic. They didn't learn how to do these things at home, so I'm pretty sure they picked it up one day at school while they were doing "nothing."

For a while there last week we thought we had come up with the perfect solution for teachers to get through to our young ones.

We all have realized that while all day in a classroom can teach them nothing at all, an hour in front of a radio allows them to know all of the words to the entire Top 40 songs in the nation.

We rationalized that if teachers would put their lesson plans to music, the students could harmonize and henceforth and forevermore know what they learned in school on any given day.

We were pretty proud of ourselves, what with having solved one of life's greatest problems. Our arms were beginning to get a little sore from patting ourselves on the back when Edgar Roberson, who had stopped by to pick up some pictures, burst our little

bubble. Edgar agreed that it would be a pretty good idea, but then after thinking about it for a little while said, "Can you imagine Sid Eley standing in front of his class singing? That did it. We totally lost it and elapsed into fits of laughter."

That was about the most hilarious thing we could think of. Solomn, serious Sid...dancing around the class, belting out a science lesson in Stevie Wonder style. It was simply too much. We all agreed that those students would never hear the words they'd be too busy laughing.

After the laughter stopped, I decided to give Sid a call and see if he'd mind us sharing our thoughts with you. Sid got the last laugh. I read him my column up through the previous paragraph, and he told me that it would be fine for us to print it, but he also wondered if I realized that he really did have a "magnificent" voice and that in actuality he did sing his lessons to his class. Oh well.

Teachers, we tried; but we just didn't make it this time. Maybe one day we'll come up with a way to make your work easier, but until then keep on teaching our kids "nothing", it seems to be working okay.

'Workfare' gives welfare recipients sense of pride

It's called "workfare" and it is a concept that should have been implemented long ago. Requiring able individuals receiving public assistance to work for their checks is proving to be the answer to the stigma of welfare.



The notion that able-bodied recipients of welfare programs should be required to work is not a new one. Many have believed for years that federally financed public assistance programs encouraged those receiving benefits to become dependent on the system. Conservatives labeled many such handouts an insult to the work ethic and feel welfare has encouraged a decline in traditional family values.

Entrenched liberal thinking that welfare is compensation for economic and social injustice is beginning to change. Many are beginning to realize that some social programs actually encourage a continuation of welfare dependent generations.

The idea of developing programs that encourage pride and discipline in welfare recipients is becoming very popular and is receiving unusual bi-partisan support. State legislatures around the country are joining forces to support laws that require able-bodied welfare recipients to accept occupational training and jobs. More than 20 states have such legislation and more will follow with programs of their own. Several North Carolina localities have experimented with workfare programs.

California has implemented a

plan many say is a model for future programs. Called Greater Avenues for Independence or GAIN, the program covers approximately one-third of the state's 586,000 AFDC cases. Welfare beneficiaries, with the exception of the handicapped and single parents with preschool children, must register with the program or risk having their payments stopped.

Once in the program, GAIN participants are evaluated and given necessary training to ready them for the job market. They are given three months to find a job, and if unsuccessful, are enrolled in a pre-employment preparation program where they are required to work off the sum of their welfare payments in an assigned job.

Workfare programs, as can be expected, are opposed by some. It isn't impossible to find well-reasoned objections to aspects of the programs are worth trying. And many of the participants agree. Most people, if given the opportunity, prefer to support themselves. Any system that encourages this attitude is worth trying. Let's give workfare a chance.

A recent article in Time magazine reported the comments of a Des Moines participant. Ruth Breitzke, 34, has worked as a volunteer at the juvenile court since September in return for the welfare check. "I enjoy what I'm doing here even though I don't get paid for it," she says. "It gives me the feeling that you can get back into the working world. It gives you that boost." IN Hamilton, Ohio, two workfare participants working at a shelter for the homeless say they enjoy their jobs so much they put in several extra hours per month without pay.

A favorite term of those who support workfare is "obligation." They believe welfare recipients, as citizens of society,

are obligated to do their part to make the system work. Properly implemented workfare programs allow those dependent on welfare an opportunity to pay that obligation. Most of all, it gives them a sense of pride in themselves and encourages self-dependence. These are goals every individual should have the opportunity to reach. Workfare can provide this.

Colleton showed interest in colonization

The last of the eight original Lords Proprietors named in the 1663 Charter of Carolina was Sir John Colleton.



Colleton was born in 1608. The place of his birth is unknown, but Devonshire was the likely place. Rich and influential in his adult life, Colleton was a staunch supporter of the English monarchy.

During the English Civil War Colleton served in the royal army, advancing to the rank of colonel. He gave large sums of money to the royal cause and raised an entire regiment for the king's service. In the latter endeavor he was associated with Sir John Berkeley, with whom he would later own part of Carolina.

Sometime about 1650 Colleton left England for Barbados. On that West Indian island he became a planter, merchant, and financier. He also held office on the island. Kinship to one governor of Barbados undoubtedly helped Colleton's position. That

the governor was also related to the Duke of Albemarle may have had some effect on the choosing of the Carolina proprietors.

Colleton returned to England, where he was knighted in 1661. He was given a seat on the Council for Foreign Plantations and membership in the Royal African Company.

The exact manner in which the Carolina proprietorship came into being is difficult to determine, but there is reason to believe the idea was initially John Colleton's. He had a lively interest in the expansion of English colonization and his experience in the New World gave him a greater appreciation of the needs, problems, and rewards of new settlements in America.

Like most persons interested in the land, Colleton was eager to enlarge his holdings. The fertile soil and vast forests of the unoccupied territory once granted to Sir Robert Heath tempted Colleton and others to dream of empire.

That King Charles II owed his throne to men like John Colleton (not to mention money and favor) was a strong factor in inducing the monarch to grant title to a vast part of North American to Colleton and his colleagues.

Colleton took an active part in the proprietors' deliberations regarding their new province. He received personal title to an island in Albemarle Sound today bearing the altered name Colington.

As the only proprietor with actual experience as a planter (Sir William Berkeley's planting being secondary to his governmental position), Sir John Colleton

would have the greater understanding of what would make Carolina successful.

Unfortunately, Colleton died in 1666 and Carolina had to suffer government by men of lesser experience too busy to concern themselves much with land and people three thousand miles from England.

Colleton's share of Carolina fell to his son Peter.

THE PERQUIMANS WEEKLY

Established in 1932
A DEAR PUBLICATION

Published Each Thursday By Advance Publications Inc. Elizabeth City, N.C.
Second Class Postage Paid at Herford, N.C. 27944 USPS 428-080

Jane B. Williams
Editor

Nancy Smith
Advertising Manager

Debbie T. Stallings
Circulation Manager

ONE YEAR MAIL SUBSCRIPTION RATES

In-County \$9.00
Out-Of-County \$10.00

119 West Grubb Street
P.O. Box 277
Herford, N.C. 27944

Member
North Carolina Press Association
National Newspaper Association