

Perspective

Divorce proves most difficult on children



When people tell me they enjoy reading my columns, it is only natural that their comments make me feel good. I've noticed most comments concern columns that relate to my experiences in life, or of situations that we have all found ourselves in from time to time.

Probably the most comments have been on the story about my daughter and how it feels to watch your child grow knowing you can't be an active part of her life. Sure, they are special moments, but it is difficult to really share with someone when all the time allowed is a few days once a month and perhaps a couple of weeks during the summer. From the comments I've received, there are more cases similar to mine than most of us realize. The "other" parent really does care.

We hear so much today about national "tragedies." From teen pregnancy to AIDS, it seems there is a constant attack on the traditions that made this nation what it is. We all know the divorce rate is higher than it has ever been, in fact, less than one-half of today's marriages will last. Divorce has become such a common practice that we pay little attention to statistics anymore.

Divorce in itself should not be considered a tragedy. There is a greater tragedy in two people continuing to live together in unhappiness. Even those who remain together for the benefit of their children are making a mistake. In such cases, the children will often suffer more as a result of the marriage than they would if it ended in divorce. In either case, the children will still be hurt. That's the real tragedy.

There are many who believe we place too little value on the sanctity of marriage by making it simple to obtain a divorce. It is possible to destroy years of commitment and the lives of many in only a few minutes. Most divorce proceedings take less time than the marriage ceremony.

Perhaps this line of thinking is true. Maybe it should be more difficult to end a relationship that could possibly be saved with just a bit more effort than has been taken. Perhaps there should be a requirement that

divorce be granted only after those involved received mandated counseling. Perhaps the costs in real dollars should be greater.

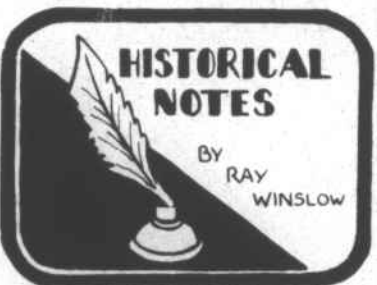
Even these measures will fail to have much impact on the soaring divorce rates. Society has become so complex, the daily demands on individual lives is so great, there are so many temptations.

Plus we have become so permissive and unmoralistic and too conscious of individual "rights." The traditional family structure of years gone by has changed so very much. In many families, both parents must work in order to make ends meet often resulting in much less time for open conversation. It is difficult to sit and "chat" about things when worries about jobs, deadlines, children and other things roam so large. Values in living have all but been destroyed as items of discussion in our schools. Not so long ago, such teachings were as important as any subject matter. The church seems to have lost the zest once noted in promoting moral living, and as an institution, appears to be confused about its role. Government policy is often such that it discourages families staying together. We place so much emphasis on the importance of self-expression and individual rights that we are not encouraged to attempt to work things out. Instead, we run to the courts for answers.

It is doubtful we'll see any real change in this attitude in the years to come. Divorce will continue to be the most popular method of resolving family problems. And the children will continue to be the ones hurt the most. It is a shame there can't be a better answer, but there isn't.

Courts play active roll in county government

The Inferior Court of Pleas and Quarter Sessions of Perquimans County was in session on February 10, 1862. In its nearly two hundred years of sittings, the Court had never been faced with greater danger. Perquimans was threatened with invasion.



A rather full bench of nine magistrates was present. Samuel Nixon, Josiah Perry, William R. Blanchard, Nathan Bagley, Joseph R. Billups, Henry H. Small, Edwin Brace, Joseph F. Newby, and James W. Mullen (justices) joined Court Clerk James C. Skinner in taking "upon themselves the Oath to support the Constitution of the Conference States."

The Court had been acting for the Confederacy since the previous April when it had begun plans for the defense of Perquimans and the raising of military units to fight for the South.

It was early foreseen that North Carolina had a vulnerable coastline inviting attack. Back in November the County authorities had responded to an order from the governor for "the Militia of the County of Perquimans to report themselves armed and equipped with fowling pieces and such other guns as they can procure" at Roanoke Island.

The county's response was not exactly what the governor had wanted. The justices of the peace (who governed the county) stated: "The necessities of our County requires a detachment of the Militia for home protection as a County police, therefore it is ordered...that sixty men from the County...be detailed to perform military service (in the county) during the day and serve as a regular

patrol during the night until the return of the regular militia from Roanoke Island."

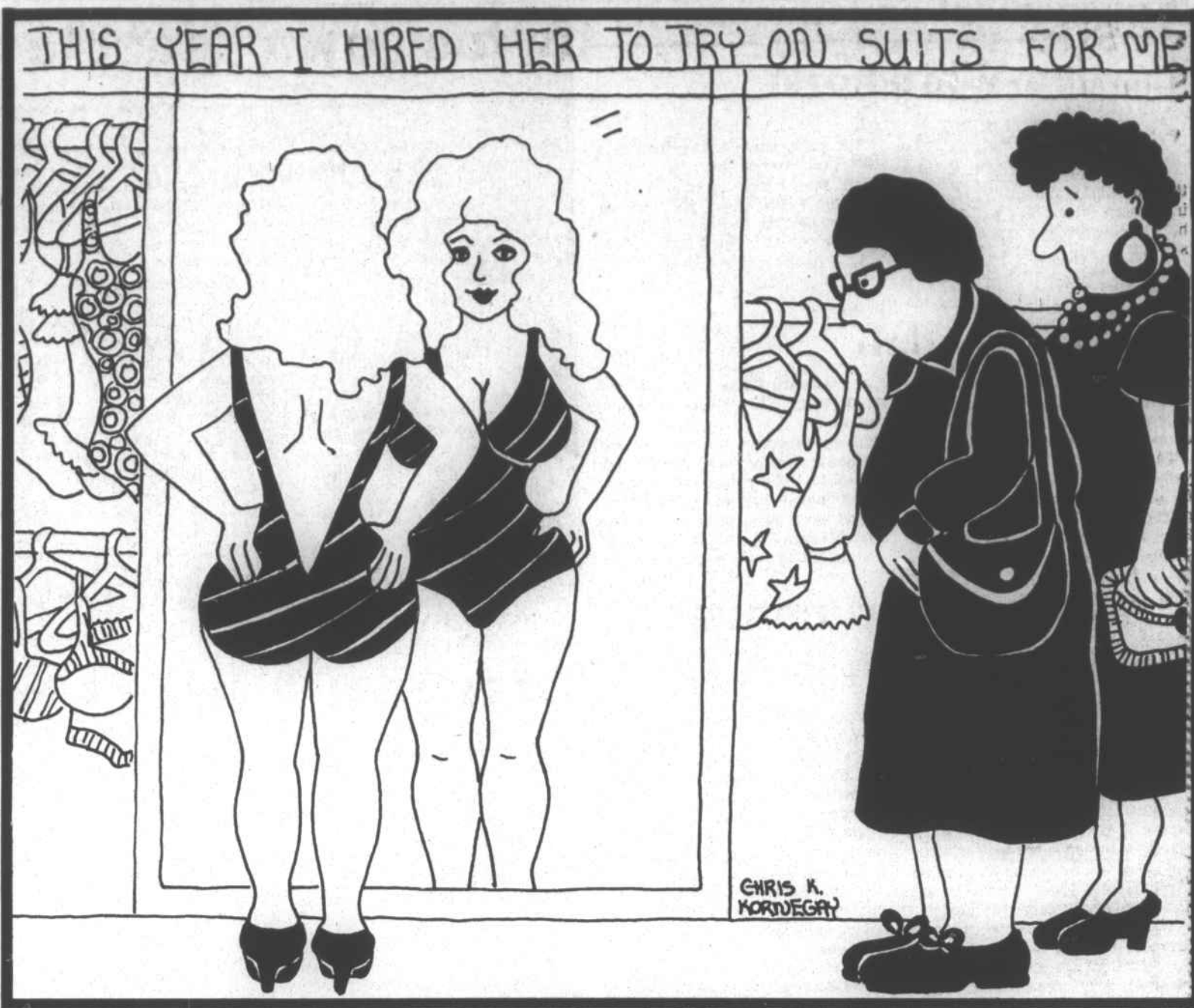
That attitude from the state's counties generally weakened the defensive force which could be set before the anticipated invasion. Skeptics would say there were not enough men to stop the Union Army in any case, but super patriots would not hear such talk.

All that was just past this February one hundred twenty-five years ago. After binding themselves irrevocably to the Confederacy the county authorities ordered Col. Joseph G. Granbery to call out the Perquimans militia and dispose them for the protection of the county.

The men left in the militia were not the best fighting men, because the army had already gotten two full companies of local able bodied soldiers.

Capt. William Nixon and his "Perquimans Beaueguards" were relatively safe in the forts near New Bern, but Capt. Lucius J. Johnson and the "John Harvey Guards" were on Roanoke Island.

From Roanoke Island came news that could shock the court. (Part 2 next week.)

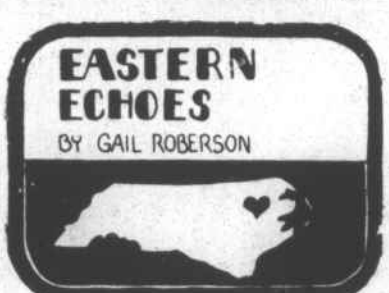


When a Nickel would play the jukebox

There are little ways you can tell you're growing older without looking at the calendar or gazing into the mirror. Lately my dark hair is beginning to show some signs of the salt and pepper look, and I can predict the weather by the ache in my left hip and shoulder better than the most well equipped of weather bureaus.

While waiting for my pizza order the other night, I decided to insert some money into the jukebox and play my favorite songs while I passed the time. I approached the jukebox with my money ready and my choices in mind. The machine was not that much unlike the ones from long ago, but as nickle no longer bought the music, that's for certain. I pulled out a few more coins and scanned the song titles. I scanned the titles for a Long time. Long enough, in fact, that somebody finally came to get me because my pizza was getting cold.

I dropped the coins in my pocket instead, and returned to the table with a downtrodden look. "I couldn't



decide," I told everybody. But the real reason was that I simply didn't recognize the titles anymore. And not too many of the names of the singers either. Now if that doesn't make you feel a bit outdated, nothing will.

And then, there is the place I pass on the way into town. Once it was The gathering spot for everybody under age twenty. You could get wonderful milk shakes and hamburgers there, and enjoy all your friends, to boot. It's also where I met my husband. I mean, where else would he be when the whole world was at the Tasty

Freeze. I must have circled the front of that place a hundred times every weekend in my red and white Farlane. Today, my old stomping grounds has been converted to a church.

I used to be such a fanatic about cleaning that I thought had to wax the lawn. That, too, has passed, thank God. And I'd mow the grass so often that my yard looked like the crowning locks of newly inducted army personnel. Now I've developed a fondness for the "scraggly looking lawn," having totally abandoned my enthusiasm for the lawnmower, and that bald spot out there in the yard has stopped worrying me altogether.

I don't choose my cars like I used to either. Today, I'm more apt to select a sedan over a swept-back two door, and my conversation with the salesperson leans more heavily towards the mileage than the horsepower.

I'm known as someone other than Gail Roberson these days too. To ten nieces and nephews I am now "Aunt

Gail," and to everybody's children, "Miss Gail."

And here's another thing. I once thought my parents were daffy when they didn't recognize a community friend who'd come by to play with me...a child who grew up and lived their whole life right down the road from us. I now wish to apologize to my parents on bended knee. The neighborhood kids around here now have to introduce themselves to me all the time. And, when I telephone my closest neighbor over across the road, I have no idea if I'm speaking to her sons or her husband when the phone is answered. I just say, "which one are you," or "let me speak to your mama or your wife." I could swear it was just a year ago that I bought those boys building blocks and story books. Now, they're both as tall as Georgia pines, and could probably snuff the life out of a grizzly in one quick squeeze.

I just don't understand where all the time has gone. And God, how I wish it would slow down just a little while it's going.

Cherry wounded in Viet Nam

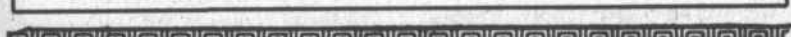
20 YEARS AGO

Capt. Corbin Cherry Is Wounded In Vietnam: Captain Corbin L. Cherry, son of Mrs. W.C. Cherry and the late Mr. Cherry, who was wounded in action in Viet Nam on March 25, 1969 by fragments from a mortar round while he was accompanying troop on a combat operation, has been evacuated from Viet Nam to Japan, Captain Cherry's mother was notified Monday of this week. Captain Cherry received wounds to his left leg resulting in traumatic amputation of the left foot at the ankle and a superficial wound to his abdomen, according to a telegram from Washington, D.C. to his mother, received March 27, from Kenneth G. Wischam, Major General USA, the Adjutant General Department of the Army. Captain Cherry an Army Chaplain, volunteered his service to his country and was guest speaker at the morning worship service at the First Methodist Church on Sunday, June 25, 1967, just prior to his reporting for duty as an Army Chaplain at New York City.



Sunrise Service At Up River Cemetery: A sunrise service will be held Easter Sunday morning at 5:30 at the Up River Cemetery. Up River and Piney Woods Churches will hold the joint Easter Sunrise Service. Carolyn Long In ECU Concert: The University Chorals and the Varsity Band of East Carolina University combined talents and presented a spring concert Wednesday night. The 75 chorals members (C) and 62 band members (B) represented 43 N.C. counties and 10 states. Miss Carolyn Long, participated with the choral group.

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Just clip and fill out this coupon. Include as many details as possible (Names, addresses, telephone numbers, etc.)

It may not be possible for us to use some of the stories suggested but we are always looking for new ideas.

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