

The Perquimans Weekly

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Notes from
a blind

Since childhood, I've always had special little eavesdropping spots in the woods where I could learn and watch what went on around me without disturbing the lives of the animals. Some were constructed by me. Some were mere bushes I hid behind, or fallen trees. There was even an old, caved-in house in the center of a meadow that I'd settle down beside and prop my back against in comfort while I observed the goings on from the busy meadow to the timber line due south of me. It was there one late afternoon that I witnessed two buck deer in battle, and on another occasion had the privilege of seeing, for the first time, a fox teaching her young to hunt. I was always careful to wear one of daddy's old gray shirts when I used this unique blind, because the color simply melted into the faded boarding of the abandoned house. It is still believed that many animals are color blind, but in those days even most books declared them all to be. I took no chances, as my thoughts have always been that we know precious less about the animals than they about us.

Long hours camouflaged as a bush or crouched in some blind often proves uneventful as well as uncomfortable. Indeed, it can be dangerous, too. I am usually near a tree when observing, or perched in the top of one. If there's one fact I've learned from my years of nature study it's a healthy respect for lightning, especially when I'm a living antenna in a tree bough being raked by a thunderstorm. I've had my molecules arranged more than once by close by lightning strikes, and no longer push my luck.

Recently, on one of those rare cooler days of summer, I visited a long-abandoned blind I'd used over twenty years ago. Though remnants remained, it was useless, but the area around the blind had improved greatly with age, unlike many these days totally destroyed by logging or development. I obtained permission from the land owner to use the blind again, and set out to reinforce and redesign it. There was not enough time in my writing schedule to actually use it then, but a month later I returned for the pure pleasure of it. I carried with me plenty of snacks, water,



Nature in a Nutshell

Gail Roberson

some field guide books, my most powerful binoculars, my emergency asthma medication and my field journal and pencils. In this journal I always record the activity around the blind as well

as do simple art sketches of the animals or insects.

The day I picked to return for actual field work was one of summer's hottest, but mundane matters such as that and hordes of yellow flies are worth it all once you get your first glimpse of a fawn or owl. I hitched my sack across my shoulders and climbed the makeshift ladder into the branches of the beech. I made haste to settle in, for I'd seen some blackberry vines nearby, and expected many visitors to them before dark. I got comfortable. Overhead soared a red-tailed hawk who passed that way again in thirty minutes dangling something from one claw. Another hour went by with nothing but the hum of mosquitoes for company. But there are rewards for patience and persistence, and soon a pair of doves settled on a branch of my tree, preening and cooing and courting like teenagers. I focused attention on them for a while until distracted by a movement in the distance. Even without the binoculars I could well detect the large buck whose golden-brown coat blended with the high meadow grasses. He paused at the edge of the forest, sniffed the air and took a few steps forward, sniffed again, pawed the sandy ground and munched his way towards me. The drum of a woodpecker echoed around the beech and crows argued across the hedgerow from which fluttered a swallowtail butterfly. Soon the deer left for greener pastures, but almost on cue, in his place arrived a hoard of small yellow butterflies. They flitted and tasted, and eventually landed on the meadow grasses to lay their eggs. I glimpsed a brown rabbit, identified two snakes and well over a dozen birds in a short while in my blind that afternoon.

I've returned many times since. I've even allowed a photographer friend to share the blind with his camera equipment. My mini-vacations in a blind are free and soothing to the soul, educational and entertaining, and I use one every chance I get.

Kids reflect upbringing

WARNING! contents of this article may step on some toes. I know because my own feet look like boat paddles.

With the ever increasing concerns about juvenile delinquency, recently we have been seeing and hearing more and more studies on "juvenile delinquency profiles."

These profiles suggest particular traits or indicators which predict that a young person may be at a high risk of becoming a delinquent. I have a better idea. Let's profile the parents or guardians of the kids who are committing violent crimes and other felonies. Then, we can target other children for concern and attention.

The parental behavior warning signs are:

1. Those parents whose jobs come first. You would be amazed at how many parents don't even accompany their child to Juvenile Court because quote, "I can't afford to miss work." Consciously or subconsciously, these parents' jobs are given priority in their

lives and the children can't help but know this. This is detrimental in two major ways. First, it steals valuable and irreplaceable time and experiences between parent and child, which both will

regret in years to come. Secondly, it damages a child's sense of self esteem to see what is really important to her/his parents.

2. The parents who watch TV, read the paper, golf, fish or pursue other activities more than they talk to their child. Failure to communicate with our teenagers for whatever reason, keep parents ignorant of their child's desires, ambitions, worries and influences during a very fragile and impressionable time in their life. A child's personality, beliefs, value system and life style are learned from their parents. If parents don't take the time to talk to and listen to their children, someone else or Hollywood will become the role models.

3. Parents who never let

their child suffer consequences of her/his own negative behavior. God has put into place natural laws which dictate that if a person causes harm to another, she herself will suffer harm, maybe not in the same way or at the same time but certainly. This law is intended to be learned at a very early age in order to allow us to avoid committing acts which result in devastating retributions. Just as a child must learn that if he touches fire he will be burned, he must also learn that if he breaks the law he will be punished. We do not do our children any favors by teaching them, as a result of our over protectiveness, that they can get away with anything and avoid all consequences. It is often the case that we must suffer in order to be saved.

4. Parents who never demand or maintain obedience and respect from their child. We have been brainwashed in this so called "enlightened age," into believing that to set standards for and demand them to be met by our children is in some way abusive or stifles their creativeness and individualism. HOGWASH! Our entire social order is based on limits to our behavior. A child must

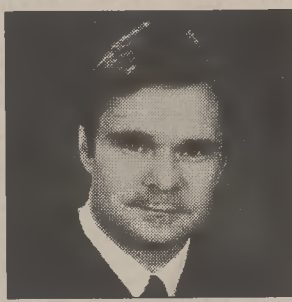
learn respect for others, their property and those in authority from their parents or likely not at all. No limits at home result in no limits on the streets.

5. Those parents who encourage or allow their children to continuously watch movies, television programs, read literature, play video games or surf internet sites that depict cruelty, perversion and violence. Children become by learning and they learn by exposure, and two thirds of television programs and 80 percent of all movies produced today are morally unfit for our children to watch. If a child sees 500 murders a year on television and in the movies then what makes murder such a big deal anyway, right?

It eases parents' consciences when a child winds up in juvenile court to think, "It wasn't really our fault." As a judge I sincerely believe that in only one out of a hundred such cases is it really not the parents' fault.

We simply get the proportionate return out of our children that we invest in them.

God save this State and this Honorable Court. Court's Adjourned.



View from the Bench

District Court Judge Edgar Barnes



Nature in a Nutshell

Gail Roberson

Letter

Dear Editor:

Since my letter last week concerning FEMA assistance, Perquimans County was declared a disaster area.

I would like to thank all involved who made this possible, and to FEMA, they were out to my house in 4 days and this has been a heavy burden lifted from our shoulders.

I hope all who need assistance will call this agency, as they are very efficient and are out to help you.

Thanks again to all who made this possible.

Kathy Bleil
HertfordLetter to
the editor policy

The Perquimans Weekly welcomes the opinion of its readers. Letters should include the name, address and telephone number of the writer. Letters without signatures or telephone numbers will not be printed. Only the name and city of residence will be published with the letter.

The subject matter should be of interest to the community, not a personal gripe. Letters may be edited for clarity and space limitations.

Submit your letters to The Perquimans Weekly, P.O. Box 277, Hertford, N.C. 27944, or drop them off at our office at 199 W. Grubb Street. Call 426-5728 for more information.

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Easy and hard

Some things in life are so hard and some are so easy. It strikes me as odd that those things that are hard are usually those things for which we are responsible. Those things for which others are responsible we usually see as really easy.

What people have told me — and what I have overheard — lately lead me to believe the following things are hard or easy:

Easy

● Coaching. Everybody who sits around you in the grandstands at any sports event can tell you the minute after a play goes wrong that the coach should have called it differently. Funny thing is, when the play goes right, usually the coach gets no credit.

● Teaching. Everybody and their brother, me included, I must admit, knows exactly what we must do to get test scores up and graduate better educated kids. The trouble is, of course, that none who know all the answers devoted their lives to education.



Ramblin' with Susan

Susan Harris

who's done wrong isn't yours.

● Minding someone else's business. See above and substitute "me" for "my child."

● Exercising. What with so many of us jumping to conclusions, running to tell gossip, walking all over other people's feelings, slamming folks whose opinions are different than ours, straddling the fence, climbing the walls and pinning those we don't like into a corner, it's a wonder anyone goes to exercise class or the gym to work out.

● Reporting. All you've got to do is write exactly what was said in exactly the right order and tell exactly what the outcome was—regardless of the fact that three people were talking at the same time and

everyone in the room who heard what you heard understood the discussion just a little differently.

● Policing. Forget the constitution and the bill of rights. If you know someone did something wrong because you were told by a reliable source who heard it from another reliable source, just arrest the accused. If you have to execute an illegal search in the meantime, that's okay. After all, it's not MY rights being violated because I didn't do anything wrong, and even if someone said I did, the cops know I wouldn't do anything like that.

● Bossing. We could run the company/government/schools/law agencies/anything else if "they'd" just turn us loose and let us use some common sense. To heck with the law/bottom line/rights of others, etc.

Hard

● All of the above when we're the ones responsible for the outcome. Things others must deal with always look so easy. We wish our lives and schedules were as easy as the next person's. But so many times we don't know exactly what that next person is going through. Easy or hard, we don't know.