Fix Up, Keep The Foxhole

One of the two dogfaces in the foxhole kept griping about living conditions: mud, wet, cold, exploding shells, whizzing bullets. His holemate grew weary of the complaints: "If you know a better hole, go to it."

There's something to be said for muddling through, but not much. People in general and parents in particular build much of the purpose of life into quests for better ways.

North Carolina's legislative pork barrel is thoroughly typical of politics as it is played universally. As its best—if it truly has a good side—and certainly at its worst, general funding of specific politicians' pet projects reflects an attitude toward democratic government.

What's the point in knocking yourself out to gain elective office—or to help someone else win a positlon of power—if not to accrue benefit? Where is it written that politics, as the art of the possible, is altruistic at all? To the victors go the spoils and all that.

On the other hand, how specifically should those benefits apply? Politicians are given far broader licenses that poets. Promise 'em anything, but deliver only that which will stand the office holder in good stead at the next election.

If the pork barrel did not exist, it probably would be necessary to invent it. It is the way elected officials demonstrate their value to their individual electorates. As practiced, of course, it also is a partisan political weapon of no small consequence.

This past General Assembly, Rowan County's all-Republican delegation came up with a better foxhole: don't play the sleazy game. Result: almost everybody else got something from the barrel; Rowan got zip. The particular electorate concluded, with justification, that the principle was too expensive.

Now comes a position paper from the North Carolina Center for Public Policy Research with some comfort for both pork barrel camps. Access to the barrel has become more democratic, more representative and, generally, more people in more places share it. The center concludes that "the pork barrel process is much fairer than it ever was."

"Pork barrel spending has remained relatively stable as a portion of the state budget," the center reports in its quarterly magazine, North Carolina Insight, "but the pork barrel process has gone through several major reforms. It now is more open, and more deliberate within the legislative system."

Put another way, everybody admits the barrel is there, and everybody knows the reason it is there. So the center says this nagging question remains: Is the purpose of the pork barrel, that of funding purely local projects with state money, valid? Can we find a better foxhole? Is there a lesser legislative evil?

The center couldn't say. It could only emphasize increasing equity in pork barrel application, and point out that it contains less than two tenths of one percent of the state budget.

It did recommend that the legislature keep better barrel books: "give credit—or blame—to those who successfully sponsor pork barrel legislation."

"With the General Assembly's sophisticated new computer system," the center pointed out, "additional accountability could easily be provided to tell the public exactly what ratified bill contains a pork request and to give credit where credit is due."

So, concludes this self-proclaimed bipartisan think tank, we don't know a better hole. Stay in the pork barrel. Install a bubble top, floor, carpet, heat, air conditioning, plumbing, VCR, but stay in it.

Never Mind The Motives, Do It

From The Christian Science Monitor

The on-again, off-again superpower summit between Mikhail Gorbachev and Ronald Reagan is apparently on again—for early December in the United States.

This is a positive development for both nations and for world peace. For reasons similar to those we will shortly list, a visit by Ronald Reagan next year to the Soviet Union would likewise advance world understanding.

Not to meet your "enemy" is to forgo the opportunity to stand in his shoes, to understand his point of view, and possibly to make him your friend.

Many supporters of Mr. Reagan, and Mr. Gorabachev, are opposed to such meetings. They fear that unwise concessions might be made on subjects like arms control. Indeed, this was the case with the summit in Iceland a year ago, when Reagan and Gorbachev suddenly engaged in a game of one-upmanship on reducing nuclear arsenals.

For this latest summit, Mr. Reagan was right to declare that the proposed signing of a midrange missile accord need not be linked to a meeting. this called Moscow's bluff in a last-minute attempt to bring Reagan's Strategic Defense Initiative into the negotiations. The subject can still be discussed not be made a condition for such as meeting. Reagan was right not to give in.

Gorbachev has been having his own domestic political troubles, which may have led him to attempt to avoid a US visit now. His having renewed his interest in coming may be a sign that he has put his own house in better order.

Whatever his motives, a visit to the United States would be the relatively young Soviet leader's first such venture.

If he expects to find a leadership or a nation supine or confused by the stock market slide, bedeviled by budget and Supreme Court conflict, preoccupied with television entertainment and materialism, he should be in for a surprise.

There is something rock-solid about the democratic West.

Gorbachev's visit will only make Americans want to show him their best, the values on which they have built a free society—not a perfect society, but one that is nonetheless advancing individual rights and opportunities for all.

War Powers Resolution Useless

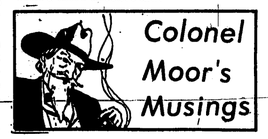
From the Los Angeles Times

The War Powers Resolution has been law 14 years, yet no president has ever chosen to honor its mandates and no Congres has ever demanded that its provisions be enforced.

Successive presidents, beginning with Richard Nixon, over whose veto the act became law, have all seen the act as unconstitutionally infringing on executive authority. Successive Congresses have insisted that the act is constitutionally proper. But Congress, confronted first with Lebanon in 1982 and then the Persian Gulf in 1987, has chosen not to press the point. In consequence, even the strongest of the resolution's supporters today acknowledge that it does not work.

The War Powers Resolution was supposed to prevent the United States from becoming involved in a war without explicit congressional approval. That remains a worthy purpose. But the argument that has gone back and forth between the White House and Congress over a half-generation focuses not on aims but on authority.

A nation that has undertaken global commitments inevitably faces global risks and potential armed conflict. Congress attempted, in 1973, to make sure that it would have a say in controlling the extent of any conflict. That goal has not been abandoned, but Congress now seems determined to try to go at it in a different way. This time, maybe, it can write a more effective law.



Now what? Before the start of every school year for the past 20, the U.S. Department of Labor has trotted out the numbers: the younger the school bus driver, the more accident prone. This past summer, the department told North Carolina and five other states it had looked the other way as long as it could. The kids are just too dangerous. The states simply would have to get rid of all their 16 and 17-year-old drivers by the end of the year.

Much agitation. The N.C. Department of Public Instruction said it had 4,300 bus drivers younger than 18. The cost of hiring out-of-school adults to replace these would be considerable—if adults with nothing better to do than drive a bus to and from school could, indeed, be found.

Not to worry. Last week, the state controller's office came with numbers showing that, in North Carolina at least, the younger the school bus driver the safer. Drivers under 18 had 7.8 accidents per 100,000 during the 1986-87 school year. Older drivers posted 12.3 accidents per 100,000 miles.

The state is basing its annual request for age waiver on these findings. The next move? The U.S. Department of Labor probably will exercise one of these yes-but options: North Carolina has the most reckless bunch of 18-and-older school bus drivers in the civilized world. We have reviewed our survey and found that school bus drivers under 18 in all 49 other states have .01 accident per 100,000 miles.

Mooresville Tribune

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From Where I Sit

By Johnny Morrow

Alcohol and oxygen. Oxygen and alcohol. No matter how you say them, or the order in which you place them, there appears to be no viable way the two can be interrelated. Yet, I came across two articles from the New York Times that started me to thinking. Considered in the broadest aspect — and I am reaching quite a bit — the two are responsible for taking an untold number of lives. We would be in sorry shape without them, but I'm looking at the situation from the point of view of the glass being half empty. Contemplated as such, it gives pause for thought.

Take alcohol, for example. When used for medicinal purposes, it can literally be a lifesaver. When consumed recreationally, it can be a killer, both for those who abuse it and for those who never touch the stuff. Statistics speak for themselves. After a decline in the early 1980s, the number of traffic deaths involving drunken drivers rose markedly in 1966. Alcohol-related traffic deaths dropped by 11 percent from 1982 to 1985, then jumped by seven percent to 23,990 in 1986.

Total traffic fatalities, including those unrelated to alcohol, also increased in 1986, by five percent over 1985, after having remained essentially stable at about 43,000 to 44,000 a year, since 1982. Keep in mind that this increase took place despite the widespread enactment of state and local laws designed to reduce drunken driving since 1980, and despite the rise of a citizens' movement directed toward the same end. Also, the accidents, covered in a graphic analysis, occurred before enactment of a federal law allowing states to raise the speed limit to 65 miles per hour on rural interstate highways.

The 1986 upturn in deaths was particularly acute among teenagers, the group generally regarded as most vulnerable. The analysis showed that deaths of legally intoxicated 15- to 19-year-old drivers dropped steadily, by 48 percent, to 212 in 1985 from 410 in 1980. But in 1986, they increased to 231, a rise of nine percent. The analysis also found that the number of 15- to 19-year-old drivers killed in single-vehicle night crashes declined by 35 percent, to 2,408 in 1985 from 3,693 in 1980. In 1986, however, the decline was dramatically reversed as deaths rose by 17 percent to 2,820.

Single-vehicle night crashes are closely correlated with drunk-driving fatalities. According to the government figures, fatal single-vehicle crashes at night declined to 14,603 in 1985 from 18,277 in 1980, a drop of 20 percent. They jumped back to 15,663 in 1986, an increase of seven percent. It is often difficult to perceive numbers on paper as being real human beings until you or a member of your family become a statistic. Then, it is too late.

Dr. Ralph Hingson, of the Boston University School of Public Health, authored the analysis of traffic deaths in 15 states. He said that this group of highest-risk drivers, particularly young males, is constantly being replenished. "Three or four years from now, there will be a whole new set of teenagers who weren't driving when there was all that attention to the problem in the early 1980s." We can't expect the interest of that period to have a lingering effect. Action must be taken that will constantly remind the new drivers of the dangers involved with alcohol abuse.

While there is nothing more tragic — and needless — than traffic deaths caused by drunken drivers, it is fascinating to chart our origins. So many circumstances have combined to make us what we are in the environment we share. This has always been the case, but to varying degrees. And now, tiny bubbles trapped in amber for 80 million years have given scientists their first direct look at what kind of air the dinosaurs breathed — and perhaps a clue to what killed them. It boggles the imagination that air has been preserved for such a long period of time.

Experts on global climate have always assumed that the air hasn't changed very much over the eons. But a preliminary analysis of the bubbles suggests that the ancient atmosphere may have been 50 percent richer in oxygen. The findings were presented at the annual meeting of the Geological Society of America. Until then, the oldest known samples of air were far younger, the product of a 160,000-year-old core of polar ice drawn from its resting place a mile below the Antarctic surface.

By crushing the bits of amber — known mainly for preserving insects — and analyzing the faint breath of gas that escapes, researchers appear to have opened an unexpected new window onto the history of the atmosphere and the creatures it nourished. As the technique is refined, researchers Robert Berner of Yale University and Gary Landis of the U.S. Geological Survey in Denver hope to assemble a detailed picture going back even further. Microscopic air bubbles are not unusual in amber, the resin from pine trees that has hardened into yellowish translucent lumps. Some amber has been preserved for 200 million to 300 million years.

Oxygen now makes up 21 percent of the atmosphere. The rest is mainly nitrogen, with a fraction of a percent of carbon dioxide and traces of many other gases. The amber, found in northern Manitoba, Canada, suggests an oxygen content as high as 32 percent. The rest is mostly nitrogen, as in the atmosphere today. If confirmed, the discovery of an oxygen-rich atmosphere in the planet's past would intrude on the debate over a wide range of problems, from the history of climate change to the rise and extinction of species. Speculation is already rampant, with nary an end in sight.

No one has ever thought about the possibility that oxygen could change so dramatically. Extra oxygen would have been a great boon to animals trying to develop more efficient versions of the energy-generating chemistry of life. A given species, for instance, might have been able to get by with smaller lungs. A decline in oxygen content, on the other hand, would have affected species accustomed to a richer atmosphere. The research might provoke a new look at what caused "the mass extinctions, including those of dinosaurs." Old theories will give way to new theories as more is learned, and the controversy will continue.

Before there was life on Earth, the planet had an atmosphere with no oxygen at all. It took billions of years for early organisms to free the oxygen that was bound to iron oxide and other minerals in the planet's surface. Some scientists have argued that an oxygen level as high as 30 percent would set off a global conflagration, vast forest fires burning in the enriched air. James Walker, of the University of Michigan, an authority on the development of the earth's atmosphere and oceans, said, "I can't believe we're living that close to the edge. If you get too much oxygen in the air, the world would become highly flammable."

I wonder how many lives the abundance of oxygen took. I wonder how many more were lost as the oxygen content decreased. I wonder what we humans would be like, and what life forms would surround us, if our atmosphere still contained 32 percent oxygen. But we are upstarts in the life cycle, and therefore have always breathed the same air. How long we are allowed to breath it often is determined by how close we get to drunken drivers. And therein lies the interrelation. Both kill. Alcohol and oxygen. Oxygen and alcohol. No matter how you say them, or the order in which you place them, they have a common bond — well, sort of.

OUR COMMUNITY

IN OTHER YEARS

1953
34 YEARS AGO

Mooresville, in the not too distant future, will be a better lighted town, now that the Duke Power Company has been authorized to proceed with its plans to install new white way lighting on the two principal streets here.

This action was taken by the town commissioners at their regular monthly meeting Monday night.

Duke Power Company's plans call for the installing of new white way lighting on Main street from McLelland avenue to Statesville avenue and on Broad street from McLelland avenue to Moore avenue. The fixtures will be the mercury-vapor type, with 15,000 and 20,000 lumens (10 lumens equal one candlepower). These new lights will place the existing ones which are 4,000 and 6,000 lumens.

New steel poles to hold the new lights will be placed on Main Street, and the scarcity of these at the present will hold up the project for several months. However, it is the hope of the Duke Power Company that the project can be completed early in the coming year.

The new lights, with their additional lumens, will cost the town an additional $2,500 per year, City Manager Robert Peck said.

In an advertisement appearing elsewhere in this paper, John V. Barger announces the organization and aims of a new construction company bearing his name — John V. Barger Company.

Mr. Barger is president of the new company.

A house and business-unit renumbering project, townwide in scope, will be carried to completion here within the next month or six weeks, the Tribune learned today.

Mrs. T.D. Miller has been selected to serve as general supervisor in the elementary schools of the Mooresville system for the 1953-54 scholastic year, it was announced today by Superintendent Roland Morgan. She has been a member of the faculty of the South Elementary School here for the past 10 years.

Mr. and Mrs. Dan Haselden, of Colorado Springs, Colo., announce the birth of a daughter on Friday, November 27, at Camp Carson Hospital in Colorado Springs. Mrs. Haselden, the former Miss Jo Rita Davis, is the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. John Davis, of this city. Mr. Haselden is a son of Mr. and Mrs. W.J. Haselden, also of this city.

Communicating With Your Government Representatives

			Office	Home
Town	Manager	Rick McLean	663-3800	664-7735
	Mayor	Joe Knox	663-0436	664-1051
	Ward 1 Commissioners	Richard Nantz	664-5806	664-3027
		Grady Shoe	664-1300	664-1365
	Ward 2 Commissioners	Gene Brannon	664-1772	663-0248
		Robert Randall	663-3231	664-1921
	Ward 3 Commissioners	Darrell Wilson	664-3617	664-2069
County	Manager	Wayne Deal	663-1616	
	Commissioner Chairman	Larry Hedrick	876-1111	
	Commissioner Vice Chairman	Alice Stewart	873-1842	
	Commissioners	Jessie Crosswhite	872-6345	872-6479
		Frances Murdock		872-6125
		Sam Ostwalt		528-4883
State	26th District Sen.	Howard Bryan 1420 Mt. Vernon Ave. Statesville, N.C. 28677	919-733-5783	873-9000
	42nd District Rep.	Robert Brawley Route 3, Box 96 Mooresville, N.C. 28115	919-733-5931	663-2635
Federal	Ninth District Rep.	Alex McMillan 507 Cannon Building Washington, D.C. 20515	202-225-1976	663-1976
	Senator	Terry Sanford 716 Hart Senate Office Building Washington, D.C. 20510	202-224-3154	
	Senator	Jesse Helms 402 Dirksen Senate Office Building Washington, D.C. 20510	202-224-6342	

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Prevent AIDS... Free report

Concerning AIDS, a health editor recently stated, "It's a great time for defensive living." More Americans, in fact, are expected to die of AIDS complications by 1990 than died in Vietnam.

Despite widespread rumors, AIDS is not a casual contact disease. It's not caught so much as it's gotten through exchange of infected body fluids by shared needles or sex.

The surest path to peace of mind is prevention, which leads us to offer the Surgeon General's official AIDS report. Pick yours up, FREE, at our Rx-counter. We do care.

Seasonal Obsession For Poundcake Blossoms

This material was written by Dr. Larry McGehee, vice president for development and professor of religion at Wofford College. It was provided free to newspapers by the Spartanburg, S.C. School.

I have never understood that oft — quoted decree of Marie Antoinette who, as the mob shouted for bread, said, "Let them eat cake."

Apparently the story is told to show the queen's insensitivity — or to explain how she lost her head.

Yet, who among us, wanting bread, would turn down the offer of cake?

Especially poundcake? Now there's something really worth shouting about, something actually worth losing one's head over.

Simplest of all cakes, poundcake has no peer. It bestrides the kitchens of the world like a Colossus, above the delectable but inferior layers of coconut, caramel, chocolate, and Boston Cream. Poundcake is the prized possession of the peasant and the pride of the philosopher, the filler of the age gap between our first and second childhoods.

Too indescribable to be the topic of poets' paeans, too sacred to be the shared mainstaff of Sunday communion, poundcake stands as mute witness that there is something above and beyond everyday existence, that something extraordinary is possible in the midst of ordinary lives, and that something supernatural can come from natural elements.

Poundcake is twice-blessed; it blesses both its baker and is partaker. A cook's reputation rises with the rise and aroma of poundcake. Success transforms a cook into an artist; failure, into a cartoonist.

Occasional poundcakes have deserved to be bronzed and placed in spotlights in the Smithsonian as permanent reminders of the best man (and more often, woman) can create. (Sadly, there are others heavy and hard enough to seem made of bronze.)

There was a time when men and women dressed formally for dinner each evening. They wore plain black clothing, depending upon the food, flowers, silverware, china, crystal, and candlelights to provide the ornamentation and color of the evening. A good poundcake is like unto a "simple black dress", for one can augment it in many ways — with boiled custard or ice cream, syrups or fruits or preserves, even spread with peanut butter or crumbled into a glass of milk. It lends itself well to such complementarity.

But good poundcake also stands well alone, its own reason for being, self-justified.

Although proper and appropriate to eat any day — or night — of the year, poundcake does have an annual official season. Poundcake Pounce stretches from Halloween (All Hallow's Eve) to Twelfth Night, a regrettably short period of a mere two months and two weeks.

Short though the Poundcake Pounce Period may be, however, there is one consolation — that one is permitted poundcake at least once a day for the 73 days, if one can find it.

Poundcake Pounce is one of the highest holiday seasons of the year, of course, universally anticipated with more eagerness and greed than the arrival of the Easter Bunny, Santa Claus, or the Tooth Fairy, and rivalled only by the Sandman.

As everyone knows, the arrival of official poundcake season made William Shakespeare the great writer he was. Of that annual arrival he wrote: "Now is the winter of our discontent made glorious..."

Will also opened the production of each of his new plays by cuting a poundcake instead of a ribbon — a lost custom that, if revived, would guarantee any new auto showroom or shopping mall a mob. If you let them eat cake — plain old poundcake — you'll always draw a crowd.

Alcohol - Drug Information

By BILL WEANT
Tri-County Mental Health Center

Drug abuse is taking a drug with or without a prescription beyond its medical value to influence the mind or body in order to alter feelings and emotions.

Cocaine is a mind-altering drug obtained from the leaves of the South American coca plant. Cocaine acts as a stimulant when taken internally for its psychoactive effects. When applied directly to a portion of the body it acts as an anesthetic.

It is said to be the biggest producer of illegal income of all drugs in the United States. Cocaine sales are said to be in the vicinity of $30 billion a year. Researchers estimate that more than 10 million Americans use cocaine with regularity. Cocaine use is more common among adults with better than average income. This is because of its cost. The amount of cocaine, in powder form, it takes to cover the area of a dime will cost around $35.

Cocaine is usually sniffed or/"snorted" into the nose and then absorbed into the blood stream. Cocaine may also be undiluted and injected. "Freebase," or undiluted, cocaine is heated in a glass pipe and smoked.

There are many street names for cocaine. Some of the most common are coke, dust, flake, nose candy, rock, snow, superblow, toot and white.

Cocaine produces sensations of extreme euphoria and feelings of energy, power, confidence and talkativeness. Like most other stimulants, cocaine can produce a sense of unpleasant depression in the use when the initial stimulant effects of the drug have ended.

Crack is concentrated cocaine paste cut into chips and smoked. Because crack is inhaled directly into the lungs, it affects the user more quickly and more powerfully than cocaine powder.

Even one use of cocaine or crack can cause death through heart attack, respiratory failure and convulsions. Remember basketball star Len Bias, and pro-football player Don Rodgers?

Cocaine destroys the mucous linings in the nose and can give you a runny rose, headaches, nosebleeds. Cocaine may cause permanent physical damage.

Crack is the most addictive drug known. it is almost instantaneously addictive.

Once addicted, a cocaine or crack user is physically and mentally dependent on the drug and may lie, steal, and perhaps even kill to get money for more drugs.

Laboratory animals will subject themselves to electric shocks and give up food and water to get more cocaine.

Treatment for substance abuse addiction is available from your Tri-County Mental Health Center.

(This series is prepared by Bill Weant, substance abuse education consultant with the Tri-County Mental Health Center, 418 East Statesville Ave., Mooresville. If you have a question concerning alcohol or other drugs that you would like answered in a future column, phone 663-3599).

Dear friends, Carol B. Neill

St. Augustine made this comment approximately 400 A.D.: "The laying out of the body, the burial rites...are more of a consolation to the living than of assistance to the dead." Since that time, many other qualified persons in religion and psychology have agreed. The funeral service impresses the realty of death, while it brings together relatives and friends to share the burden of grief of the bereaved family.

Respectfully,

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FUNERAL HOME
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MOORESVILLE, NC 28115

Cartoon Exhibit At UNCC

An exhibit featuring contemporary newspaper and comic book cartoons as fine art is currently on display at the University of North Carolina at Charlotte's Rowe Gallery.

The exhibit, "The Art of Cartooning," includes the work of Charles Schultz of "Peanuts," Milton Caniff of "Steve Canyon," Hank Ketcham of "Dennis the Menace," Mort Walker of "Beetle Bailey" and Bob Oksner of "Lois Lane."

"The Art of Cartooning" presents 65 original drawings with explanatory notes and associated production materials and runs through Nov. 20. Gallery hours are 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Mondays through Fridays and 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. Saturdays. For more information, call 547-2473 from 8 a,m, to 5 p,m, weekdays.

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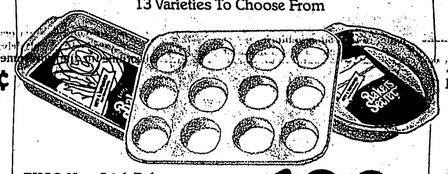

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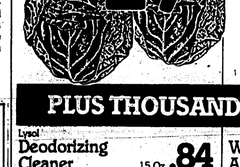

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