

Lenten

Guideposts

Gossip Never Is 'Idle'

By ELAINE ST. JOHNS
Author and Housewife

I grew up on the Ninth Commandment — literally. (The Eighth Commandment in the Roman Catholic and Lutheran churches.)

When I was 7, without a nyone's permission, I borrowed my mother's jade earrings to play dress up, and lost them. When they turned up missing, I said I had

ST. JOHNS seen my young brother take them from my mother's jewel box.

Billy said he didn't. I said he did. Billy got a licking. When I heard him yell, I beat my fists against the locked bathroom door and begged that I had done it. My dad, knowing my very real love for my little brother, didn't believe me, but thought I was trying to take the blame.

My mother, with that eighth sense mothers have, knew I was telling the truth. With the wisdom of Solomon, she denied me the purgative pain of a worse licking. Instead she let me smart under Billy's hurt, accusing eyes, and try to win back his trust and respect the best way I could.

Never since that day have I told a deliberate falsehood against my neighbor.

When I was a very young married woman, I lived on a block with a lot of other young married women, and one elderly spinster named Miss Coote.

Miss Coote was the only different thing in the neighborhood. She wore high-button shoes to church. When she went shopping she carried an out-sized, old-fashioned reticule and was always accompanied by the ginger cat on a leash.

WE DIDN'T RESENT her. She was a sweet old thing, quiet and timid. We just thought her old and had fun building up her eccentricities.

The stories grew as time went on. There were reports that she only weeded her petunias by the full moon, that she fed her old dog Red on remoulade twice a week, and that she could keep her animals in steaks and clams, what with prices and all.

"I think she's a shoplifter," one of the girls gizzled. "I can just see her popping down the stairs into that outlandish reticule, and then pussyfooting around to the hook shop. Who would suspect such a sweet old thing?"

I knew Miss Coote had once owned all the land on which the lanes stood, and could quite well have fed her pets caviar if she had wished. But I didn't want to spoil the fun and was harmless, amusing prattle and we all enjoyed it.

A WEEK LATER, at a neighborhood party, I was stunned when one of the mothers informed me, tentatively, that old Miss Coote was a known shoplifter with a prison record. The fact that half a dozen little boys immediately pricked up their ears didn't help.

"Oh, I'm sure not," I began, intending to defend her from the truth about her financial position, when another woman cut in: "I don't think she's a thief. I think Miss Coote's plain crazy."

Immediately the boys began to chant: "Crazy Coote! Crazy Coote!"

The next time I heard that chant I saw three boys standing before Miss Coote's house, pounding on the pavement with sticks, yelling "Crazy Coote! Crazy Coote!" On the other side

See SHE on page 3-A

He Paid The Hard Way & Saved 50c

By JOHN KILGO
News Staff Writer

A ministerial student came into County Recorder's Court to order and get change for \$10—the hard way.

Normal Ard, who mailed one thousand pennies to the court in a fruit jar to take care of a fine was given two choices by Judge William Scarborough.

"You can pay up in paper money and take the pennies back to school with you," the judge told the Mount Olive College student.

"Or you can go back in the clerk's office, count the pennies and exchange them at the bank for paper money."

The boy forked over \$9.50 in folding money and took his jar of pennies and left the courtroom.

"This whole thing got a little messed up," Ard said afterwards.

"You see I was driving this car and the patrolman gave me the ticket for improper license. But I didn't own the car. The boy that was riding with me owned it and he wanted the ticket."

OWNER OF CAR

Billy Yawn — a classmate of Ard's — was the car's owner.

"Actually," Ard said, "it was Billy's idea to send the pennies."

"And he was writing these letters and signing my name to them. I knew he was doing it, but I didn't realize I was going to get in trouble with the judge."

"That Billy's a card. These are his pennies."

Yawn said it didn't take very long to think up the penny bit.

"I thought I should have been given the ticket instead of my buddy," Yawn said, "but the patrolman said he couldn't do that."

"I decided what I was going to do was to get back to school I unrolled \$10 worth of pennies and put them in the fruit jar."

FUNNY AT FIRST

Ard said at first he thought it was a pretty funny trick.

"But then I read about this in the paper," he said, "and that night the patrolman came to my house and told me to be in Charlotte today at 9 o'clock."



(News Staff Photo by Tom Franks-Hansen)

Ard (Left) And Friend Billy Yawn Got Their Pennies Back

"That's when it quit being funny. I saw in the paper where the judge said he was going to pull my leg."

"But we were hoping he'd at least leave it on. He pulled it all the way off."

"We've had our fun out of this thing, though."

"And we saved 50 cents by coming to court. That's a pretty good deal."

"I think we'll take these 50 pennies and invest them in this Charlotte gas war so we can get back to school."

GOOD TIME

This morning Yawn was still having a good time.

"The judge said he was going to pull our leg," he said, "but we were hoping he'd at least leave it on. He pulled it all the way off."

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At Age 74,

He Gets Law Degree

NEW YORK — Chester A. Smith has completed law school at the age of 74—not to gain prestige but to pay back \$43,000 he does not legally owe.

Rep. Marcellus Buchanan tossed in the House hopper the resolution which calls for appointment of a nine-member legislative commission to "study and make recommendations with respect to the organization and function of the State Highway Commission."

The resolution pointed out that the 1957 General Assembly reorganized the State Highway Commission, reducing its membership from 14 to 7. This reorganization also resulted from the recommendations of a study commission.

Buchanan said he was not trying to decide whether the Highway Commission should have many members, as in the past, or fewer, as at present. Public hearings by the Study Commission could settle how the people feel on the question, he added.

THINKING OF MANY

The Study Commission proposal represents the composite thinking of many members of the House," Buchanan said. "It was not disclosed with the administration," he added in reply to a question.

In his resolution, Buchanan said: "Considerable controversy has arisen throughout the entire state of North Carolina as to the relative merits of the two systems under which the Highway Department has operated during the past six years."

Under the old Highway Department set-up, each of the 14 members of the Highway Commission represented one of the state's 14 highway divisions. The present set-up maintains the 14 divisions for engineering purposes but the 7 commissioners are supposed to represent the state as a whole. It was intended to answer Gov. Hodges' call for a commission to study the state's highway system as a whole, rather than a sectional, point of view.

RELATIVE MERITS

Buchanan's resolution said the commission should make a study so as to be able to inform the 1961 General Assembly of the merits and desires of the people of the State of North Carolina as to the relative merits of each of the two systems under which the State Highway Department has operated during the past six years."

The study commission would be composed of six members of the House of Representatives appointed by Speaker Addison Hewlett and three members of the Senate chosen by Lt. Gov. Luther Barnhardt. The study group would be required to hold public hearings in all sections of the state with at least one hearing in each of the 14 highway divisions.

'STILL SATISFACTORY'

FT. BRAGG — Gen. George C. Marshall remains in satisfactory condition at Womack General Hospital here, a medical report said today. He suffered a stroke Jan. 15.

Willie Tait Smith, accounting instructor, complaining of excessive absences, dropped Fritz from his class roll and sent his class card back to the registration office.

Fritz still has the run of the campus, excepting the cafeteria, and he is somewhat better known. School officials hadn't solved the mystery of who enrolled him.

Fritz is a boxer dog, owned by O. N. McNeil.

Another Shakeup?

Road Commission Study Requested

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Ice Jams Increase Dangers

By ASSOCIATED PRESS

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FAMILIES TO RETURN

Meawhile, evacuated families in Logansport and Wabash prepared to return to their homes. The Wabash also dropped rapidly at Peru, one of the communities hardest hit by the mid-winter

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(AP Photo)

Snow Woe Fo' Sho'

The town of Calumet in Michigan's upper peninsula is taking this season's snowfall in stride, as people are used to several hundred inches of snow in a season. At top, a barn is almost covered; at bottom, Arthur Lepisto uses his harn as a ski run.

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Secretary's Hernia Is Corrected

WASHINGTON — Secretary of State Dulles today underwent a successful operation for hernia.

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LESS THAN HOUR

White said Dulles was on the operating table less than an hour. The secretary, who will be 71 Feb. 25, entered the Army's Walter Reed Medical Center. The operation was performed there by the hospital commandant, Maj. Gen. Leonard D. Heaton.

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