



THE CHARLOTTE NEWS

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SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 1, 1958

Those Caissons Go Thrusting Along

THIS was no day for comparisons in America.

The satellite, praise be to it, is in orbit—think in no small part that "out-moded" and neglected organization known as the U. S. Army. Hitched firmly to the Explorer and held high for the moment are the hopes and morale of all Americans.

The comparisons will come later. We have succeeded only in being second to the Soviet. The Explorer, compared to Sputnik II, is a tiny thing. The Jupiter-C rocket which hurled the satellite into

the heavens may have had less thrust and power than the Soviet rockets. Finally, the Soviet may be preparing now an attempt to make an even more spectacular showing with another satellite. It may succeed.

The comparisons are inevitable. But this was not the day for them. This was a day for rejoicing and for gratitude to the Army, the scientists and the technicians who turned the trick.

The race for equality in space has not ended but, thank goodness, it has begun.

Sign Ban Will Boost Midtown's Health

THE City Council's midtown ban on overhanging signs is a bold but necessary move to give Charlotte a new look of ordered elegance.

There are objections—sincere ones—from some merchants. But in time these, too, will be enjoying the benefits of doing business in a more attractive shopping area.

A jumble of signs gives midtown an appearance of formless confusion. The effectiveness of the signs themselves is lost in the neon wilderness.

The impulse to do something came commendably from the business community itself. The City Council acted upon a formal recommendation of the Chamber of Commerce, altering it only slightly.

The action ought to have more than casual significance, however. It should really become part of a much broader

program to preserve the economic health of midtown.

Midtown needs more than symmetry. It needs an effective antibiotic for the ailments that contaminate the business district. It needs a few simple comforts, too, such as additional places to sit and rest.

But midtown must always be made as attractive as possible—attractive enough that people will want to go there. Unless a good many people go there and buy there midtown will be in deep trouble. And without a healthy core, an urban area simply disintegrates into a formless sprawl. This must not happen in Charlotte.

As modest as it may appear, the sign ban will help. If accompanied by other equally progressive measures midtown can be preserved as the healthy heart of a great trading metropolis.

There's Satisfaction In The Sandbox Set

ANY recent murmurings of satisfaction from the sandbox set may be traced to reports that Charlotte's six-week summer kindergarten program will be continued in 1958.

The reports are quite correct. The Charlotte council of the PTA has agreed to assume responsibility for this significant educational project and is therefore fully deserving of praise from sandboxes and parents alike.

There is even an excellent possibility that more schools than ever will have kindergartens during the coming summer. This is a welcome prospect indeed since across the nation today leading educators are coming in regard kindergarten as essential. Public kindergartens are already in operation in cities in 36 states.

Credit is due the American Association of University Women for initiating the kindergarten project here and carrying it on for three years. In taking

over from the AAUW, the parent-teacher association council hopes to broaden the program's scope while, at the same time, broaden public understanding and support.

In this worthy enterprise, as in others, the PTA will be again following its basic impulse—as an educational organization. There was a time when the PTA was little more than a ladies aid society organized to buy curtains for the school auditorium or Venetian blinds for the principal's office. That time has happily passed here. It is an example of its greater usefulness.

The project, of course, is administered in cooperation with public school officials. Charlotte has a good school system but kindergarten helps the child develop the kind of listening, working and oral habits that equip him with what the experts call "school-readiness."

It is a worthy project and one that deserves commendation and support.

'More To Science Than Missiles'

MORE than arteriosclerosis was on Dr. Irvine Page's mind this week when he spoke at a Charlotte-Mecklenburg Heart Association luncheon. As a scientist, the famed Cleveland heart specialist was concerned about the astounding rebirth of interest in scientific research since the first Sputnik arched ominously over the American continent.

Dr. Page expressed a well-founded fear that this interest was restricted primarily to science as a producer of weapons of destruction. "There is more to science than missiles," he said with quiet emphasis.

True enough. But from the debates in Congress one would never guess it. The scientist has indeed become a

hero overnight. He is suddenly looked upon as a steely paragon of rational virtue—if he can make a bigger and better rocket than the Russians and with a bigger and better nuclear warhead.

But this narrowly defined view of the worth of research is as distorted and dangerous as the old McCarthyite nonsense about the egghead being by nature a villain. It is right that scientific research should be encouraged. But let it be encouraged in its broadest sense. Let's avail ourselves of the blessings of science as well as the bombs.

Dr. Page said that there is more to science than missiles. He might have said it differently. He might have said that there is more to life than death.

Truthful James In The Monroe County (Wis.) Democrat

BY THE LIGHT OF A KEROSENE LANTERN

AS a man who has gray hair I can remember when everybody had kerosene lanterns and they were used for everything.

In winter, particularly, when the sun didn't rise until between 7 and 8, and set about 4:30 you had to have lanterns.

The farm wife knew that the lantern was a necessity. She saw that the tank was filled at all times and that the wick was trimmed and that the glass globe which enclosed the flame was kept bright and shiny.

The lantern was as much a necessity as the milk pail or the farmer's arctic. The wife held the lantern because the tank smelled of kerosene and often leaked. It was a fire hazard in the house and also it would spoil every bit of food it came near.

With the lantern you could go to the barn, the hen house or any other building. The farmer usually hung it on a nail while he was milking, but sometimes, in order to see better, he would set it on the floor. Then the cow would kick it over and the barn would catch fire.

When the farmer wanted to go some place at night, he would hang the lantern on the end of the tongue of the wagon or bobbed to light the way in front of the horses. If you didn't need it on the end of the tongue, you kept it covered up under the fur robe to keep your wife's feet warm.

Once a hired man asked his employer

if he might use the lantern to go courting.

"Gosh," said the farmer, "I never used a lantern when I went courting."

"Well, maybe not," replied the hired man, "but look what you got!"

The judge looked up from the bench to see a familiar face before him. He said "I've had you up here for speeding, drunken driving, parking alongside fire hydrants, driving a car with no inspection plate and the last time you were here I ordered your driver's license suspended. What's the charge this time?" The defendant looked sheepish. He mumbled: "Jawalking your honor."—LAMAR (Mo.) DEMOCRAT.

There is nothing more exasperating than a wife who can cook but won't—unless it's a wife who can't cook but does.—GREENVILLE PIEDMONT.

Behind every successful man you can usually find three people: His wife and Mr. and Mrs. Jones.—CARLSBAD CURRENT-ARGUS.

"The first and most important rule for safe driving is to be polite," says a traffic official. Yes, but how can a driver be polite to some of the (deleted, deleted, deleted) drivers running loose and wild?—JACKSON (MISS.) STATE TIMES.

The Wandering Trail Toward A County Office Building

By JOHN JAMISON
Charlotte News Staff Writer

MONDAY'S "Temporary" suspension of plans for the proposed county office building was just one more boulder in the rocky path towards the long discussed courthouse annex.

A quick review of The News' file labeled "New County Office Building" turns up one impressive fact:

Obstacles to the project have been many—but not individually difficult to surmount. And leadership has been sporadic, divided and sensitive to pressures.

Chapter Ends

The current delay in plans—which County Commissioners say is a temporary one—ends one of the more eventful and confusing chapters in the county office building story.

If a beginning point for that story must be selected, it could be said to be Jan. 9, 1956. On that day County Commissioners heard J. W. Alexander Jr., president of the local bar association, call the present courthouse "inadequate and outdated."

The attorney read a five-page report detailing serious overcrowding of governmental facilities and calling for an office building to be placed on courthouse square behind the Law Bldg.

No Action

Four months later the commissioners showed no signs of action, and Mr. Alexander renewed his plea.

"It may be too late if you don't take action now" to obtain a site for the building, he warned.

The following month the board asked the Charlotte Board of Realtors for an appraisal, not of the courthouse square site, but of the entire city block across E. 4th St.

In July, 1956, a committee of lawyers and commissioners recommended the county buy the block across 4th St. and build a five-story building there. They suggested a bond election for \$1,500,000.

It was also learned the Board of Realtors had appraised the block for \$335,217. (The county owns two major portions of the block—the

site of the county garage and a lot used for parking on the northeast corner.)

Question Asked

County Attorney Henry C. Dockery was asked to determine whether or not the county could legally condemn the block if that became necessary. It was understood that Ernest J. Sifford would wage a bitter fight against the taking of his apartment building in the block for the appraised figure of about \$60,000.

Meanwhile, a firm of New York bond attorneys ruled that Mecklenburg would have to do two things before it could get itself an office building: (1) Get an act from the General Assembly authorizing it to condemn the site, and (2) ask the voters to approve a bond issue.

Mr. Dockery prepared a local bill to send to the 1957 legislature in January, 1957.

The bill was introduced in March—without the signature of Rep. Jack D. Love who said he could not go along with giving the county the power of eminent domain. The bill eventually became law.

Then came another lengthy period when absolutely nothing was accomplished. This period was terminated—again by the lawyers—in August, 1957.

Bar Committee

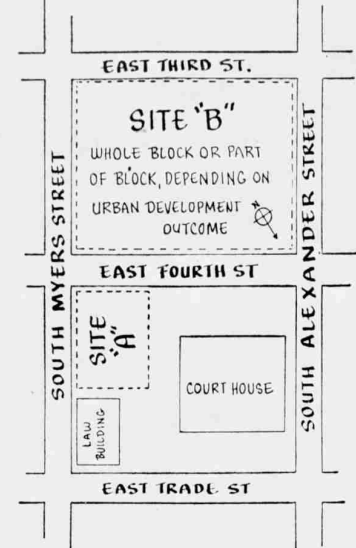
A bar association committee led by Judge Francis O. Clarkson prodded the commissioners into setting an October date for a bond election, this time for \$2,500,000. Sloan & Wheatley were employed as architects for the building.

The committee urged the board to call the election first and then decide on a site for the building.

A month later Rep. Vogler cautioned the board that "country folks" would not go along with this arrangement. They wouldn't "buy a pig in a poke" he said.

Commissioners promptly reversed their earlier action, calling off the bond election and appointing themselves a committee of the whole to study the matter further.

The following week Chair-



Two controversial sites: 'a' on present courthouse property, 'b' the block across 4th St.

man Sid Y. McEwen was heard to say he wasn't entirely happy with the choice of Sloan & Wheatley as architects for the big job. He and Commissioner Sam S. McNinch had wanted Charles Connolly for the task, but were outvoted.

Feminine Voice

The next voice heard was a feminine one. It was a member of the League of Women Voters calling the old courthouse "a sardine can with columns." The League urged its support behind the fight for a new building.

At this point, however,

County Commissioners didn't know:

1 When a bond election would be held.

2 Where the building would be located.

3 How big the new building would be or how much it would cost.

4 What functions should be in the old courthouse. On Sept. 23, three months after he had led commissioners into setting an early date for the bond election, Commissioner McNinch decided the voters would not approve a bond issue at that time and said the office building vote should be delayed for "about two years."

Vote Taken

But in November Commissioners John M. McEwen, Ernest K. Brown and J. Herbert Garrison outvoted Mr. McNinch and decided to ask the voters to approve a seven-story structure right beside the courthouse as recommended by Architect Charles H. Wheatley.

(Chairman McEwen nearly straddled the fence and didn't vote.)

A week later, after hearing of possibilities of a "substantial" saving through the help

of the federal government's urban redevelopment program, Commissioner Garrison switched his vote, decided he favored the across-the-street site and successfully moved for a delay in action until Jan. 15.

The Chamber of Commerce, which had long favored the across-the-street location, followed Mr. Garrison's action by announcing it favored development of a "governmental plaza" across the street from both city hall and courthouse and approved tying the plan in with urban redevelopment.

Fight Feared

Early in January, Architect Wheatley told the board his firm wanted to propose a compromise in order to put an end to "bickering back and forth." He said a bitter fight going into election day might kill the issue.

So he suggested returning for the across-the-street location and keeping an eye on, but not depending on, urban redevelopment for help with the cost. This idea never really got off the ground.

The commissioners called a "Special" meeting for the night of Jan. 20 to hear all sides of the question.

The following morning Mr. Wheatley suggested calling a bond election right away and deciding later on details of location and construction.

Commissioners answered this suggestion a week later—last Monday—by paying off the architects for their preliminary surveys and plans and instructing them not to do any more on the project until further notice.

The next chapter may begin before July 1, the deadline for a bond election on Charlotte and Carver Colleges, when the office building bond issue could also be considered by the voters.

Sites Compared

Architect Wheatley compares the two proposed sites in about this manner: The courthouse square site is already owned by the county. A seven-story structure there (three stories for parking and four for office space) would cost about \$2,170,000. It would also save air conditioning the old courthouse, furnishings and architects' fees for the new building.

The across-the-street site would cost the county between \$2,000 and \$300,000 and the total project would cost about \$2,425,000 including fixing up the old building. Just how much of this price the county could save—if any—through urban redevelopment is not known. But experts say it wouldn't be difficult to figure out ahead of time.

This calculation may be the next, and probably the most enlightening, step undertaken by the Board of Commissioners.

People's Platform

U. S. & Reds Engaged In Act Of Cannibalism

Clinton S. C.

Editors, The News:

NEXT morning where the two had sat, they found no trace of dot or cat, and some think today that burglars took that cat away. But the truth about the cat and pup is this: They ate each other up. This is what is going to happen to the United States and Russia.

—TELLER SUTTLE

Viewers Should Fight Pay Television Plans

Charlotte

Editors, The News:

THE editorial on pay television in the Tuesday issue of The Charlotte News deserves credit for the way it has cut through the confusion of the pay television issue and brought into focus the basic principles involved.

Out of the many arguments being made in favor of toll television, the fact still remains that it is an effort on the part of certain

interests to capitalize on the public's right to the use of the airways without charge.

Any effort to foster such a plan of charging the public for what they now receive without charge from our American television system should be opposed strongly and immediately by every television viewer.

—E. J. GLUCK

Chairman Of The Board
WSOC Broadcasting Co.

The American Accent

IF MULTITUDES could speak if they would sound like my countrymen as I hear them over the radio and in the movies, spreading the multitudes I imagine among millions who are led to feel that one ought to speak if one had met, in the movie, in these times, more every syllable is blurred or buried; there is no precision or clarity; no cool has its value. Well said the novelist Hemingway: "Who can defend the American accent, which is not so much an accent as a whistle, a snuffle, a tang?"—Van Wyck Brooks, in "From A Writer's Notebook."

Troubles Hounded Dead Financier

Drew Pearson's Merry-Go-Round

WASHINGTON

INSIDE fact about dynamic Bob Young, head of the New York Central, who shot the side of his face off in a Palm Beach attic the other day, was that he had been trying for months to sell his house in Palm Beach and had taken a mortgage on his home in Newport, R. I. On one other occasion a relative had wrested a revolver from his hands.

Reasons for his depression were: (1) He had hoped to make the New York Central prosper and wasn't succeeding. (2) His Allegheny Corp. held substantial loans for a big real estate firm in New York which is shaky. (3) His assets were locked into the Allegheny Corp. by a three-year-old Supreme Court suit brought by one stockholder, Randolph Phillips.

Didn't Know

Paradoxically, the Supreme Court held in Young's favor as to how to handle his stock. Even at the time he leveled his shotgun at his head in his Palm Beach attic, the Supreme Court had ruled for him, but Young didn't know it.

Most humiliating to Young was the

fact that he had to sell 100,000 shares of New York Central stock, leaving him only 1,200 shares. He had raised cash with the previous Central management for no other stock in its own company. And now he was put in the same position.

Stock Frozen

The reason he was put in the same position was because Allegheny stock in New York Central was frozen. It owns one million shares of Central but couldn't sell because of the Supreme Court suit. As a result it took a loss of \$10 million. Central stock was plummeting down from a high of \$80 to \$16, during which Allegheny couldn't sell but also during which Young had to have money to cover his margins. That was why he mortgaged his Newport house, tried to sell his Palm Beach house, and ended in 1,000 shares of Central stock.

Work Finished

When Young took over the New York Central he promised a dividend of \$8 a share. In December his board passed pay-

ing any dividend. He saw no light ahead. The administration which he had helped to put into office had helped the highways, doing nothing for the railroads. He considered his life's work finished.

Note—The Duke and Duchess of Windsor were planning to visit him next week.

More Secrecy

The government is now so obsessed over security that it's even censoring the Morgenthau diary. FBI's Secretary of the Treasury gave his diary to the National Archives for the use of historians, but the State, Defense, and Treasury Departments classified it "secret." Secretary of the Navy Gates is chafing at inaction and misdirection in the Pentagon, talks about going back to his home town, Philadelphia. He may deny this publicly, but privately he's caught in a miasma, can't get anyone to say yes or no on a huge defense, has to work from 9 a.m. to 9 p.m., and hasn't played golf since September. (He plays much more tranquilly.)

Speaker Sam Rayburn has put the kibosh on the hopes of a Chicago catering

firm to start a fancy public restaurant and banquet hall in the west side of the Capitol Building. Sen. Everett Dirksen of Illinois was backing the plan. To a group, visiting friends, members of commerce were to hold banquets in the proposed dining room. They could wait there that they ate under the same roof with the Congress of the United States. Mr. Sam said no.

Exit Zarubins

It was an ironic twist of diplomatic fate that the Soviet ambassador who arrived in Washington under a cloud stayed to negotiate the first people-to-people exchange with Russia. Georgi Zarubins had been in charge of the Soviet Embassy in Canada when code clerk Loris Gorenko walked out with cables proving that many members of the Embassy were stealing atomic secrets.

Zarubins got to know the United States, seemed to like the American people. There were even rumors that he was being recalled because he was too friendly—though these could not be substantiated.

