

SOUTHERN EXPOSURE

A JOURNAL OF POLITICS & CULTURE

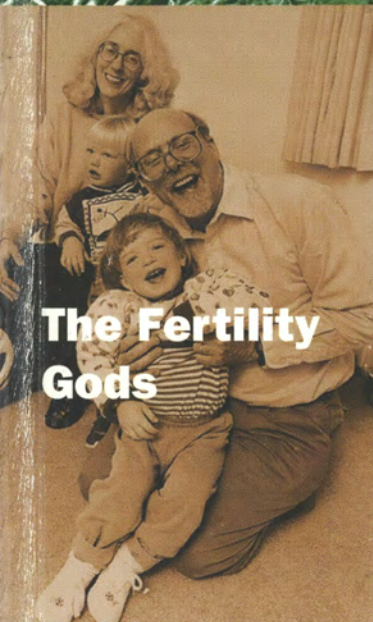
VOL. XXIV NO. 2 \$5.00



State of the Forest



A Dangerous Age



**The Fertility
Gods**



BATTERED



A Place at the Table

BEST OF THE PRESS

ALSO
KMART the best place not to shop



TWO CELEBRATED YOUNG AUTHORS PROVE
**The art of fine fiction
 is flourishing.**

WINNER OF THE
 HOUGHTON MIFFLIN
 LITERARY FELLOWSHIP

**Ashley
 Warlick**



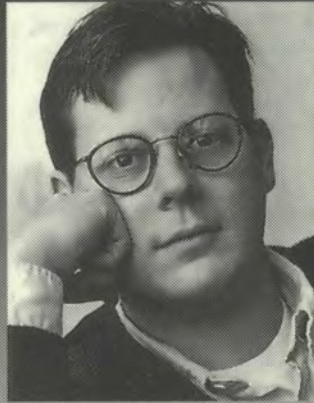
Piper Warlick

"To get this good,
 Warlick has obviously
 signed a pact with
 every sweet-talking
 devil in hell."

—Lee K. Abbott

"A WORTHY SUCCESSOR
 TO OUR FINEST
 SOUTHERN WRITERS."*

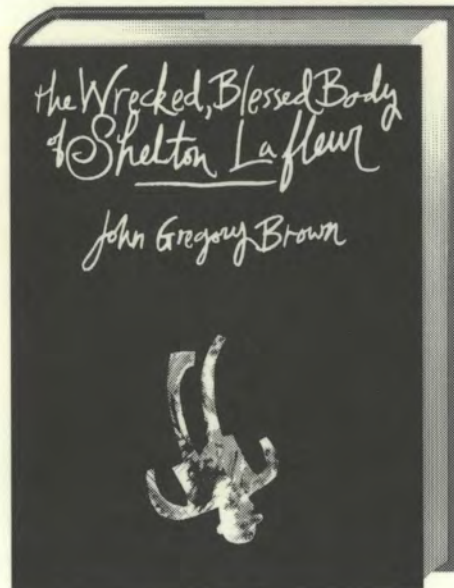
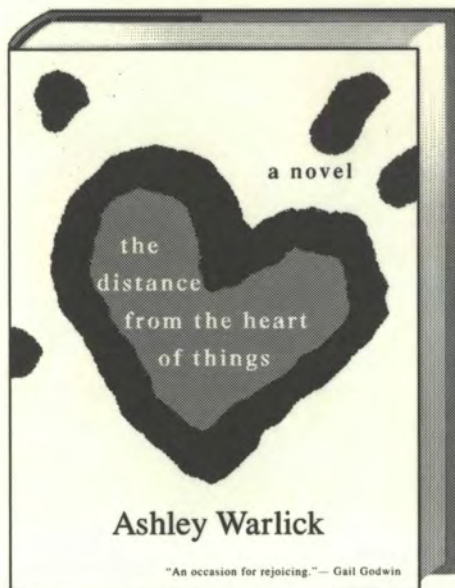
**John Gregory
 Brown**



J. M. Edkins Jr.

The distinctive new
 novel by the award-
 winning author of
*Decorations in a
 Ruined Cemetery.*

*Chicago Tribune



CYNTHIA SHEARER'S
first novel is "magnificent"*

THE
WONDER
BOOK
OF
THE
AIR

"Compelling." —*The New Yorker*

"Extraordinary...as swollen
with a love for language
as a Georgia preacher in July."

—GAIL CALDWELL,
Boston Sunday Globe

"Supple and observant...
A pleasure to read."

—LISA JENSON,
San Francisco Chronicle

"The story, told in **astounding**
detail, brims with characters who
seem truer than life."

*KAYE GIBBONS,
author of *Sights Unseen*

Now at bookstores



PANTHEON

You work hard to
make a **difference**
in **your** community.

You are being asked
to do more with less.

Looking for new ideas?

Check out the

Philanthropy Journal.

- Since its debut in 1993, the *Philanthropy Journal of North Carolina* has been writing about people just like you.
- Each month, the *Philanthropy Journal* brings you news and information about the people and organizations that are working to make North Carolina a better place to live and work.
- The *Journal* regularly features articles about:
 - Fundraising**
 - The arts**
 - Environmental activism**
 - Social change**
 - Community development**
 - Health care**
 - Volunteers**
- To subscribe now, call (919)-899-3742



Philanthropy Journal
OF NORTH CAROLINA

Contents

Southern Exposure

Vol. XXIV, No. 2

Summer 1996

Best of the PRESS

- 21 Best of the Press**
- 22 Alice and Carol** ♦ *By Elizabeth Simpson, The Virginian-Pilot*
A lesbian couple challenges stereotypes.
- 28 The Fertility Gods** ♦ *By Carol Winkelman, The Chapel Hill News*
Reproductive technology creates new health and ethical dilemmas.
- 34 State of the Forest** ♦ *By Leon Alligood, Nashville Banner*
Forestry practices raise concerns over Tennessee's most valuable natural resource.
- 40 A Dangerous Age** ♦ *By Carol A. Marbin & Stephen Nohlgren, St. Petersburg Times*
The community can't just lock up everyone who acts strange.
- 45 Nickels and Dimes** ♦ *By Mark Barrett, Asheville Citizen-Times*
Child support could go to people now receiving government assistance.
- 48 Battered** ♦ *By Erika Johnson Spinelli, The Item*
It takes an abuser facing his violence to break the cycle.



The 9th Annual SOUTHERN JOURNALISM AWARDS

Features

- 13 Grave Robbing** ♦ **Native Americans aim to stop the looting.**
By Lois Tomas
- 15 No Ways Tired** ♦ **Greensboro Kmart workers lead the way.**
By Barry Yeoman

Departments

- 4 FROM THE EDITOR**
- 5 LETTERS**
- 7 ROUNDUP**
- 14 FOLLOWUP** ♦ **Go Directly to Jail**
By Dana Clark Felty
- 50 VOICES from the South** ♦ **They Would Be Singing**
By Joan Papert Preiss
- 52 FICTION** ♦ **Monkey — In Twenty-Five Words or Less**
By Helen Ellis
- 55 JUNEBUG: Southern Exposure's Storyteller** ♦ **If it Don't Fit, Don't Force It!**
By Junebug Jabbo Jones
- 57 BLUEPRINT for Change** ♦ **Funding Social Change**
By Alvin A. McEwen
- 60 REVIEWS of Southern Media** ♦ **Southern Pot of Soup**
By Roberta Herrin
- 64 STILL THE SOUTH** ♦ **Pottery**
By Mary Lee Kerr

SOUTHERN EXPOSURE

SUMMER 1996

EDITOR
Pat Arnow

ASSOCIATE EDITOR
Ron Nixon

SECTION EDITORS
BEST OF THE PRESS
Eric Bates

INVESTIGATIVE
Eric Bates

FICTION
Jo Carson

VOICES
Nayo Watkins

JUNEBUG
John O'Neal

BLUEPRINT
Ron Nixon

BOOK REVIEW
Janet Irons

STILL THE SOUTH
Mary Lee Kerr

ROUNDUP
Wendy Grossman

ART DIRECTOR
Mia Kirsh

CONTRIBUTING WRITERS
Bob Hall, Mike Hudson
Barry Yeoman

CIRCULATION
Sharon Ugochukwu

INTERNS
Caroline Brown, Dana Clark Felty, Lucille Fidler, Priya Giri, Wendy Grossman, Noha Ragab, Leslie Waugh

SPECIAL THANKS TO
Sybil Dorsey, Jane Fish, Sally Gregory, Betty Meeler, Haila Rusch, Deb Sunick, Michelle Ugochukwu

INSTITUTE FOR SOUTHERN STUDIES
BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Cindy Arnold, Marty Belin, Laura Benedict, Cynthia Brown, Julian Bond, Pat Bryant, Pat Callair, Bill Chafe, Christina Davis-McCoy, James Green, Christina Greene, Jim Lee, Leslie McLemore, Ted Outwater, Ted Rosengarten, Len Stanley, Dimi Stephen, Sue Thrasher.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
Tema Okun

INVESTIGATIVE ACTION FUND DIRECTOR
Ron Nixon

FINANCE
Sharon Ugochukwu

SENIOR RESEARCH CONSULTANT
Bob Hall

Copyright 1996 by the Institute for Southern Studies
SOUTHERN EXPOSURE is published quarterly by the Institute for Southern Studies and is available with a membership in the Institute for \$24 per year. Manuscripts and photos may be submitted if accompanied by a self-addressed stamped envelope. Address correspondence to P.O. Box 531, Durham, NC 27702. Telephone 919-419-8311 or FAX 919-419-8315. e-mail SoExpo5338@aol.com.

SOUTHERN EXPOSURE is indexed in *Alternative Press Index*, *The American Humanities Index*, and *Access: The Supplementary Index to Periodicals*, and is available on microfilm from University Microfilm, 300 North Zeeb Road, Ann Arbor, MI 48106. Second-class postage is paid at Durham, NC 27702 and additional offices. ISSN: 0146-809X. Post Office No. 053470.

POSTMASTER: Send form 3579 with address changes to *Southern Exposure*, P.O. Box 531, Durham, NC 27702.

From the Editor

Every time I go downstairs in the Institute for Southern Studies office, I see the stacks of back issues of *Southern Exposure* lined up on the shelves, 24 years worth, 102 issues. As editor of the past five issues, I feel connected to a quarter century of Southern action.

The other day I noticed a 1985 issue that featured the ugly North Carolina senatorial campaign between Jesse Helms (who won) and Jim Hunt (who is now governor). An article about the Fund for Southern Communities outlined how a young foundation tried to help the puny funding situation for social change organizations in the South. There was an ad for a new director of the Institute — for \$14,000 a year.

Today, Jesse Helms is running for re-election to the U.S. Senate. The Institute is looking for a director. The Southern Journalism Award winners excerpted in this issue covered familiar territory: a nursing home scandal in Florida. Ministers taking advantage of parishioners. Battered women.

It got me thinking. It got me thinking I'd like to go home to watch TV and paint my nails. But I thumbed through some more issues that reminded me that the way we doggedly pursue the issues does make a difference.

We started the Southern Journalism Awards nine years ago to encourage reporters on daily papers to pursue hard and important stories across the South. Bringing light and air to tough issues can lead to change. Some of this year's first-place winners excerpted here inspired reform. "A Dangerous Age" in the *St. Petersburg Times* prompted examination of Florida's commitment laws (page 40). Directly after "Nickels and Dimes" appeared in the *Asheville Citizen-Times*, the North Carolina legislature dusted off the passed child-support enforcement laws (page 45). And after "The Fertility Gods" appeared in *The Chapel Hill News* in North Carolina with questions about informed consent, new procedures corrected some of the problem (page 28).

Another Southern Journalism Award winner, which was informed by our 1992 investigation of the burgeoning hog industry in North Carolina, led to much-needed regulation — and the series won a Pulitzer Prize (back cover).

There is other evidence of progress. In this issue, we profile a much-expanded Fund for Southern Communities (Blueprint, page 57). And we can pay our director a living wage (if he/she doesn't have a big family) (ad on page 6).

Barry Yeoman says his story about the Kmart boycott organized by employees, community groups, and the churches ("No Ways Tired," page 15), is "the new civil rights movement."

This is no time to get discouraged. *Southern Exposure* is going to keep on talking about issues that receive little attention elsewhere (see "Project Censored" news, page 5). We'll keep on raising these issues and encouraging change. It works.

— Pat Arnow

P.S. We still have many marvelous back issues (see inside back cover).

The Kmart boycott organized by employees, community groups, and churches is "the new civil rights movement."

SOUTHERN EXPOSURE HAS US STRUGGLING

I'm on a terrible deadline, but I just read the new *SE* and had to tell you how much I like it. I think it's *great*. It's unlike any issue of *SE* that I have ever read. You've given us a hundred earnest souls striving to do good — to overcome their own weaknesses, to understand neighbors, to cross racial and gender and class lines, to come to grips like all of us with a South that is changing so fast we struggle to keep up. For the first time in *SE*'s pages, you have *us* struggling, not just some other folks. From Stan's wonderful piece to Ron's, you have thoughtful, serious, engaging voices. *SE* remains a clarion call for social justice and freedom, praise the lord, but you bet I can see the difference. It's also been a long time since I've seen blacks seem so much a part of a *SE* issue — that is, not just portrayed in, but of, the issue, if you know what I mean.

I don't think I would have taken *SE* this way myself. I think I remain most deeply attached to the style that Bob (Hall) pioneered in the late 1970s and early 1980s, when *SE* routinely went after big business and corporate corruption. But this is good — very, very good, and you should be proud, and I'll be this *SE*'s reader forever.

Please accept the enclosed donation for *SE*. I like to put my money where my mouth is.

David Cecelski
Durham, North Carolina

DO BLACKS SUPPORT THE CHRISTIAN RIGHT?

I read Ron Nixon's article, "All God's Children?" in your Spring 1996 issue and find some of the assumptions faulty, beginning with the blocked declaration that "When it comes to school prayer, opposition to homosexuality, pornography, and abortion, the religious right gains *tremendous* (italics supplied) support from the black community."

Are we expected to take seriously pronouncements made on African-American positions gained through "polls" conducted by whites? There is an internal inconsistency, in fact, built into the piece as indicated by the assertion that "Overtures to blacks by the Christian Coalition have been less successful than overtures to whites." How then do you quantify "tremendous?"

Likewise, on what do you base the declaration that the African-American community is a potential reservoir for the Christian Right? Whose judgment is this? I'm inclined to doubt such a prediction for the simple reason that black people have first of all as priorities to exist and survive the oppressive nature of every single institution of American life. They have managed to do so during the centuries of this Republic's existence with a great deal of nobility, and I do mean precisely *that* quality: *nobility*. Isn't the position simplistic that they now represent a reservoir for some of the most malevolent national traditions?

I'm also bothered by your cover: the image of a black male,

yelling something — one is not sure what — alongside your cover title, "Falling Apart/Coming Together. Can we overcome our differences?"

Why not ask Pat Buchanan, Robert Dole, Bill Clinton, and white Americans and accompany that question with a yelling white male image? Or you might try asking Rodney King, who posed the question much more poignantly, and in a much more valid context!

Jewell Handy Gresham
Croton-on-Hudson, New York

Ron Nixon replies:

It's unfortunate that Ms. Gresham misread my article on the Christian Right's outreach to African Americans. First, she disputes the assumption that the Christian Right can gain tremendous support from African Americans and at the same time have little success in attracting blacks to join the Christian Right. She calls this an "internal inconsistency." This "inconsistency" was explained in the article by showing black community support and agreement with the Christian Right on a number of social issues like homosexuality, abortion, and school prayer. You don't need polls (white or otherwise) to tell you this. Anyone who has gone to a black church can attest to it. Blacks can be just as conservative socially as whites. Ask those members of the African-American community who happen to be gay or lesbian. But support on some social issues does not mean that blacks are ready to run out and join the Christian Right.

Secondly, she misread the quote from Dr. Clyde Wilcox, who stated that on "social issues," not in general, blacks are a potential reservoir

Project Censored Names Southern Exposure on Top 10!

"Working in Harm's Way," Ron Nixon's article about child labor in the fall/winter 1995 *Southern Exposure*, was named one of the top 10 censored stories of the year by a distinguished panel of judges participating in **Project Censored**. The award recognizes the most important underreported stories of the year. The child labor story was rated the third most underreported story of the year.

Southern Exposure has also been nominated for *Utne Reader's Alternative Press Award* for investigative reporting.

of support for the Christian Right. This was demonstrated by the success of the Christian Right in recruiting black churches in Louisville, Kentucky, against the anti-discrimination measure for gays and African-American support for the black principal in Mississippi who was fired from his job for letting his students pray in school. Again, this does not mean that blacks support the secular politics of the Christian Right. Instead it shows the core of religious beliefs in the black community are similar to those in the white conservative right on certain issues.

Finally, to say that African Americans wouldn't support "some of the most malevolent national traditions" is, well, simplistic. How, then, would you explain the existence of people like Alan Keyes, Clarence Thomas, Thomas Sowell, Phyllis Berry Myers, and Kay James, to name a few? These people who are black support the same "malevolent national traditions" that Gresham says blacks would never support. It can be argued that these people and many like them do not represent the mainstream of African-American thought. But it is wrong to suggest that all blacks have acted nobly throughout the history of this country. Like any other race of people, we have our good and bad. To suggest otherwise is to forget that above all, African-Americans, are human, capable of making the same mistakes or bad choices as anyone else.

And from Pat Arnow:

We did talk about putting a pissed off white guy on the cover but decided that male Caucasians — pissed off and otherwise — are all too amply represented in the mainstream media.

JOB ANNOUNCEMENT

Executive Director

The Institute for Southern Studies

The Institute for Southern Studies, a nonprofit center working for progressive change in the South and publisher of *Southern Exposure*, is seeking an executive director to:

- Work with board and staff members to develop and maintain a strategic focus.
- Foster the Institute's commitment to addressing race, class, gender, sexual identity, and other issues.
- Develop and implement a fundraising plan.
- Manage finances.

Candidates should be committed to social, economic, and racial justice and have a good grasp of issues affecting Southern grassroots communities in addition to good communication and organizational skills.

Position to start in August 1996. Compensation is \$30-32K with benefits. Women and people of color are encouraged to apply. Send cover letter and résumé to:

Tema Okun, Interim Director, ISS, P.O. Box 531, Durham, NC 27702-0531 or call (919) 419-8311 ext. 25.



**Building a Better Community?
Get the Right Tools for the Job.**

Subscribe to *The Neighborhood Works*

An award-winning, bimonthly magazine covering community-based, urban approaches to issues such as housing, the environment, organizing, economic development, transit, land use and more.

One year, only \$19.95

THAT'S 33% OFF THE REGULAR PRICE!

2125 WEST NORTH AVENUE, DEPT. S,
CHICAGO, ILLINOIS 60647

312.278.4800, EXT. 140

CHURCH BURNINGS

BAKER, La. — Members of the Sweet Home Baptist Church in Baker, Louisiana, are afraid to reconstruct their church building, destroyed by flames. The arsonists have not been found and might do it again.

According to a report by the Center for Democratic Renewal (CDR), an Atlanta-based group that tracks far-right activity, Sweet Home is one of 45 black churches that have been burned, bombed, or vandalized over the past six years in the South. Most were in Tennessee (15) and Alabama (8), with Louisiana and South Carolina not far behind with five each. The numbers are horrifying and continue to climb steadily — six more churches have been burned or vandalized since the report came out in March — yet 33 of the 45 crimes remain unsolved. There have been arrests in 12 cases.

The CDR study reveals that the law enforcement record isn't improving. "The picture doesn't look good in terms of arrests," says Rose Johnson, program director for the CDR. "We're putting together updated figures now, but I'd estimate at least 80 percent of incidents resulted in no arrests."

The FBI has been slow to link the crimes, label them as racist, or track down the perpetrators, even though each of the 25 people arrested so far has been a young white male with ties to white supremacist groups or strong racist beliefs, according to the CDR. Instead, says CDR's Johnson, the members of the burned churches are being targeted in federal investigations. "The FBI has been subpoenaing the financial records of church members," says Johnson, "unduly subjecting them to harassment by federal officials."

Members of the targeted churches are drawing on strong community support to put their lives — and their churches — back together. Green Bay Packer Reggie White has supported the rebuilding of the Inner City Church in Knoxville, Tennessee. Four denominations along with the Southern Christian

Leadership Conference are joining to help finance and rebuild churches in Boligee, Alabama. Not all churches have as much support, however. "Communities are struggling," says Johnson. "They often don't have the \$80,000 to \$100,000 it takes to rebuild." Many are also frightened, having been attacked more than once, and are patrolling church grounds at night or taking valuable equipment home at night.



In an effort to end the fear, pastors are joining with national groups to demand that the federal government take the crimes more seriously and search out white supremacist plans to continue the burnings. In June, pastors from destroyed churches, along with the CDR, National Council of Churches, and the Center for Democratic Rights will meet with Justice Department officials face-to-face to share their concerns. Johnson says the groups want to know "what is being done out there."

For more information on the preliminary research report "Stop the Terror: We Won't Go Back," contact the Center for Democratic Renewal, P.O. Box 50469, Atlanta GA 30302, (404) 221-0025.

— Mary Lee Kerr

HOME IS WHERE THE FREEDOM IS

CHARLESTON, S.C. — Thomas Boykin of Charleston is looking forward to a summer of freedom. For the first time in his adult life, he'll be able to come and go as he pleases and do pretty much what he wants. His agenda will be loose. "I plan on having fun," he says.

Thirty years is a long sentence, but he wasn't a hardcore criminal. He never committed a crime at all. Born with cerebral palsy, Boykin uses a motorized wheelchair and needs daily assistance from another person to get in and out of bed and to get dressed. When he was 14, his family sent him to a group home for people with disabilities, and he lived in one of these homes for the next 30 years.

Living in the group home was very much like being in a minimum security lockup. Lights out at 9 o'clock. He had to have permission to leave the premises. He ate, slept, and bathed when staff members told him to. As a man in his 40s, he had as little control over his life as he had when he was 14.

That has changed. At the beginning of this year, Boykin left the group home for good. He now has his own apartment and employs two people to help him with daily needs. He decides when they come in and what they do. The first rule he made when he got out on his own was that he was no longer going to bed before 11 pm.

Boykin's freedom is due to South Carolina's willingness to pay its workers through Medicaid. A waiver allows funds that were used to pay for institutionalization to be spent on in-home care instead.

THE SHIRT OFF HIS BACK

WASHINGTON, D.C. — Eddie Bauer's getting the pants sued off of them for trying to strip the shirt off a young black teen. The company is the target of an \$85 million lawsuit filed by two Washington, D.C.-area teen-

agers who allege false imprisonment, defamation, and violation of their civil rights. At a warehouse sale this year, one of the teens was forced to take off an Eddie Bauer shirt he'd bought the day before be-

cause security guards suspected him of stealing it.

The experience reinforced concern in the black community that black teenage boys are targeted for extra surveillance in retail stores.

— Wendy Grossman

Tens of thousands of non-elderly disabled Americans are forced into nursing homes and other oppressive institutions because they need daily assistance. If they can't afford to pay for it, they turn to Medicaid, where the rules are sharply biased in favor of the mighty nursing home lobby.

People with disabilities often find that the state will spend almost unlimited Medicaid funds to institutionalize them but little or nothing on home care they control. They're trapped — not by their disabilities but by rules designed to maintain profits. More than \$30 billion in Medicaid funding annually goes to the nursing home industry. Yet statistics show that home care costs less than half of institutionalization.

All Southern states except West Virginia have a Medicaid waiver to provide some sort of home care for the elderly and/or disabled. Medicaid waivers are probably the most common method for disabled people to get out of institutions.

But waivers come in all shapes and sizes. A state's harsh restrictions on things like hours and type of assistance can force people with severe disabilities into nursing homes. LaTonya Reeves, who uses a wheelchair and is legally blind, faced that possibility. She was born and raised in Memphis. The waiver there would have allowed her only a few hours of assistance a week. Her only option was a nursing home.

At age 25, Reeves was no longer willing or able to depend on her family to help her. She moved to Denver where there were more flexible rules.

Now she feels that she lives in self-imposed exile.

But she has little choice, she says. "I would never go into a nursing home. I would lose all my freedom. And so I would die."

Medicaid must provide nursing home care, but home care remains an option for states, so discrepancies vary widely from state to state. Those whose independence is possible only because of home care lead a tenuous existence, extremely vulnerable to legislative whim.

Governor Pete Wilson of California and Tommy Thompson of Wisconsin are hacking away at home care programs once considered models. Consequently, establishment of a national, mandatory system of in-home care with consistent minimum standards is high on the agenda of the disability rights movement.

— Mike Ervin

CORNERING THE POLLUTION MARKET

THE PIEDMONT — In the Virginia and Carolina Piedmont, power companies are trying to corner the market in legalized air pollution. Under the Clean Air Act, utilities are given a set number of allowances to emit sulphur dioxide (SO₂), a leading cause of acid rain. Any facility that pollutes more than its allocated amount has to buy pollution permits from someone else who is polluting less. Extra permits are put up for sale at a yearly auction.

At a 1995 auction, Duke Power spent \$12 million buying 35 percent of the U.S. market of short-term "spot" allowances for SO₂ and 60 percent of long-term permits

to be redeemed in the years 2001 and 2002. This will total over 93 tons of airborne pollutants. A distant second in the 1995 allowance war was Virginia Power: over \$2 million got them nine percent of all permits.

In March, Virginia Electric and Power Company sought to control the 1996 auction. The Richmond-based utility led all bidders by spending nearly \$2 million for 23 percent of the total long-term permits, including 68 percent of those redeemable in six years.

The permit sales are supposed to replace bureaucratic regulations with free market solutions in the war against air pollution, especially acid rain. "For the first time," writes Brian Tokar in *Dollars and Sense*, "the ability of companies to buy and sell the 'right' to pollute was enshrined by U.S. law."

Not all permits have gone to utilities. To protest the permit system, a few credits have been bought by environmental law clubs and other concerned individuals. A group of middle-school students from Long Island (named INHALE) pooled \$20,000 to buy nearly 300 permits in the 1996 auction

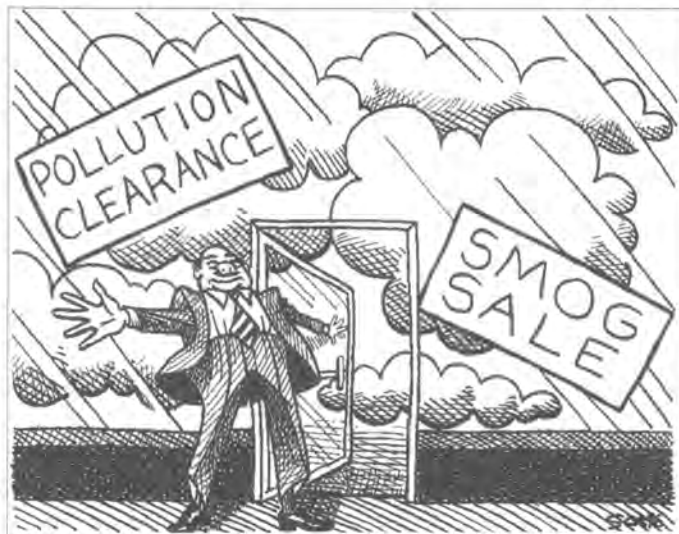
— which took less than one-tenth of a percent of allowances off the market.

If Southern utilities actually used their permits for polluting, the environmental impact would be unprecedented: in 1995 and 1996, they purchased the right to pump almost 150,000 tons of SO₂ into the skies of North Carolina, South Carolina, and Virginia over the next seven years — not counting permits they plan to buy in future auctions.

More likely, the companies will use their near-monopoly position to set permit prices. So far, utilities have found buying permits to be cheaper than installing smokestack scrubbers or other pollution control measures. With Southern utilities driving up allowance costs and selling permits for a profit, wealthier companies will disproportionately exercise their right to pollute.

As Tokar says, "It should be clear that if pollution credits are like any other commodity that can be bought, sold, and traded, then the largest players will have substantial control over the entire game." And it's a game Southern power companies are playing to win.

— Chris Kromm



A RIGHTEOUS SECURITY THREAT

SOUTH CAROLINA — Five Percent Nation is a loose-knit religious organization that split from the Nation of Islam in 1964. The group's lack of structure and its youthful followers have prompted the South Carolina Department of Corrections to label the group a "security threat" and treat it as a "gang."

Because of their affiliation with Five Percent, about 60 South Carolina inmates have been in solitary confinement for the past year. They are allowed five hours of exercise a week in handcuffs and leg chains and receive limited visits. Four of the inmates in lock-down recently filed suit in U.S. District Court against six prison administrators.

Last year, a policy forbidding long hair and beards led to a prison riot. Three hundred of the rioters, who were associated with Five Percent, were placed in lock-down, says Steven Bates, director of the South Carolina ACLU. "Those who were released had to convince officials that they were never Five Percenters or renounce their faith by signing a form," he said.

Due to the harsh conditions of solitary confinement, several prisoners have recently signed the renunciation forms. The Department of Corrections has also banned all Five Percent literature, and some prisons forbid the writings of Elijah Muhammed, which the Nation of Islam holds sacred, says Robert Bensing, the attorney for the plaintiffs. The Five Percent Nation has for decades been recognized by federal courts as a religion.

While Five Percenters do not claim any scripture unique to their religion, followers often read the *Quaran*

COOL YOUR JETS

ALACHUA COUNTY, Fla. — A war has broken out over whether a Navy A-7A Corsair II jet, flown in combat missions during the Vietnam War, should remain on the campus of Spring Hill Middle School in High Springs, Florida.

The Jet Must Go Committee argues that the jet is a violation of the school's weapons' ban on campus. Also, they say that the jet is propaganda, teaching children that violence is all right and creating a pro-military attitude and environment.

At a meeting to discuss the controversy, supporters of the jet outnumbered those who objected to it. Rebecca DeMent, an eighth-grader, said that she saw the jet as a symbol of technology and that she was "proud to have it in the front of our school. It is a weapon of protection and no more." Like others who had been writing letters to the editor of local papers, she pointed out that the jet is



Courtesy of Julie Netzer

AN A-7A CORSAIR II JET DECORATES THE LAWN OF THE SPRING HILL MIDDLE SCHOOL IN HIGH SPRINGS, FLORIDA.

also a memorial for a 12-year-old classmate who died of cancer.

One of the chairs of the anti-jet committee is Julie Netzer, a member of Veterans for Peace. She'd rather her tax money be spent helping the children, not paying for a spotlight to light the jet at night. Recently the school board could not come up with enough money to heat locker rooms, gymnasiums, and classrooms at one school, but they found \$7,000 to put up the jet.

"We've got the kids sitting out there with no heat. It's an embarrassment," Netzer says. "They're not wisely spending their money."

— Wendy Grossman

or Elijah Muhammed's *Mess-age to the Black Man*, the same texts read by Nation of Islam members. The Five Percenters are founded on the idea that the collective black man is God. The religion is named after the idea that only five percent of the population is righteous.

Part of the religion's allure is that there is no leader, and the group's meetings, called parliaments, generally occur in public places. The group has always been viewed as the most threatening Islamic group because its members are young and win converts preaching racial consciousness with a potent inner-city parlance.

Arguments in court will likely revolve around what constitutes a legitimate religion. Bensing pointed out that the 4th Circuit has recognized Wicca as a religion,

a group with a loose structure like Five Percent. "If we lose," Bensing says, "I know we'll go to the 4th Circuit." The decision could affect the treatment of Five Percenters across the country.

Citing the lawsuit, department officials refused to discuss the inmates in lock-down, the classification of gangs, prison policy regarding gangs, or what criteria are used to determine a legitimate religion.

— Alex Todorovic

DECENCY AT LAST

WASHINGTON, N.C. — As the waves crashed and swirled around them and the wind howled, seven men in the Pea Island Station crew risked their lives to save people on a sinking ship. "Again and again [they] went back through the raging sea, literally carrying all nine per-

sons from certain death to the safety of the shore," said U.S. Coast Guard Captain Warren G. Schneeweis. That happened a century ago, in October of 1896. Because the men in the crew were black, their bravery went unrewarded.

A local teenager, 15-year-old Kate Burkart, read about the crew being slighted and was outraged. She lobbied Senator Jesse Helms and President Clinton to do something about it. And they did. This spring the U.S. Coast Guard awarded the Gold Lifesaving Medal to the Pea Island crew posthumously. The honored crew members, led by Richard Etheridge, were Benjamin Bowser, Lewis Wescott, Dornman Pugh, Theodore Meekins, Stanley Wise, and William Irving.

Their descendants, along with Burkart, who is white,

gathered for the medal ceremony. Dwight Meekins, a Coast Guard commander whose grandfather was one of the Pea Island rescuers, became choked up. "It's a glorious day, isn't it?" he asked.

Pea Island, which is off the North Carolina Outer Banks, had the nation's only all-black lifesaving crew from 1880 to World War II. The U.S. Life Saving Service was the fore-runner of the Coast Guard.

— Wendy Grossman

LIVING IN A LOVE CANAL

BATON ROUGE, La. — The evidence is in, and dioxin is guilty. That was the conclusion of the first two citizens' conferences that examined the effects of dioxin and other synthetic hormones that are everywhere — in the vinyl dashboards and seats of cars, in wall coverings, flooring, hospitals, commercial buildings — even Barbie dolls.

By the third conference this spring in Baton Rouge, participants knew the scientific and anecdotal data. They were ready to act. That is why they titled the meeting "Time for Action." Held in an area with many chemical plants that has been nicknamed "Cancer Alley," the conference served as "a kick-off to challenge corporate power that is producing this stuff," said one of the organizers, Jim Warren, of North Carolina Waste and Reduction Network (NC WARN).

The nearly 600 grassroots activists, scientists, environmentalists, environmental justice groups, youth groups, and veterans' organizations who attended the three-day conference agreed that the most urgent goal is to stop incineration of wastes. "That's the leading cause of

THE MOCKING OF A PRESIDENT

LEXINGTON, Va. — The Arkansas float displayed just about every tasteless Bill Clinton joke anyone could think of. It had a Bill Clinton look-alike holding a sign reading, "I swear I didn't inhale." It had a young man wearing a purple dress with a brown paper bag over his head with a sign taped to the bag: "Chelsea."

Then there were several young women with pillows under their shirts, holding a sign proclaiming Arkansas as No. 1 in the nation in teen pregnancy. One "pregnant" girl had a sign reading, "Thank you Bill." The float also bore a sign announcing that the state is the "Home of the Next Ex-President of the United States."

The Arkansas delegation flatbed trailer was the first float in a line of more than 50 that rolled down Main Street, kicking off Washington and Lee University's 1996 Mock Presidential Convention in March.

At an event where GOP stalwarts Newt Gingrich, William Bennett, and Dan Quayle talked of family values and stamping out drug dealers, the enthusiasm of a good portion of the underage audience was fueled by their drug of choice — alcohol.

Because the Democrats control the White House, this year's Mock Convention was trying — in all seriousness — to predict the Republican presidential nominee. That suits many of Washington and Lee's students, who tend to be more affluent and more Republican than the general population. They elected Bob Dole.

Over the years, the party atmosphere at the Mock Convention's parade has been known to



REPUBLICAN U.S. SENATOR JOHN WARNER GREETES A FRIEND AT THE WASHINGTON AND LEE UNIVERSITY MOCK CONVENTION

Photo by Eric Brady, The Roanoke Times

get out of hand. In 1984, convention officials quashed a plan by the Massachusetts delegation to commemorate a notorious barroom gang rape in New Bedford. Some students had wanted to have a woman in a torn dress sitting on a pool table and waving while several males sang "The Gang's All Here."

This year, officials made sure the floats were in good taste, they say. "I was given special instruction by the mayor and his wife to make sure I looked over all the floats before they went out," said Adrienne Bryant, the parade chairwoman. She thought they ended up being "pretty tame."

Chris Rosen, a freshman from Little Rock who played the part of Chelsea, received mixed reactions. "Some people were laughing and cracking up. Other people were just horrified," he said.

— Mike Hudson

release of dioxin into the food chain," Warren said.

The next goal is "to phase out the uses of industrial chlorine, since dioxin is an inevitable by-product of the manufacture of PVC plastics, pesticides, cosmetics, and hundreds of other products," Warren said. There are alter-

natives to the use of industrial chlorine in every case, Warren added.

Dioxin and other common endocrine disrupters such as PCBs have been implicated in sharply declining male sperm count, dropping fertility rates, increases in breast and testicular cancer,

and an inability in some animals to reproduce because of shriveled male sex organs. Even trace amounts of the ubiquitous chemicals pose a long-term worldwide health risk and a more immediate risk to people in communities near toxic waste dumps, incinerators, and chemical

plants, Warren said. "They haven't found a safe threshold for these chemicals, yet they've been so broadly distributed that there's virtually nowhere on earth you can't find them. They're in the polar ice caps and in virtually all the food you eat," Warren said.

The fears of Warren and others at the conference were validated by speaker John Peterson Myers, head of the W. Alton Jones Foundation and author of *Our Stolen Future*. The book shows that certain chemicals are wreaking havoc on humans and other animals by disrupting their normal functions. "Endocrine disrupters mimic the hormone of the body and fool the body into taking actions that can cause unexplained illness," Myers said.

Myers was echoed by Lois Gibbs, who has battled corporate polluters since the late 1970s and recently authored a book called *Dying from Dioxin*, which reached many of the same conclusions as *Our Stolen Future*. "You don't have to live in a Love Canal," Gibbs said. "The average person in the United States has almost enough dioxin in his or her body to damage their health."

A representative of one veterans' organization at the conference warned participants not to take the warnings lightly or listen to chemical industry propaganda that chemicals aren't dangerous. "When we were exposed to Agent Orange [a defoliant which contained large amounts of dioxin] in Vietnam and started complaining of headaches and other illnesses, they told us nothing was wrong," he said. Many Vietnam veterans complain of illnesses afflicting them and their children that have been linked to Agent Orange. "Look at us now. Don't let this happen to you."

— Ron Nixon

NAKED VIEWPOINT

MONTGOMERY, Ala. — Attorney General Jeff Sessions, a GOP candidate for his state's open U.S. Senate seat, is trying to keep anti-gay legislation alive despite a federal court ruling that struck down the law. In January, U.S. District Judge Myron Thompson ruled that a 1992 statute that would have banned state universities from funding gay student groups "violates the First Amendment" and constitutes "naked viewpoint discrimination." The ruling came just two weeks before the start of a conference of gay and lesbian student leaders from across the region slated for the University of Alabama in Tuscaloosa. Sessions had sought to use the law to block the event.

The ruling eased anxieties of free speech advocates and gay people in the state's universities. Alan Clampett, president of the University of

Southern Alabama student group, expressed "relief that the cloud of this law had finally been lifted." The gay and lesbian conference came off without a hitch.

Sessions is unwilling to let the issue die. As the state's top lawyer, he has vowed to appeal the ruling to the U.S. Court of Appeals for the 11th Circuit. That challenge is likely to prove ill-fated. Experts say that legal precedent cuts strongly against Sessions' position. "If other legislatures or school boards adopt similar policies [to Alabama's], they can expect the First Amendment to be invoked successfully against them," said the ACLU's Ruth Harlow. She represented a student group from the University of Southern Alabama that filed suit against Sessions to stop enforcement of the law. She later argued the case in court.

As the success of some race-baiting candidates

shows, failure in the courts doesn't necessarily make for failure at the polls. Defenders of Jim Crow laws, like former Alabama Governor George Wallace, won elections by playing on voters' prejudices in the era of inevitable desegregation. Sessions, taking a page from the race-baiter's playbook, seems to have learned that running against the courts while playing on pervasive prejudice can be an effective campaign strategy.

But Sessions is no stranger to the politics of race. According to the Alliance for Justice in Washington, D.C., his nomination to a federal judgeship in the 1980s stalled over a lawsuit he once filed that charged several prominent African Americans with voter fraud. Sessions lost the case and, later, the nomination. Given the risks of race-baiting, Sessions may have seized on political gay-bashing as a reliable way to win over arch-conservatives without suffer-

NAKED CHRISTIANS

LONGWOOD, N.C. — Clothes don't make the Christian, says David Phipps, a retired Pentecostal minister — especially among nudists.

This spring Phipps was among the 40 Christian nudists gathered at Whispering Pines Resort for their first annual conference. Basking in the warm weather, they took communion, discussed Jesus, sat in the hot tub, sang Christian karaoke, and played volleyball in the pool.

It was a family atmosphere, says Carol Love, an owner of the resort and one of the Christian nudists. Though public nudity is often associated with original sin, Love points out that the Bible does not forbid nudity.

"There's nothing that I do nude that is forbidden to my Christianity. We're very modest nudists," she says. "Most Christians don't tell their friends that they're nudists. There's a stigma attached to nudists. Most people think nudists are a bunch of sex-starved crazy people, but that's not it at all."



The Southern Baptists' neighbors didn't seem to mind, however. At the Old Shallotte Baptist Church nearby, Deacon Larry Shreve believes people should wear clothes, but he wouldn't condemn the nudists. "We don't condemn. We don't condemn. We just try to be loving," he says.

— Wendy Grossman

ing widespread rebuke.

And in an election year, even the drawn-out nature of the legal process figures to work to his advantage. His appeal will keep the issue alive — and on voters' TV screens — for the duration of his Senate bid if he wins the primary in June.

— Hans Johnson

THE GIVER AND TAKER OF COASTAL POLITICS

BALD HEAD ISLAND, N.C. — Visit the Atlantic Ocean this summer. Enjoy the surf and sun. And remember what geologists say: the beaches are moving. Not disappearing, just moving.

While that's OK for visitors, some landowners would like a sea wall or jetty to keep the sand on their beach. But history shows the resulting changes in currents and sand flow will cause the beach downdrift of the jetty to diminish faster. Those oceanfront residents will then want a jetty, too, and so on, until the coastline looks like New Jersey's.

To protect its beaches, North Carolina banned jetties in 1985. Yet this spring, the Village of Bald Head Island erected 16 jetties along 1.3 miles of its beach, each one jutting about 300 feet from the dune line into the ocean.

Regulators say the giant, sand-filled tubes are "experimental," and the island's location next to Wilmington's shipping channel means no downdrift beaches will suffer. Critics think the exception weakens the ban on barriers. "It's a crack in the dike," says Todd Miller of the North Carolina Coastal Federation. "The pressure is increasing as more homes and condos are

threatened with erosion."

Critics also question whether political favoritism influenced the Bald Head decision. In mid-1994, Walter R. Davis sued the state, claiming the ban amounted to an unconstitutional "takings" of his Bald Head Island properties, since he couldn't stop beach erosion.

A Texas oil magnate raised in North Carolina, Davis is used to getting what he wants. Giving money to politicians helps. "One of the



Photo by M.J. Sharp

A 300-FOOT JETTY WILL HELP PROTECT PROPERTY OF OIL MAGNATE WALTER DAVIS (HOUSE ON RIGHT) ON BALD HEAD ISLAND, NORTH CAROLINA.

main reasons that I give money," Davis told a reporter, "is to get to talk to them. If you can't talk to people, you can't get anything done." During 1989-92, Davis and his wife invested \$191,500 in North Carolina politics; he's the largest single donor to state politicians.

Davis uses his access well. He discussed his lawsuit with Governor Jim Hunt, who's taken his gifts for 20 years. And he told the attorney general's lawyer handling the state's defense that he'd spend up to \$1 million to take

his suit to the Supreme Court — or he might drop it if the Village of Bald Head Island got permission to build jetties in front of his property.

The power to grant an exception ("variance") to the jetties ban rests with the Coastal Review Commission (CRC), which gets advice from the governor's environmental staff. The governor and attorney general have no authority to commit the CRC to a policy. But in March 1995 lawyers for the attorney general and Davis signed an agreement with several provisions, including: (a) Davis would drop his suit if Bald Head got a variance and the permitted jetties extended in front of his properties, and (b) Hunt's environmental chief would advise the CRC to approve the variance.

A day after the agreement was signed, Hunt's chief sent his recommendation and, a day after that, the CRC approved Bald Head Island's jetties. Only the CRC chair knew about ties between Davis' lawsuit and the staff's advice. To meet another part of the agreement, Hunt and his staff began intensely lobbying the Corps of Engineers to help pump sand from

the Wilmington channel onto Bald Head's eroded beach — even though a state official warned the lobbying might give "the impression that we are intervening on behalf of one property owner." The pressure worked, and Bald Head Island got 650,000 cubic yards of new sand.

Here's the kicker: As negotiations continued on the lawsuit's eventual dismissal, Davis and his wife sent \$4,000 to Attorney General Mike Easley for his 1996 re-election.

Coastal environmentalists protested the "inappropriate

and dangerous precedent" of the attorney general and Hunt administration negotiating policy changes to settle a lawsuit. The North Carolina Alliance for Democracy called for an investigation into the role played by Davis' donations, but denials of wrongdoing were firm.

"We'll admit that he was able to get the variance because he was rich, but not because of political favoritism," said Allison Davis, a state spokeswoman. Davis' willingness to spend big bucks on his constitutional challenge was most worrisome, she said. "We did not want to risk losing that rule [the jetties ban]."

As she spoke, work began on Bald Head's jetties. The same month, March 1996, condo owners on nearby Shell Island sued the state to get their land protected, too.

— Bob Hall

BUCHANAN'S \$\$ TREE HAS SOUTHERN ROOTS

SOUTH CAROLINA — As a candidate, pseudo-populist Pat Buchanan got lots of his money in small gifts. But before he opened his campaign, he got \$2.1 million from one donor — Roger Milliken, the legendary South Carolina textile boss and John Birch supporter.

The money went to a Buchanan-controlled charity, The American Cause, and its advocacy arm. Some money paid for a media blitz against GATT, the global trade agreement Milliken bitterly hated. But much of it paved the way for Buchanan's presidential bid, just as Bob Dole's Better America Foundation helped him. Just how much is still unknown because American Cause hasn't filed its required tax returns, reports Monte Paulsen of South Carolina's *The State*.

GRAVE ROBBING

Native Americans aim to stop the looting

By Lois Tomas

Photo by David Goyett

The Florida chapter of the American Indian Movement (AIM) has declared war against those responsible for irreparable damage to the graves of American Indians. "If there is no respect for the dead, how can we respect the living?" asked Sheridan Murphy, executive director of the organization.

Archaeological and burial sites throughout the Southeast are ravaged from illegal activities. Looters, also known as "pot hunters," commit their crimes in remote places that are hard to patrol. Witnesses are afraid to come forward because pot hunters are intimidating, carrying weapons and making threats.

Native Americans claim that desecration of their ancestors' graves is acceptable because of racism. In 1989, a Kansas grocer made souvenir key chains from the pile of Indian bones he displayed behind his counter. There are other examples: a college prank by George Bush involved the theft of an Indian skeleton. An Iowa road crew discovered the bodies of 26 whites and two Indians; the whites were reburied immediately, but the Indians were turned over to a museum.

Susan Shown Harjo with the Morningstar Foundation said in a 1991 report, "Everyone gets the right to be buried and stay buried. That's the rule throughout the world. The rules change when it comes to Indian country."

When the United States and Great Britain failed to ratify a UNESCO treaty that would have prohibited the export of human remains and burial objects, looters saw an opportunity. Markets pay top dollar — a Southwestern pot brought a quarter of a million dollars and a Mississippi ax sold for \$150,000 — and create a feeding frenzy at sites throughout the United States.

Out of 950 million acres of federal land, less than 10 percent has been surveyed for archaeological sites. When looters find these sites first, archaeologists worry that important information is lost forever.

That was the case at the *Yat Kitischee* (Red People) site in Clearwater, Florida. Despite being in a residential and industrial

area of one of Florida's most densely populated counties, the site had remained unknown to area archaeologists — but not to looters who destroyed acres of village and burial sites.

"The media didn't care what was happening until we took up arms to defend [*Yat Kitischee*]. That got everyone's attention," said Murphy.

Although *Yat Kitischee* has been saved from further



ARDEN ARRINGTON HAS DESTROYED LOOTERS' EQUIPMENT IN SHELL CREEK IN SOUTHWEST FLORIDA.

vandalism, other sites like Shell Creek in southwest Florida are not so lucky. This ancient Calusa village is mined often and now has 40 holes, some nine feet deep. Bone fragments and teeth are exposed to the surface.

Local nature guide Arden Arrington has destroyed looters' equipment left at Shell Key, leaving pieces hanging in trees as a cryptic warning. But these efforts have had little effect. "We've all spent lots of time and money trying to get this stopped," Arrington said.

In 1986 Florida passed the Unmarked Bodies in Graves Law to protect Native American graves. Ten years later, Native American activists accuse the state of failing to stand behind the law. Though trading in human remains is illegal in most Southeastern states a 1989 *Baltimore Sun* article estimated that "1.2 million individual Indian skeletons, along with countless bone fragments, grave goods and sacred objects, lie unburied in the hands of auctioneers, collectors, archaeologists, and museums nationwide. No one knows for sure how many Indian bones occupy the coffee tables and research laboratories [in Maryland]."

"Native American remains are the remains of human beings and should be treated that way," said Joe Quetone, executive director of the Florida Governor's Council on Indian Affairs.

"They're not pre-historic. They're human beings." S
E

Lois Tomas is a freelance journalist and editor of Red Sticks Press, an American Indian newspaper in St. Petersburg, Florida.

Go Directly to Jail

And collect several million dollars — if you're in the private prison industry.

by Dana Clark Felty

Former Tennessee Republican Party chairman Thomas W. Beasley is living proof that crime does pay. The founder of Corrections Corporation of America, the nation's leading private prison company, Beasley now makes his living from incarceration — mostly of Southerners.

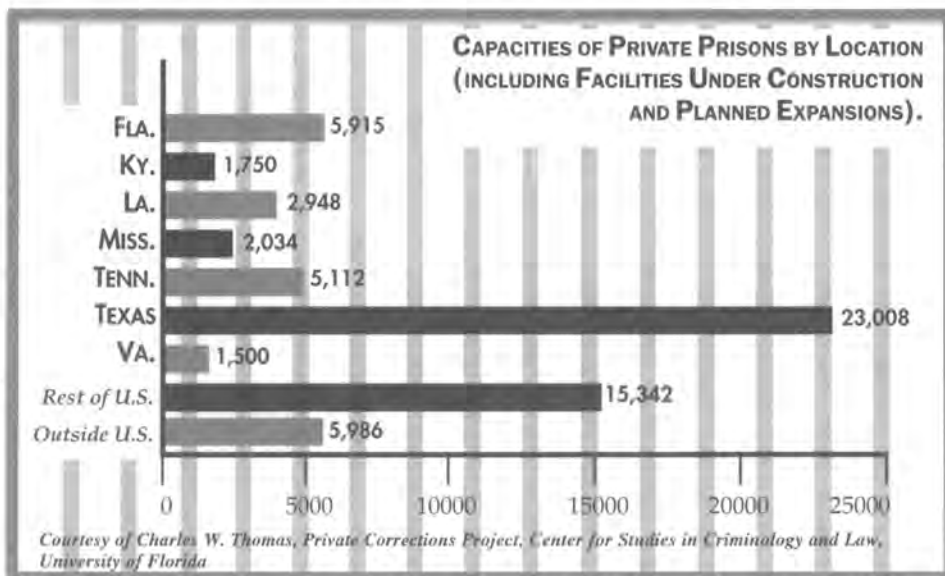
After *Southern Exposure* dedicated its cover section to crime, police, and prisons in the South six years ago, the private prison industry has been growing. Spurred by get-tough anti-crime measures and downsizing government services, state and local officials are looking to private corporations to offer alternatives. Privatization is economical, but it raises concerns about political and social issues of incarceration.

Fewer than 3 percent of the nation's correctional institutions are privately owned, but 78 percent of them are in the South. And these Southern-based corporations control 89 percent of the international market for private correctional facilities.

Corrections Corporation of America, based in Nashville, is the largest of the 16 private prison companies in the nation. In 1994, operating 14,965 prison beds worldwide, CCA netted \$7.9 million. By the end of 1995, the company's capacity doubled to 30,610 beds, and they saw \$14.3 million in net profit. Most of CCA's contract facilities are in Louisiana, Tennessee, and Texas.

Texas alone contains 54 percent of the nation's privately owned prisons. Most are run by Florida-based Wackenhut Corrections, CCA's top competitor.

Private prison companies like CCA and Wackenhut claim to be running a better quality prison than public prisons and at a cheaper cost. Dr. Charlie Thomas, a University of Florida professor of criminology and expert on private prisons, says private prison companies can save local and state governments 15 percent to 25 percent in construction and 10



percent to 15 percent in operating costs.

Opponents of private prisons see things differently. "I think they may discourage alternative sorts of punishment," says Sheriff Robert Ficano of Wayne County, Michigan, who spoke against private prisons at a sheriffs' convention last year. "If you're into prisons-for-profit, you're not into alternative methods. It's in their economic interest to argue for prisoners to be locked up."

Since private prison operations can profit from more incarceration, companies like CCA have regularly lobbied "tough on crime" politicians in Congress. Since 1981, the three co-chairmen of CCA have given nearly \$1 million in campaign contributions, including \$500 to Phil Gramm, \$2,000 to Bob Dole, and \$7,000 to former President George Bush. In the last two years, CCA has given an additional \$20,000 in soft money to the Republican National Committee.

The investment paid off for CCA. The 1994 federal crime bill allocates \$9.7 billion dollars for prison construction. When the bill passed, a CCA executive told the *Wall Street Journal*, "This bill was very favorable to us."

In addition to campaign contributions, according to CCA's annual report, "The

company retains a registered lobbyist who assists the company with promoting legislation to allow privatization of correctional facilities." The strategy seems to work. An investment analyst cited the crime bill and the constraints on government spending as reasons "we can expect a dramatic increase in the number of prisoners being served by private companies."

A Florida bill to establish "a task force on alternatives to domestic incarceration" would do just that. Introduced by Representative Stephen R. Wise (R-Jacksonville), the bill would also look into having private prison companies move Florida prisoners into privately owned foreign prisons. Wise's 16-member task force includes representatives of the top four private prison companies in the nation.

"I think it sets the stage for abuse," says Joe Gunn, Texas AFL-CIO president. "To me, they don't feel a sensitivity to the public. They concentrate on making money. They don't keep their eye on what the prisoners are there for: to be rehabilitated."

Dana Clark Felty is a student at Antioch College and *Southern Exposure* intern.



No Ways Tired

Greensboro workers are invoking the spirit and tactics of the civil rights movement to create a new model for union organizing.

Story and Photos by Barry Yeoman

When she was a little girl, Deborah Compton-Holt used to attend civil rights marches and meetings with her father in her home town of Greensboro, North Carolina. Most of those adventures have faded into hazy memory — except one. “I remember when Martin Luther King came to Greensboro because everybody was so in awe with him,” she says. “This man could speak and captivate even children.” That day, her father, an engineer for Burlington Industries, joined King at a downtown sit-in to protest legalized segregation, and the two men went to jail together.

The Comptons didn’t know King personally, but they, like many of their neighbors, considered him part of their family. “He was closer to you than some of your relatives,” she says. “The day he passed, our whole neighborhood — you could hear a pin drop. Everybody was stunned.”

As King’s birthday approached this year, almost three decades after his assassination, Compton-Holt found herself

thinking about her father’s brief connection to the civil rights leader. She knew her co-workers at the Kmart distribution center in Greensboro planned to commemorate the holiday with a large civil disobedience. Kmart pays the mostly minority workers at the facility sharply lower wages — almost \$5 an hour less — than it does at a dozen other distribution centers with whiter work forces. To protest the disparity, the Union of Needletrades, Industrial and Textile Employees (UNITE) was staging a non-violent demonstration at a local Kmart store.

Compton-Holt, a devout Baptist with vibrant eyes and a broad, motherly smile, had participated in some legal protests before. But she had to give extra thought to breaking the law. “I used to make hasty decisions in my younger days,” she says. “Now I’m into spiritual decisions. I try to let God make the decision for me.”

So she prayed. She fasted. She raised the issue at a family dinner. “My mom and I did a lot of talking about the civil rights movement, and that brought up

a lot of memories of my dad,” she says. She thought about how poverty has plagued so many African Americans, tearing even working families apart. “I thought if we had not stopped fighting and struggling, we wouldn’t be in the shape we’re in now. It just put everything in perspective for me.”

On King’s birthday, the 44-year-old merchandise packer slipped a “Don’t Shop at Kmart” T-shirt over her sweater, caravanned with co-workers to the Kmart store, and marched with about 200 others into the parking lot — until they were standing face-to-face with a platoon of police in riot gear. The store’s manager came out and told the protesters to get off the property. A police officer warned, “Those who do not leave will be arrested.” As planned, most of the group retreated. But Compton-Holt stood there, thinking of her father.

“It just brought back all those memories,” she says. “There were a lot of tears, but they weren’t tears of sadness. It was tears of ‘We’re doing this again.’”

She didn’t move. “There was no turning around. We just joined hands and

prayed." As they worshipped, police arrested 39 protesters and led them into a van, where they sang "Victory Is Mine" and "We Shall Overcome" all the way to jail. Except for the birth of her son, Compton-Holt says, it was the proudest

nity," says the Reverend William Wright, pastor of Greensboro's New Zion Missionary Baptist Church. "Is community defined by its citizens, or is community defined by corporations that come in and set up little Mexicos in our cities?"

workers. As the sponsor of the Greater Greensboro Open (GGO) golf tournament, the corporation had a stellar reputation in town — and the prospect of 500 new blue-collar jobs looked good. The city, county, and state offered \$1 million of incentives, including sewer lines and road improvements. Job applicants lined up at the doors of the sprawling flat-roofed center, a building 35 football fields long, separated by barbed-wire fence from a predominantly black East Side neighborhood.

"I knew Kmart was a big corporation, and I knew they sponsored the GGO, and I'd shopped in their stores," recalls Dave Blum, a 53-year-old merchandise packer. "I figured they'd probably be a good company to work for. I figured there'd be a future there."

But as soon as the facility opened, Blum and his co-workers realized that any future there would be grim. On the shop floor, where workers package merchandise for shipment to Kmart stores in five Southern states, temperatures ran as high as 100 degrees. Bathrooms didn't work. Breaks were rare, and workers were fired for the smallest infractions.

But worst of all were the attitudes of supervisors, many of them white managers imported from other Kmart facilities. According to employees, the standard management style consisted of ridiculing and shouting at workers. Female employees say managers routinely spied on them, followed them to the restroom, and made lewd comments.

"I've seen women cry taking abuse — but people needed the work," says 48-year-old Governor Spencer, a lanky former postal worker hired by Kmart shortly after the center opened. When Spencer talked with the managers about the working environment, he says they replied, "You see these applications on the table? You don't like it? Someone will take your place."

Kmart flatly denies there were any problems with working conditions or harassment, but refuses to discuss specifics. But discontent was so widespread — and reports of sexual and racial harassment so legion — that workers began looking for a union to represent them. They settled on UNITE, which represented

THERE'S a lot of pride in Greensboro these days. It energizes the UNITE union hall. It electrifies the Kmart parking-lot protests that have become more common than blue-light specials.

event of her life.

There's a lot of pride in Greensboro these days. It energizes the UNITE union hall, an industrial brick building one block off a major freeway. It draws people to the Faith Community Church, with a congregation that ministers to the poor in a gritty downtown neighborhood. It permeates the suburban Quaker campus of Guilford College. It electrifies the Kmart parking-lot protests that have become more common than blue-light specials.

Working together, Compton-Holt and other blue-collar workers have joined forces with students, ministers, church members, and social-change activists to forge a workplace campaign that draws on the historic connections between the labor and civil rights movements. They've turned a run-of-the-mill union protest into a community-wide struggle — a battle not just for higher wages and better working conditions, but for a new set of values that place human dignity above corporate growth.

The Kmart protest offers "the possibility of our leading the nation to a whole new sense of how we define commu-

Just as Greensboro activists sparked the civil rights movement with a sit-in at a Woolworth's lunch counter in 1960, the new model for union activism emerging at Kmart could soon spread well beyond North Carolina. The AFL-CIO has launched its "Union Summer" — a \$1 million campaign that deploys student activists to organize non-union plants in Atlanta, Charleston, Miami, New Orleans and 14 other cities. Greensboro demonstrates how a union can draw on its strength as an integral part of a community rather than allow itself to be isolated as an "outside force."

"There's a growing awareness within unions," says Ben Hensler, a field representative for UNITE, "that if we're going to be able to take on — and win — fights with companies like Kmart, we've got to be allied with the communities that are affected by the policies of these corporations."

INCENTIVES FOR ABUSE

When Kmart announced its plans to build a hard-goods distribution center in Greensboro in 1992, expectations ran high among both local officials and

some of their relatives in the nearby Cone Mills textile plant.

Kmart fought the organizing drive, but its anti-labor efforts were a spectacular failure. By a two-to-one margin, the workers welcomed the union. Even organizers were stunned. "It was amazing," says Ben Hensler of UNITE. "You never see a margin like that when the place is that new."

Only after the union did some research, however, did the workers learn how bad their situation really was. UNITE discovered that Kmart paid its Greensboro workers dramatically less than their counterparts at every other distribution center in the country. The top hourly wage in Greensboro was \$8.50, compared to a national average of \$13.10 at a dozen other Kmart centers from Morrisville, Pennsylvania, to Ontario, California. In Newnan, Georgia, where the cost of living is below Greensboro's, Kmart pays up to \$14.

Kmart offers a simple reason: Low wages are the norm in Greensboro. "When the company opened the distribution center, it surveyed wage rates. They determined what the wages will be based on that," says Kmart spokeswoman Mary Lorencz. "You can talk to people in the market who say they can live on that wage."

But workers and their allies have a different explanation. At all but one of the other Kmart distribution centers, the majority of the hourly workforce is white. At Greensboro, minority employees make up two-thirds of the workforce. The wage disparity, say workers, comes from out-and-out discrimination.

After the union victory, UNITE and Kmart sat down to negotiate a contract. Lorencz says Kmart has been "negotiating in good faith." The union accused the company of stalling. When it became clear that bargaining was going nowhere, workers decided it was time to go public.

IN THE ROUGH

The opening shot was the boldest. In April of 1994, the workers decided to crash the Kmart Greater Greensboro Open, a nationally televised tournament. "We had been telling Kmart, 'If you don't treat us right, we're gonna pay you a visit at the GGO,'" says UNITE organizer Anthony Romano, a young Harvard-educated Southerner who came to Greensboro to organize Kmart workers. "And we're a union that always follows through."

So the workers dressed in polo shirts and blended in with the rest of the fans at the Forest Oaks Country Club — until 2 o'clock sharp. Suddenly, 60 workers stormed the 10th fairway, sat in concentric circles, locked arms, and started chanting. Police handcuffed the protesters and hauled them away, to the cheers of tournament spectators. "Club them like baby seals!" shouted one man.

The protest garnered plenty of media



"I'M INTO SPIRITUAL DECISIONS," SAYS DEBORAH COMPTON-HOLT AT A CHURCH RALLY OF K MART WORKERS AND COMMUNITY SUPPORTERS.

attention, but no progress in contract negotiations. After the standoff had dragged on for two years, workers appealed to their ministers at church — and Greensboro's clergy listened. "These are our members," explains the Reverend Wright, who heads a black ministerial alliance called the Pulpit Forum.

The ministers made two important contributions to the fight. First, they encouraged workers to think of their demand for pay equity as a campaign for civil rights. "All of it is connected by a struggle for justice," says the Reverend Nelson Johnson, a community activist

says Kim Moody, director of the monthly publication *Labor Notes*.

But many white workers at Kmart understood that any discrimination against the predominantly minority workforce hurts whites, too. "What affects one affects the other," says Dave Blum. "My black union brothers make the same thing I do. We're both held down."

The ministers also revived the tactic of civil disobedience from the civil rights era. "People were ground down by these large corporate entities," says Johnson, a soft-spoken man with striking blue coronas ringing his brown eyes. "We wanted

titution protesting working conditions at Kmart's distribution center. The local NAACP turned down a \$10,000 check from Kmart, earmarked for crime prevention and tutoring, saying the money could taint the organization's support for the workers.

The widening demonstrations attracted many Greensboro residents, old and young alike, who had never participated in political protest. For Brittany Boden, a Guilford College senior, the Kmart struggle marked a "transformation from feeling silly as a student. There's so much nourishment from this experience." Mary Crawford, a retired textile worker, joined the protests after stumbling across a jailhouse essay by Martin Luther King Jr. "I began to cry," she says, "and I knew I had to go. I know what it means to do good work and not get paid for it."

PRAYER AND PLANNING

In a spartan room at Faith Community Church, 40 people sit in two concentric circles of folding chairs. A portrait of Frederick Douglass, the abolitionist leader, presides over a roomful of blacks and whites, students and septuagenarians, workers and community members, praying together.

"We thank you for the privilege of being a part of this struggle," says the Reverend Greg Headen, pastor at Shiloh Baptist Church. A periodic call of "yes!" comes from the circle. "Thank you for the Kmart workers that take a stand at great risk. Give them the strength that they need. In Jesus' name we pray."

Then, as prayer gives way to planning, everyone turns to Deborah Compton-Holt. She's wearing a brown suede jacket over her "Don't Shop at Kmart" T-shirt, along with a red and black UNITE baseball cap. "Things are still kind of stagnant in the plant," she says. "The company has put on a lot more pressure. Some people have quit." She reports a "small victory": a 50-cent-an-hour pay raise. But she and co-worker Calvin Miller make it clear that a half-dollar isn't enough. "We're going to have to escalate our pressure and take it beyond the boundaries of North Carolina," Miller says.

"CHECK this victory out: The NAACP sent back 10,000 big ones!" By now the church is rocking, the clapping growing excited. "When poor folks and broke folks send money back — that's a victory."

since his student days at North Carolina A&T University. "The struggle for racial justice and the struggle for economic justice are so closely intertwined. Was the struggle against slavery an economic struggle or a race struggle? Obviously both."

Linking the labor and civil rights struggles is a time-honored idea. When Martin Luther King Jr. was assassinated, he was visiting Memphis to support striking black sanitation workers. But these days, few activists make the connection. "There's a big hesitancy on the part of unions to present things in that language, because they're afraid of a backlash from their white members,"

to claim this fully as a legitimate struggle of this community. And if it required presenting our bodies as a living sacrifice, that's a small price to pay to engage in turning this trend around."

So last December, eight ministers held the first in a series of illegal protests, occupying a Kmart parking lot until they were arrested and jailed.

Their civil disobedience sparked a blaze of community support. White pastors, progressive activists, students, and elderly church members all vowed to lay their bodies on the line. Thirty-nine people were arrested at a January civil disobedience; in February, the number was 50. Ten thousand people signed a pe-

There's talk of future protests and court appearances. But Nelson Johnson, standing in the back of the room, wants to make sure that the group doesn't get bogged down in logistics. "We really need to talk about the tremendous victories we've won already," he says. "I think what's happening in Greensboro is awesome. The first piece of evidence is in this room tonight."

Then his voice grows more preacherly. "The workers at Kmart distribution center are no longer separated from the community. We are all coming together, young and old, black and white. I think that's a victory." The room breaks into applause. "Check this victory out: The NAACP sent back 10,000 big ones!" By now the church is rocking, the clapping growing excited. "When poor folks and broke folks send money back — that's a victory."

From inside the circle come the words, "Praise Him!"

Finally, the pastor describes a meeting he had with the Greensboro Chamber of Commerce, in which the business leaders agreed to a set of principles to guide the city's economic growth. They included decent wages, freedom from discrimination, programs to retrain workers, and sustainable development. "The head of AT&T and Lorillard came down and sat down and we've been in conversation ever since," Johnson says. "That to me is revolutionary."

The meeting slides back into logistics for a while. But before it ends in a prayer circle, Johnson gives voice to the feeling that permeates the night: sheer gratitude for being in this room with dozens of other people struggling for a just community.

"We're in no ways tired yet," he says. "To have walked away from our brothers and sisters at Kmart would have denied us this moment."

PACIFISM AND VIOLENCE

For Nelson Johnson, such a moment has been long in coming. The 53-year-old pastor has survived two defining episodes in Greensboro's history — episodes that set the stage for the Kmart battle.

The first was the civil rights movement, which placed Greensboro in the national spotlight. In February 1960, four black freshmen at North Carolina A&T University staged a sit-in at the lunch counter of the downtown Woolworth's. By the end of the year, 96,000 students around the country performed similar acts of resistance. Johnson continued the tradition a few years later as an A&T student leader; in 1966 he was arrested for refusing to leave a whites-only restaurant called the Apple Cellar.

Johnson says Greensboro's civil rights history continues to provide inspiration — not only to him, but to many in the Kmart struggle. "Woolworth's represented the community standing up against injustice," he says. "The churches and citizens here and the workers at Kmart are affected by this history and tradition, and it has meaning when you call it up again. It's certainly something that you can get strength from."

The second defining event was the 1979 assassination of five anti-racist demonstrators by members of the Ku Klux Klan and the Nazi Party. The victims

were members of the Communist Workers Party (CWP), an organization of young activists who had tried to take over three inactive textile union locals.

On the morning of November 3, as the CWP assembled for an anti-Klan march at the Morningside Homes public housing project, nine carloads of white supremacists wheeled into the area. The crowd began chanting, "Death to the Klan!" The Klansmen and Nazis got out of their cars. A fight broke out. The supremacists grabbed their rifles, pistols, and shotguns. Eighty-eight seconds later, five demonstrators lay dead or mortally wounded.

Although the murders were captured by television cameras, an all-white jury acquitted the Klansmen and Nazis. A federal trial ended in one guilty plea and several acquittals.

Only one member of the CWP's top leadership survived the shooting: Nelson Johnson. During the melee, a white supremacist rushed him with a knife and stabbed him in both forearms. Police arrested Johnson and charged him with inciting a riot.



POLICE IN RIOT GEAR SURROUND PRAYING PROTESTERS AT A K MART STORE. "THEY LOOKED LIKE MINIATURE DARTH VADERS," SAID ONE DEMONSTRATOR.

The Klan-Nazi shootings cast an immediate and lasting chill over labor organizing in Greensboro. The massacre deeply divided progressives, some of whom didn't want to be seen as supporting communists or the unions they tried to revive. Workplace organizing fell almost to zero — and businesses took advantage of the lull.

"The shootings had such a chilling effect on labor relations in Greensboro," says Joe Groves, who coordinates the Peace and Conflict Studies Program at Guilford College, "that for years we have

BEYOND GREENSBORO

In a cavernous cinder-block meeting room, a gospel choir rouses hundreds of men and women to their feet. They wave their arms, clap their hands, and sing along to an updated version of "Down by the Riverside." People pour into the room, fresh off buses and vans from Mississippi, Alabama, Tennessee, and Kentucky. Red, white and blue helium balloons hover above folding chairs.

On this spring day, Kmart workers have taken their struggle on the road, staging simultaneous protests in seven

with us as you went with Jeremiah. And bring us back safe and sound."

But it's William Wright who really stokes the crowd. He starts softly, but his voice grows more forceful with each sentence. "You can't kill what God wants alive," the Greensboro minister says. "If I go back to jail, it's all right. I believe it's a good day to go back to jail today."

Two hours later, at a shopping center in the upscale Buckhead neighborhood, 1,000 protesters converge around a pickup truck parked in front of a Kmart store. A phalanx of police officers blocks the entrance. Two Kmart managers in blue suits stand with them, one wearing dark glasses and the other holding a General Electric video camera. A thicket of "Don't Shop at Kmart" signs rises about the heads of the protesters. The crowd chants.

The moment of the civil disobedience approaches. Nelson Johnson climbs onto the truck bed and encourages listeners to revive the spirit of the civil rights movement. "We have been walking around for 35 years, and we are shaking off the dust that has accumulated on us," he tells the crowd. "God bless you, and let us move forward. Victory is ours!"

And then, with the choir again singing a piercing rendition of "Victory Is Mine," Johnson and Wright and 39 others march right past the line of police officers, through Kmart's double doors. One thousand voices chant, "Shut them down! Shut them down!" The ministers sit silently between the inner and outer doors, praying, until the police arrest them and take them away.

The last word of the afternoon comes from Deborah Compton-Holt. She too stands on the truck bed, microphone in hand, sounding much like the civil rights activists her father used to take her to hear when she was a child.

"Praise God, everybody. Praise God," she tells the crowd. "As long as God stands on my side, we will win this war."

SE

Barry Yeoman is senior staff writer for The Independent in Durham, North Carolina.



NELSON JOHNSON SEES THE K MART STRUGGLE AS A CHANCE TO REVIVE THE SPIRIT OF THE CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT — AND COME TO TERMS WITH THE 1979 MASSACRE OF FIVE LABOR ACTIVISTS.

been getting companies like Kmart who feel like they can safely come in and offer low wages, because labor was thoroughly intimidated in 1979. And they were right."

The Kmart protest brought activists back together — and forced them to confront what had happened that autumn day. "Kmart was an opportunity," Johnson says, "for the hurt and pain of '79 to get expressed."

cities to kick off a national boycott of the retail chain. At the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers union hall in downtown Atlanta, the crowd cheers feverishly for justice in Greensboro.

They're getting psyched up for the day's big event: Georgia's largest civil disobedience since the 1960s.

The Reverend James Orange, one of Martin Luther King Jr.'s closest lieutenants, gives the invocation. "Go with us," he prays, "as you went with Daniel. Go

Best of the Press



The
9th annual
Southern
Journalism
Awards

Each year *Southern Exposure* and our publisher, the Institute for Southern Studies, honor reporters whose stories broaden the range of issues, voices, and sources in the region's daily newspapers. By asking tough, often imaginative questions and by probing untapped sources of information, these writers show how the media can analyze a community's problems and contribute to positive change.

Now in their ninth year, the Southern Journalism Awards have come to represent the very best of the daily press. From the 106 entries in two categories — feature reporting on women in the South, and investigative reporting — winners were selected in three divisions based on the size of the newspaper's circulation.

Our panel of 27 judges included journalism professors, magazine and newspaper editors, reporters, authors, and community leaders. Our heartfelt thanks to each of them: Bill Adler, Maxine Alexander, Pat Arnow, Richard Boyd, Anne Clancy, Jerry Hardt, Neill Herring, Steve Hoffius, Jereann King, Chris Kromm, Jenny Labalme, Marc Miller, David Molpus, Bob Moser, Ron Nixon, Dee Reid, Derek Rodriguez, Melinda Ruley, Al Sawyer,

Caroline Senter, Carolyn Schwartz, Bertha Sims, Vernie Singleton, Bob Sherrill, Leslie Takahashi, Michael Yellin, and Barry Yeoman.

We are pleased to present excerpts from the first-place winners in this special section. Their power and perspective extend well beyond the readership of their hometown paper, touching on issues of importance to all of us who consider the South home.

Next year, in addition to our annual awards for investigative reporting, we will present prizes in two other categories: money and politics and working people in the region. Entry forms will be mailed to daily newspapers in November; the deadline for entries is December 4.

All inquiries and requests for entry forms should be directed to: Southern Journalism Awards, P.O. Box 531, Durham, NC 27702. Fax (919) 419-8315. Email SoExpo5338@aol.com ATTENTION Southern Journalism Awards.

— Eric Bates

Eric Bates and Bob Hall, who are both former Southern Exposure editors, coordinated the Southern Journalism Awards.



Alice and Carol

By Elizabeth Simpson
The Virginian-Pilot, Norfolk

Ta profile an ordinary lesbian couple, reporter Elizabeth Simpson and photographer Beth Bergman accompanied Alice Taylor and Carol Bayma for four months — at church, picnics, and evenings at home.

As soon as some people saw the word “lesbian” in the headline, they picked up the phone to complain. But in the following days and weeks, the newspaper and the couple received reams of positive responses:

▲ Gay couples said Alice and Carol helped the world see that gays and lesbians were ordinary people trying to live ordinary lives.

▲ A gay teenager said she had been suicidal in the past but felt more courageous after reading about Alice and Carol.

▲ Straight people thanked the paper for a vision of a couple who were peaceably working to be part of their community.

▲ People thanked the couple for coming out in one of the most public ways possible and the paper for allowing gays “a place at the table.”

VIRGINIA BEACH, Va. — Some months ago, Alice Taylor was asked to tell the story of her coming out as a lesbian. For a newspaper article.

She wasn’t sure what to do, so she wrote out a list of why she should do the interview, and another of why she shouldn’t.

The “should” column was empty.

The “shouldn’t” one was full: The violence she and her partner might suffer; the hurt feelings it could cause in her church; the impact on the small ministry she runs for the homeless; the feelings and privacy of her children.

She asked her long-time partner what she thought. Carol Bayma quoted Esther 4:14 in which Mordecai poses a question to his cousin, Esther, who must decide between remaining silent or speaking up to save other Jews from persecution: “Who knows whether you have come to the kingdom for such a time as this?”

For Alice and Carol “such a time as this” is now.

A place at the table

This is the time to tell a story about one quiet couple in one church in one average neighborhood. Two women — both in their 50s — who have spent decades opening the door of their sexuality, to themselves, their children, their relatives, their friends, their church, their community. Who have asserted their identities quietly — not through lawsuits or hunger fasts or marches.

And who have been shunned and embraced as a result.

They have learned there’s a difference between people speculating they are gay and knowing definitely. “It was OK when you were just you,” one friend confided to Carol. “Why did you have to go and make it official?”

OTHER WINNERS DIVISION ONE (dailies with Sunday circulation of over 100,000): **Second Prize** to Nancy Stancill of *The Charlotte Observer* for a groundbreaking report that prompted sweeping reforms of North Carolina divorce laws used to force women into unfavorable settlements. **Third Prize** to Jennifer Lenhart of the *Houston Chronicle* for exposing the little-known impact of drug laws and sentencing on the 20,000 children with mothers in Texas prisons. **Honorable Mention** to Tara Hulen and Shawn Ryan of *The Birmingham News* for documenting how misdemeanor courts handle cases of domestic violence — and why abusers get away with their crimes.



ALICE TAYLOR, LEFT, AND CAROL BAYMA, WHO HAVE BEEN TOGETHER 23 YEARS, PRAY TOGETHER BEFORE DINNER, A NIGHTLY RITUAL IN THEIR HOUSEHOLD.

Photo by Beth Bergman, The Virginian-Pilot

In their own small circles of church and family, they have put a face on the issue of homosexuality. They have challenged stereotypes with their long-lasting relationship. Their gray-headed normalness. Their quiet Christian ways.

And they are doing the one thing they vowed to do when they began their relationship 23 years ago: they are growing old together.



Alice, a soft-faced woman with a warm smile and feathery gray hair, is late coming home tonight from her job with St. Columba Ministries, an ecumenical group that helps the homeless. Carol has turned on a light outside the couple's Virginia Beach house.

When Alice walks in, she goes over to Carol, grasps her hand, and smiles. Blue eyes meet blue eyes: crinkled laugh lines

appear on the two faces. The two say nothing, but speak the unspoken language of couples.

Two decades ago, that same look gave Carol her first clue that Alice liked her in a way very different from the usual friend. "There came a time when I realized she was happy to see me," says Carol, a smooth-cheeked woman with short-cropped, gray hair. "When her face lit up."

Snapshots of Alice and Carol's children and grandchildren clutter the piano top. As Bernie, their dog, flops down on the floor, the two women piece together the mental snapshots of coming out.

Carol thinks back to when she was 9 or 10 years old. She sees herself pedaling down a dusty road in the Michigan town where she grew up. She was with friends. One by one, the others dropped off the trail. They didn't like the long bike rides.

Or the sitting for hours next to a lake, gazing at the thin reeds and roosting birds. Sitting, thinking, daydreaming.

Carol didn't mind leaving the others behind. She was an intense young girl who liked to spend time alone. Even as a young girl, she sensed something was different about her. She dreamt the typical girlhood daydreams — where she was the heroine, saving someone — but that someone was always a girl, never a boy.

One place she was well-rooted was the church. The preacher at her Presbyterian church was progressive for the 1950s, inviting African-American children to church socials and sending the segregated, prejudiced congregation into a tailspin. Even though he knew the congregation didn't agree with him on various social issues, he stood his ground.

That tolerance later helped Carol

They have challenged stereotypes with their long-lasting relationship. Their gray-headed normalness. Their quiet Christian ways.

square her sexuality with her religion. While fellow Christians might use the Bible to attack her, she believed that God loved her. "In church I was encouraged and treated like someone good," says Carol, now 52, and a civilian employee of the Navy. "As long as I was connected to the church, I never felt alienated from God."



After high school, Carol married a Navy man and moved to Virginia Beach, but all along she felt like she was pretending. She wanted children, to pour herself into motherhood. Jennifer was born five years into the marriage and Ben a few years later. For years the duties of being a parent distracted her from a fading relationship with her husband.

Enter Alice.

At a book-club meeting, Alice noticed one woman in the circle of members. The woman hadn't read the book, but she was still vocal about her opinions. Then she fell asleep in the middle of the meeting.

Alice took an instant dislike to her. She was obnoxious. Egotistical. A loud-mouth.

The woman was Carol.

Still, a friend thought Alice and Carol had a lot in common. And true to the friend's intuition, Alice connected with Carol. They were both in unhappy marriages, both trying to raise children in households that didn't feel right.

First the two women talked about books. Then, religion.

Alice had never had a strong connection to the church, but Carol talked her into going to services at the Presbyterian church she belonged to. Then Bible study and Sunday school. More discussions. More church activities. Alice joined the

church. And Sunday school.

The two women discovered themselves as much as each other. They gardened together, took family trips together, even vacationed together. They baby-sat each other's children. Alice helped Carol get a job during a period when Carol couldn't seem to stick with anything. She helped her line up job interviews, scolded Carol when she ran late for work, told her she needed to take more responsibility.

And Carol helped Alice out, not as a lesbian, but as a person. When they first met, Alice was painfully inhibited. She wouldn't let other people touch her. If someone sat next to her, she moved. She wouldn't talk unless spoken to first. She rarely laughed.

Carol got Alice to loosen up, to talk with other people, to hug and touch. To be human.

Carol asked Alice to sing in the church choir, which Carol directed.

"I can't," Alice said.

"Yes, you can," Carol answered. And Alice joined.

Then, Carol asked her to sing a duet.

"No, I can't do that."

"Yes, you can." And Alice did.

"I can't say there was love there then, because I didn't know what love was," Alice says. "In my whole life I didn't know what it was. But Carol touched me somewhere in my spirit and personhood. She called out to me things I didn't know I had. She softened me. I was a brittle, severe person. She taught me to laugh."



One thing they both knew in those early days of their friendship was they weren't finding love in their marriages. Carol knew why sooner than Alice.

One day, six months after meeting,

they were sitting at the kitchen table at Alice's house, having one of their usual three-hour discussions. By this time, Carol had acknowledged to herself she was gay. She needed to tell Alice. Carol was beginning to be attracted to her, and she had to find out how Alice felt about homosexuals. If Alice had a problem with gays, Carol would have to leave.

Worried about how Alice would react, Carol couldn't get the words from her throat to her mouth. So she picked up a matchbook cover and wrote down a single sentence. "I'm a homosexual," it said.

Alice read it. "Oh," she said in a nonchalant manner. "Okay."

Alice filed it away in her head, but it didn't matter too much to her. She had met gay people before, so she felt no surprise or condemnation.

Carol was instantly relieved. By this time, her eight-year marriage had broken up, as had Alice's 13-year one. Carol began courting Alice in the weeks after. Flowers. Little gifts. Phone calls. She asked Alice to go for a walk on the beach, what she considered a first date, but Alice broke her arm playing softball the day before.

For three nights after that, Carol stayed by Alice's side in the hospital, talking with her, making sure her children were OK. When Alice went home from the hospital, Carol stayed with her to cook and help out.

Alice couldn't wait until Carol showed up. It was the first time she had leaned on someone emotionally for help. "I didn't know when I began to fall in love," Alice says. "I know I was terrified. I kept thinking, 'This is wrong, this is different, this is not the way things are supposed to be.'"



Ambivalence was the rule for years. Pushing forward and pulling back, a mix of friendship and love.

Carol wanted to move in together, Alice didn't. Carol wanted to tell the pastor of their church, St. Columba Presbyterian in Norfolk, about their relationship; Alice said it was too soon. Carol made sure her children knew she was a lesbian; Alice held back telling her three children.

Then they met a couple at church who

would play an important role in their lives.

Jim and Linda Davenport, along with other church members, became a second family to the couple. When Jim was in the hospital during the last few days of his life, Carol and Alice helped Linda care for him around the clock. They split shifts, one spending the day with him, the other the night.

Jim died one morning in 1979. Alice drove Linda home while Carol took care of some of the funeral arrangements. "I thought Jim and I were going to grow old together," Linda told Alice on the drive home.

The words "grow old together" struck Alice so strongly she heard nothing else the entire ride home. The sound of the words filled her head, her whole consciousness. "Grow old together." She considered the message Jim's parting gift to her.

Alice went home and called Carol. "You have to put your house up for sale, and I'm going to do the same. We are going to grow old together. I'm not going to miss what Linda and Jim missed."



After that, it would be a gradual coming out, as each saw fit, as the situation presented itself. Children, parents, friends, family. Some people were never told. "I am careful about who I make friends with or who I come out to," Alice says. "I come out when there's a need. Their need or my need."

Nowhere would coming out be quite so frustrating as in church.

St. Columba Presbyterian Church proved to be a good experience. The church, a small, intimate congregation, ministered to families in a nearby low-income housing development. Carol and Alice threw themselves into the church, teaching children, setting up a ministry for the homeless, mowing the grass, helping with fundraising.

One day the pastors posted a job for youth director. Alice wanted the job, but she felt she needed to tell the pastors she was a lesbian. She worried they'd disapprove of her working with children in a formal, paid position.

The husband-and-wife pastors —



ALTHOUGH THEY CAN'T SERVE COMMUNION, CAROL, LEFT, AND ALICE PREPARE BREAD AND WINE AT BAYSIDE PRESBYTERIAN. SOMETIMES THEY FEED THE LEFTOVERS TO THE BIRDS.

Caroline Leach and Nibs Stroupe — didn't mind. They welcomed her coming out. In fact, they had been waiting for her to tell them. Alice got the job and later also served as an elder, a leader elected by the congregation to sit on the "session," the organization that ran the affairs of the church. Carol also became an elder.

The comfort didn't last long. The church folded six years after they joined because the housing development closed. The ministry for the homeless, which Alice still directs, continued under the name St. Columba Ministries, but Carol and Alice had to start looking for another church.

She picked up a matchbook cover and wrote down a single sentence. "I'm a homosexual," it said.



They chose Bayside Presbyterian Church in Virginia Beach, a medium-sized congregation where their children could be part of youth activities they'd missed out on at St. Columba, which focused on serving the poor.

Within a few years both Carol and Alice were once again deeply involved in the church. They helped raise funds for the homeless, led Bible study classes, sang in the choir. Alice served on the session for three years. Both did the things they did as elders at St. Columba, helping with baptisms and giving communion.

Still, they served "from the door of the closet," as they put it. Although they didn't tell people they were gay, they believed many people knew. They lived at the same address, shared the same telephone number, came to church functions together. They were treated as a couple.

Carol and Alice continued in this don't-ask-don't-tell mode until four years ago. Carol was sitting in Sunday school class. Fidgeting. Tired of the feeling she got when the subject of homosexuality came up in the class, which it had four weeks running. The sound of her own silence made her feel like a coward.

"If something comes up today, I am going to say something," she vowed.

It did, and she did. "I can't be quiet anymore," she began, the words sticking in her throat. "You don't know who I am. I'm a lesbian."

The discussion went on without missing a beat. One elderly woman — who Carol thought was extremely conservative — reached over and gave her hand a squeeze.

It was a liberating feeling. She had admitted she was gay, and the world didn't cave in. It felt good. Affirming. "They just listened to me, and we moved on with the lesson," Carol remembers. "It was not a major thing."



Carol sensed the congregation was hungry to learn more about the topic, and she asked the pastor to have a study on the subject of homosexuality and the church. A gay man who worked in an AIDS ministry came to speak, but congregation members who came to listen started interrogating him, attacking his homosexuality.

"But the Bible says..." they interrupted his speech.

"But God says..." when he began again.

"Right here in Scripture it says..." a third time.

They didn't let him finish. He finally sat down, defeated.

Alice and Carol felt crushed. Alice approached one of the women in her Bible class afterwards. "What you did to that young man was unconscionable," she said, a prickly heat rushing over her. "I am a lesbian, and what you did to hurt him hurt me."

The exchange opened a floodgate of emotion. Homosexuals were no longer "out there" but among the congregation. Church meetings were held to discuss the issue. Accusations were leveled that a gay had "sneaked onto the session." Anger was vented that Carol and Alice had taught Sunday school classes and served communion.

People called them an abomination; others reminded the critics that Alice and Carol were the same people they were the year before.

Some friendships ended. A very good friend of Alice's turned the other way when she saw her or Carol walking down the church hallway. But others supported them. One young man confided in them he was gay and hadn't had the courage to tell his parents.

In the months after that, Alice and Carol no longer were called to serve communion. They were told their names

hadn't come up in the rotation, but after more than a year went by, they asked what was going on. The session agreed to address the issue. In a letter hand-delivered to them in April, the elders told them they could no longer serve communion.

There would be other slights. Carol stood up in church one Sunday morning during announcements to let the congregation know about a Presbyterians for Gays and Lesbians meeting. Soon a petition was circulating asking that members not be allowed to use the words "lesbian and gay" during services or to post items on the bulletin board.

Now, four years after they came out at Bayside, Alice and Carol feel some frustration but regret nothing. "Many, many people have to be questioning the issues," Alice says. "They have to say, 'They are not the ones we see on CNN doing demonstrations. They aren't child molesters. They don't have multiple sex partners. They don't do pornography.'"

She pauses and thinks back to her childhood and her attitude toward African Americans. "I was raised to be very prejudiced. Then, when I was older, I began to meet blacks who were smarter than me, better than me. And I thought, 'Something is wrong with what Mom and Dad said.'"

"To me, we are not an abomination. They [members of the church] have to see God in us. They have to be questioning what the drumbeat is saying."



Carol and Alice feel now as though they check a part of themselves at the church door. Still they go, their twin heads a fixture in the front pew. Still they are friends with church members. Still they are involved.

"We feel there is purpose to our being vocal, a reason to it," Carol says, explaining why they haven't left Bayside. "There are people there who support us as individuals, who believe it's important for us to be working on this issue in the church."

One Saturday night in April, Carol and Alice sat around a table with eight other people eating curried rice. Their banter ranged from serious issues to funny

stories that filled the room with peals of laughter.

The gathering, called The Fellowship of the Table, is the brainchild of Rebecca Kiser-Lowrance, the wife of Will Kiser-Lowrance, Bayside's associate pastor. She'd seen all the people of the church who were looking for a place at the table but couldn't find one. People who have been turned away, people who were hurting. People like Alice and Carol. This was a place for them to gather, ask questions, grow stronger in their faith.

As Will Kiser-Lowrance sipped coffee, he told a story about when his daughter was born with a condition in which her intestines had failed to develop. Alice and Carol would come over to take care of her so he and Rebecca could take a walk by themselves.

Emmy died when she was seven weeks old. Will could not forget Carol and Alice's kindness. "To hear people at church call them an abomination makes me angry," he said. "Before I met them, my way would have been to support gays privately but to be silent publicly because of my job. It took two lesbian women to make a man out of me."

Will said one of the toughest things for some congregation members had been to square Alice and Carol's good works, kind ways, and knowledge of the Scripture with their homosexuality. He said the church had stopped for a breath on the issue, but it would rise again. Before, homosexuals were an amorphous, anonymous group for many people; now they are Alice and Carol.



The church is not the only place Alice and Carol have challenged people's beliefs.

They recall the different reactions they've gotten over the years to their coming out: Alice's maid of honor broke off their friendship after Alice wrote to tell of her coming out. One of Alice's sons says he's "still having trouble with it" and won't discuss the issue. Carol's parents ignored Alice for years and refused to visit Alice and Carol's home.

But others have accepted them. After

"You know, I think your mother and Carol are gay." "Mom? Nahh."

her husband died, Carol's mother became friends with Alice and showed off birthday cards signed by both women. Alice's three-year-old grandchild Meredith calls Alice "Grandma" and Carol "Grandma Carol." Tom House and others have sat by them in church even through times of controversy.

Frank Taylor, Alice's older son, can understand the mixed reactions. He's found himself on both sides.

He didn't question his mother's relationship with Carol until he was 25 years old and married. After a family gathering, his wife said, "You know, I think your mother and Carol are gay."

"Mom? Nahh," he responded.

He decided to ask her and went by her office at St. Columba Ministries.

He took the news hard. He felt betrayed by his mother for not telling him sooner and angry at Carol "for switching" his mom. He stopped visiting them.

Finally, he went to a counselor for help. She asked him to list the things he liked about his mother and the things he didn't. He wrote that she was a compassionate person. She had concern for people's feelings. She supported him. She was easy to talk to. She gave of herself.

On the "dislike" side was only one item: her sexual preference. "It's not worth giving her up for that," he thought.

Frank is now 34, an avid fisherman, a commercial painter. At a family cookout, he talked about his struggle in accepting his mother and her partner.

"I'm kind of proud of them now, proud of both of them really. I feel like they're pioneering types. If my friends criticize gays, I say, 'Hey, ease back. My mom's gay.'"



Alice and Carol are in their living room for a final interview. They ponder the

question of why they have opened their door to a reporter.

"Does there have to be an answer?" Alice asks, her brow furrowing. "Can I say, 'I don't know?'"

By now Alice is tired. Tired of the questions, tired of the intrusion. "I am tired of the issue itself," she says wearily. "It's so little of who I am. I'm a mother, a friend, a partner. I do ministry. I'm a homosexual. I'm a right-handed, blue-eyed old woman. To boil it down to my homosexuality is unkind."

But Carol knows why they are coming out in such a public way. The reasons spill from her. Teenage gays who are committing suicide in frightening numbers. Stereotypes that don't fit reality. The need for role models. The young people who have come up to them and thanked them for leading the way.

"The world is a gift to us," Carol says. "And we can't accept the gift and hide who we are. There's no guarantee it will get better if there are not gay people willing to be known."

Even though she is quiet, Alice knows the answer, too. That's why she is here telling this story.

For such a time as this. **S**

1st Prize
Investigative
Reporting
Division Three

The Fertility Gods

by Carol Winkelman
The Chapel Hill News
North Carolina

Messing with Mother Nature! Will She strike back? In this three-part series Carol Winkelman, a freelance writer and science editor, describes the joys and dangers of a recently developed fertility treatment that uses eggs of a young woman to implant in another woman. In her meticulously researched series, Winkelman describes the complex egg donation procedures, examines informed consent procedures that experts deemed inadequate for egg donors, and looks at ethical dilemmas that arise with the new techniques.

Shortly after her series appeared, the Assisted Reproductive Technologies clinic, (which is affiliated with both University of North Carolina Hospitals and the medical school) improved their informed consent procedures.

CHAPEL HILL, N.C.— The last two and a half years of Dion Farquhar's life read like a fairy tale. She fell in love, married, had twin boys, and signed a book contract with a classy New York publisher.

But hers is a modern fairy tale. Both the boys and the book came to her as the result of the most recent and most successful of the high-tech fertility treatments available at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill — egg donation, a process by which eggs from one woman are surgically removed, fertilized, and transferred to another woman's uterus.

After the eggs were donated by a 25-year-old woman, fertilized in a petri dish and transferred to her uterus as 2-day-old embryos, Farquhar became pregnant at age 45. At 46, after a normal pregnancy, she gave birth to twins Alex and Matthew.

Farquhar's late-in-life pregnancy reflects the success of UNC's egg donor-recipient program, in which previously infertile women now can have babies thanks to idealistic young women, many

We're one big high- tech family

of them students who contribute their eggs for \$1,500 and a feeling of altruism.

The egg donor program, the most successful part of UNC's assisted reproductive technologies program, currently offers patients a 39 percent "take home baby" rate — one of the highest rates in the country. Duke University Medical Center's take home baby rate is 33 percent, and the large and well known University of Southern California program has a take home baby rate of 31 percent.

But there may be a price for that success.

Are we to be charmed by heartwarming stories, dazzled by new technology, or unsettled by unforeseen consequences?

OTHER WINNERS DIVISION THREE (dailies with Sunday circulation of under 30,000): **Second Prize** to Lenora Bohlen LaPeter of *The Island Packet* on Hilton Head Island, South Carolina, for a series that exposed chronic abuse in local nursing homes and another series on the destruction of once-fertile oyster beds by rapid development. **Third Prize** to Wister Jackson of *The Daily Courier* in Forest City, North Carolina, for his exposé of a local church that turned its members into indentured servants who toiled in factory jobs for the benefit of church leaders.

Tests, drugs and \$1,500: Some egg donors would give again— and some wouldn't

Chapel Hill — It all started with a tiny ad in *The Daily Tar Heel*.

The ad offered \$1,500 for young women willing to donate some of their own eggs to women who couldn't have children.

Tonya, a 20-year-old pharmacy student at the University of North Carolina, thought it would be wonderful to help someone have a baby. And she could use some extra money to help put herself through college.

The donation meant going through medical, genetic, and psychological screening tests and then adhering to a demanding regimen of hormone injections and medical tests. Tonya donated eight eggs last July to the UNC egg donor-recipient program. And she plans to donate eggs again.

Tonya says the UNC clinic "did a great job" of walking her through the egg donation experience, warning her of the risks of infection from the egg retrieval procedure, and telling her about ovarian hyperstimulation syndrome — a short-term risk of the fertility drugs that may cause ovarian swelling and abdominal bloating and tenderness. But Tonya said a possible long-term side effect of the drugs, ovarian cancer, was only briefly mentioned.

An aspiring pharmacy student, Tonya read up on the drugs at the UNC Health Sciences Library. She also sought the opinion of her family doctor. After he told her she was young, healthy, and not at high risk for side effects, she decided the benefits of donating were worth the risks.

Although Tonya says she wants to be "as emotionally unattached to the eggs as possible" and says the real mother is the woman who carries the baby for nine months and becomes attached to it, she says she would sacrifice her anonymity if doing so would help the child. "If the child needed a kidney or something, I would donate," Tonya said. "If it were between my own child and that child, I'd pick the child that I'd carried . . . But I'd want to be notified and asked. The parents could notify the infertility clinic, and they could notify me."

Such altruism is common in the UNC donor population, said Robert Bashford, the UNC psychiatrist/gynecologist who screens women for the program. "This kind of procedure attracts a certain kind of creature," Bashford said. "They give blood and plasma. They carry an organ donor card. That's who comes through the door."

Another young donor, a 20-year-old from Durham who asked to remain nameless, gained insight into the pain of childlessness by talking with infertile friends. "That's what made me decide. I knew how bad they wanted children," she said.

But she doesn't plan to do it again. The fertility drugs' side effects gave her sore thighs, mood swings, and a belly so bloated she looked and felt pregnant. "My leg got numb from Pergonal. I got so bloated I couldn't wear clothes. My stomach got real hard in places," she said. "I was very emotional, with cramps and all. It was like PMS — only 20 times worse."

The UNC clinic prepared her well for the egg donation experience, she said. She was taken by surprise only once — by the pain following the egg retrieval procedure. "After surgery, I was in so much pain I couldn't lay down or sit down. It took about a week. I looked pregnant. I couldn't even walk straight," she said.

In the ultra-sound-guided egg retrieval process, a long needle is passed through the vaginal wall to harvest eggs from the ovaries. She produced 22 eggs and "gave a baby back to the world," as she had hoped to do, since the recipient couple got pregnant. "I felt good that I had helped somebody," she said.

Unlike Tonya, she decided not to donate again. "I wouldn't want to go through that pain again," she said. "I helped one couple out. I don't need to help everyone in the world."

It is too early to tell; egg donation is only 10 years old. For recipients, at least, benefits outweigh risks, and the news is hearteningly good. Women who previously could not have babies, now have babies — sometimes two or three — thanks to the strides made in obstetrics, cryogenics, and embryology over the last 20 years.

In the 1970s came the fertility drugs that stimulated egg production and gave women more chances to conceive a child. In the 1980s, there was the evolution of high-tech fertilization — IVF (in vitro fertilization), GIFT (gamete intrafallopian transfer), ZIFT (zygote intrafallopian transfer), and finally egg donation.

Since the first donor-recipient baby was born in 1984, egg donation has become an increasingly popular high-tech way to have a baby, with a success rate that now surpasses all the other assisted reproductive technologies.

In 1993 alone, egg donation resulted in the birth of more than 1,000 babies. From 1992 to 1993, the number of egg donor-recipient programs reporting to the American Fertility Society increased from 75 to 137.

The UNC program, developed in 1990 by Dr. Luther Talbert, who is now in private practice in Cary, is one of the older and more successful programs. It has performed over 107 transfers of eggs from donors to recipients resulting in 36 successful pregnancies and, since many were multiple births, 56 babies in all.

The donors

One of the secrets of the UNC program's success lies in its youthful donors and their young eggs. It was UNC's reputation for a "plentiful supply of healthy donors" along with its success rate that prompted Farquhar's New York doctor to send her to Chapel Hill in the first place.

"The Chapel Hill area has a near optimal donor population," says Dr. Mark Fritz, chief of UNC's Division of Reproductive Endocrinology, of which the fertility and egg donor-recipient programs are a part. Many of these women are college students who present fewer concerns regarding AIDS, hepatitis, drug and alcohol abuse, and other health prob-

lems than donors from urban centers like New York and Los Angeles.

"It's difficult to get good donors," said Dr. William Meyer, director of the UNC program and assistant professor of gynecology at the UNC Medical School. "In New York City, you have a problem because if you run an ad in the newspaper for \$2,000 for egg donation, you're going to get people who are maybe not the best people to get donated eggs from."

UNC targets its advertising at students by running ads in *The Daily Tar Heel* that offer potential egg donors \$1,500 per completed egg donation cycle. In order to qualify, donors must be between the ages of 18 and 32. They must also pass through a medical and psychiatric screening process.


The recipients

Women seeking donor eggs at the UNC clinic may be as young as 25 or as old as 50.

Though Meyer says the program prefers to "offer a service within the bounds of what might occur naturally," menopause is not necessarily a limiting factor. Some recipients are young women in their 20s or 30s undergoing premature menopause. Young women with genetic defects, inherited diseases or eggs damaged from chemotherapy also turn to egg donation as their only chance to bear healthy babies.

But the majority of egg recipients are women in their late 30s to mid-40s who have been unable to get pregnant or stay pregnant using other infertility treatments. Women in their 40s receiving donor eggs have higher take-home baby rates and lower miscarriage rates than women in their 30s undergoing *in vitro* fertilization or intrafallopian transfers with their own eggs.

What recipients have in common is not age or marital status but a strong determination to have a baby and the ability to pay for \$13,000 worth of drugs, lab tests, and medical procedures, since they are responsible for both the donor's and their own medical expenses. Few insurance companies will pick up the tab.



THE FERTILITY GODS

DONATING EGGS

Women who donate their eggs for fertilization — and the women who receive the eggs — go through a 26- to 30-day program of blood tests, ultrasounds and hormone and drug injections to synchronize their reproductive systems and to prepare their bodies for the exchange of eggs. Here's how the process works:

THE DONOR

DAYS 1-21: Donor is given injections of a hormone which turns off her internal reproductive clock.

DAY 10: The start of about two weeks of injections of estrogen, which prepares the uterus for pregnancy.

DAY 15: The start of about nine days of injections to hyperstimulate the production of eggs.

DAY 27: Begin injections of Progesterone, a hormone which further prepares the lining of the uterus for pregnancy.

DAY 28: An injection of a hormone triggers ovulation.

DAY 29: A small tube is inserted through the vaginal wall to harvest the eggs before the donor can ovulate.

A FEW DAYS TO TWO WEEKS LATER: The donor's body returns to normal.

THE RECIPIENT


DAYS 1-21: Recipient is given injections of the same hormone to prevent ovulation.

DAY 10: The start of about two weeks of injections of estrogen, which prepares the uterus for pregnancy.

DAY 27: Begin injections of Progesterone, a hormone which further prepares the lining of the uterus for pregnancy.

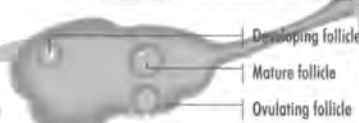
DAY 31: Three or four of the healthiest embryos are inserted into the uterus. Progesterone injections continue for another two to four weeks.

DAY 45: The recipient is given a pregnancy test.



A NORMAL PREGNANCY

- Ovary releases egg
- Egg enters fallopian tube
- Sperm fertilizes egg
- Fertilized egg, called a zygote, embeds itself in the lining of the uterus.




AN EGG DONOR'S OVARIES

Actual size

Normally, one or two egg follicles will develop during a menstrual cycle. A hyper-stimulated donor's ovary, however, will produce 10 to 30 eggs per cycle.

During normal ovulation, a woman's ovaries swell to 1 1/2 inches.

Under drug-induced hyperstimulation, a donor's ovaries can swell to 6 inches or more.



The eggs are placed in a container with sperm, which fertilize the eggs. After 48 hours in an incubator, the fertilized eggs, which have grown into two to eight celled embryos, are ready for transplant.

Source:

CHARLES APPLE / The Chapel Hill News

What cancer risk?

When an egg donor walks into the UNC Assisted Reproductive Technologies clinic, she thinks about how donating eggs will help an infertile couple

have a baby. She thinks about how the \$1,500 will boost her budget or pay her student loans.

She doesn't think hard about long-term cancer risks,

Theoretically, a woman could give birth to her grandmother's eggs frozen decades before.

She should, according to recent biological theory. Egg donors take fertility drugs to push their ovaries to produce from five to 30 eggs instead of the usual one or two per menstrual cycle — and the more a woman ovulates, the greater her cancer risk.

But the UNC program, along with others around the country that are dependent on young donors to maintain their success rates, describes the cancer risk in language that experts say is inadequate.

"I am astounded by the lack of informed consent," said Bernadine Healy, former director of the National Institutes of Health under the Bush administration. She is currently Senior Health Policy Advisor at the Cleveland Clinic. Informed consent is a vital legal and ethical doctrine requiring a doctor to provide patients with the information they need to make decisions in their best interest.

"Egg donation should be treated with the same care as research. It's a high stakes activity that should get as thorough an informed consent as possible in medicine," said Dr. Arthur Caplan, director of the University of Pennsylvania's Center for Bioethics, who has seen problems with consent forms at several university fertility centers. "UNC," Caplan said, "downplays the risks donors are taking instead of providing an explicit discussion of them."

But the fertility doctors are in an awkward position: If the information they hand out dissuades potential donors from giving, the doctors' fertility patients — and much of their \$300,000 program — suffer.

Some suggest that's a conflict of interest, and that the job of informing potential donors should be left up to other doctors completely detached from the program.

"You don't have to be a conspiracy buff," Caplan said. "There is a tremendous shortage of eggs and egg donors

and a lot of money to be made, and I think people are trying hard to get donors."

UNC Hospitals' program is not a money maker as it is in some hospitals. In 1993-94, in fact, the program lost \$142,000, not including doctors' fees. In 1994, there were 18 egg donors, and 13 women gave birth with donated eggs.

Meyer said the clinic gives adequate warning of risks and tells donors "the bad aspects of donating."

"At best, they really try to discourage you," said Tonya, a 20-year-old woman who donated eggs at the end of her 1994 freshman year at UNC. "What they tell you would scare a lot of people off," said "Tonya," who has asked to remain anonymous.

A questionable practice

An hour-long donor-education class tells possible donors at UNC about weeks of hormone injections, medical tests, and monitoring of ovulation, as well as descriptions of the drugs and medical risks involved in the egg donation process.

But the long-term medical risk of ovarian cancer is mentioned only briefly, and in what some experts say may be in misleading and confusing ways:

- No mention is made of the risk of ovarian cancer on egg donor risk sheets and consent forms.

- No mention is made anywhere of the most recent and worrisome 1994 findings

that showed an 11-fold increase in cancer risk.

- The ovarian cancer risk is mentioned — and diminished — on a reprint of a medical article by Dr. Richard Marris that calls the findings of a 1992 study on fertility drugs and ovarian cancer "meaningless from a clinical standpoint."

This information does not give egg donors a balanced view of the ovarian cancer question to make informed decisions in their own best interest, according to some health policy experts.

Giving the Marris article to donors without giving them articles representing the other side of the medical debate is what Healy finds "a questionable practice." In an editorial in the May issue of the *Journal of Women's Health*, which she edits, Healy wrote: "It is disconcerting that some fertility specialists are ready to discount the cancer risk and, at times, provide egg donors with 'reprints' which dismiss, if not discredit, the recent epidemiologic data."

Marris said in an interview that his article is being misused if given to patients with the intended message that "you don't have to worry about this."

"If they take what I wrote and give it to their patients and say, 'Here is the truth about this' — this is not what I wanted," he said.

Ovarian cancer is a nasty disease. Although a woman's lifetime odds of developing ovarian cancer are low, about 1.5 in 100, her odds of dying once she gets the disease are relatively high. Because ovarian cancer is silent and difficult to detect, it is fatal 60 percent of the time within five years after diagnosis, according to the Center for Health Care Statistics. Breast cancer survival rates after five years are twice as high as survival rates

What recipients have in common is not age or marital status but a strong determination to have a baby and the ability to pay \$13,000 for drugs, lab tests, and medical procedures.

“The bottom line is, you’ve got this cute kid.”



Photo by Dan Coyro

NEW REPRODUCTIVE TECHNOLOGIES HELPED DION FARQUHAR AND MARSH LEICESTER BECOME PARENTS OF TWINS ALEXANDER AND MATTHEW.

Like many women of her generation, 48-year-old Dion Farquhar postponed childbearing while she pursued her education and career.

As the first member of her family to go to college, Farquhar was a serious student. She earned a Ph.D. in political theory, taught college for several years and then, in her late 30s, was ready to have children.

She looked for the right man — but didn’t find him. Finally, at age 42, with her child-bearing years waning and no permanent relationship in view, Farquhar decided to have a

baby on her own.

After two and a half years of fertility treatments, starting with low-tech artificial insemination and ending with higher-tech fertility therapies, Farquhar was about to give up on having her own biological child.

Then her New York doctor told her about egg donation: “She told me, “You get the egg of another woman, and they fertilize it in vitro and put it in you, and you gestate it — and you have the pregnancy experience,” Farquhar said. “And that appeals to me as a kind of hybrid between adoption, in

which I would have no genetic connection to the child, and having my genetically own baby.”

Farquhar’s acceptance into the UNC program was followed by a serendipitous chain of events. Farquhar left New York for a summer seminar in Santa Cruz, California. What began as a dinner date five days later with Marsh Leicester, 53, an English professor at the University of California Santa Cruz, led to marriage within three months. “We met for dinner — and that was it,” Farquhar said.

Meanwhile, Farquhar started the hormone injections that would prepare her uterus for the implantation of an embryo and waited for UNC to find an egg donor. That August, while vacationing in Michigan, Farquhar got a call from Linda Bailey, a nurse at the UNC program, with good news: They’d found a donor match who would be ready to go in mid-September. The bad news was that Marsh could be the sperm donor only if he and Farquhar were married.

Three days later, Farquhar and Marsh tied the knot on the shores of Lake Michigan.

By September 19, Marsh and Farquhar were at UNC to participate in a conception in which neither of them would be a genetic parent. Marsh, at 50, produced sperm that could not fertilize the donor egg.

Fortunately, the couple had arranged for “donor back-up” from the sperm bank.

After the eggs were fertilized and incubated, four good em-

bryos were transferred to Farquhar’s uterus. Twelve days later, Farquhar’s pregnancy test came out positive. She was having twins. After a normal 39-week pregnancy, just one week short of her due date, Farquhar gave birth to fraternal twins, Alexander and Matthew.

Farquhar plans to tell the boys of their unusual mode of conception when they are older. “All the close people know,” Farquhar said. “Nobody has been appalled. . . . The bottom line is, you’ve got this cute kid. That’s what people see, not the abstraction of biogenetics.”

Unlike some of the recipients, Farquhar did not bond with her anonymous donor who, Farquhar feels, gave “an abstracted part of her body — her genetic material. I wasn’t particularly interested in whether she swam or played chess. . .

“You’d think I’d be more worried,” Farquhar said, but she accepted the UNC team’s judgment that the donor was a good match in terms of height, weight, and hair color.

As far as Farquhar is concerned, the children are hers. “Bonding is just bonding,” Farquhar said. “I couldn’t imagine being closer to them or loving them more.”

A part-time lecturer at the University of California, Farquhar was asked to give a talk on some scholarly topic that she was working on. “So I said, ‘I guess I’m working on reproductive technology.’” Farquhar’s paper developed into a book, *The Other Machine: Discourse and Assisted Reproductive Technology*, to be published this year by Routledge of New York.

“In New York City, you have a problem because if you run an ad in the newspaper for \$2,000 for egg donation, you’re going to get people who are maybe not the best people to get donated eggs from.”

for ovarian cancer, according to the National Cancer Institute.

Opinions vary on how to interpret the potential risks of fertility drugs. Dr. Mark Sauer, one of the pioneers in egg donation as former head of the donor-recipient program at the University of Southern California, said the risk is probably small. But small is a relative term.

An increased risk to even 4 in 100 is “not a trivial number, especially if you are one of the four,” said Dr. Alice Whittemore, professor of epidemiology at Stanford Medical School and author of a controversial 1992 study.

Ethical dilemmas

When Stan Beyler holds one of his patients’ babies in his arms, chances are he first saw that baby as a few cells under a microscope, and first held it as a fertilized egg in a petri dish — or a frozen embryo in a cartridge-shaped tube. For Beyler, this is humbling.

Beyler, the embryologist at UNC’s Assisted Reproductive technologies clinic, sees himself not as a fertility god but as “his or her handmaiden,” who assists nature by helping couples overcome physical obstacles to pregnancy.

But, while fertility specialists may stand in awe of nature, they are in control of a technology that has ramifications we can barely imagine.

They freeze embryos for future use, keeping them for years in suspended animation until brought to life or discarded. They make previously infertile women pregnant — sometimes with twins or triplets.

But can our laws, ethics, and psyches keep pace with these rapidly developing technologies? Is science pushing nature too far?

Some embryos are never transferred to a uterus. They are frozen, discarded or used for research, depending on individual agreements between doctors, hospitals, and clinics. An egg donor may produce as many as 20 eggs. Once fertilized, there’s no telling how many of those will become healthy embryos. If four are transferred to a recipient woman, what should become of the rest?

Should such embryos be frozen indefinitely until the recipient wants to become pregnant? Or should they be discarded, given to someone else or donated to research if no longer needed?

“The morass of unknown ethical dilemmas with frozen embryos is a bigger issue than most things,” said Sauer. It could result in legal entanglements involving inheritance, custody — even embryo theft. According to current American Fertility Society guidelines, embryos should be kept no longer than the reproductive life of the woman who donated the egg, which would prohibit the transfer from generation to generation.

But it is possible for triplets, identical or fraternal, to be frozen at the same time, thawed in different generations, carried by different mothers — and born decades apart.

If cloning is ever considered acceptable, women could give birth to identical twins generations apart. Theoretically, a woman could give birth to her grandmother’s eggs frozen decades before. And if unfertilized eggs are ever successfully frozen, a woman could utilize eggs frozen decades before.

Cloning could be clinically practical, said UNC’s Beyler, if used to increase a woman’s odds for pregnancy. “You could clone an embryo to become two, three, or four embryos to enhance her

pregnancy rate,” he said.

UNC’s Beyler says that assisted reproductive technologies will stay within the bounds of what the individual society dictates. “But this will vary from culture to culture — and from generation to generation,” he says.

“What we consider abhorrent now,” he said, “may be acceptable in 100 years.”

In July 1995, one month after this series appeared in The Chapel Hill News, the UNC fertility clinic strengthened the ovarian cancer warning it gave to egg donors.

The changes were made in the “informed consent” form given to egg donors to tell them of the possible risk of drugs and procedures involved in egg donation. The clinic now warns potential egg donors that an association may exist between ovarian cancer and fertility drugs and that multiple donations might increase this risk. Along with this warning, donors are offered birth control pills following their donation since these pills may reduce a woman’s risk of developing ovarian cancer.

Changes were also made in the accompanying information given to donors to explain the possible ovarian cancer risk. The clinics substituted a one-page paper that dismissed the cancer risk with a longer and more recent medical paper.

Previous critics applauded the changes. Dr. Arthur Caplan, director of the Center for Bioethics at the University of Pennsylvania School of Medicine, said that UNC was “moving in the right direction” because the added information empowered egg donors to ask questions.

But problems still remain, according to Caplan and other experts in the field. The new paper on risk that the clinic now provides to donors is, like the one that preceded it, dismissive of cancer risks. It was also commissioned by the pharmaceutical company that manufactures the fertility drugs given to egg donors — but that fact is never revealed to donors. The author of the paper, Dr. Howard McClamrock, says he doesn’t give his paper to egg donors at his Maryland clinic because “it was not peer reviewed and accepted for publication. It’s my position, and my ideas only — not any more than that.”

Excerpted by Sally Gregory.

1st Prize
Investigative
Reporting,
Division Two

State of the Forest

By *Leon Alligood*
Nashville Banner, Tennessee

Trees cover one half of Tennessee, providing jobs, recreation, and habitat. But current forestry practices have raised concerns about the woodlands today's children will inherit. Nashville Banner senior staff writer, Leon Alligood, spent six months crisscrossing the state by land and air, and interviewing over 100 sources, resulting in a five-day series of insightful commentary about Tennessee's most valuable natural resource.

NASHVILLE, Tenn.—The chinkapin oak is what foresters call a sweepstakes winner. In its 275- to 300-year life, the tree has endured fires, insects, blizzards, hail, wind storms, drought, lightning and man. It is one of the lucky ones.

"We wouldn't take anything for it. There's not another like it," says Perry Lanius of Lebanon. The tree shades the front yard of the home on West Main Street he and his wife, Frances, have shared since 1952.

Trees.

Tennesseans love them.

We relish their cover during the sultry days of summer.

In the fall, tourists flock to see their changing cascade of colors.

By their growth from seedling to young tree, we compare the metamorphosis of tyke to teen; in their constancy, we find comfort as middle age yields to seniorhood.

Concurrent with our infatuation for trees standing is an appreciation for forests harvested.

Doing right by the trees

Our homes are framed with two-by-fours.

We desire the cachet of fine wood furniture in our living rooms and the luster of oak in kitchen cabinets.

Settled in easy chairs, we read books, magazines, even this newspaper, all of which are printed on paper that began as a tree growing in the woods.

This dichotomy, the forestry equivalent of having our cake and eating it, too, has been around since the earliest pioneers marveled at the frontier's thick forests, even as they cut them down for fuel and shelter.

Today, many Tennesseans find it difficult to reconcile feelings about our woodlands and how they should serve us.

OTHER WINNERS DIVISION TWO (dailies with Sunday circulation of 30,000 to 100,000): **Second Prize** to Scott Gold and Scott Whisnant of the *Wilmington Morning Star* for their hard-hitting look at the dangerously outdated and largely unregulated technology of North Carolina's hog industry. **Third Prize** to Logan D. Mabe and Sonia Lelii of *The Ledger* in Lakeland, Florida, for their impressive series examining how unequal funding and low standards shortchange children in local schools.

Old Cuts, New Cuts, Unkind Cuts

The Generations of a Tennessee Forest

A misconception about forests is that they are stable and unchanging. Woods that were childhood haunts are expected to remain the same, just older. In reality, forests are in a perpetual state of flux, scientists say. They are dynamic structures of nature that, if left undisturbed, have an order of succession that drives their existence.

However, man has always interfered, beginning with Tennessee's earliest residents, Native Americans. Five hundred years ago, "There would have been a lot of open space," theorizes University of Tennessee forestry professor Ed Buckner. "The people here were farming, and they had a single tool that helped them — fire. Thousands of acres were burned," Buckner says.

"Closed forests would not have supported the numbers of people that lived here. Neither would it have supported the elk or the buffalo that we know also lived here."

After DeSoto and other early explorers exposed the Native Americans to European diseases, thousands died, Buckner says. Their abandoned fields, absent the deliberate burning, became a seemingly impenetrable forest to the pioneers 250 years later.

However, it didn't remain impenetrable long. One of the settlers' first acts of self-preservation was to clear-cut the forest for building material and firewood and to create fields for farming. The effect on the state was telling. Historians say that between 1773 and 1873 roughly half of Tennessee's forest cover was stripped, a loss of about 13 million acres.

Industrial uses of forest products accelerated the harvesting and, in many cases, abused the forests.

Extensive cutting continued well into the 20th century. In this century, man also interfered by introducing chestnut blight, which in less than 50 years wiped out one of the most prevalent hardwoods of the Tennessee forest.

By the early 1930s, there were signs logging had extended beyond the resource's capacity. In a 1931 *Ashland City Times*

article, tobacco farmers complained of not having enough wood to burn in their curing barns.

By the end of World War II, a logging decline that was to last several decades began. Coinciding with this was a drop in the number of farms, as Tennessee's growing industrial and manufacturing base lured workers to non-farming jobs. As the number of farms decreased, fields reverted to forests.

In west Tennessee, severely eroded cotton plots were transformed into oases of evergreen as pines were planted to stabilize the soil. A good example is Natchez Trace State Park, 90 miles west of Nashville. "It was land that nobody wanted, abused land, too steep to be row-cropped," says State Forester Ken Arney. "Now we have a beautiful forest that everybody loves."

However, immediately after World War II, large sections of Tennessee were anything but beautiful. The state developed a reputation for scrubby woods of little value, and it remained that way for decades.

Meanwhile, the trees grew.

Fifty years later, the situation is reversing. According to a 1989 U.S. Forestry Service report — the most recent data available — Tennessee grows three times as much wood as is harvested. Over 75 percent is hardwoods, primarily in stands of oak and oak-hickory.

Today, Tennessee and other Southern states that suffered similar fates of over-cutting 75 to 100 years ago are called the "wood basket" of America. In the last two and a half decades, numerous lumber companies, pulpwood inter-

ests, and specialty markets have opened for business here.

Environmentalists derisively say the timber industry is returning to Tennessee for a "new cut" after "running into the big pond" — the Pacific Ocean — in the Northwest. Industry officials deny a west-to-east movement, blaming recent declines in Northwest lumber production on what they term "artificial" obstacles such as the spotted owl controversy and expensive court battles instigated by environmentalists.

Regardless, Tennessee has more trees and a growing timber industry. "I guess you could say it's being discovered, both the quality stuff and the low-quality. We've got a million more acres of forestland now than we did in 1950," adds the Tennessee Division of Forestry's Barnett. "It's a phenomenal comeback in many respects."



After World War II, large sections of Tennessee were anything but beautiful. The state developed a reputation for scrubby woods of little value.

“This used to be a forest,” says Murray, pointing across the road from the cemetery to a 60-acre clear-cut.

Questions are being asked — not only from environmental circles, but also from loggers, sawmillers and others in the wood-products industry — about what kind of forest we will have in the 21st century.

Chipping away our forests

Billy and Stanley Wheeler, father and son, earn their daily bread in Guys, Tennessee, a small community hard against the Mississippi state line. The Wheelers own a pallet-manufacturing business, B.S. Mac. For about eight years, the father-and-son team has used low-grade hardwood trees in their business. The local woods are full of them, not only in McNairy County, but throughout the state. In fact, while the volume of timber has increased in Tennessee over the past half-century, quality has diminished.

Foresters blame a century of high-grading, a practice of removing highly marketable trees while leaving the specimens that do not pay their way out of the woods. These remnants form the basis of the next forest.

For decades, Tennessee loggers, landowners, and foresters have longed for a market for these second-rate trees, the ones better suited for firewood than furniture. Until about six years ago, the Wheelers' pallet industry served that purpose.

Then came chip mills in northern Mississippi, able to grind tons of hardwood logs each day into wood flakes used in making paper, especially white paper. Deciduous trees — hardwoods — are used almost exclusively to manufacture this product. The American Forest and Paper Association reports that white pa-



DOUG MURRAY OF LAFOLLETTE VIEWS A CLEAR-CUT ON PEABODY MOUNTAIN IN CAMPBELL COUNTY.

per is in high demand worldwide because of computers, copiers, and fax machines.

Stanley worries McNairy County is not big enough for both his pallet business and the paper companies. “When we’re running full, we hire 20 people. That hasn’t happened since last March,” he says.

Today, tons of logs the Wheelers say they would have sawed into pallet boards are now diverted to the pulpwood stream. The logs Stanley does buy are more expensive, too. Loggers demand \$3 more per ton than what the chip mills are paying.

Concern for hardwoods

Because of their encounters with the “paper tiger,” the Wheelers don’t like what they see, for the future of their business or for the forest.

The father and son are not alone. Increased harvesting of the state’s hardwoods for pulp has prompted concern not only from conservationists but also from other traditional hardwood users. Most of the concern centers around clear-cutting and problems associated with this harvesting method.

Extensive clear-cutting to satisfy a paper mill’s need for wood fiber could lead to a hardwood deficit, meaning more

trees are being cut than are being grown, environmentalists contend.

Paper mill critics have other concerns, too. Will paper companies replace a clear-cut forest with fast growing loblolly pine rather than allow oaks and other hardwoods to regenerate? Will ecosystems and water quality be harmed?

Pulp and paper manufacturers, who collectively own about 1.1 million acres in Tennessee, believe they are good stewards of the forests, securing work for thousands of Tennesseans while providing woodlot owners with a source of revenue and consumers worldwide with needed products.

The debate continues.

So does the cutting.

Sustainability questioned

Since the late 1980s, U.S. Forest Service statistics for Alabama and Mississippi indicate the pulp and paper industry has repeatedly violated a cardinal rule of sustainable forestry. Never cut more trees than are being grown.

Bob Mitchell, a high school physics teacher-cum-forest advocate from Chattanooga, is afraid the same fate awaits Tennessee’s hardwoods. “These states had a lot of resources; a lot of trees were down there before these companies came in. Now they have devastated that area,”

he alleges. "Doesn't it make sense that they would continue on into Tennessee, and doesn't it make sense that they would continue their clear-cutting practices on our hardwood forests?"

There is reason to put credence in Mitchell's scenario. In 1989, the last year a forestry survey was published for Tennessee, six counties in the state showed deficit readings for hardwoods.

The next survey won't be tabulated for two years, but both foresters and industry watchers indicate that number could rise significantly, particularly along the Mississippi and Alabama borders. "The 1989 numbers were good, but for my area — this southwest corner of Tennessee — things have changed drastically since 1989," says Pete Moditz, area forester with the Tennessee Division of Forestry. "Even though we don't have the numbers to back it up, we are in a deficit at this point."

Defining sustainability

That Tennessee hardwoods are harvested for pulp is no surprise. In Kingsport, a Mead paper mill (now owned by Willamette) has been using deciduous species since the early 1900s. More recently, the use of the state's hardwoods by paper mills began increasing in the 1970s and by the 1980s matched the amount of softwoods being used.

During the period 1983 to 1993, hardwood pulp production in the state ranged from a 1989 low of 490,900 tons to a high of 743,100 tons in 1993, according to the U. S. Forest Service's annual reports on Southern pulpwood production.

"The information universe is increasing so rapidly, and even though a small proportion of it may be printed on paper, absolute paper consumption is still increasing," says Stan Lancey, director of economic services with the American Forest and Paper Association.

Mitchell says it all adds up to nonsustainable use of Tennessee's greatest natural resource. "The current demand for chips is driven by the world market, and our region cannot sustain that market," he argues. "If nothing is done, it's going to be a rape. These companies would like to turn Tennessee into a pulpwood lot."

"If nothing is done, it's going to be a rape. These companies would like to turn Tennessee into a pulpwood lot."

Nonsense, says industrial forester Don Kimberly, manager of over 170,000 acres of middle Tennessee woodlands owned by Champion International Corporation. "That's another of those myths out there," the Waynesboro man says. Kimberly says anti-logging activists like to point out that Wayne County, headquarters for Champion's operations in the region, is one of the six Tennessee counties already showing a hardwood deficit. "What they don't say is that statewide there are three times as many hardwood trees growing than were being harvested," he says. "Sustainable to me means over a long run we can cut as much as we're growing. We may be cutting less this year and more the next year, but the two years combined is sustainable growth."

The word, however, has a different meaning for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. "What I'm most concerned about, and I'm looking from an endangered species and wildlife standpoint, is habitat," says Lee Barclay, who heads the agency's office in Tennessee.

Because the pulpwood industry in Tennessee has increased its use of hardwoods, Barclay said there could be detrimental effects on deer, bears, squirrels, and other animals who depend on mast — the acorns and nuts that many hardwoods produce.

Fear of pines

An indictment of clear-cutting hardwood forests is that the majority of these acres will be replanted with pine. This fear of pine plantations replacing the state's oak forests pervades the environmental community. "I've got nothing against pines, but I don't want a pine monoculture replacing our hardwood forests. We've got something special here that other states, except for maybe North Carolina, don't have," says Alan Jones,

executive director of the Tennessee Environmental Council.

"I've planted close to a million pine seedlings on industrial forest lands throughout the southeast and Wisconsin. I've seen the results of what can happen," says Dennis Haldeman, a former forest industry worker who is now an active member of several Tennessee environmentalist groups. "I got fed up with it all. Yeah, it's wrong."

However, there is little statistical evidence available to indicate hardwood sites statewide are being converted to pine in large tracts. Paper company land, which accounts for 8.5 percent of the state's total forest, is the exception. Timber managers report it is not unusual for part of a hardwood tract on company property to be converted to pine. "But we don't automatically choose pine," Champion's Kimberly notes. "We are site-selective."

According to area forester Pete Moditz, that is a sound forestry strategy. "Some people say we're going to run out of hardwoods. I have helped landowners plant 3,000 acres of pines, and that's a lot, but do you know how many acres of forestland are in my area? There are 600,000. If it were all planted in pine it'd take 200 years. That ain't going to happen."

The Wheelers' dilemma

The Wheelers are at a crossroads. To reinvigorate their pallet company, father and son are considering options to business as usual.

"What has really caused the biggest effect on us is these loggers refuse to sort [the logs]. If it's not a real good grade log, they put it all in chipwood, and it goes to the chip mill," Stanley says.

He recently tried to explain to a logger that the lumberman could make more money by sorting pallet logs from the pulpwood. Stanley says it's a simple mat-

ter of math. The response from the logger? "It's just not worth it, that's what he tells me," Stanley says incredulously. "That's the mentality that chip mills have fabricated."

So the Wheelers are considering doing what the loggers will not do: buying all logs, sorting out what they need at their pallet plant and selling the rest to the chip mills.

A desperate act, feeding the beast that precipitated his crisis?

"We've got to do something," Stanley says.

Meanwhile, the Wheelers continue to stare into the eyes of the paper tiger, trying hard not to blink.

Doing right by the trees

Following a mountain-hugging, serpentine road that flirts with nothingness, Doug Murray leads a chain of cars through a back-roads section of Campbell county.

His battered pickup, circa better days, follows a dirt path up a steep hill. The truck's knobby rear wheels spin as the transmission shifts from first to second, kicking up a cloud of yellow dust.

A sign points the way to Peabody Mountain Cemetery, a tidy, green-lawned resting place for, among others, coal miners who died of black lung. The string of vehicles carrying environmentalists and journalists follows Murray's truck into a gravel parking lot next to the small graveyard, but the purpose of this visit is not to pay homage to the dead buried there.

"This used to be a forest," says Murray, pointing across the road from the cemetery to a 60-acre clearcut. The property is owned by Champion International Corporation, but was cleared by a local logger.

"As you can see, everything's been cut and trucked out. In the process, they clogged up a stream, diverted it to make a log-loading pad and, as a result, sediment is all over the place," he says.

The Division of Water Pollution Control agreed. Inspectors from the



A RECENT CLEAR-CUT STANDS NEXT TO UNCUT WOODS NEAR SAVANNAH. THE MARKINGS ON THE LAND ARE SKID TRAILS.



A VIEW FROM THE AIR SHOWS THAT TENNESSEE IS A STATE OF TREES. THIS VALLEY SCENE IS IN GRAINGER COUNTY, NEAR THE TOWN OF RUTLEDGE.

“I’ve heard loggers say that sometimes they just can’t follow Best Management Practices. That’s what the strip miners said. That’s why you need laws.”

Knoxville office later sent the logger a notice of violation, and corrective action was taken, but without fine or court action.

For environmentalists, the clogged stream on Peabody Mountain is a smoking gun, proof that the status quo is failing to protect the best interests of Tennessee’s future forests. They want the state’s current voluntary system of forestry rules and regulations, officially known as Best Management Practices (BMB), to be given legal bite and substance.

However, representatives of the Tennessee Division of Forestry and the timber industry note the past decade has produced marked improvement on environmental issues by those who earn a living from the forest. “There are some bad actors, we know that, but for the most part, everyone is doing a better job under the present system,” says State Forester Ken Arney.

Loggers, woodlot owners, timber companies, and Arney all stress that self-regulation is the most effective method to ensure a healthy forest for future Tennesseans. Murray and other environmentalists remain unconvinced. “There have got to be some changes,” he says, standing in the middle of the Peabody Mountain clear-cut. “As many trees as are going to be cut in the next decade or so, we need to have some laws in place to make sure someone’s looking out for the forests.”

Loggers in Tennessee do not have to pass a skill test or buy a license to harvest trees for a living, a fact that galls Eileen Segal, a member of the Memphis-based Wolf River Conservancy.

“The lady that cuts my hair has to have a license, and it’s not a natural resource!” says Segal, whose group has lobbied for

protection of the Wolf River in west Tennessee.

That loggers are not licensed is nothing unique to the Volunteer State, however. In fact, few states require registration of those who earn a living from the woods.

“Best Management Practices are only as good as the logger’s conscience is to implement them. I’ve seen magnificent logging practices — they’re in it for the long haul — but then I’ve seen some that I just don’t understand,” says Jeff Sinks, director of the Nature Conservancy’s office in Nashville.

“What I hear timber companies saying is that we’re going to be responsible — trust us — and as an environmental advocate, I think that’s an unfair request. I don’t think we should leave the future of our forests to chance or to companies deciding to do the right thing because it is the right thing,” adds Alan Jones of the Tennessee Environmental Council.

Tennessee is by no means alone on the issue of Best Management Practices. Of the 38 states that represent the major timber-producing regions of the country, 20 have voluntary compliance programs. In fact, only one southern state, North Carolina, makes BMPs mandatory.

At least one environmental organization has plans to push for forest reform in 1996. “We want a bill that actually does something to affect the problems that people have — siltation, water quality, and all the others related to clear-cutting. That’s what we’re researching,” says Shelley Wascom, director of Save Our Cumberland Mountains (SOCM). “I’ve heard loggers say that sometimes they just can’t follow BMPs. That’s what the strip miners said. That’s why you need laws.”

But forest-practice regulations will not come cheaply or without restrictions to

Tennessee’s revered private-property-rights laws. For instance, in California, which has the most stringent rules in the country, timber harvesting plans must be written by a registered professional forester, reviewed by the state, and then opened to public comments.

Proponents of mandatory BMPs say the current system offers little control over the size of clear-cuts. “If a landowner wants to clear-cut every tree on hundreds of acres, they can do it,” argues Murray.

That is true, agrees Area Forester Pete Moditz, but he argues the government should not be in the position of telling a landowner how to use his land. “I think people should have a right to do whatever they want with their property without impacting other people,” Moditz says. “If they’ve got a thousand acres they want to clear-cut, I’d try to discourage them, but I don’t want a law passed that says they can’t.”

As for added expenses, California forestry officials say their regulations cost about \$60 per thousand board feet, a sum that is passed to consumers or absorbed by landowners. Such a thought leaves the Tennessee forest industry more determined to avoid governmental oversight through self-control.

Arney adds: “It’s incumbent on everybody in the industry to work together to stay in the voluntary system.”

These assurances notwithstanding, environmental groups say recent events provide evidence forestry practices in Tennessee should receive more scrutiny.

S



A Dangerous Age

By Carol A. Marbin and
Stephen Nohlgren
St. Petersburg Times, Florida

St. Petersburg Times reporters Carol A. Marbin and Stephen Nohlgren suspected that some elderly Floridians were falling prey to psychiatric hospitals desperate to fill beds. The exposé that resulted from their 18-month investigation detailed how hundreds of old people were committed against their will for treatment they did not need. "A Dangerous Age" informed Florida's citizens about a scandal, protecting many of them from falling victim themselves. It also prompted a crack-down on psychiatric hospitals that commit elderly patients against their will for unnecessary treatment.

ST. PETERSBURG, Fla. — A locked-down psychiatric hospital was the last place you'd expect to find Mary Whelan. She wasn't about to slash her wrists, wander aimlessly in the street or climb a tower with a gun.

She was 97, weighed 90 pounds, and lived in a South Pasadena nursing home. At worst, she hated showers and sometimes refused medicine.

In earlier times, the community would have respected her wishes and accepted her eccentricities. But not these days. Whelan carried a Medicare card. And that made her a treasured commodity in mental wards, where beds need filling.

Last year, despite her daughters' objections, Whelan was locked up in Clearwater's Horizon Hospital for two weeks until a judge set her free. In the nursing home, Whelan had been active

Committing the elderly

and happy, her daughter says. In Horizon, she was "so drugged she could not keep her head up to eat her dinner. She just wanted to go to sleep. It broke my heart."

In the last few years, as private insurance companies cut payments for psychiatric treatment, some hospitals and doctors have found a bountiful source of relief: old people. They may not need to be locked up. Their families may resist. State law may create hurdles. But no matter. If old people refuse to cooperate, it's re-

OTHER WINNERS DIVISION ONE (dailies with Sunday circulation of over 100,000): **Second Prize** to Joby Warrick and Pat Stith of *The News & Observer* of Raleigh for their comprehensive investigation on the economic and environmental consequences of North Carolina's lax oversight of the rapidly expanding pork industry. **Third Prize** to Susan Feeney and Steve McGonigle of the *The Dallas Morning News* for the first comprehensive examination of how white authorities in Texas and across the deep South are skirting the Voting Rights Act by stripping black and Hispanic elected officials of their powers, budgets, and staffs. **Honorable Mention** to the staff of *The Birmingham News* for showing how Alabama benefits from federal aid at a time when the governor and other officials are attacking Washington. **Honorable Mention** to Fred Schulte and Jenni Bergal of the *Sun-Sentinel* in Ft. Lauderdale, Florida, for their exhaustive examination of how HMOs abuse Medicaid funds and maintain a separate and unequal system of care for Florida's poorest residents. **Honorable Mention** to Ken Ward Jr. of *The Charleston Gazette* for exposing how West Virginia officials used tax shenanigans and closed-door meetings to funnel public funds to a polluting paper mill.

markably easy to force them.

Nowhere is this more evident than in Pinellas County, "the commitment capital of Florida." About two-thirds of the people forced into treatment in Pinellas in 1993 and 1994 were 65 and over, almost all of them white and more than half women. They came from all over the state.

Pinellas committed more mental patients than Dade County, which has twice the population. More people were locked up in Pinellas than in Duval, Orange, and Palm Beach counties combined.

The *Times* compiled these figures after getting court orders to examine two years of commitment files — more than 4,000 cases. Reporters also interviewed scores of families with first-hand experience. The research reveals a disturbing

pattern of financial conflicts of interest, questionable practices, and sweeping power:

• *Mental hospitals locked up people who didn't belong there.*

Florida's Baker Act, which permits forced treatment, is designed for dangerous people or those who seriously neglect themselves. But nursing homes use the law to ship out people who are more unruly than dangerous, experts say. Some of the patients ping-pong between nursing homes and mental hospitals repeatedly. Creative care at the nursing home could manage many of the problems just as well.

In the hospitals, diagnoses can be based on misinformation and innuendo. Helen Tooker, an 88-year-old St. Petersburg artist, was diagnosed as depressed in part because she wouldn't get out of

her wheelchair at Horizon Hospital. No one at the hospital asked why. It turned out that drugs made her so dizzy she couldn't walk.

• *Those who stand to make money call the shots.*

The court system is designed to protect the rights of people forced into mental hospitals, but judges and public defenders are swamped. They rely on the word of hospitals and doctors — who stand to earn money treating committed patients.

Family members can be shut out entirely. Renee Monsarrat, 90, of South Pasadena, was forced into Horizon Hospital on the word of a hospital marketer. Her son Peter, who lived in New York, would have taken his mother to live with him had anyone called. "The people down there knew she had a son," he said. "Why do this without even getting in

IT COULD HAPPEN TO ANYBODY

By Carol A. Marbin and Stephen Nohlgren

It was a routine report, like hundreds of state social workers receive every month: Helen Tooker was not eating. She wasn't caring for herself.

But Cecil Odom, who investigated the allegation last year, found Tooker to be anything but ordinary. Then 87, she had been an artist for half a century and raised five children alone during the Depression. For two hours, Odom was captivated by Tooker's stories of famous people she'd known and the many places her paintings hang.

As a young widow, Helen Tooker had supported five children by painting advertisements on the back of window shades and stage curtains. In her 70s, she was the official artist for the H.M.S. Bounty exhibit in St. Petersburg.

"She told me how proud she was of her art and her history. She went on and on about where her paintings are, how far they've been, who she's been in the company of," Odom said.

Sure, she could use a little help to stay at home, like many other elderly. So the social workers made plans to bring in household help.

Then the Baker Act intervened. Tooker's son, who lived on Florida's east coast, petitioned the court to commit her to Horizon Hospital for an evaluation. She was depressed and had "stated that she no longer wants to live," wrote the son, who declined to comment for this story.

His say-so was all it took for a judge to order her into the hospital for three days. There, misconception and innuendo kept her locked up. When powerful mind-altering drugs made

Tooker too dizzy to walk, she wouldn't get out of her wheelchair. The doctor called that a sign of depression.

When Tooker refused to cooperate, she was branded irritable, hostile, and suspicious, court records show. "She wants to know why I am asking these questions," psychiatrist Debra Barnett later testified.

When Tooker said she was an accomplished artist and had illustrious friends, she was disparaged as "grandiose" and her stories deemed "questionable."

Somebody mentioned that Tooker kept loaded guns. She testified that her son had dropped one off at least 20 years earlier and she didn't know if it was loaded.

After 15 days, Circuit Judge Thomas E. Penick Jr. held a hearing and freed Tooker, calling her commitment a travesty of justice.

"That was a landmark case that just mortified me," Penick said. "Helen Tooker could be Miss Anybody USA. That could happen to you, to my mother-in-law or anybody else."

"That was a nightmare," Tooker recalls. "It took me two weeks to get out of that god damn hole." Group therapy, which included music, bingo, and reminiscing, "bored me to tears," she said. "The average child would turn up its nose at it."

Today, Tooker lives at home with her French poodle, Sissy. Social workers send a cleaning person around three times a week. Her experience with Horizon was draining, she said, but "I made it to 88, and I'll make it a little longer. It's always been a fight for my life."

touch with me?"

• *Hospitals and doctors exploit loopholes in the law.*

When people need help, the law says they should go to the nearest state-approved psychiatric facility; but hospitals find ways to bring unwilling patients from afar.

Birdie Carson was sent 165 miles from a nursing home in Starke to the Manors, a Tarpon Springs psychiatric hospital, bypassing dozens of closer facilities. "I was strapped down on a stretcher, and it was an awful bumpy ride," she said. "When I arrived, I couldn't even stand up because of my arthritis."

Don't look for consequences. Commitment laws are vague and carry no penalties for those who abuse the law. The patient's mental condition is usually the judge's focus, not how the patient got to the hospital in the first place.

• *Hundreds of people volunteer for treatment, which cuts off court oversight.*

In fact, some people had no clue what they were doing, or they said they were pressured. When one St. Petersburg man was brought to a hospital for electroshock treatments, a doctor said he was a voluntary patient, but hospital notes describe him as uncooperative, angry, and depressed. He was shocked eight times.

• *Forcing the elderly into psychiatric treatment can be deadly.*

Take frail, old people away from familiar surroundings and feed them powerful drugs, and sometimes they die. When 79-year-old Richard Winter was taken 100 miles to the Manors, he became seriously ill within days. On his wife's first visit, his teeth and glasses were missing, and he was wearing someone else's clothes. He died two weeks later.

Other times, medical professionals are so focused on mental illness they overlook other medical problems. Ezra Davis, 78, was dying of stomach cancer and in severe pain. But at Horizon, he wasn't given painkillers for eight days. His psychiatrist didn't know he had terminal cancer, a hearing master suggested.

Growing business

The elderly get committed in large

The community can't just lock up everyone who acts strange.

numbers because they need psychiatric care, said officials at Horizon and the Manors, which force more patients into treatment than any other Pinellas hospitals. Both have large units devoted to the elderly and collected about two-thirds of their 1994 income from Medicare.

Patients come to the Manors because hospitals in other communities can't match its geriatric care, said administrator F. Dee Goldberg. "We're sitting in a very successful hospital in the state of Florida. And the reason it's successful, a hundred percent of the reason it's successful, is it does a good job. Now, do we make mistakes? Yes. Is there room for improvement? I hope so. Are we dedicated to doing better and continuing to improve? Absolutely."

Yet others don't agree.

"There is something very horrible going on in this part of the state that doesn't appear to be going on in other parts of Florida," said Donna Cohen, director of the University of South Florida's Institute on Aging, who reviewed the *Times* research. "When people have been committed two, three, four, up to eight times, at the age of 80 and 90, you have to begin to wonder about the abuse of humanity."

Changes in the Baker Act are long overdue, said Martha Lenderman, who oversees mental health programs for the state Department of Health and Rehabilitative Services. Hospitals use loopholes to treat people "who could and should be treated in place, whether in nursing homes, retirement homes, or their own homes," Lenderman said. "It has been very frustrating to see what we know is wrong but not have the legal foundation to do anything about it."

The Baker Act

Sometimes people need a psychiatric hospital whether they want one or not. People with chronic schizophrenia, for example, sometimes stop taking the drugs that manage their illness. A week in the hospital gets them back on medication and back in control.

On the other hand, mental illness is no crime. The community can't just lock up everyone who acts strange. In the early 1970s, Florida passed a commitment law designed to protect individual rights. It is called the Baker Act, after state Rep. Maxine Baker of Miami, who championed mental health reform.

Before the Baker Act, people could be committed into institutions for months, even if they weren't dangerous. Court oversight was limited. Now people can be locked up only if they are dangerous to themselves or others, or if self-neglect poses a real threat. To keep them longer than 72 hours, hospitals must petition the court. People get lawyers to defend them and formal hearings before a judge.

This legal framework works well for aggressive street people, suicidal teenagers, depressed adults, and others whose treatment can help them function in society. But many seniors are a different story. Their ills can't be cured. And an attentive \$80-a-day nursing home often can handle their problems better than a \$400-a-day hospital.

Nevertheless, economic incentives help drive the Baker Act toward the elderly market. For starters, Pinellas County has 372 beds in private psychiatric hospitals that can treat people committed under the Baker Act, far more beds than any other urban county in the state. Palm Beach County has only 55 such beds—even though Pinellas and Palm Beach have roughly equal populations and about the same number of elderly.

Now compare the number of times doctors and psychiatric facilities in the two counties committed people into treatment in 1994. Palm Beach doctors and hospitals forced 410 people into treatment, about one-third of them elderly. Pinellas doctors and hospitals committed 1,573 people, two-thirds of them elderly, court records indicate.

"With so much competition among free-standing psychiatric hospitals to fill beds, there would certainly be an incen-



HELEN TOOKER, AN 88-YEAR-OLD ST. PETERSBURG ARTIST, IS STILL RECOVERING FROM THE INCIDENT AS IF AWAKENING FROM A NIGHTMARE.

tive to seek out bigger and bigger market shares," said Lenderman.

Impartial hearing

Almost all commitments under the Baker Act start with a 72-hour examination. For hospitals to detain a person longer, the courts must approve. Based on evidence, a judge can commit people up to six months.

This is the keystone of the Baker Act—the right to an impartial hearing. But hospitals and doctors hold sway. Testifying for the hospital is a doctor presumed to be the expert. Both doctor and hospital may have a financial stake in detaining the patient.

Psychiatrist Ronald L. Knaus, for example, evaluated most involuntary patients and testified at most of the hearings at the Manors in 1993 and 1994. He also worked full-time at the Manors and was an investor in the hospital.

Knaus said his investment was small, and financial considerations never influenced his decisions on care. He said he would have made a lot more money working in private practice. "I think I'm a typical mental health person that has this

need within myself to rescue people or to help people."

Speaking for the patient in the hearing is a public defender, often fresh out of law school, with loads of cases and little time to prepare. The law allows for private attorneys, but few patients hire them.

Each patient also gets two representatives—family members, friends, or others—who can speak on their behalf. But some patients have no family close by; others have representatives who are eager to help but don't get the chance.

Bill Hamilton was designated to represent his 79-year-old tenant and friend, Mildred Sprauer, but hospital staff refused to let Hamilton or his wife Helen visit, saying it would upset Sprauer too much, Hamilton said. And their notice from the court arrived after the hearing. "We never got to speak out for Mildred at all," Helen Hamilton said.

Some elderly patients are in no condition to speak for themselves. Hearings take a week or so to set up. By then, heavy-duty drugs sometimes sap what-

ever capabilities the patient may have demonstrated.

Deborah Diesing remembers the day her 88-year-old great aunt, Gertrude Sedlak, was wheeled into a hearing at Horizon Hospital. When Diesing had visited the night before, her aunt was alert, well-groomed, and pleasant. But that night Sedlak's doctor changed her medication to combat agitation, records show. In the morning, orderlies wheeled a pathetic, zonked-out woman into the hearing room, Diesing said.

"They brought her down wearing clothes that were not her own. Her hair was totally messed up. . . . This woman who normally smiles all the time looked up and smiled and had no teeth. She looked like a refugee."

Lee Ghezzi, Horizon's nursing director, said the change in Sedlak's medication had nothing to do with her hearing. He said the previous medication was ineffective. At the hearing, a doctor testified that Sedlak was confused and disoriented. The hearing master let Horizon keep her 21 more days.



MARY WHELAN, 97, WAS FORCED INTO A MENTAL HOSPITAL BECAUSE THE NURSING HOME DIDN'T WANT TO HONOR A LIFETIME CARE AGREEMENT WHELAN HAD SIGNED YEARS AGO, SAYS DAUGHTER KAREN RICKEY.

Diesing felt doubly tricked. She had brought her aunt to Horizon because Sedlak was having trouble sleeping at a Seminole retirement home, she said. A Horizon marketer persuaded Diesing that a two-week hospital stay could stabilize her aunt and get her sleeping, Diesing said. She had no idea the hospital would turn around and petition the court to detain Sedlak against her will.

Sedlak now lives in a different nursing home and is sleeping better. Why? Not because of mind-altering drugs or institutionalization, says her niece. Her caretakers simply keep her a lot more active during the day.

Other options

As interpreted in Pinellas County, the Baker Act usually rests on two expensive assumptions. When old people get confused and agitated, they must be medicated. And the safest place to do that is the hospital. That's the mantra that doc-

tors and hospitals offer the courts, time and again.

Many geriatric experts disagree with both assumptions. Nursing homes with properly trained staffs often can manage problems for less money and with much less trauma. "The medications are available, the adjustments aren't complex," said Dr. Bruce Robinson, chief of geriatric medicine at the University of South Florida. "Much movement to the hospital doesn't have a lot of social benefit."

Officials at some nursing homes agree. In 1993 and 1994, several nursing homes went a year or more without sending a resident off for psychiatric treatment, court records show, while other homes sent more than a dozen.

Creative caregiving often can manage an agitated resident, said John Carnes, a Bayfront Medical Center psychologist who consults at St. Petersburg's Menorah Manor. One confused woman, for ex-

ample, thought she was the office manager and bossed the other residents around. Tensions ran high until the staff set up a desk in an unused alcove. "We put a telephone and typewriter in and said, 'This is your office,'" said Carnes. That calmed the woman and kept her busy.

Carol Woodworth saw both approaches to caregiving.

Over 11 months, her 82-year-old mother, Edith Nehring, was forced into a mental hospital four times and lived in five nursing homes, her health steadily deteriorating.

She landed in Tyrone Medical Inn, a home that hasn't committed anyone for at least two years, officials there said.

"She loved it," Woodworth said. "She was so close to the staff, knew everybody. The cook knew my mom wanted extra gravy on her food. It was like a family."

Excerpted by Marc Miller

1st Prize
Feature
Reporting on
Women
Division Two

Nickels and Dimes

By Mark Barrett

Asheville Citizen-Times

Barbara Blake also worked on the series and was a co-winner of the award.

This five-part series appeared at a time when many people newly elected or re-elected to office in North Carolina and elsewhere were talking about taking steps to get people off welfare. With his stories of the fractured child support collection system in Buncombe County, North Carolina, Mark Barrett helped direct some of the lawmakers' energy in a different direction. The articles showed that, in many cases, child support could go to people who are now receiving government assistance to get by.

Coincidentally or not, a few days after legislators received reprints of the series and an accompanying editorial, state lawmakers pushed through legislation that had been languishing in the North Carolina General Assembly. The new laws provide much-needed assistance in the state's child support collection efforts.

ASHEVILLE, N.C. — According to her mother, 11-year-old Allison Elizabeth Hines got her name from her father.

And that's about it.

Since Elizabeth was born in April 1984, taxpayers have spent little more than \$10,000 to help her mother, Almeanor "Mimi" Hines, feed and clothe her.

The man Mimi Hines says is Elizabeth's father, Tommie Lee Allison Jr., apparently hasn't paid a dime.

North Carolina's child support enforcement system has tried twice to make Allison contribute to the cost of raising Elizabeth and failed both times.

Unfortunately for millions of children and millions of taxpayers across the country, that's nothing unusual.

When the U.S. Census Bureau studied the 10 million women who lived with a child under 21 but not with the child's father in 1989, it found that only 2.5 million were receiving child support from the child's father and receiving everything they were due.

The child support crisis

Another 1.2 million got part of what they were due, and the remaining 6.3 million got the same thing that Mimi Hines has gotten to raise Elizabeth.

Nothing.

Talk all you want about welfare and the American family — and the folks in Washington and Raleigh have been talking plenty lately — but at least in terms of the raw numbers of people affected, welfare is small potatoes when compared to child support.

"The failure of absent parents, mainly fathers, to pay child support is a national scandal, one thing that has huge consequences for taxpayers, governments, mothers, and most important, children," U.S. Senator Joseph Lieberman (D-Conn) wrote recently.

As divorce and single parenthood has

OTHER WINNERS DIVISION TWO (daily papers with Sunday circulation between 30,000 and 100,000): **Second Prize** to Mandy Ochoa Williams of the *Ledger-Enquirer* of Columbus, Georgia, for looking at teen pregnancy in an area slow to respond to the problem. **Third Prize** to Jane McBride of the *Beaumont Enterprise* for her reporting on heart disease, a serious health threat to women often neglected by a system that emphasizes gynecology. **Honorable Mention** to Alan Richard of the *Spartanburg Herald-Journal* for profiling the inspiring career of Mary Ellis, who became the first state senator in South Carolina in 1928.

“ I was Miss Nicey for 19 years . . . I didn't care what they thought about me . . . I was the squeaky wheel.”

risen over the past 20 years, child support enforcement programs have the potential to directly affect almost 18 percent of the population as either an absent parent, custodial parent, or child — nearly 40 million people in 1990.

And that figure is rising quickly. Experts on the family now estimate that half of all children born in 1994 and beyond will live in a single parent home — or some other arrangement — at some point by the time they turn 18.

The nationwide child-support enforcement system now seeks to collect on behalf of parents on welfare or any parent who pays a small fee. But when Congress authorized the creation of the system in 1975, the sole idea was to make absent parents pay the costs of raising their children so taxpayers wouldn't have to pay through welfare.

An 11.9 percent rate of success probably wasn't what lawmakers had in mind.

Of the \$20.2 billion in Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) the nation spent on families eligible for child support in the federal fiscal year ending in September 1993, the child support enforcement system was only able to recover \$2.4 billion from the children's absent parents.

A buck a day

Mimi Hines isn't looking for billions — tens and twenties would help a lot, thank you.

But first, someone has to find her children's fathers.

Hines has raised three children at her modest home in West Asheville. Of their three different fathers, only one has made any child support payments, Hines says.

Uncle Sam has been a lot more helpful. Hines said she went on welfare shortly after having her oldest son, Dran, now 18. She received AFDC payments until she started making enough money as a

housekeeper to get off the program last May, she says.

Taking public money isn't something she is proud of, she says, but it seemed like the best way to raise her children.

“It was embarrassing to me to tell (the kids), ‘We're on welfare, and we can't do no better,’” she said. “I blame myself. I should have handled myself a bit different.”

But, Hines said, welfare allowed her to stay at home to take care of her kids.

“I wanted to be here for them,” she said. That decision has paid off, she says. Unlike some of their peers, Hines' children have stayed in school and stayed out of trouble, she said.

Just the same, life would have been a lot easier had she gotten more money from her children's fathers, she said.

Dran's father, James Burgin, 51, of Asheville, is apparently the only one of the three who has remained in the area. He is also the only one who has made child support payments.

And those payments, court records show, have come only sporadically, after Burgin was repeatedly hauled into court under threat of jail.

Dran was 7, according to records, before his father made more than \$500 in payments in any one year.

Child support workers “said they didn't know his whereabouts, and he was right up the street,” Hines said. “We would see him just about every day.”

From 1987 through 1992, Burgin made a total of \$2,282 in child support payments. That's \$380 a year, or \$31.70 a month. Much of the money represented tax refunds or unemployment payments that the government intercepted before they reached Burgin.

And Burgin, who has been making regular payments for the last year-and-a-half, is the success story.

There is no record that Hines ever received anything from the father of her second child, Margaret, 16.

That leaves Tommie Allison.

Nobody home

People like Allison don't even show up in many of the statistics. No judge has ever established that they are the fathers or how much they should be paying. Child support offices can't enforce debts that haven't been legally established.

Allison Elizabeth Hines was born April 4, 1984. That December, the Buncombe child support office filed suit against Tommie Allison on Hines' behalf through the courts in Summit County, Ohio.

Authorities in Ohio served Allison with a copy of the lawsuit demanding support, but when he got to court, he denied that he was the father.

Hines says that in her case, a blood test was never performed.

“They told me that because he was out of state, they couldn't do that,” she said.

Ken Camby, who is now head of the Buncombe child support office, said it appears from his office's files that child support workers should have filed a legal action to establish that Allison was the father before they filed a lawsuit seeking support.

The case closed for a time, but the office filed suit again against Tommie Allison in February 1993, again alleging that he is Elizabeth's father.

A sheriff's deputy in Ohio returned that lawsuit undelivered. Allison had moved, court records say.

The *Citizen-Times* obtained in March a current street address for a Tommie Lee Allison in Cincinnati from records maintained by the Department of Motor Vehicles.

Camby said his office's records indicate several unsuccessful attempts have been made to find Allison since 1993. “We do try, believe it or not.”

Hines has a hard time believing that the authorities can't locate Allison and force him to pay.

“You're trying to tell me that someone who lives in the United States, with all the computer records . . . you can't find him?” she said.

The system

Penny Porter relied for years on the efforts of the Buncombe County Child Sup-

port Office to track down her ex-husband and make him pay support.

But workers told her time and again that they couldn't find Britt Shenkman after he skipped town in 1982, already owing more than \$26,000 in past due support and alimony.

So when Porter joined a group for custodial parents called the Association for Children for Enforcement of Support (ACES) 10 years later, she only included an extra \$5 for its "parent locator" service as an afterthought.

In eight days, an envelope containing five recent addresses for Shenkman was in the mailbox at Porter's Arden home.

In about three months, \$71,700 in past due child support and alimony payments was sitting in Porter's bank account. Her son was 21 years old.

Most custodial parents don't collect large payments all at once as Porter did.

But in one important aspect, her story is all too typical of those millions of parents seeking help raising their children — the system failed her.

Things fall apart

The nation's child support enforcement system is burdened with rapidly growing numbers of cases; technology, laws and a work force that have not kept up; and a job that probably wouldn't be easy no matter how well prepared the system was to do it: making people who are often hundreds of miles away pay money to a former lover or spouse.

The federal government requires states to operate offices to help custodial parents locate absent parents, get court orders requiring parents to pay, and keep the payments coming. Parents who receive AFDC are required to use the offices' services, and the offices will help other parents needing support who pay a small fee.

While the child support enforcement system nationally added about 9,700 workers from 1989 to 1993 — a 27.6 percent increase — the number of cases in the system grew by 5.2 million, a 44 percent increase.

That works out to 382 cases per person employed by the system nationwide. But because many of those employees are either supervisors or clerical workers, it is



Photo by Jonathan Ernst, Citizen-Times

ALLISON HINES, 11, HELPS OUT HER MOTHER ALMEANOR BY WASHING THE FAMILY CAR. HER FAMILY HAS STRUGGLED WITH MANY OF THE CHILD SUPPORT PROBLEMS THAT TOUCH THE LIVES OF MILLIONS OF AMERICANS.

not unusual for an individual case worker to be responsible for 600 to 1,000 cases or more.

North Carolina has traditionally been somewhat better staffed than the nation as a whole, with 373 cases per employee (including supervisors and secretaries). Even so, figures from early 1994 showed that the typical child support case worker had 685 cases to contend with. With that caseload, a worker would have to work for more than four months before he had spent one hour for every case he is responsible for.

Anger over child support enforcement has turned the words "deadbeat dad" into a national catch-phrase. But that anger has not always been turned quickly into action.

"The legal system is a very slowly changing institution," said Buncombe County District Court Judge Gary Cash. "We proceed in certain respects as we have for years and years."

All by myself

Penny Porter says she went on welfare for two weeks in the mid-1970s, shortly after Congress authorized the child support program, for the sole purpose of enlisting the help of the Buncombe County office.

During all this time, Porter said she

asked nicely for help and was told everyone was doing the best they could.

The letter [from ACES] changed all that. ACES had tapped into the records of a credit bureau to get Shenkman's address.

"I was Miss Nicey for 19 years. Then when I found out that (the Buncombe office) was sitting down there doing nothing... I didn't care what they thought about me... I was the squeaky wheel," Porter said.

Camby said his office's files show "extensive" efforts were made to find [her ex-husband]. They just weren't successful.

Porter doesn't believe it. Buncombe workers "can't be doing their job," she said.

She's glad to have the windfall, but figures in many ways it came too late. The home where she raised her son and two older daughters by a previous marriage was paid for largely through her parents' generosity.

Without them, taxpayers "could have been supporting my kids. They wouldn't have had a dime," she said.

S

Excerpted by Priya Giri.

**1st Prize
Feature
Reporting on
Women
Division Three**

Battered



Jonathan Tedder, *The Item*

In a week-long series, Erika Johnson Spinelli and Ellen Liburt took a detailed, thoughtful look at domestic violence — and what it takes to break the cycle of abuse. The series shows how abuse starts and the many factors involved in why it continues. It also describes support services that help women and children and explains why it's important for victims to seek help.

In this story, an abuse counselor for men speaks frankly about growing up watching his father beat his mother. Although he vowed not to repeat those brutal mistakes, he failed. He learned how to control the physical abuse and some of the emotional battering, but as the end of the article demonstrates, abusive behavior is entrenched and even unconscious.

Traci Quinn Duffy, Assistant Managing Editor/Features, coordinated the project.

By Erika Johnson Spinelli
The Item,
Sumter, South Carolina
Ellen Liburt also worked on the series
and was a co-winner of the award.

SUMTER, S.C. — Wallace Smith left home when he was 14 because he couldn't stand to watch his father beat his mother any longer. Before leaving, he had offered to buy her a gun so she could kill him. "I swore I'd never do what my father did," Smith said.

It was a vow he didn't keep. Four years later, Smith was married and "slapped

The cycle of family violence

[his wife] around" weekly. The nine-year marriage dissolved after he threatened to kill her.

He married again and verbally abused his second wife, much as his father had abused him. "You're stupid," "You're just

OTHER WINNERS DIVISION THREE (*daily papers with Sunday circulation under 30,000*): **Second Prize** to Clejetter Pickett of *The Daily Reflector* in Greenville, North Carolina, for a stirring profile of Laura Marie Leary, the first black graduate of East Carolina University. **Third Prize** to Kathleen Davis of the *News-Tribune* in Rome, Georgia, for preserving the memories and experiences of local women — and through them the memories of an entire community.

“In the military, if I told someone to do something, they did it. But it doesn't work that way in the home.”

like your momma,” his father had taunted Smith and his seven brothers and sisters.

Smith has escaped that cycle of abuse, but he still struggles every day to control his anger. “I have always been kind of a mean person,” he said.

Smith has been married to his second wife for 27 years. He has never hit her and says he has not verbally abused her since he entered counseling 13 years ago, when he went to the Men's Resource Center in Columbia, South Carolina.

He blames his abusive past in part on his father, but through counseling he has learned to accept responsibility for his own actions. Now a peer counselor at the center, Smith encourages other abusers to do the same. “I tell [abusers] they can't be responsible for what their wives do,” he said. “I've got to reprogram their minds.”

In the five years he's been a counselor, Smith has seen more than 400 men pass through the center's doors: military men, police officers, blue- and white-collar workers, and even a minister. Some men think it's OK to hit their spouses, that it's even funny, Smith said. One man laughed at a photograph of a woman's beaten face.

Abusers like Smith, who witnessed abuse as a child, are conditioned to believe that such behavior is acceptable. That's where the cycle begins.

Smith entered the cycle when he was 6 years old, when he realized his father abused his mother. “When she woke up to fix breakfast, she had swollen eyes and lips, and she couldn't move her arm,” he said.

Although he hated his father's behavior, Smith re-enacted it four years after he left home. He would get angry at little things — if his wife, for example, didn't cook *exactly* what he wanted for dinner. “I'd come home to her half-drunk,” he said of his first wife. “So then I'd have a couple of beers and slap her around.”

Abusers often have to control every aspect of their spouses' lives. For Smith, the 22 years he spent in the Air Force reinforced that mentality. “The control thing is hard to let go,” he said. “In the military, if I told someone to do something, they did it. But it doesn't work that way in the home.”

Smith's first wife took the weekly beatings, although she tried several times to stop him. She reported his abuse to his Air Force commander, who threatened to throw Smith in jail if he beat her again. Smith didn't believe him, and his wife's visit to the base angered him. He went home and beat her up. The next day, he was behind bars.

His abuse landed him in jail two more times. Each time, he only grew angrier. After nine years, Smith called the marriage quits. He was stationed overseas when his commander decided his wife would be safer at home. Smith was taken to the airport in handcuffs to see her off. He threatened to kill her if she didn't divorce him.

After that, Smith swore he would never marry again. He didn't think he was cut out for it.

Three months later, he married a second time.

A friend had a New Year's Eve party and wanted Smith to meet a woman. Apparently, Smith wasn't very nice to her, and his friend demanded that he call her and apologize. She suggested they might see a movie if he ever got sober. He did. They did. And he married her because she didn't drink or smoke, he said.

The cycle started again. Smith verbally abused his second wife, calling her names and demeaning her. “But I never hit her. I was scared if I hit her, I'd hurt her really bad,” he said.

Her family's daily involvement in their life finally pushed Smith to the edge. He threatened to kill her if her family didn't leave them alone. They filed for divorce

and were separated for more than six months.

“She said she didn't want a divorce, but she didn't want me to call her names anymore,” he said. “I told her to keep her family out of our life.”

They've now been married for almost three decades. Smith has struggled to end the cycle of abuse in his life and prevent it in his children's.

He doesn't know if he's been successful. Smith's oldest daughter is in a bad relationship, he said. “She takes a lot of garbage. I tell her she's stupid.”

SE
Excerpted by Marc Miller.

The Institute for Southern Studies and *Southern Exposure* announce

The 10th Annual **SOUTHERN JOURNALISM AWARDS**

Entering its 10th year, the Southern Journalism Awards represent the best of the daily press in the South.

As you can see from the winning excerpts featured in this issue, the kinds of reporters and stories honored are those which dig deeply and creatively into tough, often unprobed subject areas while contributing to progressive change.

Submissions for the 1996 awards are invited in three categories:

- ✓ INVESTIGATIVE REPORTING
- ✓ MONEY AND POLITICS
- ✓ WORKING PEOPLE IN THE REGION

Cash prizes of \$3,000 and certificates will be presented in the spring of 1997, and excerpts from winning articles will appear in that summer's edition of *Southern Exposure*.

Entries will be mailed to dailies in November and are due Dec. 4, 1996. To receive your entry form, contact: Southern Journalism Awards, P.O. Box 531, Durham, NC 27702.

They Would Be SINGING

"If my brain were transfer to someone else they would be singing WE GONNA ROLL THE UNION ON." — John Handcox

By Joan Papert Preiss

A recent interview with labor historian and author Michael Honey on public radio brought back memories of John Handcox. The program began and ended with a recording of Handcox singing "Join the Union Tonight," which he'd written. I met him just once, 10 years earlier, and remembered him well.

look. It had to be — and it was — John Handcox! Just recently I had read about him and seen his picture in *Southern Exposure* (January/February 1986).

John Handcox was a famous union activist and songwriter. He had been a member and organizer of the Southern Tenant Farmers' Union in the 1930s. He wrote "Roll the Union On," "Raggedy, Raggedy Are We," "There are Mean

a history I had just begun to learn.

When I returned to Durham, I called Bob Hall at *Southern Exposure* about sending John Handcox copies of the magazine with the article in it. Soon after, in September of 1986, I received a letter from Handcox. Of the article he wrote, "It were one of the best articles . . . it inspire me to keep on keep on." In another letter he told me about leading the singing for the May Day Parade in 1937. "I were on the program night and day the hold time I were there." Enclosed with one letter was the statement that follows and a copy of a song he'd written, "What a Happy World This Would Be."

A long-time peace and justice activist, Joan Papert Preiss is chairperson of the Triangle Friends of the United Farm Workers and a member of Farmworkers Ministry Committee of the NC Council of Churches.

John Handcox "Hard to Say Goodbye"

By Michael Honey

John L. Handcox was born near Brinkley, Arkansas, just after the turn of the century. Like his parents, he became a tenant farmer. In 1935 he became an organizer for the newly formed Southern Tenant Farmers' Union and helped to organize sharecroppers into locals. Not being much of a speech maker, he revived a knack he had enjoyed during his school years — he wrote poems and songs to carry the organizing message.

By 1936, the union had 31,000 members, black and white, in six states.

Handcox was run out of Arkansas just ahead of a lynching rope. He continued



Courtesy of Michael Honey.

JOHN HANDCOX AND MICHAEL HONEY SING AT THE LABOR ARTS EXCHANGE.

Hearing his voice took me back to 1986 and the Labor Song Exchange in Silver Spring, Maryland. I noticed a tall, slender, distinguished elderly black man with white hair and beard and thought he looked familiar. He was talking to someone, so I circled them to get a better

Things Happening in this Land," and others songs that had become popular in the labor movement.

I introduced myself, and I told him I enjoyed the magazine article, which he had not yet seen. The next day, he sang for us. To me it was history come alive —

to work for the union, to write union songs, and to lead the singing of his songs in meetings in Memphis, Charleston, Missouri, St. Louis, and other towns to which he traveled.

Eventually he settled in San Diego, where he worked as a carpenter and joined the United Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners of America.

Handcox wrote songs and poems "to make this place a better world." He would say, "If I don't make a dime, if I can help to make this a better world, I think I have accomplished something." His songs took on a life of their own. They were sung around the world wherever union organizing was happening. Some were recorded for the Library of Congress by Charles Seeger, father of folk singer Pete Seeger and a WPA worker. In the 1980s, Handcox started coming to the Labor Heritage Foundation's Arts Exchanges in Silver Spring and appearing at folk festivals. He was particularly happy that labor activists were still using his songs.

In the 1980s, Handcox and I collaborated on a few songs. He'd send me semi-finished poems, and I'd add music and arrangement creating songs such as "Jobless in the U.S.A." and "Hard to Say Goodbye." He continued to write songs and poems, as he said, "pointing out to people when they're working hard, and ain't getting anything out of it," until his death in 1992 at age 88.

Michael K. Honey is assistant professor of labor and ethnic studies at the University of Washington, Tacoma, and author of two books, Black Workers Remembered and Southern Labor and Black Civil Rights and is currently writing a book on John Handcox.

"John Handcox — Songwriter" by Marjorie Miller, with an introduction by Pete Seeger and the words and music to Handcox's three best known songs, appeared in the January/February 1986 issue of Southern Exposure. To receive a copy of that issue, send \$5 (which includes shipping and handling) or credit card information (VISA or MasterCard) to the Institute for Southern Studies, P.O. Box 531, Durham, NC 27702. You can also fax credit card information to 919-419-8315 or email it to SoExpo5338@aol.com.

"I Did it on my Own Inspire."

Why I donated my body.

By *John Handcox*

I donated my body to the school of medicine University of Calif. at San Diego. There are probably many peoples who want to know why. I donated my life to the workers of America, there are many who want to know why; I've try to answer that question on many occasion, I knew that I was risking my life when I begin to try to organize the poor worker against the plantation owners, they wanted their worker to be submissive and ignorant. It is the workers that have produce the wealth of the world, no one ever came to me an ask me to join the union or try to organize the union; I did it on my own inspire by all of the injustices that I had see and determine to change thing that I felt were wrong, with this thought in mind I put together a list of names of peoples I felt would help; we got together and setup the first union. H.L. Mitchell still carried this list of peoples who were instrumental in helping to organize the first union for the workers of America.

He urged me to continue on so I start to write songs and poems that he would have printed in the union paper. I have been told that my songs and poems are being song all over the world wherever

there is a union. I do not know how my songs and poems are rated but I believed that if they were at the foot of the class they could'n be turn down. I did not write them for money or praises but I did write them hoping to inspire other to unite together to make this a better world for the workers to live in.

You may want to know why I donated my body to the University of Medicine, if my body can be used to make this a healthier world to live in I'm happy to know that, let it be said that I not only donated my life to helping other but my death too. I know that if my brain were transfer to someone else they would be singing WE GONNA ROLL THE UNION ON and THERE ARE MEAN THINGS HAPPENING IN THIS LAND. If my heart could be transfer to someone else it would be full of love for the workers of the world; but what ever my body is used for I believe it will be more valuable than digging a hole an throwing dirt in my face.

So let it be said that I, John L. Handcox, not only live for others but I died for others too.

— *John L. Handcox*

What A Happy World This Would Be

Song by *John Handcox*

*If we all loved each other,
What a happy world this would be.*

*If we all treated others as we wished
to be treated,
What a happy world this would be.*

*If we all would sing together,
What a beautiful song that would be.*

*If we all would unite together,
What a strong union that would be.*

*If we all rejoiced together,
What a happy world this would be.*

*If we all would walk together,
What a great walk that would be.*

M nkey

in Twenty-Five Words or Less

By Helen Ellis

At her wedding, my sister wants her bridesmaids to recite, in twenty-five words or less, what marriage means to us. Don't laugh. She wants me to speak last out of six women bound in pink rayon and control-top pantyhose. Two are receptionists. Three are from college. I am her older sister who lives in New York City and is only seen in black and blue jeans. OK, laugh.

My sister thinks that I will use all twenty-five of my words. She thinks that I will make marriage seem like the best choice because I am a writer and, if I want, can make juggling live monkeys sound tempting.

Her fiancé is a monkey.

He grins all the time. He tucks his lips under and opens wide as if to brag *See how many? See?*

With his picker and his dirty bird, he holds his beer bottle by the neck and downs it. When he thinks no one is looking, he pinches and tugs at the shirt seams that hammock his armpits. Silly monkey.

When I can, I cage him with glares and stares and sideways glances.

To my sister, marriage means allowing bananas in her bed.

At the bridal shower, my sister's best girlfriend puts her toddler in a playpen in the living room. The baby girl lies on her back and turns her head to stare at us through the

tight string. Her puffy tummy goes up and down, fast like the nylon roof of an air castle. She pulls her ears as we squeal. She watches us bounce on the sofa and chairs. She watches us topple toward my sister to see what waits inside the next box wrapped in silver paper. The paper shines. Coffee table lights make the presents look wet. Baby wants to touch.

My sister rips the paper off and throws it up in the air, down to the carpet.

My sister's best friend squats and gathers, squats and crumples. She drags a Hefty bag like a sunburned turtle who is tired and cannot squeeze into her house. She crosses her legs and stays on the floor. She claps the loudest.

She looks up at my sister who hooks each present with her pinkies. Show and Tell: red lace body suits; black garters; silk, washed and sand washed and slippery; panties that bare the bottom; bras that boost and cradle.

Twelve women sit and imagine the honeymoon. Fresh love and rum and hardly a stitch required. We remember when our men belonged to us.

My sister passes each gift to her best friend. Her best friend folds each carefully. She matches the cards to make Thank You notes easy. She hopes we do not notice that her girl is unhappy. Baby is pouting in her pen.

To my sister's best friend, marriage is arranging everything just so.

A London Underground wall read: A woman needs a husband like a fish needs a bicycle.

My sister met her husband on a flight from Birmingham to Atlanta. She likes to say that she met the man of her dreams on a twenty-three minute trip to heaven. Don't roll your eyes. It was cute the first time I heard it. My sister, the flight attendant, committed his complimentary beverage to memory. Budweiser, no cup.

"Alcohol really isn't complimentary," my sister whispers, "but that night, something told me I should buy that man a beer!"

She loves that story. She tells it like it has an expiration date.

My mother can't hear it enough.

"Half an hour in the air and she finds a good man. A lawyer, even!"

OK, roll 'em.

My sister has chosen to wear my mother's wedding dress. She had the seamstress cut the sleeves off, raise the hem, and make a train with the leftovers. Mama didn't need no train.

My sister wants to show some skin. My sister has skinny upper arms and calves as wide as her thighs.

I am older and much softer.

My theory is this: Keep your weight lower than your IQ. If I want, I can weigh twice as much as her.

My best friend Wyatt says, "You don't want a little girl's body. You're twenty-five years old. You have a woman's body. Believe me. Most men will pick a pair of B cups over a flat stomach any day."

To Wyatt, marriage is assuring you that a John Grisham book is good reason to skip the gym.

I hug Wyatt longer than I should and invite him to the wedding.

My sister says she is glad I found a date so close to the wedding. She says she is going to seat us at her high school boyfriend's table at the rehearsal dinner.

"Wyatt's so funny," my sister says. "He'll be good for Buddy. Lift his spirits. You know. He refused to bring a date."

I tell her that the table will be fine. Sitting with Buddy will be just fine.

My sister smiles and squeezes my hand. She bets that everyone will be so excited about meeting a man from New York City.

"MeeMaw will probably call him a Yankee," she says.

"MeeMaw calls Spiderman a Yankee."

My sister asks me what Wyatt does for a living. When I tell her he writes, she asks me if I think it's wise to get involved with another writer.

"How will you support your children?"

"We don't have any children."

She bends her lips and swats an invisible fly. "You know what I mean!"

I assure her that Wyatt and I are not involved.

In Australia, I took a year and walked from the east coast to the west, then north to south. I spent every step with a man eight years my senior. Every night, he checked our sleeping bag for snakes. He taught me how to build a fire and how to use a rifle. He said my body was beautiful. He taught me that there were fifty-two ways of saying the word yes.

When I left, I learned that lovers could never be friends. I can only assume the opposite is true.

My sister tells me I can borrow her car to pick Wyatt up at the airport. She tells me to go early. She tells me I did not get a chance to look around when I landed.

"It's been renovated. There's a McDonald's and a bookstore."

She tells me to have a shake and see if my novel is sold at the new and improved Birmingham airport.

On the way to baggage claim, Wyatt walks down the escalator and points, "Ooooh! Mickey D's!"

Going up, a mother smacks her 6-year-old for laughing.

My sister's best friend stands behind a desk and says, "Welcome to the Winfrey Hotel. How may I help you?" She chuckles as if she and Wyatt and I are in a play.

I introduce them, and when Wyatt turns to follow the bellboy, she mouths the word WOW to me. She waves to me even though I am less than two feet away. I smile and follow Wyatt.

In the room, Wyatt's phone rings. It is my sister's best friend. She tells Wyatt that everyone is so excited to have a man from New York City visiting. She reminds him that he is in Alabama now. He should not be afraid to take advantage of her Southern hospitality.

I sit on the edge of Wyatt's bed and watch him humor my sister's best friend. He runs his fingers through what is left of his hair. He makes a face at me and pretends that he is going to pull it out. I laugh like firecrackers, and Wyatt tells my

**My theory is this:
Keep your weight lower
than your IQ. If I want, I
can weigh twice as
much as her.**

sister's best friend that I am watching The Comedy Channel. I think, two years is a long time to be friends with a man.

My sister's fiancé says my sister is the best friend he has ever had. He says my sister is the best he's ever known and so he has to marry her. He says no one has ever understood him so well. He says my sister is the most patient and forgiving woman on this earth. He says he can't believe that she puts up with him. He loves her, he says, and he's not afraid to say it in front of a church load of people.

At the wedding rehearsal, he says if no one believes him, we can check the price tag on the open bar tomorrow night.

To my future brother-in-law, marriage means drinks on him.

A bartender in SoHo told me never to take a man with more than two beers in him seriously. Especially when he proposes. He's looking at you, but remembering that girl he kissed on the beach. Tan and willing. That's all he wants after he tells you he loves you. If he tears up, hail a cab.

My sister quit her job one month before the wedding. I don't think she'll ever work again. She spent six months in a real job and now she will never have to worry about the rent or grocery money or only shop when clothes are more than 30 percent off. My sister is going to devote her life to being a good wife and mother.

No, she is not pregnant. She is just in love with a monkey.

My sister's best friend's husband is out of town on business. She is sad to say that her one and only will miss my sister's wedding. She left the baby at home with a temperature because she would never dream of missing my sister's special time.

I do not like my sister's best friend. I have not liked her since she telephoned Wyatt in his hotel room.

I am sure it was she who switched the name cards at the rehearsal dinner. Buddy ended up next to the groom, poor soul. During the salad, the groom punched Buddy's shoulder and boomed, "Thanks for breakin' her in for me, kid!"

Buddy fingered his Ranch.

My sister's best friend sat at our table and asked Wyatt if he wanted her cherry tomato.

Wyatt turned to me and boomed, "This fair lady's tomatoes are up for grabs. Shall I fork one for ya?"

Everyone laughed and my sister's best friend turned close to purple. She excused herself to powder her nose and call her sitter.

When I am around, Wyatt always knows the right thing to say.

My sister asks me later that night if Wyatt is going to embarrass her like he embarrassed her best friend.

"Coming down the aisle," I say, "watch your feet."

To Wyatt, marriage means taking a joke and keeping your fruit on your plate.

At the end of the aisle, my sister's fiancé's eyes are red and he has trouble standing still. He sits down twice before the wedding march.

"He's overcome," my mother whispers to Wyatt.

"Yes," says Wyatt.

Before we walk down the aisle, my sister asks me what I am going to say in my twenty-five words or less.

"I haven't decided," I say.

"What?" she says. "Everyone's ready but you!"

"Everyone's married but me."

Before the "I Dos," the preacher announces that the bridesmaids will say something about marriage. The crowd goes quiet as if we are all going to vote yea and make sense of it all. My sister's best friend says that marriage is two people becoming one. The other maids say marriage is compromise, commitment, an endless journey, the ultimate love affair, forever and ever amen. Randy Travis sung it best, says one. When all eyes turn to me, I say, "Well, the experts have spoken, but I think marriage is taking advice from no one."

Only Wyatt smiles.

The preacher tells my sister to love, honor, respect, and she says she will. My sister's husband kisses her. Right answer, I guess.

On the plane, Wyatt says that marriage is giving up the window seat.

I think about shrinking pools. I imagine seeing stars. I kiss him longer than I should, and I unbuckle my seat belt. I stand and Wyatt puts his hands on my hips. As we switch places, the flight attendant frowns. Tonight, we are roaring up toward heaven or New York City.

SE

Helen Ellis is an Alabama native enrolled in the graduate fiction writing program at New York University. "Monkey in Twenty-Five Words or Less" was an H.E. Francis Literary Competition finalist.

To my future brother-in-law, marriage means drinks on him.

If It Don't Fit, Don't Force It!

A meeting in Chicago might have warmed the chilly wind blowing on the arts.

Did you ever have the feeling that you're trying to get the right key in the wrong keyhole?

It was cold in Chicago. The Hawk was coming in off Lake Michigan like someone had kidnapped his three youngest children, and he was going to turn over every brick and shingle till he found them. The temperature was only about 38 degrees but the wind chill took it way down below freezing.

It had been years since I'd had to deal with "The Hawk" in "The Windy City." Now here I was fighting the Hawk again for every inch I gained on Michigan Avenue. We were already three days into spring, and still another snowstorm was heading in. A few scattered flakes had already begun to curl around corners and people's heads as we fought to reach the places that we had to go.

So what's the big deal, right? Chicago's often cold and always windy.

For me, on that day, it had to do with memories. Memories that cut as sharply as the wind did. Memories like the wind that seemed to cut past the bone into the marrow. I had lots of memories about this toddling town. The deepest cut came from the recollection of my old buddy, Po Tatum. I hadn't been back to Chicago since 1968 when Po had disappeared after a showdown with the cops over some abandoned buildings he'd squatted in and was trying to renovate with a group of homeless ex-cons he had to organize.

I tried to find some of Po's old running buddies on the South Side but didn't

By Junebug Jabbo Jones

have much luck. Johnny Tadlow was long gone — everybody thought he'd been wiped out by the Mafia as a warning to Po to get out of the food business. (Po and his crew were doing well raising and selling fresh homegrown vegetables in the neighborhood). Ms. Consuela LeBeaux (the nurse that Po used to live with) had moved back to Haiti right after Po'd disappeared and we'd had the memorial service for him. There was no way to track down Hound Dog and Dead Eye. I didn't even know what their real names were. But I did hear about a popular blues club in the Old Town section called Flukie's Place that they said was run by

How come the discussion leading up to the so-called 'consensus' was limited to middle- and upper-income white people, mostly men?

a fancy-dressing woman who always wore blue dresses. There's a good chance that she's the same woman that brought Po to his mama's funeral back in '51, but I couldn't get to the club to check it out.

I had come back to Chicago to do some workshops with a Chicano community organization that's working out a way to use the sharing of stories to

build a coalition with some African-American groups there. I'll tell you more about that story some other time, but this particular morning I was going to meet a good friend of mine who was in town for a meeting of the Theater Communications Group (TCG), the national organization for what they call "regional theaters." Since this would be the only chance I'd have to visit with her, and since I always enjoy spending time with creative people, I thought that this would be a good fit. Besides, I was getting really frustrated trying to find Po's gang.

•••

When we finally got to the Goodman Theater where the meeting was, they had lots of fairly good coffee and sweets set out for those who had missed breakfast. Judging by how fast those things went, it must have been a good bunch of us. This I took as a good sign of things to come. Good coffee, good food, and good people often go together.

The main subject of conversation was how the regional theater movement should deal with the loss of income since the federal government's trying to back out of the art business (like it's backing out of a lot of things that don't show up as short-term profits for big companies that pay for most of the talking done in Washington, in and out of those famous smoke-filled rooms). The government is sort of like Bill Cosby's pal, "Fat Albert." When Fat Albert jumps in the pool, it changes the game for everyone.

Once again I thought, "This is a good sign. They have the same problems as people who're trying to go to school, old people with fixed incomes, people who need health care, people who work for a living, women who need equal pay and

equal protection under the law, poor people, people of color — including, of course, those who are nearest and dearest to me, African Americans!"

Things started off pretty good. The group had just recently hired a new director, and this was a chance for them to get to know him and vice versa. The new director started out giving a short history of his own interest in the work and a brief background of the problem. "The problem," he said, "is that there's a breakdown of the cultural consensus on which the regional theater movement was based. That consensus was," he said, "that (according to one of the founding fathers) the regional theaters should be valued more as centers of culture than as the producers of products to be bought and sold."

"So now," I'm thinking, "we know how they see the difference between 'regional theater' and Broadway/commercial theater, but what's their idea about how theater relates to the rest of the world? How was consensus built in the first place? How come the discussion leading up to the so-called 'consensus' was limited to middle- and upper-income white people, mostly men?" It reminded me of the guy who said, "Let's go back to the beginning . . . where I come in."

If the core problem is how to deal with cutbacks in public funding for the non-profit arts, then you have to take up the public debate about the value of art, which for the past several years has been led by those outstanding senators from the Carolinas, Jesse Helms and Strom Thurmond. Now that they have back-up from the GOPAC congressional freshmen, they're really dangerous. All day, I waited to see when the discussion would come to the big question. "How do we mobilize *our* troops for counter attack?" Finally, my patience wore out my jaw



strap. I had to say something.

Taking the privilege of a guest, I got permission to speak, and said, "Seems to me we've been losing chickens, geese, ducks, and all kinds of small critters from barnyards all over the country for a good

They kept on talking about how each organization could better itself without fighting those old fat foxes, Helms and Thurmond.

while. Now we've got a couple of greedy, old, no-count, broke-down foxes volunteering to head up the troops that's going to guard the barnyard. From what I understand about what y'all say you're supposed to do, TCG is well-suited to take the leadership in the national discussion about the role of art in American culture. Maybe that should be the main thing you do for the next few years, at least till

things get turned in the right direction."

They looked at me like I had taken my clothes off and cussed at the preacher in the church house. After a while, they went on with the conversation as if I hadn't said a thing at all. I looked at my friend who'd brought me over there and hunched my shoulders. She hunched back, and we listened to them as they kept on talking about how each organization could better itself without fighting those old fat foxes, Helms and Thurmond.

All I could think of was what James Baldwin told Angela Davis when he volunteered to help keep her out of jail: "If they come for you in the morning, they'll come for me at night." Helms, Thurmond, and company have practically killed the National Endowment for the Arts. They've got the Smithsonian Institution scared to make honest historical exhibits. What will stop them from marching in the front door of any theater in the country and closing it down next?

After the meeting was over, my friend and I had The Hawk to our backs as we headed back down Michigan Avenue. The wind was even more fierce than it had been that morning. I told her "Well, I'm pretty sure that I had the right key, but I guess I was trying to stick it in the wrong keyhole."

"Humph!" she said as if the Hawk had taken her breath when she opened her mouth to talk. "If it don't fit, don't force it."

"I wish I'd been able to get Po Tatum that message when he was holed up in that building on Drexel Boulevard."

"Potaters?"

"No, I was talking about my homeboy, Po TA-tum. If you've got the time for a drink, I'll tell you about him."

SE

John O'Neal brings the stories of his good friend Junebug Jabbo Jones to Southern Exposure from his home in New Orleans. Illustration by Andrew Pearson.

Funding Social Change

The Fund for Southern Communities is different from other foundations.

By Alvin A. McEwen

Fifteen years ago, if an advocacy group in the South wanted to find funding, they generally had to look to foundations in New York, California, or some other place outside the South. The few foundations in the region fund some community groups, but the bulk of their money goes to service organizations or more established, mainstream efforts.

In 1981, a group of Southern activists

"We talk to and fund community groups and issues that other foundations won't even talk to."

led by Alan McGregor, then of the Southern Coalition on Jails and Prisons, later of the Sapelo Foundation, founded a Southern-based funding source for organizations working for social change in the South — the Fund for Southern Communities.

The Fund's annual report shows an organization supporting populist if not popular causes. Last year they helped Empty the Shelters in Atlanta, a student-oriented group that works with the homeless and researches the impact of the Olympics on Atlanta's low-cost housing. The Fund gave money to Concerned Citizens of Tillery in North Carolina to help the African-American farming community work with community development, land loss, and health issues. They also assisted Helping Hands Center in Siler City, North Carolina, in

connecting Latino and African-American poultry workers with contract growers and environmentalists in economic, environmental, health, and safety issues. They gave money to the Prison & Jail Project in Americus, Georgia, to work with prisoners, their families, the media, and other advocates to demand fair treatment for defendants regardless of race and income level.

The Fund was one of the first organizations in the South to give money for gay and lesbian organizing. And with the help of member donors, the Fund recently established the Southern Outlook Fund, a special fund that has already given \$100,000 specifically to assist gay and lesbian groups.

The Fund and donors have established other special funds as well. In North Carolina, the Triangle Fund helps organizations in Raleigh, Durham, and Chapel Hill. In South Carolina, with a donation from the South Carolina American Civil Liberties Union, they established the Modjeska Simkins Fund. Named for a civil rights legend in South Carolina, this fund supports grassroots organizing in the Palmetto state.

How it Works

According to Joan Garner, executive director of the Fund, money and technical support go to grassroots and social change organizations in Georgia, South Carolina, and North Carolina. Members of the 15-person board of directors represent community groups supported by the Fund.

Garner, who came to the organization five and a half years ago as a development associate, emphasized how the board structure makes the Fund different from other foundations. "With most



Courtesy of Fund for Southern Communities

JOAN GARNER IS EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE FUND FOR SOUTHERN COMMUNITIES.



MARGIE WILTZ CRITICIZES OLYMPIC DEVELOPMENT IN FRONT OF THE WORLD OF COCA-COLA MUSEUM IN ATLANTA. SHE IS A FIELD ORGANIZER FROM EMPTY THE SHELTERS, A SOCIAL ACTION AGENCY AND FUND FOR SOUTHERN COMMUNITIES GRANTEE.

TOOLBOX



For more information about funding for progressive Southern organizations by progressive funders, contact:

Appalachian Community Fund

517 Union Avenue, Suite 206
Knoxville, TN 37902
423-523-5783
fax 423-523-1896
email appa@aol.com
Funds groups in Central Appalachia

Fund for Southern Communities

547 Ponce de Leon Ave., NE
Atlanta, GA 30308
404-876-4147
fax 404-876-3453
e mail FSC@igc.apc.org

Funding Exchange

666 Broadway #500
New York, NY 10012
212-529-5300
fax 212-982-9272
Progressive social change funding through a network of 14 foundations (including Fund for Southern Communities and Appalachian Community Fund).

Grass Roots Fundraising Journal

\$25 for 6 issues

Fundraising for Social Change

By Kim Klein

\$25 plus \$2 shipping

Grassroots Grants: An Activist's Guide to Proposal Writing

By Andy Robinson

\$25 plus \$2 shipping

Chardon Press

P.O. Box 11607

Berkeley, CA 94710

510-704-8714

fax 510-649-7913

National Network of Grantmakers

1717 Kettner Blvd. Suite 105
San Diego, CA 92101
619-231-1348
fax 619-231-1349
Publishes a guide to progressive grantmakers

Peace Development Fund

44 N. Prospect St.
P.O. Box 1280
Amherst, MA 01004
413-256-8306
email pdfeast@igc.apc.org
Funds grassroots organizing for environmental, social, and economic justice. Provides workshops on organizational development, fundraising, racism training, and more through training arm, The Exchange Project.

Resist

One Summer St.
Somerville, MA 02143
617-623-5110

"A Call to Resist Illegitimate Authority" provides grants to small groups.

Southern Empowerment Project

343 Ellis Ave.

Maryville, TN 37804

423-984-6500

fax 423-984-9916

Sueempower@igc.apc.org

Has a training school for community organizers that includes fundraising with emphasis in raising money from the community.

other foundations find controversial.

"We talk to and fund community groups and issues that other foundations won't even talk to," Garner said.

Apply Yourself

Organizations seeking funding must work in North Carolina, South Carolina, or Georgia. The Fund supports groups involved in community empowerment, education, or organizing. Their work can include environmental issues, alternative media, women's issues, and issues affecting people of color. The organization does not fund lobbying but will consider funding "a community that wants to go about making some long-term change in policy," Garner said.

The small grants are significant. "Once organizations get funding from us, they can leverage it to receive funding from larger foundations," explained Garner. Program officer Jack Beckford likes to point out that a small grant from the Fund paid for a feasibility study for the Self-Help Credit Union in North Carolina. Self-Help has become a multi-million dollar model of community development lending, making loans for homes and small businesses that most banks would consider too risky.

The Fund is a small operation compared to many foundations. Garner said the organization makes 60 to 70 grants per year, usually of \$3,000 or less. Even as a modest operation, they are far grander than they used to be: They give away a quarter of a million dollars a year. In their first year, they awarded 23 grants totaling \$24,297. The Fund recently passed the \$2 million mark in grantmaking.

The Fund also provides technical support for activists and donors. "We realize that in addition to providing funding there's also a need to provide basic skills that go with building an organization —

traditional funding organizations, you have family members who sit on the board, or there is a certain group of donors who control the decision making,"

she said. "Here, the grantmaking is made by individuals we support."

Having activists as board members makes the Fund receptive to issues

such as fundraising skills, management skills and board development," said Garner. "We help identify programs or resource people that can provide skills."

Members

The Fund for Southern Communities is different from traditional foundations in another way. It does not have an endowment. Most of its funding comes from donations from its members, many of whom contribute modest amounts. The rest of the funding comes from other foundations and an annual fundraiser featuring performing artists like Sweet Honey in The Rock. The fundraisers raise money but also provide an



FUND FOR SOUTHERN COMMUNITIES REGULARLY SUPPORTS KEYSVILLE, GEORGIA, THE COMMUNITY THAT CREATED AN ENTIRE MUNICIPAL GOVERNMENT (SOUTHERN EXPOSURE WINTER 1991). HERE VOLUNTEERS KATIE STREETMAN, RICKY JONES, DERRICK STREETMAN, AND JAMES ROBINSON WORK WITH ONE OF KEYSVILLE'S PROJECTS, FOOD SHARE ASSISTANCE.

opportunity for members to network.

Garner sees the Fund becoming increasingly important given the political climate and cuts in federal funding. She also sees the Fund expanding its role of

bringing in diverse segments of the population to philanthropy. "We have brought people into the field of philanthropy that really would not have access," she said. "We're also very instrumental in helping to reform philanthropy in terms of who makes decisions."

Having people of color, grassroots activists, and other disenfranchised communities make decisions about who gets funding makes sense, Garner said. "They know who's

doing the work in their community and who isn't."

S
E

Alvin A. McEwen is an Associate Editor with the South Carolina Black News in Columbia.

"\$\$\$ for Change" by Jim Overton in the January/February 1985 *Southern Exposure* gives an excellent and detailed history of the Fund for Southern Communities. To receive a copy of the issue, send \$5 (which includes shipping and handling) or credit card information (Visa or Master Card) to Institute for Southern Studies, P.O. Box 531, Durham, NC 27702. You can also send credit card information via fax at 919-419-8315 or email at SoExpo5338@aol.com.

We received this informative letter about our spring 1996 Blueprint, a guide through the Workers' Compensation maze:

To the Editor:

I read with interest and delight your article on Workers' Compensation, "Moonlighting for Justice." The examples of worker mistreatment ring true across the South, and most likely the entire nation. Thanks for bringing some light to a long-hidden subject.

Just a couple of comments:

1. Betsy Barton's notes on what to do if you get hurt are right on, especially the parts about keeping records and getting in touch with an advocacy group. Unfortunately, the semi-legal advice applies *only* to North Carolina. By and large, compensation laws are written by the state legislatures and vary extensively. For example, in Louisiana an injured worker *does* receive protection for leaving work to see a doctor. You do not have to, and *should not* accept the treatment of the company doctor. You generally only have *one* year to file a claim before your rights run out, and in certain cases you only have six months. You get the point. Find an advocacy group in your own state, or you might be seriously misled.

2. Please add the Mississippi Injured Workers Union to your next toolbox. This is a good group so far working primarily with workers injured at various poultry and manufacturing plants. There are also a few other Southern injured worker

groups trying to get started.

Mississippi Injured Workers Union
350 Peace Street #4
Canton, MS 39046
(601) 859-9846

3. *Job-Damaged People* can only be purchased through the Environmental Health Network. (We are out of copies here.) EHN Books, P.O. Box 16267, Chesapeake, VA 23328-6267. (804) 424-1162. \$19.95.

Bill Temmink
Louisiana Injured Workers Education Fund,
Louisiana Injured Workers Union,
926 Milan Street,
New Orleans, Louisiana 70115

For a copy of the "Moonlighting for Justice" Blueprint article, send a self-addressed, stamped envelope marked "Moonlighting" to Pat Arnow, editor, Southern Exposure, P.O. Box 531, Durham, NC 27702. Or fax your request to 919-419-8315 and we will fax you the article. For the complete spring 1996 issue in which "Moonlighting for Justice" appears, send \$5 or credit card information (Visa or Master Card) to the above address, or fax number, or email to SoExpo5338@aol.com.

Southern Pot of SOUP

The storytelling revival inspires new books of folktales for children

By Roberta Herrin

It is early October in the East Tennessee town of Jonesborough. I am sitting under a big tent, among 500 other people, warmed by the autumn sun, listening to storytellers. The festival is an international affair with tales and tellers and listeners from Alaska, Japan, Texas, Maine, Louisiana, Hawaii — the mixture is infinite. As many as 10,000 people of all ages attend this storytelling festival. Storytelling has emerged as a global trend, supported by an industry of books, audio, and video tapes.

In the early 1970s, the tellers and tales in Jonesborough came mostly from the South. In 1977, I sat with some 15 people listening to Richard Chase in the kitchen of Sisters' Row, one of the historic buildings on Main Street. We were spellbound by the dripping rain, the fire reflecting on the hearth, and the fishing lures on Chase's hat. He told stories we all knew well from his *Grandfather Tales* and *Jack Tales*, first published in 1943.

Though scholars had collected and catalogued these stories long before Chase, his publications made the tales accessible to a wide audience. They are still popular among all age groups from kindergarten to college. I first encountered them in 1958 in the third grade. Every Friday afternoon, James Potter, the high-school principal, visited my class and read from Chase's *Jack Tales*. Thirty-eight years later, they are to me as familiar and new as Shakespeare or the Bible. The *Jack Tales* are stories about an archetypal trickster figure named Jack, who originated from European tales such as "Jack and the Beanstalk."

Participants in a storytelling festival look for familiar patterns refashioned by

some fresh idiom or setting; they like a mixture of the old and the new. J. R. R. Tolkien once argued, in the now-classic essay "On Fairy-Stories" (*The Tolkien Reader*, Ballantine, 1966), that there are no new stories because all narrative is scooped out of an ancient "cauldron of story," Tolkien's metaphor for the total body of folk material — pattern, motif, custom, belief. He likens it to a great "Pot of Soup" to which "have continually been added new bits, dainty and undainty."

King Arthur was boiled in this soup a long time, says Tolkien. So were Southern personalities and patterns — Jack and Brer Rabbit and Southern trickster and *pourquoi* tales. The trickster is an underdog who triumphs through wit and cunning. *Pourquoi* tales offer explanations to the cosmic questions, such as why the rabbit has no tail or how fire came to the earth. These archetypes recur in every genre of Southern folk tales — in slave narratives, in Cherokee myths, and in Appalachian retellings of European tales.

Children's stories

Concoctions of folk pattern, history, and Southern culture represent a zealous trend in children's books published in the last 15 years. William H. Hooks' *Moss Gown* (Clarion, 1987) is a beautiful example. Artfully illustrated by Donald Carrick, this tale blends "King Lear" and "Cinderella" against a North Carolina landscape. *Moss Gown* harkens back to Charles Perrault's 1697 classic French version, but it also compares with the newer Joanne Compton adaptation of *Ashpet: An Appalachian Tale* (Holiday



APPALACHIAN STORYTELLER RAY HICKS TELLS JACK TALES TO SOME OF THE 10,000 PEOPLE WHO ATTEND THE NATIONAL STORYTELLING FESTIVAL IN JONESBOROUGH, TENNESSEE, EACH YEAR.

All photos courtesy of the National Storytelling Center

House, 1994). Compton has borrowed this Cinderella story from Richard Chase's *Grandfather Tales*, adding her own flair and homespun idiom. The connections among King Lear, Cinderella, France, North Carolina, and Appalachia engage and expand the imagination.

In addition to *Ashpet*, dozens of picture books owe their existence to Chase's seminal collections. William Hooks has reshaped a number of the *Grandfather Tales* for picture-book format. One of his best is *The Three Little Pigs and the Fox*

Mean Jake and the Devil is a hilarious story of a man so wicked that he is refused entry into Hell.

(Macmillan, 1989), a clever retelling of "The Old Sow and the Three Shoats." Another is *Snowbear Whittington* (Macmillan, 1994), an Appalachian variant of the French "Beauty and the Beast" by Beaumont (which Disney totally corrupted). Readers will recognize in *Snowbear* motifs from the Greek myth "Cupid and Psyche," the old Norse "East

O' the Sun and West O' the Moon," and the Grimms' "Snow-White and Rose-Red." The beauty-beast story is an old, old pattern, but the Southern Appalachian setting and idiom make for a rich combination with the Greek, French, Norse, and German.

Hooks' collection *Mean Jake and the Devil* (Dial, 1981) includes a variant of Chase's "Wicked John and the Devil," a hilarious story of a man so wicked that he is refused entry into Hell. Mary Calhoun's *Big Sixteen* (Morrow, 1983) is a picture-book version of the same tale, but in her retelling, Wicked John becomes Big Sixteen, a handsome, muscular African American. By clothing the same archetype in different cultures, Hooks and Calhoun enable us to see one culture through another — a global way of "walking in the other person's shoes."

The African-American equivalent of Richard Chase's collections is Joel Chandler Harris' *Nights with Uncle Remus*. Though Brer Rabbit had stewed in the cauldron of story for aeons, Harris made him immortal to the American South in 1880. Since then, he has been reshaped decade after decade: William Faulkner's *The Days When the Animals Talked* (published posthumously in 1977); Ennis Rees's *Brer Rabbit and His Tricks* (1967) and *More of Brer Rabbit's Tricks* (1968); Jacqueline Weiss's *Young Brer Rabbit and Other Trickster Tales from the Americas* (Stemmer House, 1985); and more recently, Virginia Hamilton's *The People Could Fly* (Knopf, 1985). Though Hamilton's version is immediately recognizable and familiar, her Doc Rabbit is unique in character and speech.

Hamilton's collection includes story notes about African mythology and American history, adding depth that many other versions lack. She validates Tolkien's cauldron theory by explaining that the tar baby motif exists in the Bahamas, Brazil, India, Africa, as well as the American South: "Long ago, in certain localities of Georgia,

the tar baby was considered an actual, living, monstrous creature."

As a trickster figure, Brer Rabbit has an Appalachian counterpart in Jack and a Cherokee counterpart in Turtle. Donald Davis' *Jack and the Animals* (August House, 1995) is a lively Appalachian version of "The Bremen Town Musicians." Kenn and Joann Compton's *Jack the Giant Chaser* (Holiday House, 1993) is one of the finest of the trickster Jack tales. Jack's ingenuity and the Giant's stupidity have

Flossie and the Fox is a Southern, African-American version of Little Red Riding Hood, though Flossie is much smarter than her prototype.

undying appeal.

The number of Jack tales currently in picture book form — far too lengthy to enumerate here — are probably outnumbered by the Southern Native American trickster tales. Gayle Ross has adapted a Cherokee cautionary tale about pride — *How Turtle's Back Was Cracked* (Dial,

1995). Susan Roth's *Kanahena* (St. Martin's, 1988) is another version of how Turtle (Terrapin) tricks the wolves. Turtle may not be as familiar in mainstream Southern culture as his cousins Jack and Brer Rabbit, but there is no denying the family resemblance.

Patricia McKissack clothes the trickster archetype in yet another form — a little girl. *Flossie and the Fox* (Dial, 1986) is a Southern, African-American version of Little Red Riding Hood, though Flossie is much smarter than her prototype.

"You aine no fox. You a rabbit, all the time trying to fool me," she says, and outwits him with aplomb that a practiced trickster like Brer Rabbit would envy. The same is true of McKissack's *Mirandy and Brother Wind* (Knopf, 1988). Like Flossie, Mirandy is smart, clever enough to trick Brother Wind. These two Southern black girls have taken their places alongside classic tricksters.

McKissack and Hamilton demonstrate that ancient patterns take on new power when imbued with the familiarity of place, character, and idiom. Another writer who understands this connection is Joseph Bruchac. He has adapted several Native American *pourquoi* stories as picture books. He teamed with Susan Roth to create *The Great Ball Game: A Muskogee Story* (Dial, 1994), an animal fable which explains why birds fly south each winter and why



JOSEPH BRUCHAC AND GAYLE ROSS WRITE AND TELL STORIES FROM THEIR NATIVE AMERICAN HERITAGE.

bats come out at dusk. Susan Roth has retold and illustrated *The Story of Light* (Morrow, 1990), a Cherokee myth that explains the origin of fire. Tiny Spider, who captures a spark of light from the sun, makes an excellent contrast to the kingly Greek Prometheus. And readers who know African mythology will immediately see connections between Tiny

of their texture" (*Children and Books*, HarperCollins, 1991).

The South has certainly had its share of riddles, not the least of which is ethnicity. The storytelling movement has emerged as a forum for "enriching the texture" of our lives, for exploring what the oral tradition can contribute to the solution of riddles such as ethnicity. It has itself become a cauldron — seminal and prophetic and infinitely complex, because the modern audience wants to explore these riddles in multiple textures and formats.

Stewed in the great cauldron

In the early Jonesborough festivals, a small resources tent was provided. Today, the resources tent has an inventory bigger than many bookstores. One can listen to Donald Davis or Joseph Bruchac or Gayle Ross and then walk straight to the resources tent to buy their tales in picture-book format. Presented independently of each other, oral and print formats no longer satisfy, and though we opt for the variety available through modern technologies, something pulls us ever back to the spoken word, to the original pot wherein the ancient patterns and motifs and stories were stewed.

A number of writers and storytellers stand ready to lead us into the next phase of this movement: Hamilton, Bruchac, Hooks, Ross, Roth, and many not covered here, such as San Souci, Eleanora Tate, Julius Lester. Their stories represent the precise amalgam of history, folk pattern, fantasy, biography, and realism that is the foundation of human tolerance. These narratives, stewed in the great cauldron, motivate us to see Brer Rabbit as a Cherokee; to know Jack and Mirandy and Flossie as cousins; to recognize Tiny Spider and Prometheus as one; to believe that Cinderella or Wicked John can have black skin and exist in North Carolina as well as Africa or France.

Roberta Herrin teaches English and children's literature at East Tennessee State University in Johnson City, Tennessee. Her essay on new children's books of the South appeared in the Fall/Winter 1995 Southern Exposure.

The Stem of Jesse

By Will Campbell

Mercer University Press, 1994

\$25 hardback

By 1968, amidst intense emotional opposition to integration, Mercer University, a private Baptist school in Macon, Georgia, had admitted 100 African-American students. This voluntary recruitment effort went well beyond the token integrationists' approach: "Thank God! That's done and over with."

This unique achievement was made possible by the courageous actions of Mercer president Rufus Harris, who battled to gain enough trustee votes for integration. He was supported by Dean Joe Hendricks, who led a tutorial program for area African-American high school students, conducted a successful search for scholarship money, and recruited African-American students.

Campbell also chronicles the rising campus tensions of the late 1960s — a snack bar takeover, scuffles over cafeteria seating, and the push for a black studies curriculum taught by an African American.

Is Mercer University a success story? When reflecting on the 30th anniversary celebration of Mercer's integration, Campbell is clear that Mercer is as about as well integrated as any institution he knows and yet retains "a predominantly white agenda based on white culture." At the celebration, he is led by the spirit to call the student responsible for Mercer's integration to the dais and to say that he is sorry "for what we did to you . . . what we did to ourselves . . . Forgive us."

For those of us struggling today to break the current set of barriers which keep us apart, Campbell clarifies the importance of acknowledging the past and finding the courage to speak honest, healing words to each other. His example is that compassion is the only genuine way to meet each other as we seek to become, in Campbell's words, "one people."

— Jennifer McGovern

Jennifer McGovern, who lives in Durham with her partner and two daughters, works half-time for People's Alliance, a local progressive group.



DONALD DAVIS TELLS MODERN APPALACHIAN TALES.

Spider and Anansi.

My favorite of the Bruchac books is *The First Strawberries: A Cherokee Story* (Dial, 1993). This myth explains the origin and sweetness of strawberries and shows the universal, timeless need for friendship and respect in male-female relationships. Another Cherokee tale is Bruchac's *The Story of the Milky Way* (Dial, 1995), which explains that the Milky Way was created when a spirit dog leaped from earth to sky and spilled white cornmeal, a staple of Southern life.

Pourquoi now?

This incomplete list of *pourquoi* tales from Southern Native American mythology raises an arresting question, "Why is this particular tale type so popular in the picture-book format in the 1980s and 1990s? Are publishers merely satisfying the current hunger for anything multicultural? A more acceptable answer lies in Natalie Babbitt's observation that these types of literature are "the voice of our reachings-out for explanations of the riddles of our lives, and for enrichment

Interesting New Books

Liva Baker. *The Second Battle of New Orleans: The Hundred Year Struggle to Integrate the Schools.* HarperCollins, 1996. \$32

This volume takes us into the courtrooms, homes, and streets where New Orleans' battles for educational equality have been fought — and where progress towards integration continues to be resisted and undermined.

Melissa Faye Greene. *The Temple Bombing.* Addison-Wesley, 1996. \$25

On October 12, 1958, Atlanta's oldest and most prominent synagogue, the Temple, was bombed. This immensely readable book follows the story of the Temple's rabbi, Jacob Rothschild, and his outspoken advocacy of racial justice. It weaves through the story of everyday politics, conversations, communities, and historical figures — both well-recognized and lesser-known — that made up Atlanta during the 1950s and '60s. It offers a nuanced chronicle of the complicated, conflicted, and often courageous history of Atlanta's black-Jewish relations.

James L. Leloudis. *Schooling the New South: Pedagogy, Self, and Society in North Carolina 1880-1920.* University of North Carolina Press, 1996, \$39.95

The book recreates North Carolina's classrooms as they existed at the turn of the century and explores the wide-ranging social and psychological implications of the transition from old-fashioned common schools to modern graded schools. Written with grace and clarity, the book reveals the ways that schools became instruments of socialization — and social control.

Alex Lichtenstein. *Twice the Work of Free Labor: The Political Economy of Convict Labor in the New South.* Verso, 1996. \$18.95

This academic study traces the history of Georgia's convict labor as it

emerged after the Civil War, powerfully documenting the role of this cruel and unusual form of "new South slavery." Private industrialists, and eventually states themselves, could contract for prisoners' forced labor, which figured in building the South's "modern" economy and in undermining struggles for fair labor practices. This history is meant to, and does, resonate with current politics and economics that have brought the reappearance of "INMATE" — shirted chain gangs along Southern highways.

Shannon Ravenel, (ed.) selected and introduced by Anne Tyler. *Best of the South: From Ten Years of New Stories from the South.* Algonquin, 1996. \$14.95

Writer Anne Tyler has gathered her 20 favorite short stories from *New Stories from the South*. Whether they are the best of all of the South is something else. Most of the stories are by firmly established white writers, more than two-thirds men. Only one story is told from the perspective of a person of color. But those voices that are represented make for terrific reading.

Gerald M. Sider. *Lumbee Indian Histories: Race, Ethnicity, and Indian Identity in the Southern United States.* Cambridge University Press, 1993. \$65

This volume explores the shifting identity of Lumbee Indians of North Carolina from "white" to "free persons of color" to "Indian." Lumbee Indians today discuss their visions of history and what enables a group of people who almost always lose to keep on struggling.

Carol Stack. *Call to Home: African Americans Reclaim the Rural South.* BasicBooks, 1996. \$21

With a storyteller's ear for people's voices and an anthropologist's eye for connecting shifting family and community patterns with larger cultural and economic changes, Carol Stack wonderfully tells a little known story: the past 20 years' reverse exodus of a half million black Americans from large urban cities to the rural South.

She lets us join these migrants in their quest for "not so much the home they left behind as a place they feel they can change, a place in which their lives and strivings will make a difference — a place in which to create a home." (Stack is also the author of the unforgettable *All Our Kin*.)

Brenda E. Stevenson. *Life in Black & White: Family and Community in the Slave South.* Oxford University Press, 1996. \$35

Through the specific location of Loudon County, Virginia, and the specific lens of "the family," this academic account of pre-Civil War life examines the daily relations of slaves and planters, free blacks and yeomen. In so doing, this book promises to challenge previous histories of slave family relations and life.

Michael D'Orso. *Like Judgment Day: The Ruin and Redemption of a Town Called Rosewood.* G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1996. \$27.50

D'Orso chronicles the January 1923 massacre of the African-American town of Rosewood, Florida, and the survivor's quest for justice. After the reported rape of a white woman by an escaped black convict in the nearby town of Sumner, a group of white men stormed Rosewood in search of the alleged rapist, who was never found. But they killed several of Rosewood's 200 inhabitants (the exact number remains uncertain) in the week-long rampage and destroyed the Gulf Coast town. The incident remained buried until 1982, when a reporter interviewed one of the victim's descendants. In 1994 the Florida legislature awarded survivors and their descendants \$2 million in compensation.

— Anne Eckman, Janet Irons, and Leslie Waugh

POTTERY

By Mary Lee Kerr

Southern clay couldn't grow a lot of crops, but it grew generations of potters. From Native Americans centuries past who made vessels for food storage and ritual to Southerners who today create forms that sell for hundreds of dollars as pieces of art, pottery is a strong South tradition.

Catawba Indians in South Carolina have used pottery for ceremony, storage, and to make a living for the past 4,500 years. "We've been around since long before Columbus. Pottery used to put food on the table when Europeans first came and bought the pieces," says Wenonah Haire, Executive Director of the Catawba Cultural Preservation Project in Rock Hill, South Carolina. "Catawba pottery has never ceased being made traditionally."

Master Catawba potters still dig their clay from the ground, build their pieces by hand using the coil method, smooth the pieces with Catawba River smoothing stones passed down from potter to potter, and burn the pots in pits or fireplaces. The result is a pot or animal figure with the look of polished wood.

Although Catawba master potters won't share many of their secrets with outsiders, the Cultural Preservation Project wants to make sure the tradition doesn't die out as their language did. The Project has started classes, only open to Catawbans, to teach pottery. Haire says the program attracts some young people, but also older women who learned the skills as girls but couldn't continue because they had to go work in the mills to make money. Now they have more time to re-learn the traditional pottery methods. "It's in the blood," says Haire.

Pottery making also thrived along the Texas border where Mexicans brought their skills north. Although Africans imported pottery traditions, including face vessels and jugs with double spouts, few slaves were allowed to practice the craft formally. Thus, there are relatively few African-American potters today. European groups like the Moravians started making pottery in the 1750s in North Carolina, where their traditions are still strong.

"Southern pottery is still very traditional in the way it's made," says Charles Zug III, professor of folklore at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and author of *Turners and Burners: The Folk Potters of North Carolina*. "Families still have control of the business. Pottery hasn't become industrialized as in the North, and the region is blessed with an abundance of clay." As potters in the North were replaced with assembly lines and factory-produced wares, Southern pottery in the clay-rich Piedmont areas remained a family affair. Potters passed on traditional salt glazes, wood-fired kiln techniques, and vessel

The shapes and forms of Southern pottery — like whiskey jugs, pie plates, and pickling crocks — are very distinctive.

shapes through the generations.

"The shapes and forms of Southern pottery — like whiskey jugs, pie plates, and pickling crocks — are very distinctive," says Ben Owen, whose family has been creating pottery since the mid 1700s in Seagrove, North Carolina. His grandfather was the first to take

up the craft full-time as a means of making a living, and he was the principal potter in the area known as Jugtown for 36 years. At age nine or 10, Owen took up pottery and kept the family tradition alive. He says that in earlier times, pieces were used for food storage and bartering. Now pottery is art for collectors. "Customers come in and buy my teapots just to look at," he says, "but I encourage them to make use of them — all my pieces are functional, too."

The area around Owen's hometown of Seagrove in Piedmont North Carolina has become a kind of pottery mecca in the South, hosting dozens of potters and attracting craftsfolk and collectors from all over the world. Recently, a citizen group including Zug, potters, and community residents worked to create the North Carolina Pottery Center. Through a combination of public and private funding, the group has raised money to draw up plans and buy land. The center is slated to open in a couple of years.

The group has been pleased with the support it's gotten: "We're excited to have the opportunity to open a museum and education center to teach about and display this rich tradition," says Zug.

S

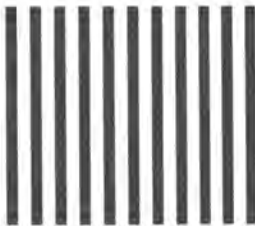
Mary Lee Kerr is a consultant with the Institute for Southern Studies.



ELIZABETH PLYER OF ROCK HILL, SOUTH CAROLINA, DRAWS ON CENTURIES OF CATAWBA POTTERY TRADITION AS SHE FORMS A DISTINCTIVE CATAWBA PITCHER.

Photo by Bob Higgins, Courtesy of Catawba Cultural Preservation Project

NO POSTAGE
NECESSARY
IF MAILED
IN THE
UNITED STATES



BUSINESS REPLY MAIL
FIRST CLASS PERMIT NO. 938 DURHAM, N.C.

POSTAGE WILL BE PAID BY ADDRESSEE

Institute for Southern Studies
P. O. Box 531 Durham, NC 27702

JOIN the Institute for Southern Studies and help the research, organizing, and publishing that go toward building a better South. Join now and you will receive one year of our award-winning quarterly, *Southern Exposure*, periodic Institute updates, and discounts on special reports.

\$24 for basic membership

I would like to contribute an additional \$ _____

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Please send a gift membership:

\$24 for membership Additional donation \$ _____

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Check enclosed Visa MasterCard Exp. _____

Name on card: _____

Card number: _____

Or phone credit card orders to (919) 419-8311 ext. 45 or fax to (919) 419-8315. Make checks payable to Institute for Southern Studies and return with this coupon to P.O. Box 531, Durham, NC 27702.



From the *SOUTHERN EXPOSURE* Library

Use this card to order the issues described on the inside back cover of this issue.

- Image of the South/\$5
- Clean Dream/\$5
- Poverty, Inc./\$5
- Drive-Through South/\$5
- Birth Rights/\$5
- Set of any three issues/\$12
- Set of any five issues/\$15

Total Due \$ _____ Payment enclosed
 Mastercard/Visa # _____
 exp. date _____

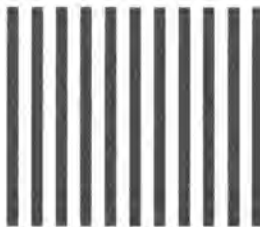
Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Make checks payable to Institute for Southern Studies and return with this coupon to P.O. Box 531, Durham, NC 27702

NO POSTAGE
NECESSARY
IF MAILED
IN THE
UNITED STATES



BUSINESS REPLY MAIL
 FIRST CLASS PERMIT NO. 938 DURHAM, N.C.

POSTAGE WILL BE PAID BY ADDRESSEE

Institute for Southern Studies
 P. O. Box 531, Durham, NC 27702

From the *Southern Exposure* Library

■ *Southern History and Culture* **IMAGE OF THE SOUTH**

Vol. XXIII No. 1/Spring 1995



A look at perceptions of the South and its regional identity from inside and out, including hillbilly and other stereotypes and the changing political landscape.

■ *Exposed* **DRIVE-THROUGH SOUTH**

Vol. XXII No. 4/Winter 1994



Southern Journalism Award winners take readers along as they cruise with bored teenagers, dig through landfills, and expose abusive foster homes in a look at the changing region.

■ *Land and the Environment* **CLEAN DREAM**

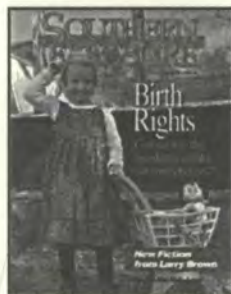
Vol. XXI No. 4/Winter 1993



Outlines the 17 principles of the environmental justice movement which are based on grassroots communities who are fighting toxic industrial pollution.

■ *Resources for Activists* **BIRTH RIGHTS**

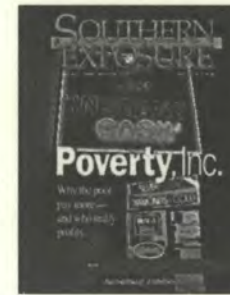
Vol. XVIII No. 2/Summer 1990



A guide that links the struggle for abortion rights with larger issues of reproductive freedom: the uninsured unborn, granny midwives, sterilization abuse, family leave and much more.

■ *Labor and the Economy* **POVERTY, INC.**

Vol. XXI No. 3/Fall 1993



An award-winning issue that investigates how big corporations profit from the poorest residents in the region and how those citizens are fighting back.

To order any of these back issues of *Southern Exposure*, send \$5 for each issue to:

**SOUTHERN
EXPOSURE**

**P.O. Box 531
Durham, NC 27702**

SOUTHERN EXPOSURE

SOUTHERN EXPOSURE has been published since 1973 by the Institute for Southern Studies. With its combination of investigative reporting, historical perspective, oral histories, photography, and literature, the magazine has earned a national reputation. In the past five years, the magazine has received two Project Censored Awards, the Sidney Hillman Award for courageous reporting on racial injustice, two Alternative Press Awards for best regional publication, a National Magazine Award, and the John Hancock Insurance Company award for economic reporting.

THE INSTITUTE FOR SOUTHERN STUDIES is a nonprofit center working for progressive change in the region. Since its founding in 1970, the Institute has sponsored research, education, and organizing programs to (1) empower grassroots organizations and communities with strong local leadership and well-informed strategies, (2) provide the information, ideas, and historical understanding of Southern social struggles necessary for long-term fundamental change, and (3) nourish communication, cooperation, and understanding among diverse cultural groups.

THE INSTITUTE is supported by foundations and individual members. Annual membership is \$24 and includes a full year of *Southern Exposure* (four issues), periodic action alerts, and discounts on Institute resources and publications. Address all membership correspondence to the Institute, P.O. Box 531, Durham, NC 27702, (919) 419-8311 or fax (919) 419-8315 to place credit card orders (MasterCard or Visa).

COVER DESIGN by Mia Kirsh



Building the Groundwork for Accountability

The Institute for Southern Studies wants to congratulate all those who helped take on the corporate hog farming business in North Carolina. Over a four-year period, pork agribusiness has gone from a comfortable position of growth and little accountability to an industry that is being held responsible by the state's citizens for ruining health and quality of life in rural communities, killing waterways, and endangering workers.

After community groups in eastern North Carolina began telling us how corporate hog farming was devastating their lives, *Southern Exposure* helped lay the groundwork for this movement with its 1992 "Hog Wild" story. The story, which showed the dangers of corporate hog farming to rural communities and the environment and detailed the political dealings that made the industry so

strong in the state, was copied and re-copied by community organizations, advocacy groups, and policymakers across North Carolina and in the Midwest. *The News & Observer* of Raleigh picked up the article and came to the Institute for information before beginning its Pulitzer Prize-winning five-part series on hog farming in the state.

All along, the citizens' groups and advocacy groups who used our work and whose stories we used, did the crucial work of talking to their friends and neighbors, traveling to Raleigh for rallies, helping craft legislation, keeping up with local policy, and telling their stories to the media over and over again. Strong community groups and strong media — like *Southern Exposure* — make a potent combination.

SOUTHERN EXPOSURE
P.O. Box 531
Durham, NC 27702

SUMMER '96 37445 108
LINDA MOORE
223 FRIENDSHIP CIRCLE
WINSTON SALE, NC 27106