Opinion

Grocery bag war

Anything, it seems, is worth fighting about when there's money to be made. How else to explain the public-relations war being waged between the plastics and paper industries over the best kind of grocery bag to use? If you've been to the supermarket lately, you know what we're talking about. Alongside those tried, trusty and true brown paper bags that Americans have relied on and treasured since 1883 you'll see a lump of limp, shapeless, non-biodegradable plastic containers that the plastics lobby would try to convince you is the way to go.

Their argument is that plastic bags are more easily portable — at least for those who go to the store on foot — because they have handles, that they don't leak all over the place when something wet gets loose, and that they can just as easily be used as garbage containers as the paper variety. They are also cheaper for the supermarket, at about 2.6 cents apiece, compared with 4.4 cents for paper bags, and they require less storage space.

The obvious response to this propaganda barrage is that paper bags stand on their own, so to speak, in your trunk, are biodegradable, make a better waste container, can be cut up and used to wrap books or make Halloween masks, and — here's the telling punch — are actually cheaper overall because supermarket checkers can pack them 18 percent faster than the plastic.

It shouldn't come as any surprise that these opposing claims come from the respective industries struggling to win the hearts, minds and bulk orders of supermarket chains around the country. But what about the poor consumer?

Surveys have been conducted, of course, and it turns out, not too surprisingly, that those who live alone in city apartments — typically, singles, old people and just about anyone who lives in the middle of Manhattan or San Francisco — prefer plastic. The rest of us — country folks — the pro-plastic folks disparagingly call us — are quite happy with our brown paper bags, thank you, and we're still a majority.

Facing the music

Poor Jerome Kern. The late composer pictured on the new 22-cent stamp would want to plug his ears if he overheard customers grumbling in post offices around the country that postal rates have gone up.

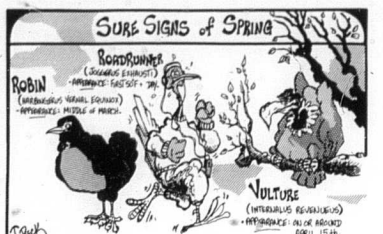
We might even applaud Kern and the hike in postal rates. Why? Because the Postal Service, unlike the rest of the deficit-spending federal government, is facing the music and paying the piper. The Kern stamp, supplemented by the transitional "D" stamp, represents a growing responsibility in government to base services on costs.

It wasn't always so. When Congress ran the post offices, the policy was: "Never eliminate a post office and never raise the rates." But now the Postal Service is a semi-autonomous agency, run more like a business than a government bureaucracy. It posted operating surpluses for three straight years — the third time in U.S. history that this has happened.

Postmaster General William F. Bolger was able to say in his 1984 annual report: "Operating without federal subsidy for postal operations and without borrowing, we were able to restore a portion of the credit we had so slowly eroded as the new U.S. Postal Service found its footing."

Why, if it's making money, should the Postal Service raise rates? Because there are growing demands on the service, which delivered 131 billion pieces of mail last year. Some costs can be offset by philatelic sales and the like, but users must be expected to pay for what they get.

What Americans get for the cost of a stamp is freedom to communicate with anyone in the world. Letter writing may be a dying art, but it remains one of the cheapest, most rewarding communications media in existence. A sound Postal Service is music to our ears.



Agree or not

Getting our priorities straight

by S.C. Van Curon

Two stories in the news drew the attention of Kentuckians last week, but I am sorry to report reader attention was in reverse order to their importance.

The story that drew the most attention was the resignation of Joe B. Hall as basketball coach at the University of Kentucky and the search for his replacement.

The other story was a preliminary report from the Council on Higher Education on its effort to produce a five-year plan for Kentucky's universities to improve the quality and raise the standards to a parity with other states.

IT'S THE SAME old tune and the same old words that have prevailed for years in that athletics comic, before higher education at the university, and part of the story is that basketball achievement is about the only thing the university alumni have to be proud of for the last 30 years.

The stories on the coaching situation loudly announce the job will pay around $250,000 a year plus other amenities.

On the other hand, the president of the University of Kentucky gets less than $100,000 a year, plus a house on campus, utilities and use of a car. Another small perk or so might dribble by in the way of speaking fees.

In a report to a legislative committee, Terry McBrayer, a member of the Council, said, the quality of post secondary education in Kentucky is generally poor and the public and General Assembly "are unconvinced of the value of higher education."

McBRAYER KNOWS whereof he speaks for he served in the legislature and rose to the position of majority floor leader in the House. "We've been so committed to being average the past 30 years, it's pathetic," he said. "Defaulting to the line of least resistance by not making a decision, in fact, is a decision and probably the worst we can make. Everybody is as mad as hell that Johnny can't read in Kentucky, but it stops right there. Then the attention shifts to tall buildings and good basketball teams and they think it's solved."

McBrayer said it very well. The problem is we're a divided state — too many sections, mountains, bluegrass, knobs, Pennyrile, etc. — warring against each other.

The regional universities have been in an expire-kidding contest since World War II and collectively in a war against the University of Kentucky and now the University of Louisville since it was taken into the state system.

Too many medical schools (two), too many dental schools (two), too many law schools (three) and too much duplication in special courses such as agriculture and the sciences in the regional universities as well as at UK and U of L.

IT IS A SAD commentary that the state that had the first university west of the Allegheny Mountains (Transylvania) ranks at the bottom in its public education system.

It's time we get our priorities straight.

Down Memory Lane

Peters heads Carlisle Jaycees; Roosevelt dies in Warm Springs

Thursday, April 11, 1935

The Rev. Norman Kiser received the Outstanding Citizen Award from the Carlisle Jaycee organization at their annual installation and awards banquet held this week at Duke University's cafeteria. This award is given to the man who has contributed the most to the community in all fields. The Rev. Kiser is the former minister of the Carlisle Methodist Church and is taking graduate work at the University of Kentucky.

Earl Mann, son of Mr. and Mrs. Clay Mann, will attend Boys State, an event sponsored by the American Legion, to be held June 8-12 at Richmond. Mann's selection was made by Robert Barlow, principal at Nicholas County High School.

Franklin M. Hughes, 58, received injuries around the face and a possible fractured jaw when he lost control of his car early Tuesday on Stoney Creek Road. The car struck a tree stump and overturned.

Officers for the 1935-66 year of the Carlisle Jaycees are Henry Peters, president; R.S. Wills Jr. and David Zachary, co-vice-presidents; Donald Hasley, secretary; James A. Carter, treasurer; Jerry Cameron, state director; Norman Duncan, Ralph Taylor and Charles Carter, local directors.

Given the characteristics of his returning players, Mr. Sutton could go with a small run-and-gun team that might surprise. But it would be a little comforting to know that help is on the way in the form of the best high school seniors available. After all, Kenny Walker has only one more year.

Had a dream the other night. The year was 1996. UK had just won the NCAA tournament. Sutton had resigned after 11 years, as he said he would, at age 60. Guess who were the leading candidates for his job? Leonard Hamilton, Lee Rose and Dick Parsons. Who got it? Leonard Hamilton. Remember, you read it here first!

Kidding aside, Sutton showed he knew his basketball by retaining Hamilton as his top assistant. Mathinks he had no choice. Hamilton came with the job.

***

A stinging situation — Covering a council meeting in Carlisle is hardly considered "hazardous duty." But Janie Duncan has other ideas after attending last Thursday night's city meeting.

What she first thought was a bug crawling along her neck turned out to be a wasp. It stung her once there and proceeded on inside her shirt for two or three more stings, enroute south.

She beat a hasty retreat to privacy, peeling off her outer garments in the process. Sure enough, there it was, ready to attack again. The brave but bitten reporter slapped it to the floor and put her foot down, hard. Next meeting, along with pad and pencil, Janie will be armed with a can of Raid.

***

Friday deadline for all letters

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Jimmie Boyd, son of Mr. and Mrs. Roland Boyd, and Eddie Taylor, son of Mr. and Mrs. Spencer Taylor, will participate in the Southern Speech Association Debate Tournament to be held this week at Duke University, Durham, NC. Jimmie and Eddie are students at Morehead State College.

BORN — To Mr. and Mrs. Lloyd David Jackson, a daughter, Davaina Faye, April 6 at Nicholas County Hospital. — To Mr. and Mrs. Melvin Paynter, Mt. Olivet, a son, Jeffery Allen, April 5 at Nicholas County Hospital. — To Mr. and Mrs. Ray Willoughby, a son, April 10 at Nicholas County Hospital. — To Mr. and Mrs. Paul Gray, Ewing, a daughter, April 12 at Nicholas County Hospital. — To Mr. and Mrs. Marion Custer Blair, a daughter, Beth Darnall, April 8 at Good Samaritan Hospital, Lexington. — To Mr. and Mrs. Thrashley Markland, a daughter, Connie Elaine, March 30 at Nicholas County Hospital. — To Mr. and Mrs. Kenneth H. Hill, Cynthiana, a son, Brian Tracy, April 1 at Nicholas County Hospital.

MARRIED — Miss Elizabeth Faye Caswell and Donald Edward Aker, April 4 at the Oakland Methodist Church, Carlisle. — Miss Linda McDonald and John D. Faulkner, March 19 at the Methodist Church in Fort Pierce, FL.

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Country hams latest target

Here Abouts

...with Emily A. Wolf

Just about everything which Kentuckians hold dear, or for which we've become famous, has come under fire in recent months, namely tobacco, bourbon, the thoroughbred industry and now our country hams.

It seems that the U.S. Department of Agriculture has come up with a new regulation which requires country ham producers to prove that their traditional curing process yields hams free of trichina worms or switch to a temperature controlled process.

It would have gone into effect this August if Senator Wendell Ford hadn't prevailed, telling USDA officials "ham producers need time to show that their time-proven curing processes are safe," as he puts it.

Ford's action got someone's attention since he was notified that a period for the proposed rule would be delayed. Kentucky ham producers now have until December of 1986 to document the effectiveness of their traditional method of curing an old ham. At that time the regulation will be amended to include any of these currently-used processes that have been federally approved.

In his weekly column from Washington, Ford explains that "Kentucky is not just a state of country ham lovers, it is a major producer of the delicacy. There are 42 federally inspected country ham-producing plants in Kentucky. More than a million of the hams were produced in the state last year, making it a $40 million to $50 million industry, according to Kentucky Country Ham Producers.

"The country ham is an important part of Kentucky's heritage that has been handed down from generation to generation. As far as producers and consumers are concerned, the procedures used to cure a Kentucky ham are time-tested, safe and produce the finest-tasting country hams available anywhere. I am pleased that we will now have a chance to prove that."

So am I, Wendell. Now get back to babysitting the barley dilemma.

***

Double-dip banana — Imagine Mrs. Audrey George's surprise when she started to eat a banana she'd just bought and found that inside the peel were two, not one but two, bananas. Husband Adrian claimed he'd never seen such in all his years.

Their daughter, Mrs. Judy Crawford, brought the fruit by the office shortly after the discovery in hopes it could be photographed. The light contrast would have been too slight to show up we told her, but the "Siamese twins" were as described, and delicious. It was one from a bunch purchased at Carlisle IGA last week.

***

Though he never lived here, Francis L. (Frank) Dale used to spend some time as a lad in the Myers community visiting his uncle, the late A.L. Dale.

"Cousin Francis," as George Dale calls him, is the newly-named commissioner of the Major Indoor Soccer League. He's probably better known hereabouts as the former president of the Cincinnati Reds and publisher of the Cincinnati Enquirer. That was before he left the area in 1977 to become publisher of the Los Angeles Herald Examiner.

The new position is in keeping with a vow he and his wife made 8 years ago to seek a career change about every seven years. Frank terms his new job as "an exciting adventure." He feels indoor soccer is right on the edge of a major breakthrough in this country, unlike its outdoor counterpart.

And if it isn't and the league folds? Well, "Cousin Francis" would probably have little difficulty finding a place at the top of the troubled Home State Savings Bank in Cincinnati, should he want to return to these parts.

***

If the University of Kentucky has landed the best coach in the country in Eddie Sutton, as Joe B. Hall calls him, and UK is the No. 1 program in the country, as Sutton sees it, then the Wildcats are all set, right?

Well, maybe, but the signing of a couple of top-notch recruits this week would help matters considerably. In fact, if the Cats are entertaining any thoughts of a return trip to the NCAA anytime soon, the two or three they may sign will have to be immediate-help types. It's fairly important that Sutton gets off to a winning start for all the obvious reasons.

In Irving Thomas from suburban Miami, Florida, UK looks to have signed a real blue chipper, despite his unimpressive point total (six) in the recent basketball game between the U.S. All-Stars and Pennsylvanian All-Stars. It's hard to know whether he's 6-9, as first published, or 6-7 as some papers list him.

After reading that Sutton is looking for speed and quickness, we can only hope and pray that Thomas can flash from end line to end line in 10 giant steps.

Others high on Kentucky's recruiting list (forward Kenny Payne of Louisville, guards Tom Lewis of California and "Blankety" Blanks of Texas) have been quoted as having mixed emotions about the coaching change; one supposedly likes it, two don't and the other three are the master's for at least one guard.

Which brings us to the main thing (and the country) coveted, Danny Ferry, has cast his lot with Duke. Sophomore-to-be Robert Lock certainly occupies enough space in the middle but lacks any foot speed, a trademark of Sutton-coached teams at Arkansas.

Given the characteristics of his returning players, Mr. Sutton could go with a small run-and-gun team that might surprise. But it would be a little comforting to know that help is on the way in the form of the best high school seniors available. After all, Kenny Walker has only one more year.

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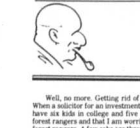
Op-Ed page

Honesty best policy? . . . not with four kids wanting to be forest rangers

Do telephone solicitors put you in a sweat when the someone is you? There are ways to deep six a phone huckster before he even knows what hit him. And you can have fun doing it.

Fighting off phone solicitors for investment firms was always tough for me because I was sort of flattered that somebody thought I had money to invest. The fact that they probably picked my name and phone number at random from a list of people who hadn't missed a credit-card payment for a full two months never occurred to me.

So I'd listen to their pitch until I ended up apologizing for not having any money to invest with them. They would hang up rather abruptly, leaving me with the impression that I had wasted their time.



RUSS METZ

Well, no more. Getting rid of them now is really simple. When a solicitor for an investment firm calls, I just tell them I have six kids in college and five of them are studying to be forest rangers and that I am worried about the job market for forest rangers. A few sobs are thrown in for effect.

The solicitor will say, "Gee, I'm sorry about that. Have a nice day." And he'll hang up ever so gently, probably actually feeling sorry for a guy with five kids studying to be forest rangers.

I used to have trouble with home improvement solicitors, too. They'd get me on the line and trap me into listening to their pitch for a new furnace or storm windows or a new roof or aluminum siding or a remodeled kitchen. They did this with their first question. "Sir, could you tell me how long you have owned your home?" I answered them truthfully. "Uh, about 20 years," I'd say.

This was a mistake.

The problem here is that this is a flattering question. Asking me how long I'd owned my home was like asking me how long I had not been a deadbeat. It feels good when somebody else knows you're not a deadbeat.

Owning your home means that you have faithfully paid your mortgage and all of the other expenses that go along with it. And owning it for 20 years means that you have not been a deadbeat for two decades. The fact that you have held a $50 bill only three times in your life doesn't seem to matter.

So, I'd end up listening to this guy spend the next 15 minutes telling me about the virtues of home ownership, about the equity I had built up in my home, and about the need for a new roof to preserve that home and its equity.

As was the case with the investment firm solicitor, I'd end up apologizing for not having the immediate funds to buy a new roof. This guy would hang up abruptly too, leaving me with the impression that he hoped my roof would cave in within a week.

But no more. When I get a call from one of these guys now, I just wait for that first flattering question. "Sir, could you tell me how long you've owned your home?"

"Oh, I don't own anything," I tell him. "I rent. Always did."

Usually you can hear them suck in their breath. "Oh, well, have a nice day." These guys aren't interested in tenants. Only land owners.

If possible, I try to tell them about the high costs of renting a home while you have six kids in college and five of them are studying to be forest rangers and I heard that forest rangers are having problems finding a job.

Then I'd throw in my heart-rendering sob.

— RM —

When a rise in the methane content of the atmosphere was noted in New Zealand, a scientist blamed it on the natural eruptions of numerous sheep in that country.

"A single sheep's daily flatulence contains enough methane gas to fuel a small truck for 25 miles," the scientist said.

Warming to his subject, the scientist went on to say that if a sheep was placed in the bed of a utility truck, along with a bale of hay, and "appropriate fittings" were affixed to the sheep's nether parts, it could furnish all the fuel the truck needed daily to travel over a moderately large farm. One thing's certain: you wouldn't have to worry about thieves siphoning your gas.

— RM —

The flu seems to come and go in phases. Phase I begins when your wife takes your temperature, and you feel so weak that you don't even bother to make sure that it is not a rectal thermometer or the one the vet gave you for the fox terrier two years ago.

She soothes you. I call Phase I the "don't worry about anything, just get some rest phase." It is alternate heat and cold, sweating and chilling, sweltering and then shivering beneath layers of blankets and afghans and comforters. A hazy 24 hours of crazy dreams and troubled tossing punctuated only by a few tasteless bits of toast and broth, and gulps of ice water.

Recovering from Phase I near when the dreaming and the tossing ends, and you begin to suspect that you are sharing a foxhole with a dozen wet hunting dogs. You haven't taken a shower for the better part of 24 hours, during which time you have been sweating like a galley slave working the rush hour in the Mediterranean. In a phrase, you are prettyripe.

Being ripe is permissible when you are in Phase I of the flu.

Phase II, I call the Bathrobe Stage — you have the option of going back to bed for more rest, or of staying up and shuffling around the house and complaining about the world in general.

Phase III is the "enough of this flu thing — put on some clothes and start worrying about things" phase. It is your welcome back to the real world and you are not so sure you are up to it.

In a way, I almost prefer Phase I. It is one of those rare moments in life when you just don't give a damn.

— RM —

Toothpaste has caused more marriages to break up than just about anything, said Lewis Grizzard, who speaks with the voice of experience. He has been divorced thrice.

"I have three ex-wives. They're all good old girls," he said. Sometimes he forgets their names but that's no problem. "I call them all Plaintiff."

Back to toothpaste. Men and women never seem to agree on where to squeeze the toothpaste tube — the bottom or the middle. Grizzard opts for the middle. "If you start at the bottom it takes a long time," he says. "It ought not be that much trouble brushing your teeth."

Columnist Grizzard used to be a sportswriter but gave it up when he "couldn't think of any more questions to ask a naked, 290-pound man in a locker room."

— RM —

George Kirby, who accompanied Bob Hope when they entertained the troops in Lebanon, tells this story:

"I went to the races one day and lost every cent I had. I didn't even have enough left to take the bus home so I started to walk. It began to rain cats and dogs and to make matters worse, the sole of my shoe came loose and was flapping up and down every time I took a step. It was having a ball with me.

"All of a sudden, a Rolls Royce with a chauffeur rolls up to the curb and Mr. Bob Hope was in the back seat. He opened a window and yelled, 'Hey, George, what's the matter?'

"I said, 'Mr. Hope, I've been to the races. Lost every cent. I don't even have enough left to take the bus home. On top of that, the sole of my shoe has come loose and I can hardly walk.'

"Mr. Hope reached into his pocket, took out a roll of bills as thick as a loaf of bread. He took the rubber band off of the roll and handed it to me. 'Here, George,' he said, 'wrap this rubber band around your shoe. It'll keep it from flapping.'"

Onward, upward.

New regulations

Continued from page 1

wake of the oil producers' conflict."

Mademann went on to point out that the textile plant in Carlisle is the feeder plant for apparel plants in Carlisle, Mt. Sterling, Cynthiana and Maysville. "Implementation of the 600 mg/l standard will jeopardize the operation of these plants which employ about 1,400 people with an annual payroll of nearly $18 million."

"CHLORIDES can be removed from wastewater by either the ion exchange method of the reverse osmosis process. A few years ago we made a study of the possibility of treating and recycling wastewater for plant reuse and it appeared that reverse osmosis would be the method of choice although very expensive and at a time when chloride content in the wastewater was not a factor. If such a process was considered now the disposal of the concentrated chloride waste would still present a problem.

"In our opinion the treatment of the wastewater to remove chloride would not be economically feasible.

"It is our opinion that a limit of 600 mg/l of chloride on the effluent of this plant would necessitate the elimination of the dyeing process which is now a major part of their operation," the report concluded.

Mrs. Christine Booth

Inauguration today

Dr. Herb F. Reinhard will be inaugurated Thursday, April 11, as the ninth president of Morehead State University. The Kentucky native came to MSU from the presidency of Slippery Rock University in Pennsylvania. The 3 p.m. ceremony at MSU's Academic-Athletic Center is open to the public. A reception will follow at the same site.

Carlisle IGA's $100 Weekly Payroll WINNER!
Christine Booth, West Main Street, Carlisle, received a $100 check Saturday, March 30 in IGA's new Payroll Promotion being conducted at Carlisle IGA. Come in and sign up today for YOUR PAY CHECK! A name is drawn every Saturday night.

Something on your mind? Write a letter to the Mercury

DR. ESLIE ASBURY

UK rewards Dr. Asbury with degree

Dr. Eslie Asbury of Cincinnati and Carlisle, one of six people who will be awarded honorary degrees by the University of Kentucky at its May 11 commencement ceremonies.

Others include Bishop Desmond Tutu, Nobel Peace Prize winner from Johannesburg, South Africa; Gov. Martha Layne Collins, Dr. Tim Lee Carter of Tompkinsville, a former U.S. representative; M. Stanley Wall of Lexington, the retired vice-president of the UK Community College system; and Bill Monroe of Nashville, a well-known Bluegrass music performer.

Dr. Asbury, a retired surgeon and author of two books dealing with Kentucky, is the owner of Forest Retreat Farms Inc. in Nicholas County which bred Determine, winner of the 1964 Kentucky Derby, among other top thoroughbreds.

Proceeds from his current book, **Both Sides of the River** ($25) are donated to Albert B. Chandler Medical Center at UK. An earlier publication, **Horse Sense and Humor in Kentucky** ($14.95) benefited Berea College.

Both books may be ordered by mailing a check to The Thorobred Press, Dept. 1301, P.O. Box 500, Lexington, Ky. 40501.

Commenting from his winter residence in Naples, Fla., "Doc" told Tho Mercury: "To a native Kentuckian this (honorary degree) is equivalent to a knighthood. Anyway, the publicity may help sell some of my books."

Dr. Asbury, who was born in Nicholas County, will observe his 90th birthday November 19. He has also received honorary Doctor of Science degrees from the University of Cincinnati and Xavier University.

Blue Licks Park opens

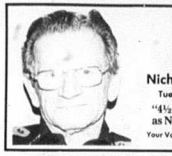
Blue Licks Battlefield State Park is now open for the season. Sam Devine, the new park manager, invites the public to come out and enjoy the park.

The park will be offering special camping rates for the months of April and May. The rate will be two nights for the price of one. Camping rates are $8 for two persons, $1 extra for each additional person. Senior citizen rates are $5 for two persons, $1 for each additional person.

Devine, who succeeds Richard Gaw, also points out that the Kentucky Department of Parks has instituted a new method for use of picnic shelters. Starting this year at Blue Licks, a shelter may be reserved by checking with the park and paying a rental fee. The charge is based on the size of the area reserved.

There are two shelter houses at Blue Licks. One is 28 feet by 40 feet and seats about 120 people. This will rent for $30. The other is 28 feet by 30 feet and seats about 100 people. It will rent for $40. Also, the larger shelter can be rented for use for a group of up to 80 people, using half the shelter house for $20.

All reservations must be made no later than noon prior to use on the following weekend, and payment must be made at the time of making the reservation.



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