Opinion

The coming of a comet

It's still million of miles and several weeks away, but the coming of Halley's Comet is already causing quite a stir. Hurtling towards us at nine miles a second, this ghostly apparition will be visible to earthlings by late 1985, and even better in early 1986.

Everybody's epitome of a comet, Halley's is famous for its dependable once-in-a-lifetime appearances. Every 76 years it swings through the inner solar system for rendezvous with the sun, this time on Feb. 8, 1986.

There are some in our midst who will have had two opportunities to view the phenomenon, although some were quite young on the last visit in 1910. For starters, I can think of several of our seniors who might have a memory or two associated with the comet, namely **Roger Wemark**, **Graves Stephenson** and **Veale Shaw**. Still others may recall hearing their parents tell of the celebrated celestial visitor.

The comet, named for Sir Edmund Halley (rhymes with valley), was first recorded in 240 B.C. and has returned 29 times since then. Unlike an eclipse, it is safe to look at a comet directly. Although scientists differ on exact dates, most agree the comet will come closest to Earth on April 11, when it will pass within 20 million miles on its long journey back into outer space.

Its past appearances were marked by portentous junctures in history. Halley's Comet has been linked with the extinction of the great dinosaurs, the destruction of Jerusalem, the fall of Rome and the rise of Christianity, King Harold's defeat in the Battle of Hastings and the death of King Edward VII.

Superstition also attended the 1910 return. In Chicago, windows were sealed against the supposed poisonous gases, as the comet's tail

brushed the Earth and the hucksters sold anti-comet pills to a wary and panicky public. In Oklahoma a sheriff reportedly had to stop the sacrifice of a virgin by a comet cult.

Now, I doubt that any of our readers will recount any such bizarre goings on, but I'd like to hear from anyone who recalls anything about Halley's 1910 visit. Where you were, what it was like, your age at the time. Just anything that we might pass along in coming weeks to document that occasion. After all it will be 2061 before it returns again.

***

It's estimated that hundreds of millions around the world will look into the night sky for a glimpse of this gossamer glow as it makes its passage among the stars.

Under the most ideal conditions observers from Kentucky will see a modest display. Those traveling to equatorial regions and the southern hemisphere will have the best view of the legend that has captivated mankind throughout recorded history. The further south the better.

Each night or morning, depending on whether you see it in January or March, the comet will appear for a couple of hours, either at sunset or sunrise. We're told it won't be streaking like a meteor but it will be moving. We'll be able to note the movement against the background of stars, with the tail becoming larger and larger each day.

Comets are believed to be huge snowballs of frozen gases mixed with dust, moving in cigar-shaped orbits around the sun. When they approach the sun, the frozen gases of the nucleus vaporize and expand outward. The gas is then blown back by the effects of sunlight and the solar wind, forming the comet's tail. Millions of miles long, the tail is said to glow like a pallid white light. Or so I'm told.

We grow 'em big!

Leslie Vice brought in this six pound purple top turnip grown by Walter Platt. Platt planted the seed in mid-July and was pleasantly surprised at the size of some of this fall's crop. — Mercury photo

Here Abouts

...with Emily A. Wolf

We'll soon be able to see for ourselves. Those who can't hop a cruise ship can climb a hill and look to the south. On a cloudless night this will be the once-in-a-lifetime sight-in-the-sky for most of us.

In the meantime, I'd love to have your recollections on the 1910 visit.

***

Tom Dixon update

A letter from **Mrs. Dolly Dixon** in Ocala, Florida bears the good news that son **Tom** was able to come home from the hospital last Friday, after four months of rehabilitation for a spinal injury that left him partially paralyzed (Hereabouts, Oct. 10, 1985).

He's not only home for good but will be able to resume his teaching career...in a wheel chair, at first in the county. "We lease him and let him he'll be on to yet," Dolly wrote. "His attitude is great."

The Charles Dixon's other son Steve, the golf pro, is currently playing on the Florida Space Coast tour. He's still looking for a road victory after winning the Lions Pro-Am Golf Tournament in Silver Springs Shores in his professional debut earlier in the summer.

So, what started out as a bad scene, at the time of Tom's wreck, is ending on an optimistic note for the Dixons and family (the Garretts) were down recently for a visit. Even the "Dead Horse" Charles sent along a "hi."

Thanks, Dolly, your letter made my day.

***

'Lousy with coyotes'

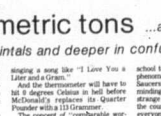
That's the way **Darrell McVey** and brother **Harold Jr.** described certain areas of Michigan during a following last week's killing of a female coyote on the Walnut Grove Road.

The McVeys said it wasn't the first time they'd seen coyotes coming from the rear of Dr. **Allen J. Hamon's** farm. And they weren't surprised when this one appeared in their headlights as they were driving by about 11 p.m. October 28.

It tried to get back through the fence, they reported, but the dog can find an opening ran back onto the road. The truck lights apparently frose the animal just long enough for Darrell to grab his handy rifle and fire a shot. One didn't do the trick so

Continued on page 2

Load 16 metric tons ...and what do you get? 160 quintals and deeper in confusion, you bet



RUSS METZ

You can lead John Q. Public to the metric system of weights and measurements, but you can't make him use them like they're doing in China, or tried and failed to do in Canada.

But our government has a sneaky way of getting what it wants and, to some degree, is succeeding. What is the one thing our kids have in their hands the most? Pop, of course. So the feds have encouraged the soft drink companies to go that route.

I've listed some of those areas where I think acceptance or rejection of the metric system has been particularly significant. Perhaps you can think of others.

–Soft drinks — Coca-Cola and Pepsi-Cola have embraced metrics. They've gone a little crazy with size packaging ideas since they dyfoilpped the two-liter plastic bottle. The two-liter bottle proved to be so popular that both companies recently introduced a three-liter bottle. Its immediate popularity will probably lead to the introduction of a four-liter bottle within the next couple of months. And if that's successful, the soft drink industry will get right to work on a kiloliter bottle that will come in its own wheels, electrical system and trailer hitch.

The human body — this may be in, but I just don't think your average, normal 115-pound female is ready to go around telling people that she weighs 36 even when she's talking about kilograms. Now she just might not mind it when her 34-inch bustline zooms all the way up to 86 centimeters. But when her 22-inch waistline becomes a 56 and her 36-inch hips becomes 76s, she begins to sound more like a front-line refrigerator than a human being. Still, the Metric Family (the Garretts) were down recently for a visit. Even the "Dead Horse" Charles sent along a "hi."

Thanks, Dolly, your letter made my day.

–Runners — Runners have taken very well to metrics. They prefer kilometers to miles for the obvious reason that when they finish a 10-kilometer foot race, it sounds like they ran farther than if they said they finished a 6.2 mile foot race. It's also easier to say you finished a "10K" foot race, but completely "out" to say you finished a "6.2 Mile" foot race.

–The insurance industry — The insurance industry has adopted a "take-it-or-leave-it" attitude toward metrics, being perfectly content to collect either 455 grams or a pound of flesh — whichever is easier for the policyholder to pay.

–Songs, saws, slang and sandwiches — Metrics have not made any real inroads into our language as of this writing. It'll be a long time before you hear people talking about "reaching a 1.6 kilometerstone," or "wearing a 36-liter hat," or warning that "28 grams of prevention is worth 6.45 kilograms of cure," and that "a miss is as good as 1.6 kilometers," or singing a song like "I Love You a Liter and a Gram."

And the thermometer will have to hit 0 degrees Celsius in hell before McDonald's replaces its Quarter Pounder with a 113 Gramzer.

The concept of "comparable worth" has been in the news lately. What best reflects your idea of comparable worth? Paying secretaries as much as truck drivers, since both have to get a lot of coffee?

Now that we've had Farm Aid, what's ahead in fund-raisers: (a) Gator Aid, for endangered reptiles and people who can't afford lead shirts. (b) Band Aid, for dislocated musicians, (c) First Aid, for underdog political candidates, (d) Lemon Aid for dissatisfied car buyers.

What is the most remarkable development this fall? (a) The Titanic was discovered, (b) The Pirates won three games in a row, (c) Upon reflection, Ronald Reagan admitted that, no, segregation has been eliminated in South Africa.

The idea of a curfew has been discussed. That group should be subjected to a night-time curfew: (a) Insurgents, (b) baseball players, (c) joggers.

— RM —

Remembering those gift cars given to coaches by loving fans: Bowden Wyatt was the conference championship at Arkansas and adoring Razorback fans presented him with a new Caddy.

Wyatt promptly accepted a job at his alma mater, Tennessee, and much rabble was raised about his ungrateful ness. Jack Mitchell, off a good season at Wichita, was hired as the new Arkansas coach.

As their paths crossed, Wyatt said, "Hey, would you like to have this Cadillac? After all, the Arkansas fans bought it for their coach."

"Naw," said Mitchell. "I'm driving a new Buick they gave me at Wichita."

— RM —

"The beings of the angelic kingdom are here not to protect us, but to make sure humanity does not destroy this planet. For that would disrupt the solar system and jeopadize their home planet."

This little-noticed news item was the words of a former Los Angeles school teacher, speaking on psychic phenomena to the Portland Flying Saucers Club. Now we know who's minding the steering wheels of those strange little crafts sailing around the country scaring the britches off everyone.

I, for one, am relieved to learn this. Up until now, I had the opinion they were federal feather-merchants hurrying toward Florida vacations.

Unidentified flying objects seem to be attracted to certain areas. There have been pictures taken of them, reports of contacts made with them and even murders credited to them in the air over Louisville just prior to World War II, and in later years on a Brazil mountain.

Flying saucers are not new. I had an uncle who was seeing them 40 years ago. His sightings came after his vision was sharpened by a little ruckus juice. But unk was ahead of his time. Nobody then believed anything except an Auburn Cord could make a flying saucer turn that fast.

I'd like to start a Flying Saucers Club around here. Maybe then some of those strange contraptions would feel obligated to show up. Nearest thing to a UFO in these parts is the day the wallpaper trucks arrive at the post office.

— RM —

Before a group of community college trustees and presidents, John R. Bonee, public relations man for Ameritech, discussed various aspects of leadership, including the idea of responsibility. His closing emphasizes that concept by way of a modified parable.

"Educators, like managers, must prepare new leaders for the future. It is an awesome responsibility.

"I would like to emphasize the responsibility of educators by telling you an up-to-date version of the well-known parable of the Pharisee and the Publican. It goes like this:

"Two men went to the temple to pray. One was a Pharisee and the other a Publican. The Pharisee stood before the altar and prayed thus: 'O Lord, I thank thee that I am not like other men — even like this Publican.'

"I give my hair also to the United Way. I donated $50,000 to the building fund this year. I paid for 10 tons of wheat for the starving people in Africa.'

"Meantime, the Publican knelt in the rear of the temple and dare not even raise his eyes to heaven. He struck his breast and prayed thus:

"'O Lord, be merciful to me, a sinner. Lord, I've done some terrible things in my life. But I know you'll forgive me, because you're all-merciful.

"There's only one thing I worry about. There's one thing I know for which not even you may be able to forgive me. You see that man up there? I taught him!' "

Onward, upward.

Down Memory Lane ...from Mercury files

10 years ago

Thursday, November 13, 1975

The one-lane bridge on the Old Paris Pike, built in 1878, will soon be replaced by a more modern one which will cut out the present nasty curve on the Bondville Hill. The state bought some land last spring from Mr. and Mrs. George Dale and from the Hubford place so that the road can be re-routed. Three generations of Mrs. Dale's family have gone to school over the bridge — in horse and buggy, pony buggy and in cars. A tollgate house used to stand where Mr. and Mrs. Lyle Anderson live now.

James and Glenna Reynolds were named coaches of the Nicholas County girls' basketball team at the meeting of the Nicholas County Board of Education Saturday. The Reynolds' will guide the girls' team through a 15-game schedule.

Mrs. Kathy Martin, Mrs. Rita Ritchie, Mrs. Jackie Clark, Mrs. Dave McMillan, Miss Nolalbidgett, Mrs. Bonnie Metcalfe, Mrs. Martha Taylor, Mrs. Billy K. Anderson and Mrs. Jack Metcalf, Nicholas County Elementary and High School teachers, were among 400 educators from the Central Kentucky Title III Region who attended a "Sharing Workshop" in Nicholasville, Oct. 31. The project is one of eight in the state funded through Title III of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act which provides assistance for public and non-public schools in developing innovative programs.

Marion Waggoner, who is currently appearing as Chief Johnson in the Diners Playhouse Lexington production of "Mister Roberts," is a native of Blue Licks. In 1974 he wrote and staged his own outdoor drama, "Simon Kenton" which was presented at Blue Licks Battlefield State Park to capacity crowds.

Margaret Hanley Price's home near Ewing was burglarized on or about Oct. 17. Three Fleming County men and one woman were taken into custody Nov. 3 and charged with burglary. Over 50 percent of the household goods and coin silver has been recovered.

BORN — To Mr. and Mrs. Marion Glenn Fryman, a daughter, Rebecca Jean, Nov. 4 at Bourbon County Hospital. — To Mr. and Mrs. Jackie Flora, a son, Jackie Allen, Nov. 1 at Nicholas County Hospital. — To Mr. and Mrs. Carl Dennis, a son, Jeffery Allen, Oct. 30 at Nicholas County Hospital. — To Mr. and Mrs. Eddie Bealert, a daughter, Sherry Renee, Oct. 28 at Nicholas County Hospital.

— To Mr. and Mrs. Dennis Wayne McCarty, Sharpsburg, a daughter, Judy Carol, Oct. 24 at Nicholas County Hospital.

DIED — Ernest E. Columbia, 63, Lexington, Nov. 1 — George W. Hamilton, 69, Paris, Nov. 4 at St. Joseph Hospital, Lexington. — Ernest Ward, Paris, 77, Nov. 8. — Mrs. Stella Lyman Asbury, 80, Nov. 1at Nicholas County Hospital. — Earl K. Williams, 68, Sharpsburg, Nov. 8 of injuries received in an automobile accident.

— Mrs. Virginia Seamands Stinson, 50, wife of Clarence Stinson, Nashville, TN, Nov. 8 at St. Thomas Hospital, Nashville — Mrs. Anna Anderson Livingood, 69, wife of Cecil Livingood, Cynthiana, Nov. 9 at Harrison Memorial Hospital.

20 years ago

Thursday, November 11, 1965

A wreck Sunday night on Ky. 36, three miles east of Carlisle near Miranda, injured Bobby Gene Snapp, 18, son of Mr. and Mrs. Eugene Snapp. He suffered three broken ribs and a bruised hand. The automobile driven by William V. McWhorter, 19, overturned and was demolished according to State Trooper Kenneth DeBoard. Snapp's brother, Gayle and McWhorter were not injured.

The Nicholas County Blue Jets, midget football team sponsored by the Carlisle Jaycees, has been invited to play this Sunday in the annual Paris Kiwanis Club Bowl game. The first game will feature the Blue Jets against the Lawrenceburg Midgets. The Jets are coached by Henry Peters.

Eighteen arrests were reported by Eugene Kelley, chief of police, during the month of October. The tally is as follows: speeding 6; no operator's license 5; public drunkenness 5; reckless driving 3, and assault and battery 1. Fines totaled $243 and meter collection amounted to $301.10.

Some changes have been made in the Nicholas County Tobacco Festival program to be held at the Carlisle Armory, Nov. 19, according to Lovell Hollar, chairman, and S.R. Barlow, publicity chairman. A grading contest for the youth has been added. Ira Massie, tobacco specialist from University of Kentucky, will be one of the judges and will speak at the night program. Over $250 in premiums and prizes will be awarded to growers.

BORN — To Mr. and Mrs. Billy Joe Webb, a daughter, Patricia Ann, Nov. 2 at Nicholas County Hospital.

— To Mr. and Mrs. Kenneth Lyon, a son, Robert Allen, Nov. 4 at Nicholas County Hospital. — To Mr. and Mrs. Russell Hatton, Sharpsburg, a son, Brian Keith, Nov. 4 at Nicholas County Hospital. — To Mr. and Mrs. Louis J. Elovez, a daughter, Nov. 4 at Central Baptist Hospital, Lexington.

— To Mr. and Mrs. Donald Sears, Paris, a son, Friday at the Bourbon County Hospital.

MARRIED — Miss Judy Allen Bromegan and William Earl Medley Jr., Nov. 6at Williamsburg.

DIED — Marion Taylor Mathers, 62, Sunday, Nov. 7 at St. Joseph Hospital, Lexington.

40 years ago

Thursday, November 15, 1945

As people who best know Nicholas County agent Bill Straw will tell you he is always right on top of any work, equipped and ready. But his play seems different. Recently Bill, on a fishing trip with Boyd Hamilton and others in southern Kentucky, traveled seven miles by road and four miles by stream, only to find he had left his rod and reel 11 miles behind at the hotel. After retrieving the gear and on the way back to the fishing point, the motor on the boat called it a day and Bill had to negotiate the two miles of the stream the hard way.

A fire which broke out early Saturday morning destroyed two houses in Henrysville. The origin of the fire was not determined, but the Alonzo White family, occupants of the house, was forced to flee from the blaze which consumed all contents. The other house was the home of Maggie Davis.

In the conservation contest sponsored by the Courier-Journal, the Louisville Times, radio station WHAS and the Kentucky Association of Soil Conservation District Supervisors, the following students in Nicholas County were prize winners: Harold Warner, Carlisle High School, first prize of $25 War Bond; William Hickman, Ewing, Headquarters High School, second prize of $7.50; Emmett Darrell, Carlisle High School, third prize of $2.50; Alva McCarty, Carlisle High School, fourth prize, honorable mention.

"The Importance of Being Young," a three-act comedy, will be presented Friday, Nov. 16, 7:30 in the Carlisle High School auditorium. The cast includes Katie Whaley, Geraldine Stanford, Jean Irvine, Kathleen Paris, Jessie Ockerman, Gayle Blown, Bobbie Doyle, Robert Allen Palmer, Alvin Bowen, Warren Crockett, Jimmy Burnaw, Ruby Watkins, Freddie Duncan, Gerald Barlow, Bobby Crawford, Viola Ballard and John Barr.

Cpl. Powell V. Neal and PFC William W. Power received their honorable discharges within two hours apart at Camp Atterbury last week and arrived home Saturday.

Cpl. Neal served 40 months in service, 32 of which were in India and China. PFC Power was in service 17 months, spending 12 months in Italy.

Miss Vivian Barlow, daughter of S.R. Barlow, and Ann Jefferson Galbraith, daughter of Stanley Galbraith, have entered their sophomore years at Transylvania College in Lexington with the recent opening of the fall quarter.

BORN — To Mr. and Mrs. John F. McQueen, a son, Nov. 10 at Johnson Memorial Hospital. — To S-Sgt and Mrs. Julian Green, a son, Dwaine Kenneth, Oct. 29 at McClosky General Hospital in Temple, TX. — To Mr. and Mrs. Floyd Kerns, Flemingsburg, a daughter, Nov. 6 at St. Joseph Hospital, Lexington. — To Mr. and Mrs. Stanley McCann, a son, Nov. 19 at Johnson Memorial Hospital.

DIED — Mrs. Lela Bell Bigler, 40, wife of John Bigler, Saturday at a Cincinnati hospital. — John F. Davis, 86, Nov. 3 in the Shelbyville Hospital.

50 years ago

Thursday, November 14, 1935

State officers elected in the Nov. 5 election are A.B. "Happy" Chandler, governor; Keen Johnson, lieutenant governor; B.M. Vincent, attorney general; C.P. Arnett, secretary of state; W.B. O'Connell, clerk of Court of Appeals; Garth Ferguson, commissioner of agriculture; Harry W. Peters, superintendent of public instruction; E.E. Shannon, auditor; John Buckingham, treasurer.

For the first time in the football history of Carlisle, the 1935 edition of the Musketeers, led by their peerless

*See Mercury Lane page 3

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Here Abouts

Continued from page 2

he let go two more times before she breathed her last.

The McVeys said they have seen numerous coyotes this fall along various sections of Maysville Road. They issued a warning to farmers with livestock to be on the lookout for the carnivorous prairie wolves which seem to be more and more common in these parts. Once confined to the western section of the United States, coyotes are a threat to all farm animals. Be advised.

***

Coaches never retire

Ben Pumphrey, who called it quits at NCHS last season after 25 years as a successful head football coach at a number of Kentucky high schools, has announced that he will return to the game as head mentor at MMI, where he began his career as ab assistant coach and teacher in 1956.

The Cadets have not finided a football team in three years and Ben will face quite a challenge. In the meantime he's assisting at Harrison County, as we've noted before, and plans to have a competitive track team at MMI this spring.

Along the lines of sports, Dr. **Taylor Asbury's** favored Flirting finished second in the $14,000 Quaze Quilt sidewalk race Friday at Churchill Downs. In 16 starts this year, the daughter of Foolish Pleasure-Herring mare has finished first four times, second four times and third twice.

It's not that I have no comment on the UK basketball program currently being investigated by the NCAA. To the contrary. If it's true that "feale rush in the 40s leads fast to tread," then I'm playing it cool yet another wek.

Coach **Mike Kenney** began basketball practice in earnest Monday when members of the football Jackets joined non-gridders on the roundball court. One promising sophomore who will be sidelined indefinitely, unfortunately, is Chris **Anderson**. The all-sports competitor suffered a severe knee injury and may have to have surgery.

Petition still available to sign

Copies of a petition expressing concern for the textile industry are still available to sign at a number of Carlisle businesses.

Mrs. Leona Walton, who is in charge of circulating the petition locally, reports over 450 names of concerned Nicholas and Bourbon county residents have already been forwarded to Rep. Larry Hopkins' Washington office.

Persons who have not already signed a petition and who would like to do so are invited to participate as soon as possible.

Correction

Brian Livingood was incorrectly reported as Brian Linville in the list of Honor Roll students (Mrs. Reid's class) furnished by the school and reported in last week's Mercury.

***

Play School Halloween

The Nicholas County High School Home Economics Department's Playschool class enjoyed a Halloween party on Wednesday, Oct. 30. Attending were, front, l-r, Rachel Ecton, Jennifer Earlywine, Sarah Scott, Jill McKee, Lori Hilander. Back, Eugene Mathes, Landon Hutchison, Lauren Hester, Elizebeth Mathes, Adam McKee and Jonathan Anderson. — Submitted photo

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