

Editorial

Marshall's Budget Is A Joke But We Aren't Laughing

When it was first approved last month, we suspected that Marshall's 1994-95 budget was a meaningless document. The town aldermen's actions in the past week have erased our suspicions. We are now convinced that the 'budget' is a joke.

Less than a week after the budget went into effect, the aldermen have busted the budget by approving several expenditures requested by Mayor Wild.

With the budget in effect just two days, the aldermen approved paying for health insurance for town employees at an annual cost to Marshall taxpayers of \$4,043.52. If the money to pay for this benefit for town workers was included in the budget, we haven't been able to find it.

Three days later, the aldermen approved a contract to put the town's water, sewer and tax billing on computers at an annual cost of \$3,300. When computerizing the town's billing was first proposed, it was pointed out that the cost of the computer service would be less than the salary for a part-time secretarial position. The aldermen last week approved the computer contract and then hired the part-time secretary we were told wouldn't be needed.

After approving the computer contract, the

aldermen also voted to hire an additional police officer to act as police chief at an annual cost of \$9,200 per year. According to the figures on the police department budget released to the press by Mayor Wild, there are not enough funds budgetted to pay the police chief's salary.

We do not wish to take issue with the projects the aldermen funded last week. Town employees probably deserve adequate health insurance coverage. Computerizing the town's billing system is probably long overdue and the need for a police chief has been apparent for some time.

While all three of these items may be needed, it is also fair for Marshall taxpayers to ask where the money to pay for computers, insurance and an additional policeman will come from.

We asked the mayor last week and were told, "You let me worry about the budget and I'll take care of it."

That's the sort of answer we've come to expect from Town Hall, but we find it totally inadequate. We hope that the Marshall taxpayers who will ultimately pay the bill for these items will also find it an inadequate response.

Wanted: Equal Employment Opportunity For All

Marshall's aldermen approved the hiring of a new chief of police last week. Announcement of the hiring must have come as a surprise to a great many people because the town never advertised the fact that it was looking for a new chief. The hiring was such a well-kept secret that the town received only a single application.

While we do not wish to take issue with either the new chief's qualifications or the board's decision to hire Mr. Cox, we are opposed to the manner in which he was hired. We believe that it is time that our local government bodies advertise job vacancies so that the public is made aware that employment within government agencies is available.

Marshall is only the latest offender. The same hiring practises are also used by the towns of Mars Hill and Hot Springs, the Madison County Board of Education, Transportation Authority, Department of Social Services and other branches of county government.

All too often, positions with town and county

government are filled by the traditional "good ol' boy" hiring practises that have dominated Madison County for all too long.

The people of Madison County depend upon government at the local level to provide many essential services. They have a right to have those services provided by the very best people available. The patronage system by which so many positions are filled shortchanges the public by excluding a great many possible job applicants.

Mr. Cox is probably amply qualified to lead Marshall's police department and we wish him success in returning order to Main Street after dark, but it is fair to ask how many other qualified applicants the town might have chosen from had the position been advertised.

An informal readers' poll last year indicated that 85 percent of our readers regularly check the classifieds. How many of you have noted jobs in county or town government advertised?

It is time for Madison County officials on all levels to hire the best people available and put the 'good ol' boy' system to rest.

Windsor's Reporting Is A Disgrace To Journalism

National attention is being focused on the race for North Carolina's seat in the U.S. Senate, in part because the campaign battle between Sen. Helms and Gov. Hunt promises to be the most expensive such campaign in history. Unfortunately, it may also become the dirtiest campaign in history.

Last week, the mudslinging between the two camps took an ugly turn when an Orange County newspaper published an unfounded report that Gov. Jim Hunt kept both a girlfriend and a homosexual lover while in office.

This ugly rumor was quickly denied and the offending newspaper's editor has apologized

and promised a front page retraction. However, the apology and retraction may prove to be too late to avoid legal action.

Election campaigns take their toll in long hours for reporters covering the campaigns. In defending his decision to publish the rumors, the newspaper's editor, Bob Windsor, pled that he was tired from working 72 hours without rest at the time the story was written.

Lack of sleep is no excuse for violating the public trust and tarnishing the confidence of North Carolinians in their newspapers. The article linking Hunt with homosexuals has no place in journalism and we are offended and saddened that the story reached the light of day.

Mr. Windsor has prided himself on being a renegade in journalistic circles. With this incident, Windsor has transformed himself from a renegade to a pariah.

Living And Growing

It's easy to do. Pointing the finger at the other guy takes little or no energy. With practice, it can become an almost effortless habit. We can actually get to the stage where we don't even know we're doing it. There's the danger. That blindness can mess you up badly.

Let's face it, none of us like making mistakes or being the bad guy. It hurts to be on the receiving end of rejection or

criticism. One of the more common ways to avoid this kind of hurt is to point the finger of responsibility on someone else. There are plenty of somebody's out there, and making them the target can take some of the heat off of you. Heck, it works. If you do it right, you can avoid the issue to where others don't know who the devil is blame. Unfortunately, there's a price to pay for this type of ap-

proach. Whenever you point a finger at another, you point one at the devil and three at yourself. That may be an accident of nature, but it illustrates the reality of projecting blame on others. Those of us who waste our time blaming others inhibit our own growth. We have a tendency to spend more time covering our tracks than growing and creating. We also tend to become more defen-

sive and narrow thinking. It's a simple process. Without responsibility, there is no growth. If everyone else is responsible for your mistakes or misjudgments, then you are stuck when it comes to growth and maturity. There's a better way to go. Start by owning your mistakes. Stop rather than rolling around in the gutter and look back over your shoulder and see how many. Don't beat on you,

or let anyone else beat on you. Punishment doesn't teach us as well as some of us think. That doesn't mean that we should accept blame for things we didn't do. Just that we should conscientiously own that which we are responsible for. Our identity and integrity will grow in result. Mistakes are a reality of the human condition. None of us should try to be perfect, but mistakes will happen. For-

tionism and shadiness are both destructive extremes. Aim high, be responsible for your behavior, and learn from your errors. Remember, when you run from responsibility by pointing the finger at others, then you are really running from you. And that's a pain that none of us can afford to take.

Heard And Seen

By POP STORY



TWO BRIGHT SPOTS ON MAIN STREET
Marshall can be proud of many attractive places along Main Street, but there are two businesses which deserve special praise. Not only for their window displays, but also for their contents and flower arrangements.

I refer to the Shady Side and Sunshine Florists. Shady Side is across the street from the First Baptist Church and Sunshine is next to the church. I doubt that there are two flower shops more attractive in North Carolina than the two located on Main Street in Marshall. I congratulate the owners for the timely and attractive window displays.

RODEO, FIREWORKS SUCCESSFUL

The annual rodeo sponsored by the Marshall Volunteer Fire Department over July 4 was again successful although the weather didn't completely cooperate. Although rain fell on Wednesday night's performance, the large crowd stayed through the show. Following the rodeo, a lengthy display of colorful fireworks thrilled the hundreds of spectators. 'Bill' and I are fortunate to live where we can enjoy the fireworks from our porch. Robbie Penland, our neighbor, came by and watched the display with us.

Congratulations to the firemen who sponsored the annual event.

NEW INDUSTRY NEAR WEAVERVILLE

For several weeks, I have wondered what was being built on the large site at the intersection of U.S. 25-70 in Weaverville. Curiosity got the best of me, so I stopped last week and asked some of the workmen what the future building was going to be.

I learned that the building is the new RCA plant. When completed, the plant will manufacture cassette tapes and employ 300 people.

SAVING SOULS

Wendell Phillips was traveling through Ohio once when he fell in with a carload of ministers. A Southerner from Kentucky was not very cordial to the opinions of the great abolitionist and set out to embarrass Mr. Phillips.

The Kentuckian asked Mr. Phillips, "You are Wendell Phillips, are you not?" "Yes," answered the abolitionist.

"You're trying to free the slaves, aren't you?"

"Yes, sir, I am," Phillips replied.

"Well, why do you preach your doctrines up here? Why don't you go over into Kentucky?" the man asked.

Phillips replied, "Excuse me, sir, but aren't you also a preacher?"

"I am, sir," came the reply.

"Are you trying to save souls from Hell?" Phillips asked.

"Yes, sir, that is my business," the man answered.

"Well, why don't you go there then?" Phillips replied.

-Submitted by Everette Barnett

Know Comment

By JOSEPH GODWIN



Due to technical difficulties, we are unable to present Dr. Godwin's column this week. 'Know Comment' will return next week.



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