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THURSDAY, JUNE 24, 1982

Change tax system

The Hoke County commissioners heard protests last week against the increase in property value set by the eight-year countywide property re-evaluation required by state law. Though the tax rate probably will be lower than the 1981-82 rate of \$1.01 per \$100 evaluation on real property (land and buildings), most property owners will pay more than they did last year. (The rate will be 72 cents as proposed, or lower, and possibly higher, but certainly not nearly as high as the old rate.)

The opposition was expressed, at a public hearing, and the opposition and explanations of the tax system occupied all but a few minutes of the approximately 75 minutes the hearing took.

In short, it was another demonstration that taxpayers not enjoying substantial exemptions, the commissioners, and the county institutions are in a bind. The taxpayers are beset by the rising costs of ordinary living as well as doing business, and by federal and state, as well as county taxes. The county departments, which include the school system, are beset by the same increasing costs of operating. The departments need more money just to maintain their present level of services. The commissioners have to set a tax rate high enough to meet the increasingly costlier needs of the county's people and yet low enough to prevent as little additional hardship on the property owners as possible.

In the taxing system, of course, the tax on real property is the main source of income to pay the operating expenses of any county. The personal-property tax also provides income, but less than the real estate tax.

Each county also is operating under the thumb of state law principally, and federal law. Consequently within the tax system are exceptions which operate to keep a county from getting more revenue from its real-property tax, its main source of income.

For example, mobile homes are not classified as real property. They are classified as "personal property," for the reason that they can be moved, making them in the law's viewpoint like a motor vehicle rather than a house. The owner consequently pays less than he would on a permanently fixed home or other building.

For another example, military people living in Hoke County are exempt from paying personal-property taxes, which means that if they rent, rather than own, their homes they pay none of the main sources of county revenue.

Also the way The System works, industry will pay less this year after re-evaluation than last year, while most farm and home owners will pay more.

Other examples of income-cutting forces could be described. The chairman of the county commissioners, John Balfour, pointed this out, the latter at the public hearing, and the two other examples at the joint meeting of the county school board and county commissioners the following night.

The county commissioners, in Hoke and elsewhere, are the targets of the complaints and criticism that follows every eight-year re-evaluation.

But the real target should be the taxing system itself, and the General Assembly is the only power that can provide any substantial relief.

In view of these years of inflation, the tax laws should be changed to at least spread the load of taxpaying from the farm and home owner in the middle-income class to the people and organizations which are better equipped to pay more.

This is a very painful process, and the legislators will get bitter fights.

But it must be done, for the sake of the school systems and the other service agencies of the counties.

--BL

Anti-nuke paradox?

From The News-Argus, Goldsboro

A paradox of the anti-nuclear power movement is that many of its participants are members of the academic community.

Yet, engineers at nuclear power facilities contend that opposition to nuclear power all too frequently is based on lack of information.

One would think that college students and professors, particularly, would be inquisitive enough to examine the facts concerning nuclear power production and bright enough to absorb these facts.

Too many, unfortunately, equate a nuclear power plant with a mushroom shaped cloud. They conjure up fears of a plant exploding at worst or emitting radioactive particles in the air and water at best.

There is no similarity between a nuclear bomb and a nuclear power plant. Had nuclear fission been used to produce electricity before the atomic bomb was dropped on Hiroshima, we probably would have little of the concern over safety we witness today.

But because of the chronological order of their development, the spectre of the mushroom cloud hangs over nuclear plants in the minds of many people.

Our worst nuclear accident in more than 600 "reactor years" of operations was at Three Mile Island.

Despite some mechanical and human failings - from which much has been learned - no one was hurt. The extraordinary safety precautions built into such plants served us well and have been improved upon.

To this day, no member of the public has been killed as a result of nuclear plant operations.

But how about radioactivity and its impact on those living near nuclear plants?

A person living near a nuclear power plant can expect to absorb an extra .3 millirems of radiation in a year.

'Don't just sit there, help me answer the phones'



If that sounds frightening, don't scamper off yet. Wherever you go you are probably going to absorb 150 millirems of radiation. You get it from the sun, from the ground, from the building you live or work in, from your color television set.

In fact, you'll get some radiation from a wood stove or from a coal-fired furnace.

In order to receive the minimum amount of radiation that could cause symptoms of illness, you would have to absorb 666.666 times the dosage you would experience as a result of living near a nuclear plant.

All factors considered, nuclear power is the cleanest and safest source of energy we can abundantly produce. It also is, by far, the cheapest. Carolina Power and Light Co. customers would have paid \$700 million more for electricity in recent years had it not been for savings experienced with nuclear plants.

As we look at mounting costs of electricity and its impact on every family and business budget, we can get a better perspective. Per unit fuel cost for producing electricity by coal is almost four times greater than producing it by nuclear energy. The customer, of course, must pay the difference.

The paradox of having so much of the opposition to nuclear power coming from the academic community is more of an indictment of the emotionalism and motives of those opponents than it is of nuclear plants.

The fact that no new nuclear plants have been started in six years, cites, to some degree, the effectiveness of the anti-nuke movement. It also illustrates the foolhardiness of a nation that shackles its people with burdensome costs and foreign fuel dependency in order to placate a vocal, well orchestrated and often misguided minority.

It's a Small World

By Bill Lindau

There's some advice in the Bible that says, though maybe not exactly like this, "Cast your bread upon the waters, and it shall be returned a hundred fold."

Well, I've had that experience in a small way, in the past few months.

I've been casting sunflower seeds on the grass in various places. Squirrels and birds (and even a dog) have been eating the stuff up.

But that's not the point. The critters didn't find all of the seeds.

So come sometime during the year's warm and sometimes wet weather I'll have a permanent crop of sun flowers scattered around my yard. Also, the Town of Southern Pines will have permanent crop of sunflowers along the curb in front of the house. (unless the town street forces remove them).

And the birds and squirrels can feed themselves for a while every year.

I asked a veterinarian the other day for tips for "curing" the dogs of chasing cars.

He admitted it's hard to do. Even when a dog is hit by a car he is chasing, it won't necessarily cure him. One of the patients suffered a broken leg that way. But not long after the splint came off, he was back to his old "hobby," chasing cars. Sometimes getting hit discourages a dog from car-chasing.

The doctor (Russell Tate) did say, however, that dousing the dog with water while he is following your car could work. He said that means really soaking the pooch.

Some bike riders and joggers carry bottles of water with squirting attachments, and they give a chasing dog a few squirts, which in all but the most stubborn of chasing-type dogs, will work. But a few squirts from one rider or jogger won't guarantee curing a dog of chasing all riders or joggers. Mailmen in the larger cities carry a can of a stinging liquid, like the police Mace, which is discouraging for a

suspicious dog. But other letter carriers are allowed to not deliver mail to houses with a hostile - barking dogs on the premises, even though the dogs don't actually bite. Usually, the dog-wary mailmen leaves the letters and packages at neighbors rather than returning them to the post office.

One of our acquaintances used to drive his motorcycle to work, about 15 miles from home, and back every day. Along the road lived a large dog, who also was rather fast. So every morning starting at the dog house, our hero found this menacing pooch bounding right behind him, practically drooling on his taillight, for a mile or two, threatening to grab a wheel in his mouth.

Someone suggested the rider get Mace and give the dog a squirt, and this he did.

"Well, he chased me again this morning," the rider related, "so I gave him a shot of Mace."

"Sure it worked. He stopped right there. He sneezed, and shook his head."

"But when he started chasing me again..."

There's also a theory that dogs chase cars because they are fascinated by spinning wheels.

A long time ago I read in a magazine about one way to stop a dog from chasing cars. Get a short, hard stick, tie one end of a string around the middle and the other end to the dog's collar so the stick hangs about even with the dog's knees (if that's what you call them). The result is when the dog starts running after a car, the stick will tap him on the knees, stinging him.

Of course, one defect in that system is it would cause the dog to stop running for any reason, since he won't know that he gets tapped with the stick only when he chases cars, only that he gets stung whenever he runs. Well, there's just no perfect system -- except keep him on a leash whenever he is out of your yard. That will save the car-chaser's (and motorcycle-chaser's) life, as well as prevent unnecessary worry for a driver.

CLIFF BLUE... People & Issues



RUSSIAN CHALLENGE! ... On Tuesday, June 15, Soviet Foreign Minister Andrei Gromyko told the disarmament conference at the United Nations in New York that Moscow would never be the first to launch a nuclear strike. White House officials are said to have shrugged it off.

We think that President Reagan should accept the Russian challenge if the challenge is made by Soviet President Brezhnev to make it firm between the two nations.

Along with the agreement, we feel the U.S. should challenge the Russians to open their arsenals for free and full inspection of their arsenals with no strings tied, and that the United States do the same.

What's good for the goose should be good for the gander! We certainly don't think it too much to agree to, as we suspect the Russians know our secrets as well as we know theirs!

HOLLINGS FOR PRESIDENT?... We have been watching the South Carolina U.S. Senator rather closely during the past several months since he came up with a tax proposal, following the President's poor recommendations on the matter. I forget in detail how his tax proposal was laid out, but it sounds quite reasonable. Some changes could have been made, but it had a reasonable approach to fiscal affairs.

Hollings has been up in New Hampshire and our guess is that he, like several others, will "feel the call to run." Senator Hollings is much better known than was Jimmy Carter when he started out.

EDWIN PATE... The sudden passing of Edwin Pate of Laurinburg removes a valuable citizen at the age of 84. It was the pleasure of the writer to serve six terms in the General Assembly with Senator Pate.

An editorial in the Laurinburg Exchange gives a revealing account of the late senator. It follows:

THE FIRST CHOICE: When Edwin Pate died Monday, Scotland County lost a successful businessman and a prominent citizen. It also lost a good friend.

The following story, told by a close friend of Edwin Pate's, illustrates that point better than any laudatory remarks.

After the death of U.S. Senator Willis Smith, N.C. Gov. William

Umstead was faced with the responsibility of appointing someone to fill the unexpired term. A group of the governor's closest friends gathered in Durham to discuss who should be recommended as a replacement.

After some discussion, the committee agreed to recommend Edwin Pate of Laurinburg. Gov. Umstead approved of the choice and gave the nominating committee permission to contact Pate with the good news.

Pate is reputed to have thanked the contracting committee members for the honor, then politely declined the nomination.

"But North Carolina needs you in Washington," the committee member said.

"If they really need me," Pate replied, "they need me more right here in North Carolina."

His reply says much about the value he placed on his ties on Scotland County and his business and civic activities here. Personal recognition was a secondary consideration.

Who did Gov. Umstead nominate? His final selection was Sam J. Ervin, Jr.

FOUR-YEAR TERMS ... Regarding the "four year terms" for state legislators, we have never heard anyone defending the four-year terms.

Well, we guess their names are on the House and Senate roll calls, having the proposal submitted in the primary in June, rather than the regular election in November, tells that they hoped to get it adopted in a quiet manner.

Here is one thing that we predict about the four-year term: "Should the Amendment pass, from the election forward, government will grow faster, and taxes will be higher!"

PRIMARY... With the N.C. Primary being on Tuesday, June 29, this year, this will be the last issue for comments before voting time as in most newspapers.

We have five proposed Amendments to the N.C. Constitution. Some are not too easily understood. On voting on a constitutional amendment, if a person doesn't fully understand it, we suggest you vote against it, for, when it becomes a part of the Constitution it's much harder to repeal than a mere legislative act.

Letter To The Editor

Tribute to Local Dog Warden
Editor, The News-Journal

We recently had an episode at our house which required the services of Mr. Hales, Hoke County dog warden. The primary motive for relating this incident is to bring recognition to Mr. Hales and his commendable attitude toward his position.

"Buddy," our family dog, had always been a loyal, loving and obedient pet. However, his instinctive taste for poultry began to grow until finally the lust overcame him and our neighbors suffered a tragic loss in their hen house. There was no explanation Buddy could have offered. He was caught red-handed and stood as guilty as if he had feathers hanging from his mouth.

After the third offense, we said, "that's it, we'll call the pound." We just couldn't have a chicken eater around. Mr. Hales responded promptly the next morning. His positive assurance that he could find Buddy a good home comforted us, as we watched Buddy roll out of our lives in the back of Mr. Hales's little red truck. That first night Buddy was gone, was the emptiest, darkest night we had had lately and the second, and third nights grew progressively worse. Each member of our family was feeling the same, but no one wanted to express it.

A phone call to Mr. Hales on the fourth day revealed bad news. Our

beloved, gentle, harmless Buddy had become vicious and would not cooperate with Mr. Hales. Needless to say our local dog warden had his hands full. He told us he could not get near Buddy and could not give him to new owners until he was sure of the safety factor. His exposure to a hazardous dog did not seem to daunt his determination to continue to work with the dog, hoping to eventually present a "reformed" Buddy to the new owners. His patience was as evident as the bite marks and scratches on his arms from previous "clients."

Finally, we felt as a family, that Buddy was too much a part of us. Mr. Hales, being the patient man that he is, offered to return Buddy to us. This man's gentle and patient ways were quite unexpected. Having moved to the Raeford area from a larger city, we are more accustomed to a short-tempered and impatient service than this man offered. He could have said "Look lady, I came to your house once and picked this mutt up and nearly lost my arms doing so, and put up with him for four miserable days. Now if you want him, you come and get him." But instead, when I thanked him for putting up with Buddy and with Buddy's family, who changed their minds, he replied in a gentle manner, "Well, that's my job."

Hats off to you, Mr. Hales.
Nancy Wells

This Is The Law

WAGE EARNER PLANS

People usually think bankruptcy requires the debtor to lose his property or most of it. However, that is not always the case.

A certain kind of bankruptcy, called a "wage earner plan", is designed to allow a person to pay his debts out of his income and keep his property.

Typically, a wage earner plan provides that the debtor will make payments over a three-year period,

although the Bankruptcy Court may permit up to five years.

The debtor must have a regular income, out of which he will pay a specified amount through the court for the benefit of his creditors. The court will not require him to pay more of his income than he can reasonably afford.

A person feeling overwhelmed with debts may find it helpful to investigate the relief available through a wage earner plan.



About 70 percent of the people in America read a newspaper at least once a day.