

Editorials

A matter of pride

Tuesday's groundbreaking of the "Meadows" was an historic event for Raeford and Hoke County.

The 15 duplex buildings, which are scheduled to be completed by November, will be the first residences to come under the auspices of the Raeford Housing Authority and will be the first of about \$4.5 million in publicly assisted units expected to be started here during 1983.

After years of having only a few isolated publicly subsidized dwellings in Hoke County, over 170 units are expected to be completed here within the next two years.

Not only should those homes raise the standard of living for the families renting them, but they will also let industries and other businesses considering locating here know that Hoke County cares about all of its residents.

Although many in the past may have suffered because of the lack of housing here, the wait may have been worth the sacrifice for those persons as well as the rest of the county.

During the 1960's and early 1970's, when the federal government was experimenting with housing in a big way, numerous projects sprang up which were poorly constructed.

Many of those projects were built by developers who were after the easy federal buck and found they could get it by slapping a few public units together.

Far too many of those projects were mismanaged, are falling apart and have now become slums.

Those units, and earlier versions, have given public housing a bad name.

To avoid some of the pitfalls of the past, the Raeford Housing Authority, which has jurisdiction over all of Hoke County, has developed a unique plan.

Under an arrangement with federal funding agencies and with the developers of the projects, the authority will not own the units, but will maintain the management.

Officials hope that the plan will enable the authority to keep a close check on the renters and to maintain quality projects which are models for the rest of North Carolina.

In addition, the authority will be paid a management fee from the developers.

Unlike some counties, which receive a "payment in lieu of taxes," both Raeford and Hoke County will receive full ad valorem tax payments from the project developers.

Each of the developers are also financing the projects through federal agencies, who have agreed to grant 40-year loans. It is hoped that the buildings will last at least that long.

Federal officials have also assured the builders that they are interested in quality housing and have provided funds for architectural design and construction supervision.

Rather than being placed on small lots in multi-story buildings, the units planned for Raeford will be developed in duplex or single family structures with a low density per acre and will be on landscaped sites.

Those who have opposed these projects in the past may be surprised to find that all this time and planning could add up to give the city and the county quality subsidized housing, which will be an asset to the community.

Those who have supported the development of public housing here for the last five years may find that their efforts and frustrations have been worth the wait.

In case of insanity

Even psychiatrists were apparently disturbed by the acquittal last year of John W. Hinckley Jr., who admitted shooting President Reagan and three other men but was found not guilty by reason of insanity. The American Psychiatric Association has just urged the tightening of the insanity defense, saying medical and legal reforms in recent years had led to a potentially dangerous situation in handling those who were acquitted of violent crimes.

In its first major statement on the insanity defense, it said, "We believe that neither the law, the public, psychiatry, nor the victims of violence have been well served by the general approach and reform of the last 10 years, which has obscured the quasi-criminal nature of the insanity defense." While the report didn't go so far as to call for the abolition of the insanity defense, the association did admit that the psychiatric professional has "great difficulty" determining whether a person is legally sane or insane and predicting future violent behavior. The association insisted that those persons acquitted of violent crimes by reason of insanity be given greater supervision.

When, if ever, a violent criminal is "cured" of the mental illness and can be safely released will remain a vexing problem which psychiatrists and the civil authorities must handle on a case-by-case basis. But certainly society can start to get a grip on its own senses by finding people "guilty" of violent crimes even if their mental condition warrants medical treatment instead of prison. That is a distinction that should be codified in law.

--From The Wall Street Journal



It's a Small World

by Bill Lindon

Newspapers get a lot of criticism, some of it justified. Sometimes a newspaper gets criticized for telling, in the critic's opinion, too much.

For example, a police reporter dutifully got the details of a burglary, including a list of everything the burglar took with him. Then he came on a fascinating aspect of the crime. So he wrote it into this story.

The fascinating aspect was, he reported, the burglar overlooked \$3,000 in cash. The police didn't feel that the paper should have published that.

The burglar after reading the story returned to the house and got what he had overlooked.

Once upon a time, the Associated Press or another wire service had a ban in its Washington Bureau: the reporter must never mention that liquor was served at a diplomatic or other function.

Any mention of cocktails or highballs or even dinner wine was stricken routinely from every report before it was filed for transmission to member newspapers.

But one reporter bet another that he could slip in a note that liquor was served, without it being cut out of his story.

One evening he returned to the office to write his story about a social function.

After the first couple of hundred words, he reported the dignitaries

who were among the guests: Ambassador and Mrs. So-and-so, Secretary and Mrs. Higgly, and after finishing with the real dignitaries, he wrote, "I.W. Harper, J.W. Dant, Jack Daniels..."

Sure enough, his story went on the wires without being cut.

His editor must have been either a cooking-liquor man or a teetotaler from birth.

Sometimes it's tough trying to explain why certain things happen. Like the Yangtze overflowed, and Ed Biffle's wife bought a new hat.

I did manage to make a rational connection between two conditions in a news story once.

I got notified one day that the U.S. Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service office in Asheville would be closed for George Washington's birthday. So what's the ASCS office got to do with George Washington? To me, the answer was obvious, so I write the following, which constituted the entire story, and it was published that way in the Asheville Citizen:

"The Buncombe County ASCS office will be closed in observance of the birthday of George Washington, a former president of the United States and a prominent Virginia farmer."

Somebody thought that was funny, so he sent it to The New Yorker magazine, which also thought it

was funny, and published it. I think he got paid \$6 for it.

I picked up a few bucks a few years later the same way.

The Winston-Salem Journal had a story about South Carolina's official electric chair. The headline on the story read: "S.C. Electric Chair Found Unsafe."

So I mailed the clipping with the head to The New Yorker, and the magazine published it.

The Houston (Tex.) Press used to prefer short sentences for most effective impact, I wrote one that fit the description. A police report concerned an accident, which I turned into this story. I forget the victim's name now but the story went like this:

"Blank lit a match to see whether there was any gas in the tank."

"There was."

"Blank was in good condition this morning in Rice Hospital."

That form probably was inspired by this little story I read some time before.

"Little Algy met a bear.
"The bear was bulgy.
"The bulge was Algy."

And on these cold days of winter, you may get some comfort from this variation on a religious comment:

"Many are cold.
"But few are frozen."

Letters To The Editor

Puppy Creek Philosopher

Dear editor:

With the world in the shape it's in, what with world-wide recession, unemployment and mammoth deficits, and professional economists acting like politicians -- attacking each other's solutions without offering any of their own, I thought it might help to get my mind off earth's ills by examining space for a while.

It didn't do any good. For example, it's been discovered that traveling in space isn't all it's cracked up to be.

You get a terrible case of motion sickness up there or out there, whichever it is. In fact, it's so bad the space people are planning on sending a doctor up with the next crew of astronauts to study the problem.

What I'm wondering is, who's going to study the doctor if he comes down with motion sickness?

In the early days of space exploration there was a considerable talk about colonizing that distant void.

We've send up a huge space ship, part by part, till it was big enough to accommodate a whole community. I've forgotten what those people would do up there, I think maybe it was to make ball bearings and grow violets, but after we've seen TV shots of astronauts floating around in their capsules, the thought of a whole community of people floating around and bumping into each other makes you shake your head.

The idea seems as impractical as balancing the budget by quadrupling the deficit.

Now it's true that two Russian cosmonauts stayed in space for

over six months, and while I haven't been to Russia, I can see it might be possible they'd rather have motion sickness up there than whatever it was they had down there.

Yours faithfully,
J.A.

Watch commended

Dear Editor
My husband and I wish to take

this opportunity to commend the organizer's and workers of the Rockfish Community Watch for their foresight and progressive thinking for the community.

We are very glad to live in a neighborhood where people really care, and do something about improving the community. Thank you, J.T. & Edith Fitzgerald Rt. 2 Raeford, N.C.

Letters Policy

Letters to the editor are encouraged and welcomed. Writers should keep letters as short as possible. Names, addresses and telephone numbers should be included and all letters must be signed. Names will be printed, however, other information will be kept confidential. We reserve the right to edit letters for good taste and brevity. Letters should be received by The News Journal by 5 p.m. on the Monday of the publication week.



CLIFF BLUE ... People & Issues

COST OF A BABY ...

Be prepared to spend a bundle when you have your bundle of joy. According to a survey by the Health Insurance Association of America, medical and layette expenses, will come to about \$3000.00.

The cost of a cesarean delivery -- and nearly one in five women in the U.S. are having them these days -- is about \$4,000.

The survey, covering delivery costs in some 200 hospitals across the nation during 1982, also found becoming a parent costs more in the Northeast, less in the South; more in an urban area and less in a rural area.

BOOZE SALES... "High unemployment hurts booze sales," says the Wall Street Journal.

"If it's a choice of putting food or liquor on the table," says a liquor distributor in New York, "most people will choose food."

"Unseasonably warm weather may help liquor stores in some places. When people don't have to pay big gas bills, they have money for whiskey," says an official.

DUNN FIRES... McLamb's Supermarket in Dunn was gutted by fire Tuesday morning, Jan. 18.

According to McLamb's own estimate, damage to the building and inventory, was "\$250,000 to \$300,000."

It will cost us more than that to rebuild, he said.

Eastern North Carolina has been hit hard by fire in recent weeks.

EARLY BIRDS... Sen. Allen Cranston of California has become the second 1984 presidential candidate to qualify for Federal funds.

Former Vice President Walter Mondale was the first.

The California Democrat is set to announce his candidacy on Ground Hog Day -- February 2.

LOSES AND WINS... Margaret Heckler, Massachusetts Republican, lost her bid for a ninth GOP house seat in Massachusetts, but she will not be off Uncle Sam's payroll for long as President Reagan has nominated her for Health and Human Services Secretary, succeeding Richard Schweiker. She will be the second woman in Reagan's cabinet.

COSTS HURT LESS... Inflation doesn't seem to be hurting American families as much today as it did back in 1978, a national survey by the American Council of Life Insurance discovered.

Some 51% of those interviewed in the 1982 survey said inflation was having "a great deal of effect" on their families, a five percentage point drop since 1978.

HIGHWAYS... States will receive an average 43% boost in highway construction money because of the nickel increase in the Federal gasoline tax, with some faring much better than others, according to transportation department estimates.

SAFE THROUGH JUNE... The Treasury department announced recently that it will transfer \$13.5 billion into the main retirement fund so there will be enough money to pay next year's Social Security checks.

\$180 MILLION RAISED ... Political action committees raised and spent more than \$180 million during the period covering last fall's elections, the Federal Commission reported recently.

DEATH RATES DOWN ... Death rates in the United States are declining for all groups except people between 15 and 24 years old, the government reported recently.

Life expectancy rose to 69.9 years for men and 77.6 years for women in 1979.

DRUG BILL SIGNED... President Reagan signed legislation recently that provides a tax break to drug companies to encourage them to develop medicines for some 2,000 rare and debilitating diseases that afflict about 20 million Americans.

AGNEW PAYS... Former Vice President Spiro T. Agnew paid \$268,482 under protest to the state of Maryland for kickbacks that courts ruled he had received during two years of his governorship of the state.

A LEADER... A leader is a man who gets something done; not a man whose only ability is expressed in criticizing what others have done.

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