

Editorials

Widened highway vital for county

Anyone who has lived in Hoke County for more than two years, should not be surprised that at least one top state Department of Transportation (DOT) official is confused and misinformed about the way local residents view the four-laning of U.S. Highway 401. Last week the DOT division engineer, who oversees highway construction projects in this area, said there was little demand from Hoke residents to widen the road, despite its record as a death track. It is unfortunate that this engineer, as well as members of the state Highway Board of Commissioners have apparently not been urged to check their records lately on the widening of 401 between Raeford and the Cumberland County line. Had the official and others been reminded to look at the files, they would have seen that Hoke County's fight to improve the road goes back beyond recent memory. Buried in what must be mounds of paperwork, they would have found that:

- DOT officials have acknowledged numerous times that the highway is dangerous and needs widening.
- Even a governor had promised to have the work completed before the end of 1972.

- The project was funded over 13 years ago.
- Each time county residents have asked about its status, they were told the four lane would be built "soon."
- Death and casualty tolls have steadily mounted on the 10-mile two lane strip.

Records would also show that both Raeford and Hoke County officials passed resolutions in July, 1982, asking the highway commission to get on with the work and to exclude the Cumberland County portion of the estimated \$14.5 million project. At that time, it was the four-mile section of planned road near Lake Rim which bothered Cumberland officials and was used as an excuse to stop the project. During the previous decade, the highway commission has also used the excuse of lack of funds to delay the widening. Those excuses came despite Governor Robert Scott's promise to have the work completed before he left office in 1972. If someone had suggested recently that the highway engineer research the history of the project, he would have probably found the 1971 memorandum from Scott to then state Highway Administrator George Willoughby. In the note, the governor asked about the status of the project, adding: "Everytime I go to that area, I am asked what the story is on the road, which they feel I have made a commitment to improve." Scott apparently felt there was enough public pressure in 1970 to get \$3.8 million earmarked on the DOT budget for construction of the four-lane road. Had Scott been able to deliver on his promise, not only would the taxpayers have saved \$10 million on the cost of the project, but the

lives of the 17 persons who died on 401 in 1971, along with the lives of others who have perished since, might have been saved. If the highway officials had been prompted to check the files, they would have also found that more than 5,400 vehicles per day travel the stretch between Raeford and Fayetteville, and that as a result of the heavy traffic and narrow road, the death toll is about 10% greater on 401 than the state average for two-lane roads. Hoke residents should not be surprised by the DOT's forgetfulness when it comes to widening U.S. Highway 401. The department has a long history of allowing this project to get moved down and off the priority list. However, perhaps the DOT's and the highway commission's memories would have been better had Hoke residents, particularly those elected to public office, kept the pressure on to get the construction started. To the DOT this is just another highway project, but to Hoke County the improvements are not only critical to the well being of those who use the road, but they are also essential to future growth. Without good highway access, the future success of efforts to attract new industries and new residents will be limited. The need for the improved highway is so important to this county, that local officials should be prodding the DOT and the district highway commissioner monthly, if not weekly, to find out the current status of the project. This is an election year, and we urge local officials to demand that the DOT give the widening of 401 top priority. There are few other matters as important to this county, and only a local effort will get the construction started.



Letters To The Editor

Letter to governor draws a response

Dear Editor:
I am a seventh grade student at Upchurch Jr. High. I wrote to the governor about the movie *The Day After*. He responded to my letter.

Yours truly,
Tara Jacobs

Here is his letter:

Dear Tara:
Thank you for your letter of concern about the threat of a nuclear war. Like many others, I watched the movie "The Day After" with my family, and afterwards I found myself thinking more deeply about the possible consequences of nuclear war. We must resolve to do all we can to prevent a nuclear attack. Our nation must maintain the military strength that will deter any enemy from attacking us, and we must also have the moral courage required to pursue negotiations that will make this world a safer place to live. My best personal regards.

Sincerely,
James B. Hunt Jr.

After all, a good drink of liquor never hurt anyone, unless of course that person drove, beat on the family or let the kids go hungry in order to maintain the habit. That particular kind needs horsewhipping. Honorable Hoke officials: How can any rule or law say that what is right for one day is wrong for another day? Hypocrisy on the Establishment's part, I say. Those that vote for the Blue Law should have sense enough to know that if a person doesn't drink alcohol then that person will not purchase it period. On the other hand, if a person does drink it, then the Blue Law doesn't mean a 'hill of beans' with the exception of double-stocking on Saturdays. A wise idea for a sensible man. Come on now, let's get with it and repeal all Blue Laws. If a person is going to drink it, they'll drink it and no Blue Law has never rehabilitated anybody. The greatest 'Blue Law' is written into every heart, and it is called 'Conscience'. I'm sure many a good citizen follows its dictating and doesn't need a guide of immoral hypocrisy.

Thank You Sincerely,
Daniel Edwards
Bladenboro

But instead of television staring at everybody it's the other way around. Everybody is staring at television. And as for everybody being disciplined and under absolute control, Mr. Orwell, were he alive now, would be amazed at what goes on in many of the classrooms of the nation, not to mention Lebanon, Central America, Afghanistan, and the state legislature. He said also that language would be turned around, with war meaning peace, ignorance meaning truth, slavery meaning freedom. He got close to the head of the nail there. In Washington these days a new tax is called "revenue enhancement" and every Congressman calls every other Congressman distinguished. However, on the whole, as far as I can tell, Mr. Orwell was off the mark and human nature is about like it was when he wrote his book, if you can overlook the chance of nuclear war and the historic cold spell we had in December.

Yours faithfully,
J.A.

Deregulation working for public

The strike by employees of the Greyhound Corporation was only one of many indications of the beneficial results of getting the federal government out of the business of deciding who can be in the transportation business, what routes they can operate and how much they can charge. In federal jargon that is known as economic regulation. In recent years, Congress has moved to deregulate the transportation industry, including airlines, bus lines, trucking and, to large extent, railroads. The results are becoming evident. Companies that have grown up and enjoyed the luxury of operating in an environment of limited competition, with the ability to pass along bloated costs, including excessive labor cost to consumers and users through compliant federal agencies, are having to readjust their way of doing business. Greatly increased competition means that excessive labor contracts cannot be approved and passed along to the customers. Some airlines are finding it impossible or very difficult to make the adjustment, and the Teamster's Union has witnessed a

30% drop in its truck-driver membership. There is a lot of talk about the need for Congress to restore regulatory protection; but that heat certainly isn't coming from the buyers of transportation services. The public has been doing just fine under deregulation. More competition has resulted in lower rates and in most places, service is better than ever. Those who want to turn back the clock to the "good old days" of federal regulation are not getting much support. Too many people now know that the competitive market works to the public benefit.

Blue laws need to be repealed

Honorable citizens of Hoke County: Your Blue Laws are invalid according to the Universal Laws of Moral Ethics. The Blue Laws are the results of moral hypocrisy, hypocritical trash, in other words. Why? You may ask!! Because, for the simple reason that it is just as wrong for a person, morally, to purchase alcoholic beverages on Monday as well as on a Sunday, or, it is just as right, morally, for a person to purchase alcoholic beverages on a Sunday as on a Monday.

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Mother's secret in the hands of Congress

By Warren Johnston

In recent weeks *The News-Journal* has been receiving a number of letters addressed to the "Puppy Papers."
The letters don't exactly fit the "Letters To The Editor" category, so each week, when they arrive, I put them in a drawer and hope that they might get lost. I also put a lot of other things in the same drawer which I have labled "Think About Tomorrow," or TAT.
The other day tomorrow came. The TAT drawer was so full that it would not open. I was forced to think about it.
I have found from past experience that when these problems crop up, the best remedy is to clean out the drawer.
In addition to the letters, there were a great many other important items which had been filed in the TAT drawer.
There were things like: a September invitation to buy a weekly column on how to build a winning basketball team written by Jim Valvano called "Ask Coach V," instructions on how to handle a heat wave, a hurricane watch manual, the October hog market report, a review copy of a new girly magazine which was to be distributed exclusively in Dillon County, South Carolina and a sincere article from Governor Jim Hunt wishing all the readers of non-daily newspapers a "happy, healthy and prosperous new year."
Although it was painful, I forced myself to dump the drawer's contents in a trash can, which I had labled "Forget About Tomorrow" or FAT.

The Puppy Papers

As the deluge of memorabilia poured into the FAT can, a letter caught my eye. I rescued it.
Since I had gone to the effort to pull it back from certain oblivion and since it seemed to be on a current topic, I decided to include it in the column.
The column was a little reluctant. "I refuse to become one of those advice to the lovelorn things," the column said.
After some encouragement, the column went along. Here is the letter:

Dear Mr. Papers:
I am worried about a telephone conversation that I had with a federal government official last August.
The conversation got a little ugly, but in recent months, I had thought little about it, until I heard the other night that the official was accused of tape recording all his conversations.
When I saw him on the news the following day, I was relieved when he accused the press of being a bunch of "pinko pantywaists" and denied ever taping anyone.
But the next day, I became concerned when he admitted the recordings had been made, and said his previous denials were "misinformation."
Actually, our telephone conversation wasn't any big deal. I had

just called to ask how to tune in the Voice of America on my radio, when this fellow began questioning me about my personal life.
After implying that my political leanings were left of Mao Tse-tung, he accused my mother of wearing Army boots. Of course, I denied it.
Later, I recanted the denial and told him that I had misspoken not only because of faulty recollection and anxiety, but also to protect my aged mother's reputation.
Although the official told the media that he was very discreet with the telephone recordings, he has now turned the tapes over to two Congressional investigating committees.
It was bad enough having the conversation on tape for this guy's listening enjoyment, but now it looks like my mother's secret could become part of the Congressional Record. What should I do?

Sincerely,
Waldo Thotmorton
Honeydew Falls

Dear Waldo:
There's not a lot you can do to get mothers to change their ways, particularly when they get a little age on them.
You might try getting her into a pair of sneakers, but I don't hold much hope for your success.

Yours truly,
P. Papers