

# Viewpoints

## New CAT program takes more than teachers

Hoke County educators are implementing a program which is designed not only to improve the learning skills of the students, but it should also help raise the ability of those teaching in the schools. It is not a miracle cure for the county school system, but if it receives the support from faculty, students and parents, the program could help many of the existing educational deficiencies. The plan, which centers around improving pupil performance on California Achievement Tests, was started last February and is expected to reach fruition during this school year. The program's success will be measured in the local scores on the spring battery of nationwide exams. In Hoke County, as in other parts of the state and nation, the CAT scores are indicating that students are not learning. Although some might question whether the tests are a true reflection of a pupil's ability, they are accepted nationwide as a standard evaluation.

### Editorials

During last spring's testing Hoke County students scored below their grade level on every test, except first and second grade math. To make matters worse, the county pupils in the higher grades dropped further behind.

According to the results, Hoke County ninth grade students are scoring on an average reading level which is almost one full school year behind their peers. Although still lagging, pupils in the local first, second, third and six grades are within months of the time they took the tests.

The new CAT program is designed to improve teaching skills, as well as student performance and attitudes about learning. Administrators say teachers are enthusiastic about the plan and are optimistic about its success.

If students and parents show the same excitement, the new program could do more than improve the county's CAT scores. It could start today's elementary school-age children on the road to surviving in the high-tech 21st Century.

Unfortunately for the members of society who will have to carry

them, the new program has come too late for those Hoke County ninth graders, who failed last year's test. They are not likely to catch up before they leave high school.

## Symphony needs help

A band of volunteers are hustling around Hoke County trying to raise funds to bring the North Carolina Symphony Chamber Orchestra to Raeford for a Pops Concert on October 4 and for workshops and performances in the schools.

For the last few years, the group has been successful in raising the necessary money, and school children and residents of this county have benefited.

Not only do the Symphony members perform for the schools, but patient demonstrations along with individual instructions are also given to the students.

The Symphony program in Hoke County is worthwhile and excites many to a cultural side of life that they may never see again.

We support the Symphony program and encourage others to do the same.



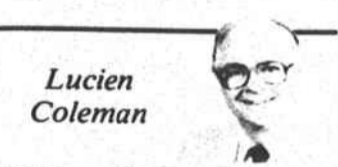
## Age should not be factor to determine retirement

As Labor Day rolled past us Monday, I thought to take a moment to pay tribute to those whose labors have ended.

No, I'm not talking about the people who populate our cemeteries. I have in mind the multitudes who are no longer gainfully employed, not because they chose to drop out of the labor market, but because they have celebrated too many birthdays.

We have a time-honored tradition in this country, the strange belief that age 65 automatically marks the end of one's usefulness in the world of industry, commerce, and productive work. "Strange," I say, because that attitude is really out of touch with reality.

Kathleen Houston is a case in point. Back in 1911 she quit college to make some money as a school teacher. And for the next 53 years she stayed too busy to resume her schooling. But, in 1964, she became a college girl again, enroll-



Lucien Coleman

### Things That Matter

ing in the University of Houston. Four years later, she graduated, at age 77. The following fall she started work on her master's degree in English.

"Anybody can do anything he sets his mind to do," she said to a reporter, "you've got to be willing to work for what you want."

Many developmental psychologists today would agree with that point of view. Increasing evidence points to the conclusion that attitude, not age, is the major limiting factor in life.

Consider Benjamin Franklin, who invented bifocal glasses when he was 78. And Tennyson, who

wrote "Becket" when he was 79. And Galileo, who developed the telescope at age 73. And Grandmother Moses, who began to paint at age 76 because her fingers were getting too stiff for her to sew.

Not only are older adults capable of doing creative work. Many of them want to work.

In a 1974 Harris poll, a national sample of Americans were questioned about the issue of mandatory retirement. An overwhelming majority, 86%, voiced the opinion that nobody should be forced to retire because of age.

Four years later another national poll produced the same results. In both polls, the same attitude was reflected by both working and retired persons.

By the year 2000, one out of every eleven older adults will be 85 or older. The statistic raises an interesting question. Do we really want to perpetuate our quaint custom of forcing citizens into non-labor for the last 20 years of their lives?

## Budget process being streamlined

There are a lot of complaints here on Capitol Hill these days about the way Congress prepares its budget.

Some of those complaints are on target. It simply takes too long and there are many last-minute frenzied decisions.

That's no way to prepare our country's budget. I must say, however, that the budget process has been flexible enough this year to force Congress to make some important budget cuts so we can trim the deficit.

That's not an easy thing to do during an election year because budget cuts usually mean someone has to suffer. Fortunately, Con-

Congressman Bill Hefner



gress looked beyond politics. There are now two proposals in Congress to cut the deficit. I support the one that would reduce the deficit by 182.4 billion dollars over three years. The hang up comes over how much should be cut from defense. When Congress comes back on September 5th after the Republican Convention, many of its members will be trying to solve the dispute over defense spending

and the budget. If an agreement is reached, it's possible a budget for Fiscal Year 1985 can be adopted.

I must point out that these efforts to cut the budget are just a start. They will slow the flow of red ink, but they don't shut it off. Even with the success at trying to reduce the deficit, the problems with the budget remain. Critics complain it takes so much time to prepare and approve a budget and that Congress is prevented from dealing with other business and overseeing existing laws.

As a result of these and other complaints, serious efforts are now underway in the House and Senate to streamline the process. You should be hearing more about this in the months ahead.

## Food price hike gives farmer little

By John Sledge  
N.C. Farm Bureau Federation  
When consumers read the recent headline, "1983 Food Prices Rose the Least in 16 Years", some probably said, "Who are they kidding?"

But according to a report from the National Economics Division of the Economic Research Service, it was the fifth consecutive year that food prices rose less than other prices.

Compared to the 2.1% rise in food prices, other major items in the Consumer Price Index increased more. Clothing rose 2.5%; housing, 2.7%; transportation, 2.4%; and medical care topped the list at 8.7%.

When we go back to the base of 1967 and make a 16 year comparison, the trend is the same. While a half-gallon of milk increased 122%, the cost of a hospital room went up 485%!

While you're thinking about these health cost increases, add

these facts about the other major item that is eroding your budget--taxes. Since 1973, federal taxes increased 158%, state taxes went up to 152% and local taxes rose 108%.

When we look at these budget item increases, where's food? At the bottom of the list.

While bargain food prices may be good news for consumers, it is not necessarily good news for producers. One reason that food prices have not increased is that the farm price has gone up very slowly in some years and decreased in others. The past year, the farm value of food actually dropped by nearly five percent.

This year, USDA expects a slightly larger increase in food prices. It will likely make the headlines, and there may be howls of protest from some consumers. But, if farm prices also increase, it will mean that the very efficient

American farmer can continue to make enough on his investment to stay in business.

The News-Journal  
ANPA NCPA  
Published Every Thursday by  
Dickson Press, Inc., Paul Dickson, Pres.  
119 W. Edwood Avenue, P.O. Box 550  
Raeford, N.C. 28376  
Subscription Rates in Advance  
In County Per Year—\$10.00  
6 Months—\$5.00  
Out of County Per Year—\$12.00  
6 Months—\$6.00  
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2nd Class Postage at Raeford, N.C.  
(USPS 388-260)

# Old bank building may be rebirth of downtown

Back in the spring, when things looked rosy for a college satellite here, I toured the old Bank of Raeford Building, which was being considered as a possible site for the school. Although I got a little dusty, I came away with strong sense of this community's past.

"You look like the past," my wife said, after I arrived home from the tour sporting a cobweb in my hair.

"It's a shame. If the college doesn't use that building, there's no telling what might go there," I said.

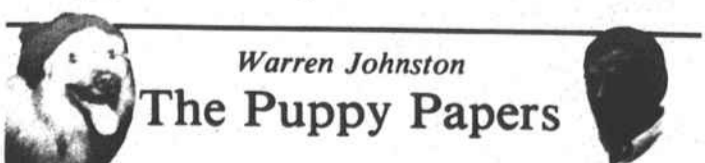
In a larger city, there would be a long line of prospective tenants for the 73-year-old structure. The main floor, with its high ceilings, large windows and attractive molding would be perfect for a fancy restaurant in a bigger town.

"There could be a private dining room in the vault," my wife said.

The third floor ballroom, which was once used by members of the Woodmen of the World who had to enter through a tiny front door, would be an excellent place to teach dance or hold art classes.

Perhaps the second floor could be converted to exclusive apartments. Many local residents still remember the warm atmosphere of the rooms when they were occupied before.

There was no need to dream about the possibilities for the building because we were all optimistic about the college and were sure it would be opening in the fall.



Warren Johnston  
The Puppy Papers

Before long, we said, there will be lots of college students, wearing beanies, running around Main Street, waving pennants and buying paddles for fraternity initiations.

Business will boom in Raeford. We'll have restaurants, bookstores, movie theatres and all the things that college students like to do, we thought.

In fact, we were so sure the college was coming that we forked over \$1,500 to that crowd of architects in Southern Pines to study the "feasibility" of the old bank building.

Of course, how were we to know, after designing the Library, the Department of Social Services Building, the Board of Education and several schools, that these guys would have no apparent feel for restoration of the community. How silly of us to forget that the monetary system is different in that neck of the woods, and that over there \$1,500 doesn't buy much.

"Oh, to fix up that old building for a college would cost you an arm and a leg," they said, after a quick peak inside.

Maybe the college was not a great idea for the oldest brick building in Raeford. After all, college students do make a lot of noise, and Main Street might not be the best place for them, we said, accepting the architects' report.

Now, United Carolina Bank has moved out of the building, and it sits waiting for a new use.

The old bathtub on the third floor is still there. A hot bath from that facility used to cost two bits back in 1912.

A new boiler has been installed for the heating system. It is more efficient than the one which Bob Lewis used to have to fire in 1926 to keep the upstairs tenants warm on Sundays.

The Bank of Raeford building is a landmark in Hoke County and, because of its corner location, the structure probably holds the key to rebuilding Main Street. The right use for the building could start a trend towards downtown revitalization. The wrong use might continue the decline of the business district.

The bank that was once housed there was one of the vital institutions which built this community. Now, members of the Hoke County Historical Society think the building can continue to serve and are trying to see that it does.

"It would be a shame if the old building doesn't benefit the community," my wife said.

"It would be a shame if the community lets it happen," I added.