

Viewpoints

Hoke needs leaders, not more politicians

Now that the elections are over, Hoke County needs to get to work.

For too many months Americans have been bombarded with campaign slogans and had their senses abused by politicians. We have had our fill of the rhetoric. We have wallowed long enough in the carnival atmosphere.

In Hoke County, we have had all the politicians we can stand. What we need now is leadership.

Decisions, which are governing the lives of every resident here, can no longer be delayed as they have been in the past.

Hoke County has a bright future, but local officials cannot make it a reality by being affable and avoiding issues.

We need better schools, a community college, direct telephone service with Fayetteville, a widened U.S. Highway 401, a revitalized downtown, a revamped sewer system, an efficient airport, countywide zoning, rural water systems, an improved courthouse, more residents, motels, restaurants, housing and jobs.

There is a lot to be done and time is running out. We need leaders, not politicians.

SC has better plan for energy assistance

On Halloween, President Ronald Reagan signed legislation which will pump more than \$4 billion in the energy assistance program over the next two years to help low income persons meet the cost of staying warm in the winter.

For most North Carolinians, who are qualified for the program, the money will arrive just in time for spring, and too late to be sure that it will be used for fuel.

As a result the late payments in this state and 48 others, much of the money may not be used as the Congress intended when the program was funded.

In Hoke County, almost \$190,000 was given away last year to help 3,145 residents with heating bills, but local suppliers noted that few of those dollars were used to pay for fuel.

Some of the recipients went to suppliers and cashed the checks, which averaged \$208, buying nothing. Others purchased \$5 or \$10 worth of fuel and pocketed the change.

The law governing the distribution of the funds requires only that recipients need assistance with purchasing fuel for heat, not that they use the money for that purpose.

If the funds are not going for fuel, one has to wonder whether dependent children are going cold, while the money is being diverted for other unintended purposes.

Because the checks do not arrive until February, North Carolina program administrator Kay Fields feels the recipients probably have previously spent other money on fuel and are using the assistance funds to reimburse earlier purchases. But Fields also admits under the present system, social workers would have to make extra visits to the recipients' homes to be sure.

If Congress appropriated the energy funds earlier in the year, then there would be a better chance of distributing them before winter, and odds would be improved on the money being used for fuel, Fields says.

Currently Congress is waiting until there is a nip of winter in the air to make up their minds about helping the poor with heating. The program should be funded in July.

However, even with the earlier funding, we still believe there is a better way to insure that the funds are used for the intended purpose.

In South Carolina, a unique system is being used successfully. The program is holding administrative costs down, limiting fraud and is getting the aid out in early winter when it is needed.

According to the program Director John Rumford, energy certificates, instead of money, will be mailed to 86,000 recipients by Christmas of this year. The certificates, which specify the type of fuel used in the client's home, can be exchanged at any dealer the recipient chooses.

The program is administered through the office of the Governor for a cost well below the 10% required by law. In addition, with the use of computers, every certificate can be tracked. State administrators feel confident that the intent of Congress is being met in South Carolina, Rumford says.

Four years ago, North Carolina looked at the South Carolina system when it was new, and the bugs were being worked out. The program was rejected.

Since then, federal administrative guidelines have improved. The program is now working smoothly in South Carolina. Tax dollars are being saved and poverty level children and elderly are warmer.

We believe it is time for the North Carolina Legislature to look again at the South Carolina certificate system.

We also believe it is time for Congress to start looking at the energy program in July rather than in October.

Rally was good idea

Spirits were high among those attending the old fashioned chicken bog and rally sponsored by the Hoke County Democratic Party on Thursday night.

The Armory floor was filled with residents, politicians and blue grass music. Everyone appeared to be having a good time.

Hoke County needs the enthusiasm and the hard work of all residents to survive, and the gathering Thursday filled the prescription for uplifting the state of mind of those who attended.

Local residents need to remind themselves on a regular basis that Hoke County is one of the finest places in the nation to live.

An annual event on a broader scale than the one Thursday night would serve as a regular reminder that we like living, working, shopping and paying taxes in Hoke County.

It would be a nice way to get to know neighbors and say thanks for trying to make life here better.



Government taking half of dollar

When the government first started taxing personal income, the maximum was 7%. Today, the Federal Government can take as much as fifty cents of each dollar earned.

The system has become so complex that the Internal Revenue Code is now more than 10,000-pages long. And, even though more than half of all 1040 federal income tax forms are professionally prepared—at a cost of more than \$60 billion a year—millions of taxpayers still are under-or over estimating what they have to dish out to Uncle Sam. Every time Congress passes a new tax bill, as it did in June, the tax code becomes curiously and curiously.

We read that studies indicate that "underground economy" — people who trade goods and services or deal only in cash—may approach one-trillion dollars per year.

On the other hand, a low rate, such as 10%, would put the needed pressure on Congress to curb its careless spending and assist the federal government in balancing the budget, suggests the Heritage Features Syndicate authored by Edwin Feulner.

SENATOR ERVIN...Former North Carolina Democratic Senator Sam Ervin, famous as the senate chairman who presided over the demise of former president Richard Nixon during Watergate scandals, has spoken out on the



Cliff Blue

People and Issues

separation of church and state. Ervin is acknowledged to be one of the foremost authorities in the nation on the Constitution; his views thus merit consideration. Ervin says politicians shouldn't try to exploit for political purposes.

Says Senator Ervin: "I was a southern senator from the so-called Bible Belt. Faith in God is the most potent force in the universe. But it's man's individual faith and not something prescribed by government. The government and politicians, he says, should stay out of religion and not involve government officially with any religious movement."

TV STATIONS...We read in the Wall Street Journal with a Roseburg, Ore. dateline. "Channel 31's live afternoon talk show was interrupted one day by a car crashing into the studio—a converted garage."

"The television station's evening news show, however, didn't let itself be interrupted when a frolicking butterfly intruded. "I just kept going," says Clay Campbell, who was the show's anchor-man. I couldn't kill a butterfly in

front of all of Douglas County; they'd never forgive me."

The Journal devoted a full column on the front page of the nation-wide Journal and a half column on page 20.

KITTY HAWK HOTEL...We read in the Costland Times that a new 250 room hotel will be built at Kitty Hawk with facilities for up to 1,000 people. It will be a five story.

SUICIDE CANDIDATE?...We read that the chance of a deeply depressed person committing suicide is smaller than most people think, says the American Council of Life Insurance. According to Prof. Ronald Maris, chairman of the department of sociology at the University of South Carolina such a person lacks the will to carry out the act. Rather, it is the less depressed person who is the more likely suicide candidate. Consequently, Prof. Maris told the Council, "often a person will try suicide just when people think he is getting better."

CP&L TO DELAY...The Carolina Power & Light Co., says it has pushed back by six months the date it plans to startup commercially its one-unit Harris nuclear power project. The utility said it expects the 900,000-kilowatt Harris plant to begin operations in September 1986 instead of March 1986 as it originally planned. Carolina P&L blamed "additional regulatory requirements," among other things, for the delay.

Execution leaves lingering question

When Governor Jim Hunt refused to commute the death sentence of Velma Barfield, I cheered the decision.

"Why should the taxpayers have to keep someone like Velma in jail for the rest of her life?" I had asked. "After all, it cost \$30,000 a year to keep a prisoner in the style we have grown accustomed to providing."

By the time the lethal injection hit Barfield's brain last Friday morning, I was sick of seeing the story on television and reading about it in the newspapers. I was ready for it to be over.

I was also changing my thinking about our system of exacting "justice."

Barfield's death gave me no sweet taste of revenge, only a numbness like I used to feel as a boy when I shot a rabbit or cut the head off of a chicken. It was a deed that had to be done, and I took no pleasure in it.

Now, Velma is gone, along with two other killers who were executed last week in other states. There are two more on tap for the chair this week in Florida.

All of them ended lives of their victims, and left scars which will hang over the emotions of families and friends of the murdered, as well as their own relatives. All of them deserved to pay for their sins.

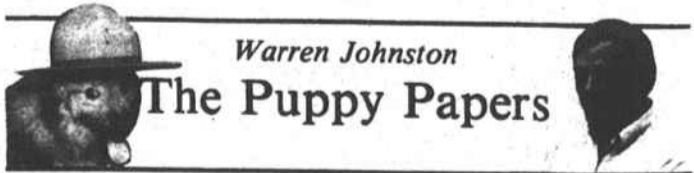
However, if we do not learn from their deaths and improve the judicial system, then little has been accomplished, other than getting their names and faces out of the news.

Some might say vengeance was served by the death of Barfield, and her execution helped ease the pain of the victims, but I disagree.

The public's thirst for vengeance would have been better slaked six years ago when North Carolinians were incensed by the cruelty of her crimes. A swift execution on the town square would have come closer to meeting the need for revenge.

Justice was too slow for restitution. Velma became a household word, and her grandmotherly demeanor made her a television regular. She said she was sorry. She said she had made her peace with God. We knew her too well to take much comfort in her death.

Others might say that Barfield's demise will deter another killer from dropping arsenic in a future victim's coffee. Statistics have pro-



Warren Johnston

The Puppy Papers

ven they are wrong. Execution is no deterrent to murder, except for the one who is being put to death.

Velma's death did save the taxpayers the future costs of providing food, clothing, lodging and supervision. For that reason it was expedient, although we are probably still paying the bloated expenses of her appeals, which lasted until the 11th hour.

Attorneys' fees would have been less, if Barfield had been sentenced to "life without hope" of parole.

Under the present North Carolina corrections system, a life sentence is rightfully viewed by the public, and by juries, as letting a defendant lounge around in the comfortable confinement of an \$80 a day accommodation.

Life without hope might be different, if the prisons were less plush and if the inmates, charged with capital crimes, were not allowed to communicate with the outside world, except through their lawyers.

Juries might see confinement as serving the cause of justice and vengeance, if capital prisoners were not permitted to appear on television or to lunch on the jailhouse green with their families and friends.

If the word got out that capital crimes brought life without hope sentences to a prison where inmates could not watch television, sleep in air conditioning or play pool, perhaps some would-be murderers might think twice before pulling the trigger.

Unfortunately, no low-cost prisons exist, and juries are not given the option of sentencing a defendant in a capital crime to life without hope in such an institution.

Until we have an alternative, we will continue to be outraged by senseless murders and ruined lives. We will house the criminals in luxury. We watch them on television before we put them to death, and we will question if we have done the right thing.

A farmer is a pro

By John Sledge

N.C. Farm Bureau Federation
The farmer deserves the image of a professional, college educated, business person with high dollar value assets and capital needs.

The saying "If you can't find work, you can always be a farmer" doesn't apply; in fact, it never did. To operate complicated machinery, use agricultural chemicals properly, use the Board of Trade effectively, and introduce computer technology into animal nutrition, marketing and genetics requires a broad range of skills and background.

At one time or another many people have probably day-dreamed about becoming a farmer — the good country life with no time clocks to indicate the hours of work, no boss or supervisor to order them around. Open fields unobstructed by tall buildings means freedom to roam, and no bumper to bumper traffic. There is a certain romanticizing about farming. But how many people in our urban-oriented civilization know the small return a small farmer gets on his large investment of capital and labor?

A young person who wants to be a farmer or rancher today must have a family operation to join or a relative with land to rent. The dollar needs for equipment and animals plus inputs to plant a crop demand the initial investment of several hundred thousand dollars. It is not unusual to find a young family that will be paying a lifetime for the initial investment needed to farm.

The families living on the nation's farms and ranches are there today because they want the type of lifestyle and independence that living in the country offers.

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