

Viewpoints

Time for Hefner to repay support

Eighth District Congressman Bill Hefner was one of the few Democrats in the state to stave off a Republican landslide and win re-election.

Hefner's victory was one of the narrowest of his political career, and had it not been for Hoke County voters, the outcome probably would have been different.

The incumbent Congressman escaped defeat by 4,003 votes in the districtwide race against Moore County Republican Harris Blake. In Hoke County, Hefner had more than a 2,000 vote edge.

This county made a difference for Bill Hefner, and we should not let him forget it during the next two years.

During the campaign, Hefner said he was looking for projects to help this county. Now is the time to fulfill his search.

Hoke County needs assistance with the widening of US Highway 401. That help is going to have to come from a federal level and from Hefner.

Raeford is also finding out that the municipal sewer system is deteriorating and will need major renovations. A federal grant would help ease the overstrapped local budget, and a Congressman will have to grease the way for such funding.

Hoke County has come through repeatedly for candidates, has asked for little and gotten nothing in return.

In the past we have given our support faithfully. Now, we need to start demanding something for it.

Hoke County voters have done their jobs. The time has come for elected officials, like Hefner, to do theirs.

Good Hoke teachers should not be wasted

Two years ago Ethelyn Baker was riding the crest of being voted by her peers Hoke County's Teacher of the Year.

This year she was fired.

Although the actual causes may never be known publicly, the school board's announced reasons for the dismissal are ambiguous, which lends support to Baker's claim that she was let go because of her criticism of the system and of her superiors.

The action against Baker is puzzling, however, we would not presume to second-guess school authorities on their decision to terminate her contract. We are confident they felt there was just cause, but one has to wonder about a system which allows a good teacher to fall from grace so quickly.

In an age when good teachers are an endangered species, perhaps more could have been done to salvage a valuable career and to convince a former Teacher of the Year and others to remain team players.

Before another good teacher is booted from her profession, it is hoped that members of the Hoke County Board of Education will study the Ethelyn Baker case and correct the deficiencies in a system which allows it to happen.

Good teachers are a resource Hoke County cannot afford to waste.

City council on right line

Members of the Raeford City Council should be commended for the quixotic stand they are taking against a cable television rate hike being sought by Alert Cablevision.

Alert is apparently attempting to cut programming and raise rates at the same time, and unlike other franchise holders in the service area, Raeford councilmen are not buying the increase.

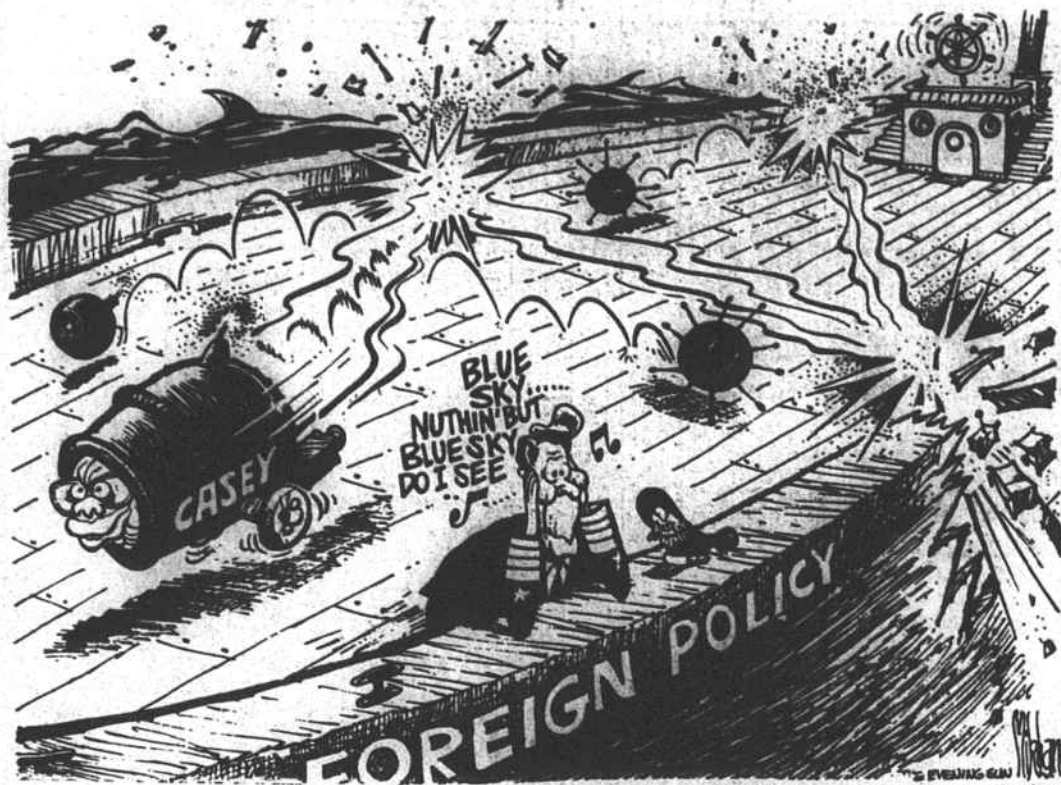
Unfortunately, the cable firm has complete control over programming, so the Raeford officials' complaints are falling on deaf corporate ears.

However, basic rates are still within the council's jurisdiction, at least under their interpretation of a new federal law governing cable television franchises.

Alert representatives view the law differently, and believe they can raise the rates without the council's approval. They say they are reluctant to do so because of the ill-will that would be created by the move.

Raeford officials may be tilting at windmills, but each month they delay approval of the rate increase, Alert is denied the extra revenue. If the stand is long enough, sooner or later, the firm might consider providing better service.

The position being taken by the Raeford Council is noble, and we encourage the officials to keep it up.



New opportunities on tap for towns

By John Sledge

N.C. Farm Bureau Federation
A study out of the Center for Social Research in Aging at the University of Miami says the movement of older Americans out of cities and into the suburbs and countryside is continuing. According to the report, the elderly led the way in the 1960's in reversing two centuries of migration into the cities.

Census figures show that metropolitan areas grew by nearly 10% in the decade of the 70's, but rural and small town areas had a growth rate of almost 16%.

The growth is not limited to areas immediately adjacent to cities. Counties that grew fastest in the 70's were those designated rural, with no towns of 2,500 people or more. More than eight million new homes were built in these rural counties during the decade.

The Miami study credits older Americans with leading migration to rural areas; and if that is so, the pace may even accelerate in the years ahead. A recent report by the Senate's Special Committee on Aging projects that in the year 2010, one-fourth of the entire population will be over 55 years old. In the last 20 years the number of people 85 and over increased by 141%.

What the trends tell us is that America's population is getting older and prefers to live in the country. The result is new economic opportunity for small towns now totally dependent on the farm economy.

American voters aren't stupid

Since political passions run high in an election year, I'll do my best to keep these remarks non-partisan. But I must confess that a partisan mailing has agitated me no little bit.

The other day, I received this "Official Survey" on defense strategy. It apparently was based on the assumption that American voters are simpletons.

The introduction contained the words, "So as not to prejudice your responses, please do not read the positions listed at the end of the survey until you have completed your answers."

Then the questionnaire proceeded to prejudice answers in every way possible.

For example, the very first question asked, "Do you support appropriations for modernizing our defenses which became dangerously obsolete as a result of cutbacks by the (deleted) administration?" That isn't a question. That's political propaganda.

Now, there's nothing wrong with political propaganda. That's the name of the election game. Everybody does it. But, if politicians want to lay a bit of propaganda on me, I would just as soon they wouldn't play like they are asking my opinion.

Another questions went like



Lucien Coleman

Things That Matter

this: "The Soviets have amassed the largest naval force in the world and have increased the number of submarines patrolling the U.S. coast. Should the U.S. Navy receive more funding to replace our aging sea force and build more Trident nuclear submarines?"

Now, really, does that look like a question designed to elicit an unbiased answer? The implication buried in the shrewd wording is that a "no" answer would be a vote for the Soviet submarines patrolling the U.S. coast.

Consider the following hypothetical question: "Fireball Drain Cleaner, recommended by many neighborhood hardware dealers, has already killed 137,368 children this year. Do you agree with these unscrupulous hardware dealers that this deadly product should be in every home?" How unprejudiced would your answer be?

In behalf of all the members of

the voting public who periodically find themselves on the receiving end of such political chicanery, I have a word for the whiz-kids who come up with such brilliant schemes:

We might not be all that smart; but we ain't stupid, either.



Collecting could cure trade deficit

The other day, while munching a nameless cookie, I discovered the answer to the foreign trade deficit.

"American industries need to start putting names on their products like the ones that used to be on Coke bottles," I told my wife.

"If this cookie had the name of a town on it, I might collect it rather than eat it," I said, hoping to prick her interest.

When I was younger, about seven, and America was free from foreign manufacturing competition, I had one of the finest Coke bottle collections in our Atlanta neighborhood.

In those days Coca-Cola put the locations of the bottlers on the bottom of eight-ounce bottles, and we prized those with cities and towns that were the farthest away from Atlanta.

Because Atlanta is the home of Coca-Cola, it is a good place for collectors. Bottles would end up there from all over the country. They would be refilled and put out on our streets, making it relatively easy for us to find towns like Chattanooga, Tennessee.

It wasn't any big deal to come up with a Monroe, Georgia, bottle, but a Monroe, Louisiana, was another matter.

Finding a bottle with a name like Nome, Alaska, or Bismarck, North Dakota, would probably land the neighborhood's "Bottle of the Year Award."

In 1954, I received the award for a Yakima, Washington, Coke I found partially buried in the playground behind R.L. Hope School.

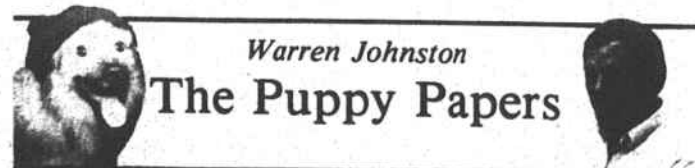
Johnny Albert had been leading that year with his Reno, Nevada, and was considered a shoe-in for the honor when I spied my winner poking through the sand. We were convinced that it had been left there by a laborer who had worked on the construction of the school back in 1935.

"You know they brought people in from all over the country to build the school," Fat Ralph had said when I showed him my discovery. "I'll bet they brought their Cokes with them too."

We were obsessed collectors. As a result, we probably bought and drank too many Cokes. I remember drinking 16 in one day after I found a machine which was spitting out consistent winners.

If it had not been for the names on the bottom of the Coke bottles, I am confident we would have been like kids in the Carolinas and would have been drinking Pepsi. I said to my wife, who was now reading a magazine,

Coke changed their production methods, and the names have



Warren Johnston

The Puppy Papers

disappeared from the bottles. Many of the small town bottlers have closed.

We moved on to baseball cards.

I liked the Brooklyn Dodgers. It was hard to find players like Duke Snyder and Pee Wee Reese. I had to buy a lot of bubble gum, which I threw away, in order to collect a complete team of the Bums.

"You can't find baseball cards these days," I said, as my wife began playing a game of jacks with the cat.

The bubble gum company is now making chewable rabbits. I find no joy in collecting them, I shouted, when she started vacuuming the floor.

Back when America had no fear of foreign competitors, manufacturers printed the place of origin on most products. Even liquor bottles used to have labels like: "Ole Joshua Staggers Sour Mash Whiskey bottled under the moon in Paris, Tennessee, where the water and the women are pure."

"Now a bottle like that would be a collector's item today," I continued, as she began clearing the lunch dishes from the table.

If shirts had the name of the city where they were made, instead of just "Made in USA," we wouldn't be having problems in the textile industry, I told her.

Instead of putting some logo on the shirt, like an alligator, apparel manufacturers should use labels with the name of the mill and the signature of the person who sewed it.

"Shoppers would be collecting the 'Honea Path, South Carolina Lulubelle Slocolm' shirts like Cabbage Patch dolls," I said to the cat, after my wife left the room.

Noting that I was losing my audience when the cat followed my wife, I decided to work on my grocery bag collection.

One of the local stores offers bags with the names of the maker printed on the bottom, and I needed a Horace Bailey of St. Mary's, Georgia, to complete a set.

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