

Viewpoints

Band plays sour note for Hoke Co. residents

On Friday, the residents of Red Springs showed appreciation for the help which had been given to the community following the devastation of the March 28 tornadoes. With the help of volunteers from Hoke County and other parts of eastern North Carolina, the small town fought back and got on its feet again.

Friday was Red Springs' day to say "thank you" with festivities and a parade. It was a fine day for Red Springs and for the hundreds who helped. It was a commemoration of brotherly love.

However, there was a cloud over the Red Springs event, which left a shadow on Hoke County and diminished the good deeds done by many of this county's residents last spring.

All of Hoke County was injured by the Hoke High School band's refusal to march in the Red Springs parade without the payment of a \$600 fee.

The attitude of band leaders is particularly difficult to understand, in light of the way in which others in this community responded to the needs of Red Springs following the storms.

Crews from the City of Raeford were on the scene in Red Springs within hours of the storm, helping to restore power and clearing debris. Some volunteers from Hoke County were on their feet for as long as 48 hours without relief. Churches and civic organizations gave money, clothes and food to help their neighbors.

This fall Red Springs sent the City of Raeford a check for over \$9,200 to help defray the costs incurred by local crews with the cleanup. Without hesitation, members of the Raeford City Council voted unanimously to return the check.

We realize it costs the band to travel to events like the Red Springs parade, but the manner in which the matter was handled is inexcusable and an embarrassment to all county residents.

School officials say they were not informed (and are not sure who was) of the invitation, nor were they told about the fee or the refusal. County board of education members say they also were not consulted about the parade. In short, the band leaders apparently made no effort to raise the funds needed to cover the costs except for asking Red Springs to pay the fee. Red Springs has had its share of expenses and a \$600 band charge for an humanitarian event was not in the budget.

By mishandling the invitation, the leaders denied band members the right to participate in the parade and to be ambassadors for Hoke County. In addition, those directors also handed the reputa-

tion of this county a black eye and gave taxpayers, who support the group, a reason to question the priorities being placed on band expenditures.

This year, as in past years, the Hoke High band has distinguished itself in statewide competition to become rated as one of the best marching groups in the state. This year the band participated in at least five such events. The band also traveled to each of the out-of-town Hoke High football games. The costs of those performances were at least equal, if not greater, than what was needed to march in the Red Springs parade.

We recognize that the statewide competition was paid for in part through fund raising efforts by the band booster club. We also believe that booster club members and the band leadership should understand if the band cannot march in events like the one in Red Springs, as well as home town parades, then how the group is ranked among their peers in the state is meaningless.

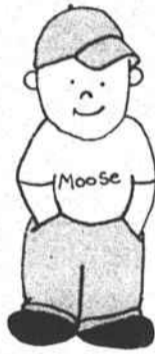
The damage of the Red Springs incident will not be easily repaired. It is hoped that in the future, the leadership of the Hoke High band will change its thinking and will begin to consider the community as a top priority.

With a new perspective, perhaps the band leadership will find the task of fund raising easier and Hoke County residents more supportive.



"What's wrong with Mom?"

Madilyn



"I don't know, I just said there's only twelve days 'till Christmas, then she got all stiff and her face turned white."



Mark

'Tis season for compassion

Lucien Coleman



Things That Matter

The holiday season. Time for the annual spending spree. And, along with it, our yearly orgy of concern for "those less fortunate than ourselves."

Turkey and dressing with all the trimmings for the street people. Food boxes for the poor. Toys for orphan kids. Generous tips for waitresses and paper carriers. "Get the holiday spirit." "Be a good neighbor." "Show a little goodwill toward your fellow man." And so it goes.

I'm not opposed to it, you understand. Even a temporary display of human kindness is better than nothing.

It's just that human misery will still be around long after the Christmas tree has shed its last

much to assuage the hunger pangs of the 800 million persons in the world who are living in absolute poverty, each with an income of less than \$90 a year.

The World Bank defines "absolute poverty" as "a condition of life so characterized by malnutrition, illiteracy and disease as to be beneath any reasonable definition of human decency."

Fully one-third of the Third World population is living in that condition as we jingle our bells and deck our halls with boughs of holly.

Even the \$3.2 billion spent on American dogs each year would do a lot to extend the "holiday spirit" to people who never take a holiday from hunger.

Letters To The Editor

Christmas help needed

To the Editor:
As Christmas comes around, and everybody gets ready to do his good deeds, yes we pass out our gifts of love to one another. Our hearts filled with love, it makes me wonder. Will they forget Jesus? After all, it is his birthday.

If we don't offer up a spiritual gift to him, we will have failed Him. The way the world is going, it makes me wonder, where it is headed to.

I am not much with a typewriter, so forgive these mistakes I make, I am just an old country boy and don't no very much. Not very much learning, but one day I found Jesus, and that's enough for me. Please read this editorial before you throw it away. It might help in some small way. I am not much at meeting people. I have always walked alone and I keep to myself most of the time, but I love people.

I am a minister of the gospel of Christ.

My savior, he called me to teach his soon coming and now my friends.

I don't teach like a lot of people, but I teach it like it is the truth. I have had a hard life, I don't have any money. I am retired not much to go on.

But I will never teach to please

man, sometimes people give to us at Christmas. I would like to thank you all for your help, and may I say thank you again.

This has helped to see us through at Christmas time, and any help you can give, we will thank you in advance, if you do send it.

Trouble is coming no one seems to care. The great tribulation is coming, and we teach our children not to believe it. They say we are going to fly away in the rapture. If this is so, please explain it to me because I do not believe it. The spirit of God tells me that it is Antichrist to teach such junk to our children, amen.

Matthew, Chapter 24- tells us the tribulation is coming. I believe, that it is very near to come if not already here. My friends be sure that you don't let no one tell you anything else.

Jesus said and I quote immediately after the tribulations of that time, the sun would not shine and the moon nor the stars. The stars shall fall from heaven, and power of heaven shall be shaken, then they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds and all the tribes of the earth shall mourn, amen. They teach everything in school all the books are law you have to teach them, but the Bible and Jesus and God. Is band from the school no prayer is heard. In school, don't you love your

children I do. I am going to teach them the truth. That is why we started the Tribal Mission School, and we are going to go on by the grace of God, amen.

We have been called names they said were discriminating. You no what I mean.

All of this is not true I am Indian. I love white. I love black. I love all. So my friends, please send us a love offering this Christmas, please.

And help us, to win over all them that wants to put us out of business. We love you. Won't you please return that love God will bless you.

Send as much as you can and may the Lord smile upon you. Amen.

by Reverend Edgar Bryant

Three snows predicted

To the Editor:
With God's patience; our inventive engineering, can we win the game or race?

Our little vehicle, body, probably needs some modified extra equipment. It is not like a squirrel in a revolving cage, or a mile and a half stock car race.

This is an endurance contest; he who endures to the end; the same shall be saved.

Are we so loaded down with all our earthly possessions 'till we miss the rapture?

The rich young ruler did; as well as others too numerous to enumerate.

We seek knowledge, truth and peace, and come out of the struggle too many times, void.

Like the afflicted woman who had suffered much by the hands of many physicians, had spent all, and was none the better.

Can we believe all this? And can we believe a winter time prediction? That is to say, in order to help us offset our polluted air; the good Lord will send us three snows. Amen --

Earl Shannon
211 Prophet

High technology ruining youth

Dear Editor:
A while back I was trying to pen some calves out here and yelled to a youngster trying to help by circling around behind them: "Go clockwise!"

He stopped. He didn't know what I meant. He has a digital watch. It flashes numbers. Has no hands on it.

You can see what high technology is doing to the youth of the land.

And that's not all. It used to be it was something of a milestone in a child's life when he learned to tie his shoes. Everybody bragged on

him and said "That boy's catching on fast."

Nowadays they're making kid's shoes that don't need tying. They don't have any shoelaces. Instead there are a couple of straps that don't even need buckling. You just press them down as tight as needed and they stick. To take the shoes off so you can throw them in the middle of the floor, you pull on the straps and they come un-stuck. What kind of a milestone is it when you've achieved that?

Of course some things haven't changed. I've discovered that school kids are still required to learn the names of all the states and their capitals, without learning who the governor of any state is,

including their own. In some cases however that isn't information worth going to the trouble of learning anyway. By next year a landslide may have thrown half of them out.

On the other hand, kids have mastered the hand calculator, they can work a computer, they can fine-tune the color on a T.V. set, and, if driven to it, probably could explain the principle of the zipper. Due to slip-on shirts, buttonholes probably are beyond them.

We got those calves penned. Took an hour and a half, according to the youngster's digital watch.

Yours faithfully,
J.A.

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Mullet investigation proves fruitless effort

I was commissioned to deliver the first State of the Mullet address at the soon-to-be annual Hoke County Mullet Roast.

"We want to know all about mullets," they had said. After several days of investigation, I too wanted to know something about mullet.

I tackled the job with a full head of steam, but every lead was a dead end. Nobody would talk about mullet. Books told me nothing.

I contacted a local net fisherman. I knew he spent many a fall night on the beach at Holden, pulling in a gill net.

"Mullet! We throw those darn things away," he said. "I fish for spots."

Undaunted, I went to the local library. The helpful librarians scurried about the room, pulling out hundreds of books and plopping them down on the table before me. There was a wealth of information about fish, but the coverage of mullet smelled. I came away with little more than a fingerlings worth of technical information.

"Listen. These people are going to want to know what they are eating," I told the librarian.

I knew I couldn't just say there are at least two kinds of mullet



Warren Johnston

The Puppy Papers

that frequent the southeastern Atlantic coast waters. "Who cares (other than the mullet) that fishermen spearing eels through the ice often hit mullet by mistake."

I checked the history books. I knew that the Hot and Hot Fish Club once roasted mullet and other fish on the coast of South Carolina but that was 1845. All of the members are now dead, perhaps as a result of the convivial activities of the group. I didn't want that to happen in Hoke County.

The minutes of the Hot and Hot Fish Club meetings are sketchy. No one would ever know if the mullet killed the members, or if it was the wine-soaked discussions of politics and rice.

Hope was restored by a cook book which described the "jumping mullet" as tender, firmly textured meat with a sweet, nutty flavor.

"Now, that's something I can tell them," I said to the librarian, who handed me another book which left my imagination wriggling.



"The goatfish, which is not a true mullet, was prized in antiquity and fetched enormous prices. The ancient Greeks and Romans not only enjoyed eating them, but often kept them alive for the pleasure of watching them die. It was an occasion to which one invited one's friends," the book said.

Those Greeks and Romans really knew how to throw a party. After a few beers, somebody would go over to the goatfish tank, pull out a three-pounder and everybody would watch it die. The evening was lots of fun.

"It was considered a highly aesthetic experience to observe the subtle changes of color that took place as the fish expired. It was a bizarre diversion," the book said.

"I think you would be better off just roasting the mullets around an open fire," the librarian said.

The librarian was right, and after my research, I believe I would be better off giving the first annual "State of the Trout" address at the mullet roast.

"Oh, we have lots of books about trout," she said.

I left the library depressed, but looking forward to eating a roasted mullet on Wednesday night, and talking about trout.