

Viewpoints

Telephone task force carried out duty well

A delegation of local residents did a good job representing Hoke County Monday when testifying before the North Carolina Utilities Commission on Monday.

The group, which was under the leadership of Economic Developer John Howard, was well prepared and testified to pertinent facts concerning extending local telephone service from Fayetteville to Raeford.

The issue of the service is vital to the economic survival of Hoke County, and members of the group took time from busy schedules to plead their cases before the commissioners.

The role of the local delegation was to support a recommendation by the commission's public staff to hold a public hearing in Raeford on September 10 and to require Carolina Telephone to determine the costs of establishing EAS.

Each member argued a convincing and enthusiastic case before the commissioners without straying from the facts or outside the allotted time frame.

If the utility commissioners vote against Hoke County, their decision will not be an easy one because of the expert job done by the local group.

Those who fought Hoke County's case in Raleigh on Monday deserve the support and thanks of all who live in this community.

It is efforts like theirs which bring hope for a future in Hoke County of lower taxes, higher wages and a better quality of life.

Dual tax specter bigger this year

The old specter of dual taxation is rearing its head again in Hoke County, but this time with a larger price tag.

As the pieces of the upcoming year's budgets are being put together, Hoke County taxpayers whose property is inside the city limits of Raeford can again look forward to paying more than their fair share of the cost of services which are not received.

As long as Raeford property owners continue to put up with the unfair taxation, the problem can only become more burdensome.

This year, two unused services will probably increase by more than \$125,000 (or four cents on the county tax rate). City taxpayers will pick up most of the tab.

County service expenses are increasing. Raeford taxpayers are shelling out more and getting less in return.

Current revenues and expenses are not balancing for budget planners, and the county is probably faced with another significant tax hike brought on by the higher costs of needed increases in the sheriff's department operating budget and a doubling of the price of green box garbage pickup.

Both of the services are essential to county taxpayers living outside the city limits, but are a costly, unneeded duplication for Raeford residents.

Members of the county commission are being forced to swallow a 100% hike by a garbage collecting firm which will boost the price of green box collection over \$150,000.

That means that Hoke County will be fining Raeford residents, who pay for city garbage collection, 50% more for county green box pick up they do not use.

The Hoke County Sheriff's Department is understaffed and needs additional deputies to effectively keep up with the demands of a growing rural population.

When the dust settles, the sheriff's budget will probably have to be increased by \$50,000 over last year's.

If Hoke County is going to remain a safe and clean place to live, then both increases are probably justified and should be implemented.

However, city and county officials should work together to curb expenses and to eventually eliminate dual services.

This county is too small for one group of taxpayers to support all of one governmental system and most of another.

If duplications are not consolidated soon or tax credits given to those who do not receive the benefits of services, then local officials can probably look forward to taxpayer rebellions like ones which have been waged in other communities.

The time has come to consider the issue and work for a solution during the next fiscal year. The burden can only get worse.



Marg.

Farm technology sales will benefit America

Ever since the first load of American farm products was sold to the Soviet Union, farmers here have questioned the logic of selling food to a possible enemy.

That concern has lessened as farmers learned the economic importance of increased exports to Russia.

Despite the 1980 grain embargo, Russia has remained an important customer. Now there is talk of increasing sales of farm technology. The Soviets have determined the only way to feed their people is to learn to increase production through improved technology. Rather than reducing exports of U.S. grain, it is quite possible it could result in a net gain for the U.S.

Look at the facts...Russia

already has a longer history of importing American technology than they do of importing American grain, yet their wheat yields are equal to those of the U.S. 30 years ago. Soviet livestock growers have achieved little or no improvement in feed conversion ratios.

It should be noted that ag technologies involved in high protein feeds, seeds and breeding stock represent sales for U.S. farmers. Remember also that Russia could buy its technology elsewhere. And it figures that the country building the strongest sales relationship with Russia will benefit from extra orders for grains.

Increased exports of U.S. farm technology to Russia can mean an economic gain, not loss, for U.S. farmers.

Lack of rain causes mental strain

I walked to work in the rain the other morning.

It was sort of crazy, but what-the-heck, it hadn't rained for what seemed like six months, so the droplets falling from the end of my nose and the puddled water leaking over the soles of my shoes felt pretty good.

However, I'm not the only one whose brain has been short circuited by the unusually dry spring weather. The long drought has been making a lot of us act a little off our noggins lately.

For example, this spring, farmers have had too much time on their hands.

"I wash and wash, but I just can't get this time off of my hands," one farmer said, noting that he has found himself doing wild things like arguing about the legislature, going to the beach with his family and taking 10 strokes off of his golf game.

This year, the fields are plowed, crops are in the ground and agrarian wives are getting tired of having leisure-oriented husbands.

The dry weather has also gotten my wife slightly confused.

"Did you hear that?" she screamed, interrupting my 6 a.m. Friday morning shower.

She had been aroused from a sound sleep by the first clap of loud thunder we had heard since August.

Over the cascading water of the shower, I did note the resounding "barrooom," but thought the cat sitting on the edge of the tub had belched. She had been suffering lately from gastric problems, a condition obviously brought on by eating the dried shrubs in our yard.

"They're bombing the house," my wife shouted, assuming that some gunner on Ft. Bragg had been affected by the arid weather conditions and was lofting shells in our direction rather than down range.

"It's raining," I said.

She went back to sleep, relieved that the fireworks were free, and

Mama's power felt

Children are hard little people to fool. At a very early age they learn about the wielding power of mama. Dad might stick out his chest and say when mama is not around that he is the boss but he knows which side of the bed to sleep on.

Some children have to get a refresher course when they are adults about the power of mama. A case in point is David Stockman, the head of the nation's budget. The president took him to the woodshed. Mama told him to shut up. When the president turned him out of the woodshed his mouth was still overheated. From hundreds of miles away mama told him to stop talking and the zipper went closed. He even grabbed the telephone and told her he was misquoted.

Mama has a built in sense of what is right and wrong. Instinct is her weapon and no one has ever improved on it.

She always sees the best side of her children even when their behavior would make Jesse and Frank James look like a Sunday School teacher.

Respect is something she demands by a look, pointed finger or a pop on the rump. Getting older doesn't diminish the demand for respect, expressing one's ideas are fine as long as they don't conflict with hers.

My own mother was the inspiration behind the success I have enjoyed as an adult. Education was the way for her children to escape poverty. She didn't ask you if you wanted to go to school, she told you to go. Sickness wasn't an excuse. The crops in the field waited until you got home. Pop could fume, fuss and even cuss. The rules weren't changed for him. I inherited my stubbornness from her but I was blessed with her compassion for people. My love for children wasn't something I learned, it was something I was taught.

Nothing will raise the wrath of a mother quicker than lack of respect. This became clear to me when I was thirty years old. My only sister and her husband were engaged in a personal family dispute. My mother said to them, "You have argued enough, I don't want to hear any more of it." The argument ceased.

Not being smart enough to leave well enough alone, I said, "Mom



Looking On

Raz Autry

maybe you should let them handle their own affairs."

Mom gave me a look I had come to fear. When we were alone, she looked me squarely in the eye and said,

"Don't you ever raise your voice or talk back to me again."

I did the same thing I did when I was a small boy, I apologized. What I really was sorry about was not keeping my mouth shut.

Attending a trial in Lumberton a few years ago, I witnessed the power of a mother in a courtroom. A young man was on trial for stealing a piece of farm machinery from his mother. As the prosecutor began bearing down on the son, it was apparent the witness was getting desperate. In reply to a question about stealing the equipment, he indignantly said, I did not steal the equipment from my mother. Before anyone could stop her, the mother raced to the witness stand and shouted to the son,

"Don't you dare lie, I birthed you, I will slap your face if you lie one more time."

He meekly replied, "yes ma'am".

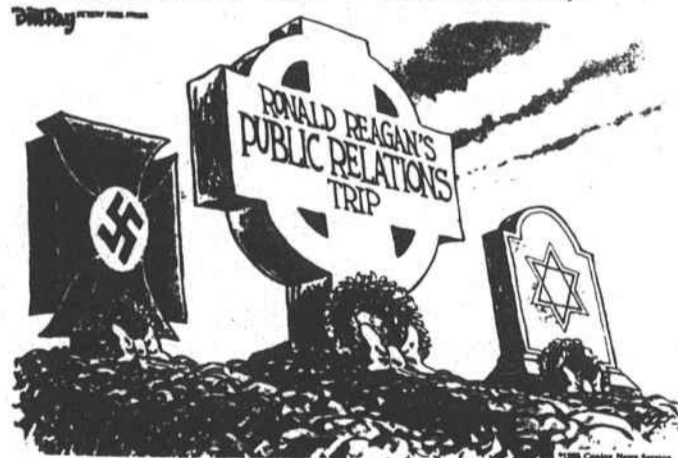
The startled judge, surely recalling a scene from an angry mother he knew, only said, "Madam please sit on the front row and try to control yourself. He didn't speak loudly because he didn't want to be the next victim."

Time has afforded mothers a proper place in history. Men have prospered from her love. They have given courage by her strength and lived better lives because of her example.

God gave them an extra sense, even though the men don't admit it. Mama's love is endless. Patience is her inner strength. Endurance is her secret ingredient and persistence is her guide.

We should thank God for sharing a part of Himself by placing it in mama. A son or daughter worth their salt will place them at the top of their love list even ahead of their children and dogs.

Happy Mother's Day.



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Warren Johnston

The Puppy Papers



not just another misguided example of our tax dollars at work.

Calhoun, who is the dog who stays with us, also has been driven nuts by the dry weather.

He spends long hours barking at the heavens and at a tiny bird who likes to frequent the wilting trees in the back yard.

The bird is only the size of quarter, but Calhoun does not like his attitude and lets him know on a regular basis.

Calhoun has also been barking at bees and horseflies, and has been ignoring intruding cats, dogs and burglars.

"Aren't you going to do something about that?" I asked him one day after a neighborhood dog sprinkled markings on the fence posts surrounding Calhoun's yard.

"That's disgusting," I said, as Calhoun stared at the sky and moaned.

Since last week's rain, he has been back to his old affable self. He gave the garbage man a good bawling out and threatened to remove the left leg from the meter reader.

His mood won't hold though unless we get more rain. He has already started craning his head upward.

There is a slight chance of rain predicted this week. If it comes, maybe the farmers can get back to work.

A good rain would also help the leaves on the trees in our back yard to grow. Then the small bird that hangs out there could hide, and Calhoun could stop barking at the heavens.