

# Viewpoints

## Friday was good for Hoke County

Last Friday's Chamber of Commerce dinner with guest speaker Governor James G. Martin was a good night for Hoke County and one of which sponsors can be proud.

It was an evening which officially marked the beginning of a new push to make Hoke County a viable thriving community.

Martin's visit, which was engineered by Rep. Danny DeVane (D-Hoke), was one of the first times in recent memory a governor of the state has come to this county and not been campaigning for money and votes.

It was a special occasion for Hoke County. DeVane and those responsible for the dinner should be commended for their efforts to make the evening a reality.

Currently, there is a drive afoot to improve the quality of life in Hoke County. If the enthusiasm and the hard work of volunteers keep the momentum going, there will be many future occasions for the governor to return.

Friday night marked the official beginning of Hoke County's renaissance. The celebration is over. Now the work begins.

## Economic push finally getting out of station

Good omens are in the wind. The signs may be deceptive, but it appears that after seven months of meetings and re-meetings, members of the Hoke County Economic Development Commission are finally ready to get down to the business of improving the financial vitality of the community.

The commissioners have adopted bylaws, approved a budget, hired an enthusiastic and qualified director, defined his job description and last week, purchased a typewriter and an automobile. Not bad for seven months' work.

All of the tools for a successful operation are in hand. The commissioners can begin to offer guidance for finding more jobs, revitalizing downtown Raeford, attracting new residents, developing an industrial park, establishing countywide zoning and making Hoke County a marketable location for plant sites.

Economic Developer John Howard has hit the street running and seems on the way to making his new position an effective one.

Now that the routine matters are behind them, the five members of the economic development commission can begin moving as fast as the economic developer in an effort to make Hoke County a better place to live.

Of course, on the other hand, there is a copy machine that needs to be considered and the furnishings to be found for the developer's new office in the remodeled depot.

## Squire has displayed dignity

Rare are the individuals who deserve all the nouns which are attributed to them. Dedication and compassion are two of the most used. Both deserve the seat of honor in paying tribute to my friend Robert "Squire" Gatlin.

One of the first people I met in Hoke County when I arrived in 1966 was the "Squire". Being impressed by the dignity he displayed and the courtly manner in which he approached a subject caught my attention.

It became apparent to me after a short time that this southern gentleman had a pretty good mind underneath that white hair.

A teacher of drafting and a mold of young men and women gave him a solid footing with the faculty at Hoke High. Distinguishing himself in the field of engineering and teaching at Duke University were only two of the many worlds he brought to the classroom. He took pride in the young men and women under his tutorage. They in turn were devoted to him. Never once did I hear a student complain about his policies or his demands. They only sang his praises.

My work in the school system was made easier because of his untiring effort to help. He drew the plans for the construction under the Hoke High stadium.

The construction of the track was under his supervision. Any time we had a problem with water, boundaries, manholes or a thousands other problems we called and he answered. If it was a Saturday job he never complained, and he would not take pay for it. After his retirement I asked him to work with me. For several years he furnished his service to the school system free of charge. The auto mechanic shop and brick laying shop are free of problems because of his insistence they be built on the present site.

When Mr. Gatlin gave up his service to the board of education he turned his attention to helping the community. Raeford and its history is a passion with him. He became the focal point of anyone needing facts about his beloved town and county.

The News-Journal was blessed with his service as the official weatherman for many years. A slight stroke put his forecasting on



Looking On  
Raz Autry

hold; however it didn't dampen his desire to help his fellowman.

Just recently he furnished his cabin and pond as he has done for many years for the sixth graders in the school system to take part in a conservation workshop. Robert was on hand each day to see if he could offer more of his hospitality. His keen interest in young people has not slowed over the years. It has intensified in his desire for them to succeed.

Robert is a great family man. His two daughters are his life. The changing expression in his eyes when he speaks their names tells the story of his love. It is a mutual admiration. It is evident in talking to them that love was the central theme in the home during their growing up years.

The other love in Robert's life left him a few months ago. Mamie was a charming lady and a friend I dearly miss. She shared her positive nature with everyone in whom she came in contact.

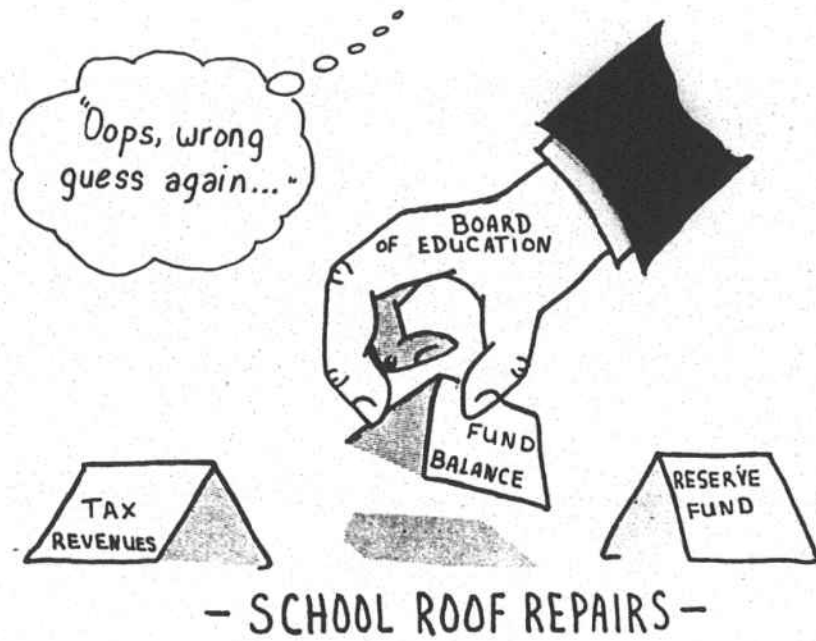
Losing a mate must be one of the greatest of traumatic experiences. Robert picked himself up after Mamie's death and continued to serve.

The "Squire" has very definite ideas about issues and he never wavers once he makes up his mind. Trying to change him is like moving a large piece of granite with a toothpick. He has often said to me that I was the hard headedest person he had ever known. The old saying it takes one to know one was never more true.

His back handed compliments is keeping with his personality. Introducing me to folks and telling them I was the finest high school principal he had ever known and the worst superintendent was characteristic of not mincing any words.

Among his many hobbies has been quail hunting. Some of my finest memories is recalling the Saturday hunts with him and Hank Richards. Robert wasn't a very good shot, and neither was Hank. Sheer enjoyment of the hunt was enough to satisfy him.

My admiration for this southern country gentleman is plain to see. Robert is part of what we cherish of the past, and he represents what we long for in the future.



## Titanic crash still mystery

Seventy-three years ago the newest and finest passenger liner on the North Atlantic, on her maiden voyage and thought unsinkable, struck an iceberg late at night in midocean. The White Star line's Titanic went down in two hours and 1,500 people drowned.

A few years ago in England and in Norway questions were seriously asked about the long-accepted version of the tragedy. It will be recalled that the Californian was widely blamed for not having rescued the drowned.

We read that the Californian lay within sight, and failed to answer emergency rocket signals -- its captain being asleep and the watch not realizing what the signals meant.

Yet the chief officer of a Norwegian ship that was in sight of the "Titanic" that night, a ship that was engaged in illegal seal hunting, said, after the death of the captain, that it was this ship which passengers on the Titanic saw that fateful night.

The lifeboats had room for less than half of the approximately 2,200 passengers, and took on mostly women and children. The



Cliff Blue

### People and Issues

ship's band played on the sloping deck. The Titanic went down bow first about 2 1/2 hours after the crash. The Cunard liner Carpathia caught the SOS and raced 58 miles to the rescue. It picked up 705 survivors at dawn.

The Titanic had been the largest ship in the world. No one knows exactly how many lives were lost. The British inquiry reported 1,490 dead, the British Board of Trade, 1,503 and the U.S., 1,517.

ELECTRICITY . . . provided a new source for lights and transportation, by the beginning of 1900, and the automobile was hatching about 1903, when the Wright brothers made the first successful powered airplane.

The late John R. McQueen and

F.R. Danley were the promoters and owners of the first power plant on Little River.

My dad, John P. Blue, and Albert Seagroves were the first men in the area, about seven miles south of Vass on Little River, to engineer the water-powered plant in 1911 or '12, before I could remember.

WHAT WE DRINK . . . Twenty years ago the favorite drink in America was coffee, followed in popularity by milk and soft drinks. Today, however, according to a study at the University of New Hampshire, soft drinks have replaced coffee as America's first choice.

We read that beer has become more popular, in a tie today with coffee, as America's third choice.

In the past 20 years so we read, Americans have increased their beverage intake while the amount of food eaten has remained constant.

Fruit juices, fortunately, are rising in popularity -- perhaps because of widening availability of individual juice drinks.

# Shopping trip turns to coat of different color

It was Mother's Day weekend. My wife, whose maternal instincts are concentrated on the care and feeding of three cats and a dog, decided we should celebrate by going clothes shopping in a neighboring mall.

"I have nothing to wear. This will be a good excuse to go shopping," she said Saturday morning, as we attempted to find a parking place in the already overcrowded retail center.

I knew better. I knew I would suffer. I shouldn't have gone along with the plan. I should have stayed home, mowed the grass, watched the ball game and let her go by herself.

It had been so long since we purchased anything, that I had forgotten the misery of shopping with a woman, particularly my wife.

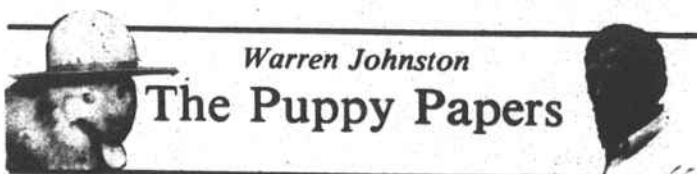
Shopping should be done in a matter of moments. I become frustrated and disgruntled if I spend more than 30 minutes in a store. I like to get in and get out.

My wife, on-the-other-hand, likes to forage over vast sections of women's clothes, examining each item on the racks and trying on half of them.

If left to her own devices, she would probably spend days cruising the clothing aisles. Rarely does she buy without examining every option in all of the mall's acceptable markets.

In order to ease my pain, we shop separately and agree to meet after a fixed period of time. I usually suggest a rendezvous in 15 minutes. She bargains for two hours.

Last year in New York, the separate shopping strategy proved to be frightening when we agreed to meet at an escalator on Macy's third floor. Unfortunately, when we made the plan, neither of us realized there were a dozen escalators on Macy's third floor.



Warren Johnston

### The Puppy Papers

For 50 minutes past the meeting hour, I rode up and down one escalator, imagining that she had been mugged by hoodlums; while my wife rode up and down another escalator thinking I would be found floating in the East River. Since then we have been more precise about where we meet.

"I'll be in the women's clothing section," she said Saturday.

After about 15 minutes, I had finished with my purchases. I sauntered over to the women's section. She was not there. New York came flooding back, but I put it out of my mind.

Calmly I wandered through the sea of dresses, blouses and unmentionables. I was steered against panic by thinking her absence was a plot to gain more time.

My wife was not to be seen in the women's section. Instinct told me she was there. I knew she must be hiding, probably hoping I would find something to occupy myself and would leave her to do more shopping.

However, I would have none of it. I wanted out of the mall. I longed for the roar of my lawn mower and the smell of freshly cut grass.

Although I felt like an unwanted suitor, I decided to stick to my plan to make the shopping foray a brief one and to ferret my wife out of hiding.

I thought of making a spectacle of myself, so that she would have to come out, but I abandoned the idea when several people passed whom I knew.

"I'm just waiting on my wife," I coughed, when they asked why I was hanging around the women's section.

"I was in the dressing room," she said when she finally appeared.

"You don't have to hang around here with me. Why don't you go buy a sports coat. You need one," she suggested, pointing out that my present model was frayed at the sleeves.

I had not bought a sports coat since I was 12 and a senior in elementary school. The suggestion of a new one was exciting. I headed for the men's department.

I am fussy about some clothes. I have certain rules that govern the purchase of sports coats in particular.

It is important to buy just the right sports coat. A jacket that you can look forward to putting on each time, and one should always purchase coats they will wear for at least 25 years.

My last coat had reached the end of its life. It was time for a new one. I saw the shopping as a mission to replace an old departed friend.

I went to several stores. I examined all of the coats they had to offer and tried on half of them.

After about two hours, my wife showed up. She was disgusted. I ducked down behind the clothing racks, but she spotted me. I told her I was looking at the quality of stitching in the seams of trousers.

"I've been waiting for you over an hour. It's time to go home. You have to mow the grass," she said, dragging me from the store with my new coat trailing on the ground.

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