

# Opinions

## Drug juries raise questions

RALEIGH -- As the legislature debates whether law enforcement officials should have a powerful new tool to fight drug trafficking, it will have to determine if that powerful tool can be controlled.



Watching  
By Paul T. O'Connor

Sen. Tony Rand, D-Cumberland, has proposed that investigative grand juries be authorized for state drug investigations. But abuse of such grand juries in other states prompted a prominent Raleigh defense attorney to tell a legislative committee that the bill could lead to some serious assaults on the civil liberties of innocent North Carolinians.

Grand juries currently operate in North Carolina. But, they are limited to investigating a particular crime. If law enforcement wants to investigate a drug ring, for example, a grand jury can't help, district attorneys say. An investigative grand jury would be able to call witnesses, require testimony, subpoena records and generally investigate that ring.

But grand juries in other states have been abused. They can be little more than a fishing expedition in which a politically inspired district attorney sets out to destroy the reputations of his opponents.

The federal courts, hoping to eliminate such abuse, have

established guidelines for investigative grand juries. Ed Grannis, district attorney for Cumberland County, says the Rand bill is far more restrictive than the federal guidelines. If the bill passed in its current form, he said, it would be the most restrictive in the nation.

Rand's bill would require a local district attorney to seek creation of the grand jury. The attorney general and a special three-judge panel would have to approve it. It could only be convened for investigations of illicit drug trafficking.

While that sounds like a lot of protection, it really isn't, says Joe Cheshire, a nationally recognized defense attorney from Raleigh who was representing the N.C. Academy of Trial Lawyers. If a district attorney or a sheriff wants to instigate proceedings for political purposes, he'll have little trouble.

Cheshire said a sheriff would tell

the district attorney he has reason to believe that someone is involved in drug trafficking and that a grand jury is needed. The district attorney would probably take his word and initiate the action. The attorney general would probably rely on the district attorney's advice and the three-judge panel would rely on the attorney general's recommendation.

Once that grand jury is opened, the sheriff's ability to smear his opponent's reputation is tremendous. The proceedings of the grand jury would be closed but Cheshire said there would be some public information. Plastered across the fronts of newspapers and heading the TV news would be stories about a citizen being called before the grand jury investigating drug dealing. The obvious implication would be that the man is somehow involved and that would destroy that man's reputation, Cheshire said.

Rand called Cheshire's hypothesis a "distortion" and said, "I have a little more faith in our public officials than that." Grannis said very few grand juries would be called. Wake County District Attorney Randolph Riley added that the amount of work involved in an investigative grand jury would limit the number a district attorneys could seek.



"BETRAYING THEIR COUNTRY FOR MERE MONEY...IT'S ENOUGH TO MAKE US HONEST SPIES PACK IT IN!"

## July kicks off second half

July ushers in the second half of the calendar year.

The month was named for Julius Caesar (it was formerly Quintilis); it was the month in which Caesar was born.

For Americans July is especially historic. Our independence is celebrated on the Fourth. The Battle of Gettysburg was fought during the first three days of July in 1863.

Three of our presidents were born in July: John Quincy Adams, Calvin Coolidge and Gerald Ford. The first admiral in the U.S. Navy, David G. Farragut, was born on July 5, 1801. The Republican Party was founded July 6, 1854, at



Cliff Blue

### People and Issues

Jackson, Michigan.

One largely forgotten, though important day is July 10. On that day in 1942 the Allies invaded Europe for the first time in World War II. General Dwight Eisenhower directed an amphibious invasion of Sicily.

July, the first full moon of sum-

mer, is a month of vacations, holidays, swimming, boating and outdoor pleasures -- and too many highway accidents.

**PRAYER IN SCHOOLS ...** When I went to school years ago there was Bible reading and prayer in schools with no one having any objection. Today it's difficult to accept objection to setting aside a few minutes for prayer and "meditation."

The Supreme Court has indicated it won't interfere with such a policy, and hasn't in one case.

Meditation is a good catch-all, in fact, it would cover the spiritual desires.

## Farming world's largest business

by W.B. Jenkins  
N.C. Farm Bureau Federation

American agriculture is the world's largest commercial industry, with assets exceeding \$1 trillion. This industry employs more than 22 million people, 20% of America's labor force.

The agricultural industry includes farming, transporting, processing, manufacturing, and retailing food and fiber. The combined agricultural industry accounts for \$609.5 billion -- 20% -- of the Na-

tion's Gross National Product (GNP).

With less than three-tenths of 1% of the world's farmers and farmworkers, the United States produces these amounts of the world's total food supply; soybeans, 64%; grapefruit, 56%; corn, 46%; sorghum, 31%; oranges, 25%; poultry, 24%; green peas, 23%; beef, 23%; cotton, 18%; wheat, 17%; eggs, 14%; and pork, 13%.

How times have changed: Fifty

years ago there were 6.7 million farms in the United States; the average size farm was 152 acres; there were 12 million farmers and farmworkers, each of whom, on the average, produced enough food and fiber for 10 people. Today there are 2.4 million farms; the average size farm is 432 acres; and there are 3.5 million farmers and farmworkers.

Today one hour of farm labor produces 16 times as much food and fiber as it did 60 years ago.

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