

Viewpoints

Elected officials need to have unity

On Monday the board of education and the Hoke County Commission squared off to settle the issue of financing the schools for this fiscal year. The meeting was important, but the timing was poor and it showed too much mutual distrust between the elected bodies. The meeting was also too late. It was called by the board of ed after the commissioners had given the budget final approval or after the horse had left the barn. Blame for the current school "spending crisis" should not be heaped on the heads of the county commissioners alone. The fault should rest equally on the board of education. School board members believe the county commissioners are sacrificing the educational needs of the county's children, while at the same time the commissioners are sitting on a capital reserve fund of over \$1 million. On the other hand, the commissioners feel the school system is overrun with wasteful spending and that a tightened belt would help the educational process. Both are partially correct, but as a result of the lack of harmony, Hoke County is the loser.

This county's schools and the taxpayers would be better off if the board of education and the commission would work together early in the budget process to provide a funding plan that makes both groups happy.

There should be a small amount of healthy competition between the educators and the purse string holders, but the goal of providing a fiscally sound and well-rounded school system should be a mutual aim of both groups of elected officials.

Presently, hired administrators of both the county and the school system work together to solve budget dilemmas. The process is not working well.

In the future, both boards should meet together prior to the final budget to develop a better understanding of the needs and obligations of the other.

Hoke County needs better schools, and it will take the cooperation of both boards of elected officials to insure that the educational system is improved.

Flags for festival would be good show

Last week Hoke County celebrated the nation's birthday quietly as usual. However, this year there was some evidence of patriotism

fluttering around the county.

Unlike the past several July Fourths, flags were flying not only on private homes, but also over the county courthouse and the Raeford City Hall.

For the future, the Raeford-Hoke Chamber of Commerce is making an effort to raise the community's use for flags during holidays and memorials.

In order to make it easy for everyone to obtain Old Glory, the Chamber is selling flags at a bargain price. That's a good idea.

Perhaps the next step should be to hold community flag days. We suggest September 18-21 for the North Carolina Turkey Festival.

If the festival goes the way promoters have planned, there will be about 30,000 visitors on Main Street in Raeford, as well as national television coverage.

It would be an impressive show to display flags at least on all the homes and businesses along the main highways leading to the festival area.

The turkey festival will be our big celebration of the year. It is hard to think of a better time for Hoke County residents to show off their community and national pride. Fly a flag on September 18-21.



Private club law hurts freedom

We have been reading about the organization of private clubs in Florida. The new idea was to enact a law which required private clubs to admit individuals of any sex, race, creed or color. It sounds idealistic at the first hearing. But upon serious thought, such a law violates civil and human rights.

For centuries, individuals have formed private clubs among those of similar interests, backgrounds, professions or beliefs. That free citizens have a right to form such clubs has been taken for granted since the beginning of democratic government and the establishment of individual freedoms.

The effort to force private clubs (apart from public or tax-supported organizations) to open their doors to any and all who would apply disguises itself as an equal rights effort.

It's no such thing, but an insidious invasion of government into the rights and freedoms citizens enjoyed for centuries.

\$10 AN HOUR ... Now comes AT&T with the "Reach Out America" program for its telephone customers. It's the best thing in long distance service from AT&T in the company's history.

In short, it allows the customer to call anywhere in the U.S. to any state, as many calls as one wishes to make, for sixty minutes. The calls must be made during non-business hours or on weekends.

The charge? Ten dollars! Those who can talk fast can make twenty calls during the month lasting three minutes, or thirty of two minutes duration. Or two for a half hour each. The charge remains \$10.

This, then is a good turn in a grim picture -- for the average individual -- of rising telephone charges.

ON SUICIDES ... Suicide, especially among teens, is a "serious public health problem" in the U.S., the federal Center for



Cliff Blue
People and Issues

Disease Control reported recently. The suicide rate among white, male teenagers rose 60 percent between 1970 and 1980 and has continued to increase.

AGRICULTURAL AGREEMENT ... The U.S. and Soviet officials signed a protocol to revive an agreement on cooperation in agriculture that had been suspended after the 1979 Soviet military intervention in Afghanistan.

FREE TRIPS NET CRIMINALS ... Nearly 3,400 fugitives wanted for crimes ranging from murder to rape, robbery and assault were lured out by hiding by federal and local law officers across Florida who promised free

and other prizes officials said recently.

NEW WORST ... Bacon cheeseburgers, sausage, biscuits, fried chicken and stuffed potatoes, products sold by some of America's most popular restaurant chains -- are cited by a consumer group as the "new worst" fast foods on the market because of high fat and salt content.

ARTIFICIAL SWEETNER ... Pregnant women and newborn infants should be cautious about using the artificial sweetener aspartame because it contains a substance that may cause brain damage, a medical researcher said.

TAX REFUNDS ... The nearly 600,000 individual taxpayers who filed their returns by the April 15 deadline but have not yet received a refund should be getting a check by the end of July, the Internal Revenue Service said recently.

HOLDING DOWN ... The House clamped an even tighter lid on the MX missile, voting to hold deployment to just 40 of the 10 warhead weapons and build no more in fiscal 1986.

Cargo law is hurting farmers

With American farm exports falling, it would seem that the last thing we could afford is a law that actually contributes to the decline, but that's what we have in the 1954 Cargo Preference Act.

Under the law, half of the commodities sold or donated under government programs must be shipped on United States flag vessels. The Department of Agriculture pays the added cost. In 1984, the government paid an additional \$100 million for moving Food for Peace shipments on U.S. vessels.

Not only is it a bad law for farmers, it's a bad law for hungry people. To make matters worse, maritime interests were successful last February in getting a U.S. District Court judge to rule that cargo preference also applies to the "blended credit" program (a plant whereby the U.S. extends low cost financing to certain foreign nations who buy our farm commodities).

As a result, the Agriculture Department was forced to cancel approval of more than \$500 million in blended credit to Egypt,

Morocco and other buyers of U.S. farm commodities. Farmers lost the opportunity to sell 3 million tons of grain and 125,000 tons of flour.

In some respect this may have been a blessing. It drew attention to a law that is badly in need of repeal. A number of bills have been introduced in Congress to free blended credit and other government assisted commercial sales from cargo preference.

Farm Bureau also seeks a total exemption for agriculture from cargo preference in the 1985 Farm Bill.

Fayetteville restaurant has disappointing flavor

Back when I was young, single and foolish and living in Atlanta, I believed I should get into the restaurant business.

It seemed like a fun idea. After all, I was escorting a different woman out to eat every night and was dining in the finest establishments the city had to offer. I knew how those places did it. I could do it better, I told myself.

I even went to New York and to New Orleans. I ate in pretty good restaurants in those cities too. Not only did all this dining out make me gain about 40 pounds, but it also gave me an inflated feeling of culinary superiority. I knew I could run a better restaurant. Not better than New York or New Orleans, but better than the ones in Atlanta.

I found a friend, who also had delusions of gastronomical greatness. He ate out a lot too. We opened a restaurant. Between us we weighed about 450 pounds and had almost \$500.

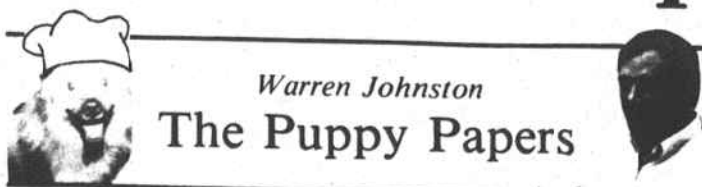
Despite our financial shortcomings, we did it better.

I lost weight and my hair thinned. We worked 18 hours a day for seven days a week. After a year, I got tired. I had had enough of the restaurant business. My partner stayed in. He now has gained a national reputation for serving good food and no longer has delusions.

The other night I ate in a new place in Fayetteville that recently rushed onto the restaurant scene claiming to be something that it is unfortunately not -- the "city's finest."

Granted, in a city that has distinguished itself for having the greatest number of fast food franchises per capita and has only gained some notoriety for its excellent oriental restaurants, to be the finest is not that hard to achieve. However, De La Fayette fails because it is trying hard to be something, and ends up being a ersatz five-star disappointment.

At the bottom of the menu the owners, who apparently want to



Warren Johnston
The Puppy Papers

do it better, invite patrons to make comments, complaints and compliments. Well, here are some of mine:

•The newly remodeled Chestnut Mill offers valet parking to arriving customers. It is not needed and only adds to the overly stiff atmosphere being attempted by De La Fayette. The parking lot is level and easily accessible. Forget valet parking.

•The use of glass panels opens the upper dining room and bar to exceptional views. Good job. Other than the green house type windows, much of the remodeling is pretentious. Money could have been saved and put into food preparation and the training of the wait staff.

•The bar is attractive. Drinks are \$2.75. You have to pay for the remodeling. Glasses are small, but the service is good. Unlike the restaurant, the atmosphere is casual. The bar gets pretty good marks.

•Then we climbed to the dining room. We were handed a blank food check with our name on it and told to take it to our "wait person." It was a little like having to have a ticket to get into the place. The climb to the dining room is worth it. The view of the old mill pond is beautiful.

•When a restaurant offers entrees priced to \$15.95, then it opens its doors to critical diners. Even with moderation, it is difficult to

leave De La Fayette without spending \$50 a couple, including tip. At that price I am going to be hard to please.

•The topped priced item (\$15.95), "Filet Mignon Mignon (misspelled) LaFayette Au Croute, tasted like pot roast, not a fine cut of filet mignon, "fresh mushrooms, covered with Burgundy, truffles and brandy sauce rolled and cooked in Puff Pastry."

•The other entrees we tried, boneless capon "ala" Charlotte (\$9.95), lobster tails "ala" Evangeline (\$14.95) and the "Chef's Special," crawfish etouffe (\$12.95), were equally disappointing.

•The capon was breaded and sauteed, covered with a packaged-tasting cheese flavored sauce, not the Bernaise (sic) as promised on the menu. The "lobster tails" were singular and unimaginative. The crawfish etoufee was a good try but fell short of the mark.

•In addition, the service was poor. All of the waiters and waitresses were too uptight and said things like: "I sincerely apologize," when something went awry. Their attempts at "high service" made them seem less adept. Everyone would have felt better if the waiters, waitresses, hostesses and bus boys, relaxed and tried to be themselves.

There is a feeling among many in the restaurant business that customers do not have a palate distinguished enough to tell the difference between a substitute and the real thing. Those restaurateurs are wrong. When diners pay for the real thing, most expect to and know when they don't get it.

De La Fayette is phony, gimmicky, and overpriced for the quality of the food. I am sure it is not what the owners intended when they set out to do the best place in town.

I hope owner Dr. C. Saliba and Executive Chef Ron Soileau will keep trying, because Fayetteville needs a good restaurant on the level attempted by De La Fayette.

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