

# Viewpoints

## Community spirit was the main event

"I can't remember when so many people in Hoke County have been involved in trying to make something work."

The sentence was spoken frequently on Main Street in Raeford on Saturday, as the first North Carolina Turkey Festival came to a close.

The success of the festival was not a product of a handful of leaders, but an example of what a community can accomplish when it works together.

Hundreds of Hoke County residents spent the hot day happily pouring soft drinks, handing out ice cream and putting chili on turkey hot dogs for thousands of visitors who flooded the street during Saturday events.

From the opening gobble on Wednesday morning to the closing whinny on Saturday night, local residents survived on nervous energy and ignored aching muscles and sore feet to make the festival work.

City of Raeford workers groomed the streets and bushes in preparation of the event last week, and after clean-up crews had finished their tasks Saturday night, the landscape once again appeared unblemished by the estimated 30,000 who streamed through the community during the four days of festivities.

Now that the tents, banners and trash boxes have been removed, it is easy to see the sparkling appearance of the city's streets, alleys and sidewalks, accented by the neatly groomed look of shrubbery and grass areas. Raeford is cleaner today than it has been in years.

Home and business owners also did their part to get ready for the event. Signs from out-of-business firms, which had been hanging around for decades, were removed from Main Street structures, and merchants spruced up display windows to give the district a commercially vibrant appearance.

Homeowners mowed lawns and painted exteriors, and we put our best foot forward.

Not only did we let a lot of the state's residents know we exist, but we also showed much of North Carolina and the nation this a good community in which to live and work. We got some attention, and we looked pretty good.

Hoke County can be proud of the job we did last week making the North Carolina Turkey Festival a success. We demonstrated to others we have the stuff to host a statewide event, and as a result we should feel good about ourselves.

"Before we go on with the meeting would someone please set upright the person who fell over during plans for the 75th Celebration."

"I think it's Turkey Festival Flashback Sir."



## Small towns wait for rate breaks

RALEIGH -- Telephone users in the small towns and rural areas of North Carolina may have a long wait for the benefits of real competition among long distance calling companies because of a decision by the N.C. Utilities Commission, according to one of the new long distance companies.

MCI Telecommunications Inc., a national competitor of AT&T's for long distance business, says a recent commission decision on rates gives AT&T an unfair advantage in the competition for long distance customers.

MCI made its charge to the legislature's Utility Review Committee. AT&T immediately defended the commission's decision and then questioned MCI's commitment to small towns and rural areas.

The controversy revolves around what is known as the access charge. When local telephone companies were taken out of the long distance business because of telephone deregulation, this charge was added. The commission says

the long distance companies must pay the local companies 15.6 cents per minute for use of the lines. This money is split evenly between the local company which serves the customer making the call and the local company which serves the customer receiving it.

But MCI and the other new long distance companies don't pay 15.6 cents, as does AT&T. They pay less. But they say that because of a Utilities Commission decision they don't pay enough less to make up for some deficiencies in service they get from the local companies.

If you pick up a phone in North Carolina and simply dial the customary 10-digit long distance number, you'll be using AT&T. If you want to use MCI, you first must open an MCI account and then dial a total of 22 digits. You may save money on MCI and other newcomers, but it's less convenient.

There are other disadvantages to the service MCI and other upstarts receive from the local companies. Transmission quality isn't as good,



Watching  
By Paul T.  
O'Connor

said Harry Miller, an MCI official, so MCI must spend extra money to enhance the signal. Also, to hook into a newcomer's service, a customer must have a touch tone phone. About half on the phones in North Carolina are still rotary dial.

The commission said all these disadvantages to MCI and other long distance newcomers should add up to a 25 percent discount on the portion of the access charge paid to the company serving the call maker. MCI protested because the Federal Communications Commission had ordered a 55 percent discount; for interstate calls, on both the calling and receiving ends of the access charge. The utilities commission decision af-

fects only interstate calls.

In some metropolitan areas of North Carolina, the debate will soon be moot because MCI and other newcomers will soon have equal access to the top grade service the local companies now give AT&T. But the equal access may be a long way off for rural areas and small towns.

MCI says that by failing to set a significant access charge discount for the second rate service newcomers will continue to receive in less-populated areas, the commission prevents them from offering substantially lower prices.

AT&T countered that the newcomers haven't shown much interest in small town service, anyhow, and that any increase in the differential would only lead to the subsidizing of big-city rates by rural customers.

AT&T also said that the discount ordered for North Carolina was very much in line with that ordered for other southeastern states by their utilities commissions.

## Success takes help

Success can only be achieved when all who participate are interested in success. Without question the first turkey festival was a tremendous success. It was a tribute to Warren Johnson as the leader. Those who worked did so with the unselfishness of the dedicated. It was truly a team effort.

At no time have I been involved with any such project that I didn't benefit from the experience. I made a new friend. Gary Wieland is a first class human being. If the rest of the men in the National Guard have the character of this man the country is in good hands.

Leland Strother was a good dependable high school student. Age has made him more so. He gave more than his share of time and work. Eloise Carter and I have worked together on many committees. My admiration for this lady increases with each assignment I share with her. Allen Douglas was a member of the site committee. He completed his assignment after working hours and at night. I am grateful the school system had the foresight to hire him as a teacher.

Clemson Tiger Richard Melton is a credit to the Agriculture Extension Service. He served in any capacity to help the cause. Mike McNeil, Harold Gillis and George Ashley were standard bearers in helping to achieve the success the festival organizers enjoyed.

Fellow retiree and friend Charles Pittman built the stage.

My friend Tom McBryde gave us most of the materials.

Praise for the cooperation of the school system couldn't be overstated. Don Steed, Joe Soles and the entire maintenance department helped in any area necessary to achieve the desired goal. Dr.



Looking On  
Raz Autry

Simpson and Mr. Caldwell gave any resources under their command for the asking.

Utility companies have suffered for the last few years from the abuse of an angry public. Many of us who have been the abusers can now only sing their praises. No organization worked any harder for the success of the festival than CP&L. The top brass and the linemen gave us their best shot and we thank them.

Years ago when we were adding the final touches on the Hoke High Stadium many folks offered us advice. Some of it was good. A lot of it was just advice. Most of the folks who offered just advice were usually those who had contributed none at all. Their first statement to those of us doing the manual labor was, "now what we need to do etc." The young men working with me at that time named them "we boys." I am happy to say we did not have any "we boys" only workers.

I am sure the other committee chairperson will pass along to those who helped their sincere thanks. For the above and those I might have omitted because of the dimness of my memory I say thank you for making my job not only a lot easier but a pleasure.

While I am grateful for being part of such a success, I still intend to be in China next year. Come on peach crop, please be a bumper crop and last until September 22.

## Trade negotiators should be tougher

In the works of the new U.S. Trade Representative Clayton Yeutter, "You've got to show some muscle once in awhile or you're not credible as a nation." Yeutter said that after announcing the truce in the so-called pasta war between the U.S. and the European Community (EC).

The U.S. showed muscle by threatening to raise the duties on imported Italian pasta unless the

Europeans got serious about a longstanding citrus dispute.

The European Community budged only when the U.S. threatened to slap higher tariffs on European pasta in the dispute which started from a decade-long disagreement over discriminatory tariffs imposed on American oranges by EC nations.

By way of truce, the EC has offered to reconsider its treatment of American citrus and cut in half the subsidy on its pasta. For our part, we won't increase duties on pasta.

"America must pay attention to the lessons learned in the pasta war," Yeutter said. "We participated in 54 negotiating sessions without success. The fact that we retaliated and got results shows it pays to demonstrate muscle."

### Letters Policy

Letters to the editor are encouraged and welcomed. Writers should keep letters as short as possible. Names, addresses and telephone numbers should be included and all letters must be signed. Names will be printed, however, other information will be kept confidential. We reserve the right to edit letters for good taste and brevity. Letters should be received by *The News-Journal* by noon on the Monday of the publication week.

## Ice brought chilling festival moments

When to many, things seemed to be moving smoothly last Saturday, the world was really crumbling around the first North Carolina Turkey Festival.

We had promoted the festival to the Ends Of The Earth and around 10 a.m., it seemed all the residents from there were showing up in Raeford.

As throngs of festival goers streamed into town, the sun began to bake Main Street. Conditions were ideal for a bonanza day at the festival-operated soft drink stands. The only problem was we had no ice.

The cry went out from the library to the depot. "We don't have any ice. We have no change."

The ice was bogged down in communications, and the change was being kept safe in a locked room in the bank. I had given the key to the person trying to get the ice. Disaster was imminent.

My knees weakened, and I flashed back to the time I co-owned a restaurant in Atlanta.

We had prepared to open the establishment for months. We invited friends over for delicious preliminary meals. We honed our staff to get them ready for the onslaught of customers who would surely fill the tables.

We delayed opening as long as possible. We were nervous. The landlord was beginning to wonder if we were not operating a front for homeless waiters. Finally, the day came. We served lunch.

Twelve customers came. We were in turmoil. The harder we worked, the farther behind we got. Our diners were so angry they would have been throwing rolls at each other and shooting butter with their knives across the room, but there were no bread, butter or knives on the tables. The waiters could not get them out of the kitchen.

We were proud of our menu. It listed a great variety of fine dishes. Our mood changed, when the orders came in, and we discovered we did not know how to make the food. Somehow we survived the first day and before long we were serving hundreds of



Warren Johnston  
The Puppy Papers

lunches with ease. However, the pain and frustration of the opening meals will never be forgotten.

The memories of the restaurant welled up last Saturday, as I thought of a way to break into the bank to get the change boxes and worried over the lack of ice.

As I ran up and down Main Street to relieve the anxiety and to find the person with the ice and the key, I noticed the volunteers had no place to sit, except on the curb. We had forgotten the chairs.

"I don't have any electricity for my booth. I can't cook," one vendor said, as I rushed by his cold frying pan.

I passed a woman I had never seen before. She was selling hot drinks and making change from a paper cup. The sun was beating down on her red volunteer hat. She had no place to sit.

"Don't worry. I'm having a good time," she smiled, as I went by mumbling something about getting her ice, change and a chair.

Things smoothed out. The ice and change crisis subsided. Power was restored to melt the grease in the vendor's cold frying pan and chairs arrived for the volunteers.

The rest of the day went reasonably well, because the workers remained good humored despite long hours in the sun.

They hustled their wares to the end, and even when the police were about to open the street again, families of volunteers were still pushing soft drinks and hot dogs.

Unlike the opening of the restaurant, Hoke County survived the first Turkey Festival barely ruffled. Everyone worked together, instead of throwing rolls and shooting butter.

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