

# Viewpoints

## Lobbying fell short

Lobbying is the key to success in getting what one needs from government.

Although local leaders are getting better at making Hoke County's needs known to North Carolina and federal officials, it became obvious with the state highway commission's vote on U.S. 401 two weeks ago our lobbying efforts are not as effective as those being waged by other communities.

In recent months, Hoke leaders have been able to get Governor James G. Martin to visit the county on two occasions, which is more than any governor has been here since 1972. Considering our staunchly Democratic Party nature, getting Martin to come at all was a neat trick and showed ingenuity.

On each of his visits, the governor was reminded of the critical need to widen U.S. Highway 401. He apparently forgot.

Besides lobbying with Martin, a group of local leaders met with newly-appointed state Highway Commissioner Richard K. Pugh, who represents the district which includes Hoke County. Pugh left the meeting with the understanding of the need for a "speedy" widening of U.S. 401.

Local leaders have also met with Eighth District Rep. Bill Hefner about U.S. 401 and reminded the Congressman of the essential role Hoke County played in his re-election.

On behalf of the county, Hefner wrote letters to state officials asking for their help in widening U.S. 401, "as rapidly as possible".

Before Governor James B. Hunt left office, the Hoke County portion of U.S. 401 was placed back on the 10-year priority construction list or Transportation Improvement Plan (TIP). Surveying work was to begin this year, acquisition of property in 1987 and construction in 1989. Everyone in Hoke County cheered.

Just when local voters were beginning to question their Democratic Party heritage and considering voting in mass for Martin in the next election, Hoke County got the shaft again on U.S. 401.

Sure, we should feel lucky. It could have been worse. We could have been cut from the TIP.

However, the vote put this county back into bed with Cumberland County and may have killed the project all together.

The widening of 401 was expanded to 71st High School and instead of being moved up on the schedule, construction is now scheduled for 1991 instead of 1989. In addition, engineering problems around Lake Rim have to be worked out before the bulldozers can begin.

The lobbying did not go far enough. The widening of U.S. 401 now has the same status it did in 1972 when then Gov. Bob Scott, who visited here two times, promised the work done by the next year.

Scott now jokes that if 401 had been widened, governors would not have had anything to promise Hoke County all these years since his administration.

Although Martin has never promised the construction of a four-lane 401, one has to wonder if he will make the same joke 14 years from now.

The widening of U.S. Highway 401 is no laughing matter for Hoke County residents. The economic future of this community is tied to the project, and we do not have time for 14 more years of disappointments and political promises.

By expanding the project, the highway commission has hinged the destiny of Hoke County on the whims of Cumberland County officials, who might lobby to use the funds on more "pressing" road improvements, as they did in the past.

In addition, the cost of the 401 project has gone from \$10 million to \$15.5 million and has been tied to engineering surveys around Lake Rim, which might determine the widening is even more expensive. The cost of bypassing the lake has been used as a financial excuse in the past to cancel the entire project.

The future of Hoke County has been manipulated again, and local residents should be angry enough to try to make this the last time.

Hoke County still has the lowest per capita income in the state, and if we lie back and do nothing to correct it, economic conditions here can only get worse.

An effective lobbying effort needs more than a handful of leaders. It takes an entire community's effort.

If this county is going to come out of its economic doldrums, we need extended area telephone service and a widened U.S. 401.

Hoke County cannot compete with other counties for new industry without good highway access. There are no four lane roads here. US 401 could be a vital link.

This county cannot lure new commuting residents, if we have to tell them they must travel a perilous and congested highway every day to work.

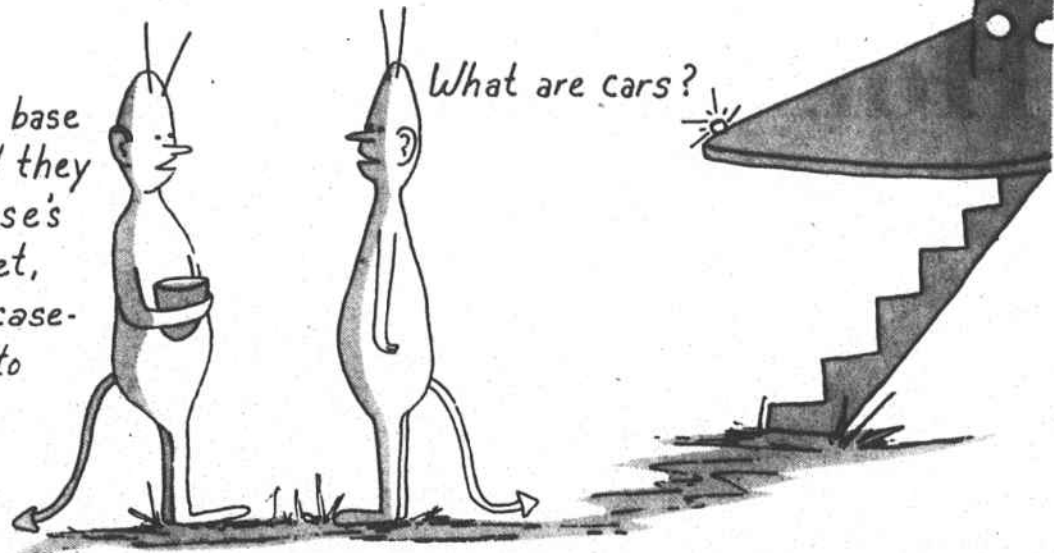
Hoke County's successes in the past 18 months, like the Sandhills College Satellite, state funds for the courthouse, the depot and the turkey festival and Hoke residents appointed to the district court and the Sandhills College Board, have proven that if this county does not scream and yell, we will never be heard over the babble of the sycophant horde surrounding state government.

The time has come to flood the governor's desk with letters and let him know we are mad about the vote by the highway commission.

Let Governor Martin know that we are tired of living in the poorest county in the state, and that every time we try to do something about our own condition, we get kicked in the teeth by state government.

The governor can be reached by writing: Gov. James G. Martin, The Office of the Governor, The Capitol, Capitol Square, Raleigh, NC 27611.

At every earthling base station I approached they would deposit Reese's Pieces in my helmet, pat my cranial encasement, and tell me to watch for cars...



## Sheltered workshop helps Hoke residents

If you wear a turkey apron -- an official N.C. Turkey Festival "Strut Your Stuffin' apron -- or if you bought or admired one, you are familiar with the very good work of the Cumberland Sheltered Workshop.

You may have known that dog houses, bird houses, play houses, and storage sheds were built there. You may not have known exactly where "there" is. Here is what I learned on a search for aprons.

The Turkey Festival planners were considering money-raising for the Festival. This was way last spring when the Festival was a topic for dreamers. There was little money to get going on and the plans were snowballing. This was in the long-ago times before the design of "Strut Your Stuffin'" and "something different to sell..." talk produced the idea for an apron. (After all, we did want folks to be thinking about cooking turkey!)

At a craft show in Fayetteville, I spotted a denim apron with pockets that looked well-made. Its price encouraged me to ask questions. I was given a brochure from the producer -- the Cumberland Sheltered Workshop.

A few days later I stopped by the Workshop's retail store on Robeson Street in Fayetteville. There I saw picnic tables and items of wood, but I also saw many

aprons, bags and stitched items in several fabrics. I knew I was on the right track, but I was told I must talk to Mrs. Dowdy.

To find her, I was told I should head out Bragg Boulevard, go over the business loop and before I got to the Pizza Palace I should turn back to the right, then to the left, go into the parking area on the left, into the main entrance, and stop at the office near the front door.

Is it any wonder that I put that adventure off for another day?

When I felt ready for the challenge, I took off down Bragg Boulevard and, to my surprise, made only one little mistake in going right there.

I met the nicest, friendliest people -- I needed directions from several of them. The place is huge. "Workshop" sounds small and cozy, like Santa's. The large space, the buildings, all the people headed intently to the many jobs to be done, I was not expecting this.

Sabrina Bass of the Workshop staff told me later that the Workshop has one hundred-thirty-two clients and twenty-four staff members. (Two of the staff members are Hoke Countians). The clients are physically or mentally handicapped. The Adult Activities Center, working with more severely handicapped people, operates on the same site. One



Kay Thomas  
Looking On

hundred-plus individuals have jobs in its program.

"The Workshop is not 'state supported'" is an emphatic statement from Bass. She explained that this misconception about the workshop undermines the importance of the work accomplished. The Workshop manufactures and sells items that produce eighty-five percent of its income. The other fifteen percent of its budget comes from Vocational Rehabilitation which pays for training people receive that can make them employable elsewhere.

In addition to sales at the Robeson Street store and the Recycling Center on Bragg Boulevard, the Workshop publishes a catalogue which shows items for sale to athletic departments and sporting goods firms. Sadium cushions are an item, like our turkey aprons, which is sewed by one division and stenciled by another. Miss Bass says that the Adult Activities people have become so good at the printing process that they can now blend

colors and use up to five blocks in a design.

There will be a booth at a Christmas show in Fayetteville soon. There, nail aprons and four sizes of dog houses will be displayed with other items for sale. Firewood is available from the Workshop; it is sold by the half- or full-cord.

I did want you to hear the rest of my apron story.

In the sewing department (when I had found Mrs. Dowdy), I explained what I had in mind and that I thought we might be able to do business. I was shown fabrics and designs. Negotiating on a price was delayed by the necessity of determining the cost of stenciling the logo. Someone in another department would have to contract with me for that work.

Several calls and another trip to the Workshop and we had a deal. It was a really good deal which would allow the Festival a good profit.

The rest is history. Now chefs, celebrities, turkey bigwigs, and you and I have fine aprons that proclaim "Strut Your Stuffin'." In fact, it seemed that by Festival time they would be all gone. We did have some left and there are still a few at the Chamber of Commerce office. I bet they'll all be gone by Thanksgiving.

## Halloween conjures up ghostly stories

Halloween was never a big deal for me when I was growing up. My mother always tried to make sure I had a good time trick or treating around our neighborhood on Halloween, but it still was not one of my favorite ways to visit the neighbors.

Every year, I would reluctantly don an old bed sheet with holes in it for eyes and a mouth, put a belt around the outside to hold the costume on and go knocking on doors for handouts with a group of my friends.

The Halloween outings were a pretty good time, but nothing spectacular. We got a lot of good stuff, and seldom had to resort to tricks, like soaping screens or rolling trees with toilet paper. The usual haul was a shopping bag full of cookies, candy, pieces of cake, apples, peanuts and honey-dipped popcorn. Nobody worried about being poisoned in those days.

We ate most of the treats before we got home. I would get sick and have bad dreams about ghosts.

Those apparitions were the only ghosts I knew on an intimate basis as a youth, which may account for my lack of enthusiasm for Halloween.

However, when we moved to the South Carolina Lowcountry several years ago, ghosts seemed to loom everywhere and my excitement for All Hallow's Eve increased.

"Oh, you're finally getting excited about Halloween," my wife said, when she spotted me trying on my Igor costume in early August.

It was the ghost stories of the area which had gotten me in the mood for premature haunting. In the Lowcountry, spirits seem to affect residents on a year-around basis, and I was no exception.

Fortunately, I regained my composure and put the costume away before I embarrassed myself by groveling at the door of some unsuspecting neighbor on the way to the beach.

One story, which has stayed with me since we moved from the Lowcountry, comes from the Pelican Inn on Pawleys Island.

It was told to me by a woman who lived through the experience, shortly after she took over the ownership of the large three-story oceanfront inn, built around 1825.

During the family's first night in the inn, the woman put her youngest daughter in a small bedroom next to hers. In the middle of the night she was awakened by the child's screams.

Thinking the little girl was having a bad dream, she reassured her



Warren Johnston  
The Puppy Papers

and went back to bed. On the next night and several nights thereafter, the same thing happened.

Finally she decided to move the baby girl and put her older brother in the small room. The following morning, the young boy would not say what had happened the night before, but announced firmly he would never sleep in the small bedroom again.

The next night, the woman, who was losing sleep over all the commotion, moved into the small bedroom and put her children in other quarters. She had had an active day and had no trouble falling asleep.

About 3 a.m. she was awakened by the sounds of people at a dinner party, which was unusual, because it was the off-season on Pawleys Island.

The woman told me she could hear dishes rattling and entertaining conversations.

Still sleepy, she said she felt as if she was being nudged and kicked. She opened her eyes, and found she was under a large wooden table. On either side of her were legs and feet of about 20 persons. She could clearly see men's buttoned shoes and ladies' long bustled gowns. The dress seemed to be from the Victorian period.

The guests paid her no heed and continued with the dinner party. The woman said she was more fascinated than frightened.

Later after some research, the woman discovered the location of the small bedroom had once been a dining room during the late 1800's and early 1900's.

Because of the persistence of unregistered guests at the dinner party, the woman converted the small bedroom into a storage area. It is used for the same purpose today, although the Pelican Inn has changed hands several times.

The story is no Halloween Three, but it is supposed to be true. At least, that's what the woman told me.

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