

# Opinions

## Season's change spurs thoughts



One on One  
D.G. Martin

This month we finally accept it. Summer is over.

The cool air brushes briskly across our faces every morning now. It is almost dark before most of us get home from work.

The color has come to the leaves all around us. We watch them burst into flame -- knowing that soon they will fall to a lovely death.

It reminds us of the temporary nature of life and the certainty, at the end, of our death in this world.

The coming of the autumn -- and the changing of the seasons at the same time each year -- also remind us of the reliability and permanence of God's pattern for this world.

If we take into account that the end of our lives here on this earth is ultimate and certain regardless of anything that we try to do about it -- and if we accept the returning cycles of seasons on this earth as permanent and unchangeable -- if we take all this in account -- why should any of us try to make a difference?

Why should we interfere? Why should we try to change things that will not change? Why should we be involved?

To find an answer we have to look at things another way. In the midst of all of this world and its permanent changingness -- we are a part of it.

We are involved whether we like it or not.

Look outside and see the evidence that people can make a difference.

See the houses, yards, the streets, and the parks. Their beauty bursts forth this season because people make plans. Because people plant trees and flowers and bushes. Because people care for them. Because people want to make a difference.

Someday we will look at those same trees -- some of which are just saplings now -- and they will tower over us and our children. You will be struck by their majesty and beauty. Remember then that people planted them and cared for them. Remember that people make a difference.

done to make life better for some other person -- to make life's journey for that person more tolerable, more understandable, more pleasant, more acceptable and more meaningful. All of us have done that sometime for some other person.

But all of us have passed by the opportunity to make a difference. Sometime we could have made a big difference just by crossing the street and putting an arm around someone in need, and we did not do it.

When that day comes we will remember those times we made a difference -- and those times we did not.

Perhaps this time of changing seasons then is a good time for us to resolve together to be better involved, to make a better difference and to better prepare for that day when those final questions are asked and we can look ourselves and our Maker squarely in the eye and present our true account.

Share with me some of your memories about how someone else made a difference in your life.

Write to me at the following address: D.G. Martin, P.O. Box 37283, Charlotte, NC 28237.



## Highway plan seen as a hoax

RALEIGH -- Every year, the Board of Transportation sets a road construction schedule that will cover the next decade.

This Transportation Improvement Plan, or TIP, is considered an essential planning tool for the Department of Transportation and for communities which need to know when and where roads are going to be built.

But on the legislature's Department of Transportation Study Committee, there is significant feeling that the TIP might be little more than a hoax on the public. The 10-year TIPs are changed so often that they have little credibility with the public and they cause a great deal of wasted time and effort in DOT, these legislators said.

The TIP is "ineffective, inefficient and wasteful," Sen. Marc Basnight, D-Dare, told the study committee. "I think we go too far when we try to plan for 10 years. It's costly because we start people working on a project, we get all the design work done and everything else ready in the field and then we change governors and he drops the project."



Watching  
By Paul T. O'Connor

Sen. Bill Goldston, D-Rockingham, said, "My people think making the TIP (with a desired road) is the first step and then the next step is getting it delayed. They want predictability."

It is no secret that the promise to build a road is one of the biggest plums a governor can hand out in this state. (He appoints a majority of the board which in turn decides which roads are built.) As Sen. Ollie Harris, D-Cleveland, said, "These folks out here running for governor are promising people roads. (The building of roads) is politics and it's going to continue to be politics."

When a governor promises to add a road to the TIP, then he may have to drop others. The state doesn't have unlimited road funds. When that road is dropped, say Basnight and others, then the state

throws away money it spent on road design and planning.

Governors would still have the opportunity to put roads into the TIP under the Basnight plan. But they wouldn't have to worry that the road was going to be taken out by the next administration.

Transportation Secretary Jim Harrington said that the TIP does have a credibility problem with the public. But he said that less than 10 percent of it was changed when Gov. Jim Martin's board came to power this year. The savings possible from planning for 10 years into the future far outweigh the disadvantages created when some plans are changed, he said.

Harrington also claimed that the TIP adopted by the Board this year is much more realistic in its projections than were previous plans. A certain amount of over-planning is necessary, he said. If a project gets delayed or new federal money suddenly becomes available, the state should have plans ready to use almost immediately. The plan adopted this year, he said, kept that over-planning to a minimum, however.

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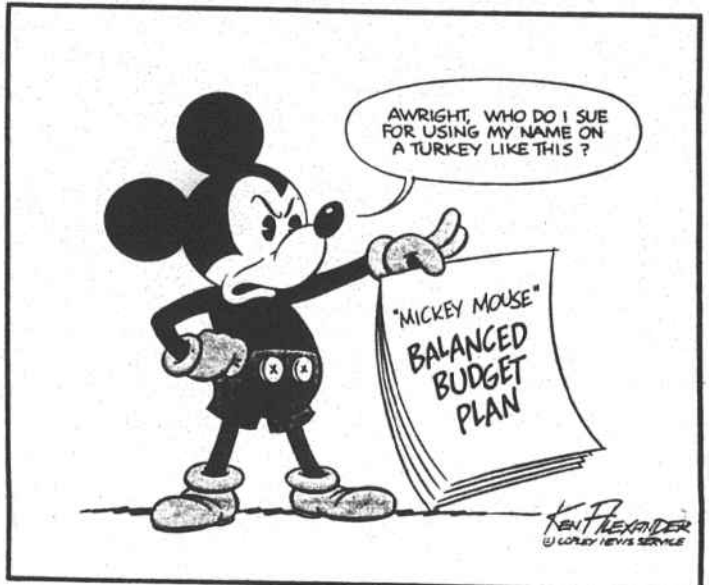
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