

Viewpoints

Library should remain open for public use

A plan to take the most heavily used meeting room in Hoke County away from local residents for more than eight months while the courthouse is being remodeled is a poor one and should be scrapped.

Members of the Hoke County Commission are expected to vote next week on whether or not to use the conference room at the library to house the Register of Deeds office during the courthouse construction period. We encourage the elected officials to find an alternative location.

Removing the conference room from public use would rip the heart out of the Hoke County Library's ability to be part of the community and to continue to serve as a focal point for local activities.

The loss of the room would not only inhibit the cultural gains currently being made in this county, but the move could also jeopardize the progressive spirit of the community.

More than 1,000 residents a month, who are currently using the room for meetings and gatherings, would be disenfranchised by the closing of the facility.

In addition, the library would not be part of Hoke County's Diamond Jubilee celebration scheduled for May and could be lost from use by the second annual North Carolina Turkey Festival.

During last September's festival, the library was a critical part in the opening ceremonies and the North Carolina Turkey Cooking Contest. The facility also served as a backdrop for Saturday's musical performances. Without the conference room, the building could not have played as valued a role.

In the coming months, this county also has the opportunity for musical performances, special readings and film festivals, however, without the support of the library and the use of the conference room, the chances of the events becoming a reality are almost non-existent.

The conference room at the library is not a good location for the Register of Deeds and should be dropped from consideration.

If the Hoke County Commissioners are concerned about the cost of renting, we recommend using the Raeford City Council Chambers as an alternative location. That hall is only used by a handful of county residents, who would have to sacrifice little more than territorial pride to move their monthly meeting to the county office building.

The Register of Deeds does not generate many customers, and City Hall functions would not be disturbed by the use of a temporary tenant.

It is hoped when the final decision is reached, the commissioners will have voted against the use of the library and in favor of the residents of Hoke County.

Programs start holidays

There are two events planned for this week, which need the support of the entire community.

Both are free and both are designed to bring Hoke County together in the spirit of the holiday season.

On Wednesday, county residents are encouraged to attend a community religious Thanksgiving Service, which is being sponsored by the Hoke County Ministerial Association.

The service will be held at the First Baptist Church in Raeford and will begin at 7:30 p.m.

On Sunday at 5 p.m., the Christmas lights will be turned on in Raeford during a community caroling and tree lighting event.

The Downtown Revitalization Commission and the Raeford-Hoke Chamber of Commerce are combining efforts to decorate a large white pine tree between the Raeford United Methodist Church and the Hoke County Courthouse.

The tree, along with the other lights in town will be lighted at the conclusion of the Christmas singing.

We commend the groups responsible for organizing both events. All county residents are encouraged to attend and to get into the Hoke County holiday spirit.

Happy Thanksgiving

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"Our last meeting was held inside the Hoke County Library, before the Register of Deeds moved in..."



MINUTES FROM THE MEETING

'Pork Barrel' due for reform

RALEIGH -- The 1985 pork barrel spending bill probably did more to hurt the public image of the legislature than any other General Assembly undertaking this year.

The bill was drafted in private by powerful legislators, then forced down their throats of their willing lambs. It was blatantly partisan and politically punitive. Most Republicans didn't get their projects funded and the one Democrat who'd opposed the leadership was also cut off.

To top things off, the bill contained funds for several fire departments which didn't exist, for the lodge of one legislator's father and a school run by the Black Muslims. It became a public relations disaster.

So now the Senate is trying to change the process under which the pork barrel, or "special appropriations," bill is handled.

A good argument can be made for keeping the pork barrel. Each legislator, in theory, designates an equal share of money that is appropriated for worthwhile projects back in his district. For example, rural fire departments, a local history museum, a rape crisis center.

A senate committee studying the appropriations process apparently wants to recommend reforms that will allow the legislature to continue to fund the pork barrel. It recently worked its way through a series of problems with the current process and bandied about some solutions.

One complaint is that the pork barrel bill comes out of nowhere. Legislators file requests for funding for special products and a



Watching

By Paul T. O'Connor

leadership committee decides, in private, where the money goes. Their package is then presented to the Appropriations Committee as a fait accompli.

Sen. Harold Hardison, D-Lenoir, said return to the system in effect before 1983 would help here. Legislators should have to file individual bills for special projects. Those bills should then move through the Appropriations Committee individually. Only if they pass committee, Hardison said, should they be considered for inclusion in a package.

The pork barrel bill also contained numerous examples of duplicate appropriations. One volunteer fire department, for example, might have gotten four \$500 appropriations, one from each of four legislators representing its area. Sen. Marvin Ward, D-Forsyth, suggested that a procedure be established to combine such requests before the requests are made to reduce duplication.

Gov. Jim Martin complained that some of the money appeared headed for non public purposes. Senators said that if each appropriation were studied first in a committee, that would be unlikely to happen next time. Sen. David Parnell, D-Robeson, added that it might be a good idea to go back to the procedure of appropriating pork barrel funds through state departments. It would be up to that agency to make sure the

money was going for a legitimate public purpose.

Other ideas are floating around concerning the pork barrel bill. There are those who want it eliminated altogether. If a legislator thinks a local project deserves state money, then a special bill ought to be filed and have to fight for state dollars like every other budget bill that is filed.

Since some of these appropriations fall into categories, like grants to fire departments, some legislators have expressed interest in creating new grants programs for local museums, fire departments, rape crisis centers. It would be a fairer way to approach funding, they say.

There's lots to celebrate at Thanksgiving

by W.B. Jenkins

N.C. Farm Bureau Federation

With all the current media attention on tough times down on the farm, consumers could be worrying about whether their next meal might have to be imported. And, since much of our Thanksgiving Day focus is on celebrating the bounty made possible by an efficient, productive American agriculture, some are probably asking the question: what do we have to be thankful for this year?

Thankfully, our Thanksgiving holiday prompts us to seriously ponder that question. When we do, we can usually come up with a pretty lengthy list -- and 1985 is no exception.

For example, we can be thankful that despite economical problems and a not always sympathetic Mother Nature, American farmers have produced abundant crops and ample supplies of meat and dairy products.

We can be thankful that unlike some other countries, we don't have to worry about whether there will be enough food to go around.

We can be thankful that for the past few years, food prices have actually been below the rate of inflation.

We can be thankful for the millions of city jobs created by production agriculture, and for the contribution the agricultural industry makes to the economic strength of our state and nation.

In North Carolina especially, we can be thankful that we can prepare a delicious, nutritious Thanksgiving meal from products grown within the borders of our own state. Few other states can make that claim.

So, while nobody will deny that there are tough times down on the farm, few have any real doubts that the industry will survive and keep on supplying us with the best food supply in the world. And for that, we can be truly thankful.



Football, turkey were T-Day tradition

When I was growing up, I don't think I appreciated Thanksgiving as much as I was supposed to. My three brothers weren't any better about it either.

My mother would remind us every year we weren't thankful enough.

"You're not thankful enough," she would say with a tear in her eye, after we had eaten the Thanksgiving dinner she had carefully prepared for three days and had only offered such laudatory remarks as: "Hey, Mom, that was pretty good. Where's dessert?"

Shocked by her reproach, we rephrased our compliments. "No, it was really pretty good," we would say, promising to ease her burden by doing the dishes, as soon as we finished tossing a football around in the front yard.

It was important in those days to get exercise after the big meal, and we figured the dishes could wait.

"Oh you shouldn't have washed them," we would say, thankful the kitchen had been cleaned during our two-hour game of catch.

Despite our cavalier attitude, Thanksgiving was an important holiday around our house.

As in many homes, uncles, aunts and grandparents would gather at our house for the traditional feast of turkey, dressing, cranberry sauce, spinach casserole and pies for dessert.

My uncle would always bring his favorite rutabaga souffle, and my grandmother would insist on having mincemeat pie.

Although we saw the our relations frequently, Thanksgiving was the only time we were forced to eat their offerings. I was thankful I only faced rutabagas and mincemeat once a year.

For many years, we would delay tossing the football around the yard and rush off to the Georgia-Georgia Tech freshman game after the meal was over.



Warren Johnston

The Puppy Papers

The annual Thanksgiving event was sponsored by the Shriners, and proceeds went to help crippled children. "Strong legs run so weak legs can walk," the slogan on the program said.

The game was pretty good and would draw crowds of around 50,000. It was a chance to see the previous year's high school stars shine in their new college uniforms.

After the rules changed and colleges started playing freshmen on the varsity squads, the game was discontinued. I have often wondered what happened to the crippled children.

The most remarkable thing about the game was the halftime show.

What seemed to be thousands of Shriners would cover the field. Some carried swords. Others had huge drums. Most wore a variety of turbans and silk costumes. There were also hundreds of clowns.

I never knew exactly what a Shriner was, but I thought they must live a pretty exciting life, particularly the ones in the tiny cars.

After the game, it was back home for hot Ovaltine, a turkey sandwich and the end of the Army-Navy game.

When I was growing up, there was a lot of turkey and football on the holiday menu.

In retrospect, those Thanksgivings were the sort of good times which are difficult to recreate. I will always be thankful I got to enjoy them, even if I did have to eat rutabagas and mincemeat.