

Viewpoints

American Legion team could use more support

Over 200 local residents showed up at a special dinner last week to support one of the most worthwhile projects to be proposed in recent months.

The evening featured guest speaker and former Yankee baseball star Bobby Richardson, and was held to raise funds to start a new American Legion team in Hoke County.

Because of the recent moving of outfield fences, Hoke County now has a fine facility for baseball at the old Armory Park. The field is lighted and has newly refurbished bleachers and restrooms. Not only would the facility be good for a new American Legion team, but it would also work well as a site for tournaments and exhibition baseball games.

Hoke County is lucky to have the Armory Park facility and is fortunate that American Legion members have taken the time to get a baseball program started in the community again.

However, to be a reality, the team still needs to raise about \$3,000 to get underway. More community support is needed.

This county has a long history of fine baseball played here. The

opportunity to resurrect the tradition is being offered by members of the American Legion.

We support the efforts and hope others in the community will contact an American Legion member and donate to the cause.

Hoke County needs to build on our heritage for a better future, and a baseball team here is one of those building blocks.

Christmas cards needed to remind commissioners

Although appearances would indicate that members of the North Carolina Utilities Commission are waiting for more information before thinking about Extended Area Telephone Service (EAS) between the Raeford and Fayetteville exchanges, there is little doubt the state officials are being constantly lobbied by those who would rather not see the local connections established.

Hoke County supporters of EAS need to meet the opposition by reminding the commissioners of the importance of EAS to the economic vitality of the entire community.

This county put on a good show for the state officials during hearings held in Raeford, and the commissioners left here understanding the need for EAS.

That was October, and now it is December. A decision may not be reached until January. Some members of the commission are noted for their short memories, particularly when they keep hearing the same tune from the other side.

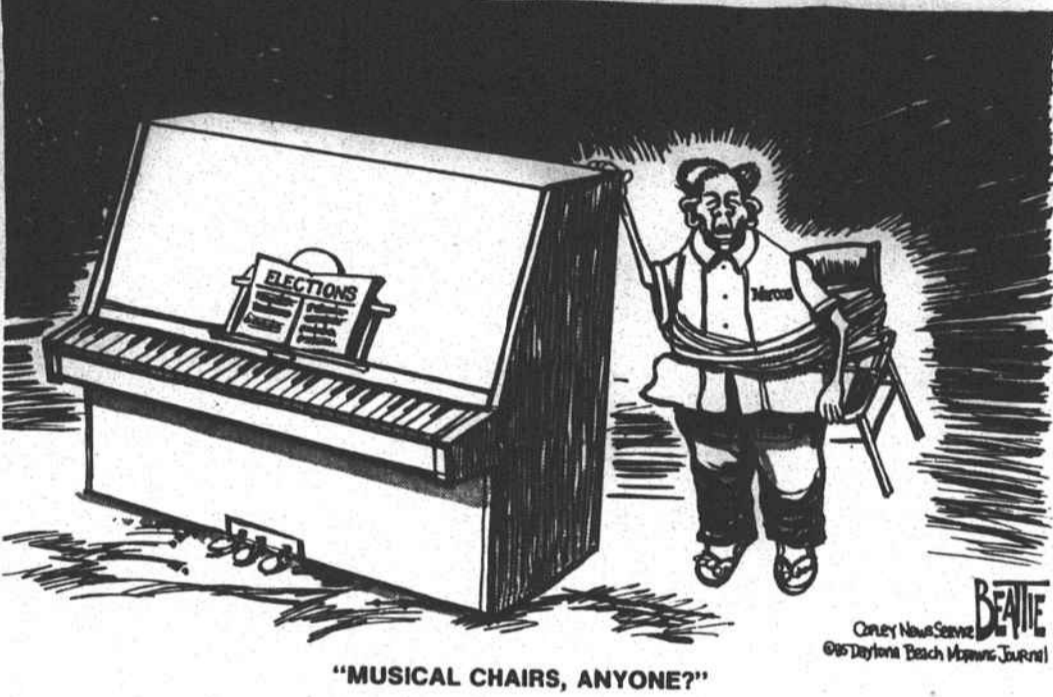
Hoke residents need to remind the commissioners we need Fayetteville service and are willing to pay a rate comparable to that now being paid by Cumberland County customers.

There is no reason for a vote of Fayetteville customers, because there is no need to raise the rates of the larger exchange. An increase in charges for the 90,000 Cumberland subscribers would line the pockets of Carolina Telephone. It would also kill the question of EAS, which would not serve the public need, the commissioners should be told.

If Hoke County is going to attract the kind of new resident who can pay taxes and who will be a productive part of this community, then we need EAS.

Send the utility commissioners a Christmas card and enclose a note reminding them the only thing which has changed in Hoke County since their visit in October, is that the need for EAS and a brighter future has grown a little greater.

The letters and cards may be addressed to: The North Carolina Utilities Commission; Department of Commerce; Dobbs Building; 430 N. Salisbury Street; Raleigh, NC 27611.



"MUSICAL CHAIRS, ANYONE?"

Left attacking basic ed plan

RALEIGH -- Almost since the day legislators began considering a plan to equalize education opportunities in the state's 141 school districts, the "Basic Education Plan" has been under attack from the political right.

Fiscal conservatives argue that the BEP, which was passed by the 1985 General Assembly, is unaffordable. Social conservatives, mostly fundamentalist Christians, argue that the plan is the work of secular humanists. Then there are other conservatives who simply argue that the plan doesn't stress basic educational goals -- like the 3 Rs.

Now the BEP is getting blasted from another direction. An educational research and lobbying group which holds a liberal outlook has come out with a strong criticism of the plan. The Atlantic Center for Research in Education (ACRE), a non-profit group based in Durham, says the plan will not significantly equalize educational opportunity among the state's 141 school districts.

ACRE studied the school systems of Alexander, Bertie, Clay, Granville, Jones and Yancey counties and tried to predict what effects the BEP would have on these systems. Five counties were chosen, according to Elisa Wolper, one author of the ACRE study, because they are economically disadvantaged, although not the poorest in the state. Granville is fairly affluent, she said.

Under the BEP, "the wealthier school systems will be getting the same influx of new state funded teachers and counselors as poor systems get," said Jeffrey Starkweather, the other author. "While poor counties may reach the bare minimum in basic course offerings, the wealthier systems will be able to offer more advanced courses, more variety of courses, more individualized instruction for advanced and remedial students, and more support services. The gap between the education received by children in poor school systems



Watching
By Paul T. O'Connor

and children in wealthy school systems will remain."

ACRE says this inequity must be addressed through a weighted distribution system for state education money. Poor counties should receive more money to help them offset the shortcomings brought on by their smaller economic base.

ACRE proposes that the state develop a formula for comparing the relative wealth of school systems. If a poor system was making a "reasonable tax effort" to support its schools, then it would receive extra funds, under ACRE's plan. An alternative might be to grant extra funds only to those "poor" systems that were in danger of failing to meet basic

state standards.

Facilities may prove the big problem for poor areas. The BEP is based on the theory that even poor counties are spending local money on teachers. When the state takes those teachers onto its payroll, the local money they had been drawing should then be available for use on facilities.

Ms. Wolper argues that the poorest counties don't spend local money on teachers and therefore will not be relieved of any financial burden when the state improves its student-teacher ratio, and will not have any new money for spending on facilities.

ACRE's arguments are not new. Some legislators have questioned how poor counties will be able to afford the facilities to implement the BEP. That concern was behind one effort to raise the sales tax. But until this time, there was no study or document to which these legislators could point to support their concern.

Letters To The Editor

Evening showed Hoke Co. spirit

To the Editor:
Last Tuesday night's American Legion banquet was a memorable occasion for Raeford and Hoke County.

Community members from all walks of life were there to express their support for the American Legion's efforts to spark interest in a Post sponsored baseball team.

Bobby Richardson, the guest speaker, as well as featured entertainers, Joni Parker, Miss N.C. and Kim Evans, Miss Fayetteville shared their humor, talents and Christian witness in a program that was very well planned.

Such a combination of camaradery and Christianity is rare in meetings outside of our churches and religious organizations. I left feeling not only proud to be an American, but proud to be a part

of this community.

The American Legion is to be commended for their efforts and the wonderful opportunity they are offering the young men of Hoke County.

It is my sincere desire that Raeford will continue to support the work of this fine organization.

Sincerely,
Jackie Kicklighter
Director,
Hoke County Children's Center

Tour a success

To the Editor:
Raeford Junior Woman's Club extends a warm thank you to the Raeford and Hoke community for its fifth successful Christmas Home Tour.

To all tour participants, home owners, and craftsmen who helped us reach our goal on this project, we heartily wish you a Merry

Christmas and congratulations on offering our public such an outstanding tour.

With these proceeds the club will sponsor two needy families for the Christmas season and support other community improvement projects through our club year.

Many thanks,
Sonya A. Falls
President, RJWC

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.

Tardy pancakes make serving duty hard to swallow

It was time to eat for a lot of people. It was the opening of the annual Kiwanis Pancake Supper, and I had their meals in my hands.

Year after year, Kiwanis members challenge the tradition of pancakes at breakfast and successfully serve up the flapjacks for the evening fundraiser. This year the turnout was bigger than expected.

In the previous years, I have been an "in training" helper at the annual event.

"Sure you have a little kitchen expertise, but you don't know the routine. Just stand around, take a few pictures for the newspaper and don't get in the way," I was told by older and wiser members of the club.

After two years of training, it was finally my turn to work.

"Here's your big chance, kid. You're on the serving line. Don't mess it up," they said.

I was pretty nervous, but I accepted the job with a bravado which could have fooled the best of them.

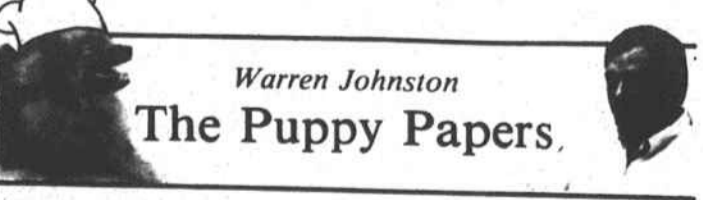
"No sweat. This will be a piece of cake," I swaggered.

When the doors opened, and the customers flooded in, I was ready. I set up the line myself. I knew it was correct.

With a smile and an air of confidence, I piled the pancakes high and heaped on the turkey sausage. After all, it was all you could eat for \$3.

"Aren't you going to give me any syrup for the pancakes?" my first customer asked.

I had no syrup. I had forgotten to get it from the syrup cooker. Once the problem was corrected, and I had been admonished by



older and wiser club members, things went well for the next 15 persons to be served.

Then, we were out of pancakes. The grills were not cooking them as fast as the demand, and from my perspective, the waiting line seemed to stretch out the front door and wrap around the building six times.

I donned a top hat, stepped out from behind the steam table and began a soft-shoe routine.

"That won't do. We want pancakes," some of the waiting said.

I started to tell them the latest one about the farmer's daughter, but quickly realized some in the line made their living through agriculture. The old joke probably would not have helped my position, nor would it have eased the mounting hunger.

A hot tray from the grill arrived, as I was beginning to imagine rumbling chants of: "Pancakes, pancakes, pancakes. We will kill for pancakes."

Fifteen pleasant, but relieved, customers were served. We were out of pancakes again. The line was growing. I tried a

version of "Suwannee River" and hoped to build audience confidence by asking for hometowns.

"Anybody here from Des Moines?" I asked.

Realizing my act was not destined for the big time, I excused myself and rushed to the grill to see if I could speed up the pancake production.

Two overworked cooks piled a tray high, and I returned to the line. "Things will be better now," I thought as I returned to a sea of anticipating smiles.

I tried to convince myself that it had not happened when the tray landed upside down at my feet, however, the reality of the moment was overpowering.

It is said in some kitchens in France, that food has to bounce off the floor at least once to be palatable.

I wanted to explain the theory to the crestfallen faces waiting in the line as I scrapped up the freshly cooked pancakes from the floor, but I decided they probably weren't in a mood for French cooking.

Some older and wiser members relieved me from serving. I was a nervous wreck. Before long pancakes flowed from the grills, and the line diminished.

Everyone had all they could eat, and the pancake supper was a success.

I spent the rest of the evening taking pictures of smiling faces. I have been assigned to the cleanup detail for next year's event.

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