

VIEWPOINTS

Mules don't need gasoline

The best epitaph to put on the stone of an untruthful man is "Here lies the truth." Recently I have been in contract with some folks who have absolutely nothing in common with the truth. Why is it so hard to tell the truth?

A View from the Country
Raz Autry

My minister has on occasion accused me of stretching the truth when I make some remarks about him in my column. For instance, he has some unkind thoughts about my ideas on Chapel Hill. The problem with him is he got blind-sided for nine years in the land of the Blue Sky. He actually thought that heaven began in Chapel Hill. I have told him heaven is the wrong word for Chapel Hill. His son Ward has seen the light; he is going to attend East Carolina and enjoy the experience immensely. He won't know where Chapel Hill is located after spending four years with the Pirates.

This boy is a good basketball player, scrappy, good at defense and doesn't hear his father yelling at the men who are calling the game. I was sorta embarrassed because he was so rough on the fellows. Since I am so calm at athletic events, it upsets me to see people yelling at the whistle blowers. Enough on this subject.

I don't know if this tale applies to some mechanics; my friend David M. passed it along. It seems a lady and her husband arrived at an automobile dealership to pick out their car. They were told that the keys had been accidentally locked in it. They went to the service department and found a mechanic working feverishly to unlock the driver's side door. As they watched from the passenger's side, the husband instinctively tried the door handle and discovered it was open. "Hey," he announced to the technician, "it's open."

"I know," answered the young man, "I already got that side."

I know some folks like that.

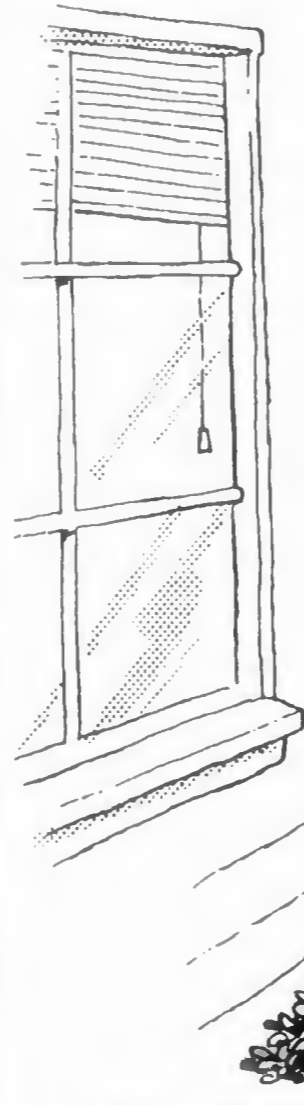
Am I the only one who has noticed that not one of the people running for president of the United States has mentioned gas prices, or suggested what to do about them. It makes one wonder if some of that so-called soft money is coming from the people who control the oil. It is easy to say what you would do if you were president. Surely we must have someone brave enough to say to Kuwait that "if you don't let more of your oil loose, so the price will come down, we are going to say to Saddam, "They are all yours." Apparently it is not good politics. There is a solution. I have mentioned it several times. We could go back to the mules and wagon. It wouldn't matter about the price of oil, mules don't eat oil, only hay, and it's plentiful. This step backward in the eyes of some folks would solve a great many of our problems. Students wouldn't fight in school. They would be too tired from cutting hay for the animals. Besides, who would feel like fighting in school after driving a mule-drawn wagon three or four miles to the school house? Especially if the mule had been eating green corn. Just a thought.

There wouldn't be any gangs in school. What soul would want to join a gang after riding a sweaty mule several miles. Just being in the same room with each other would discourage any activity other than taking a bath. Mules have a great advantage over fast automobiles. It is a pity our present day society can't see it. We could have given our preacher a mule instead of a car.

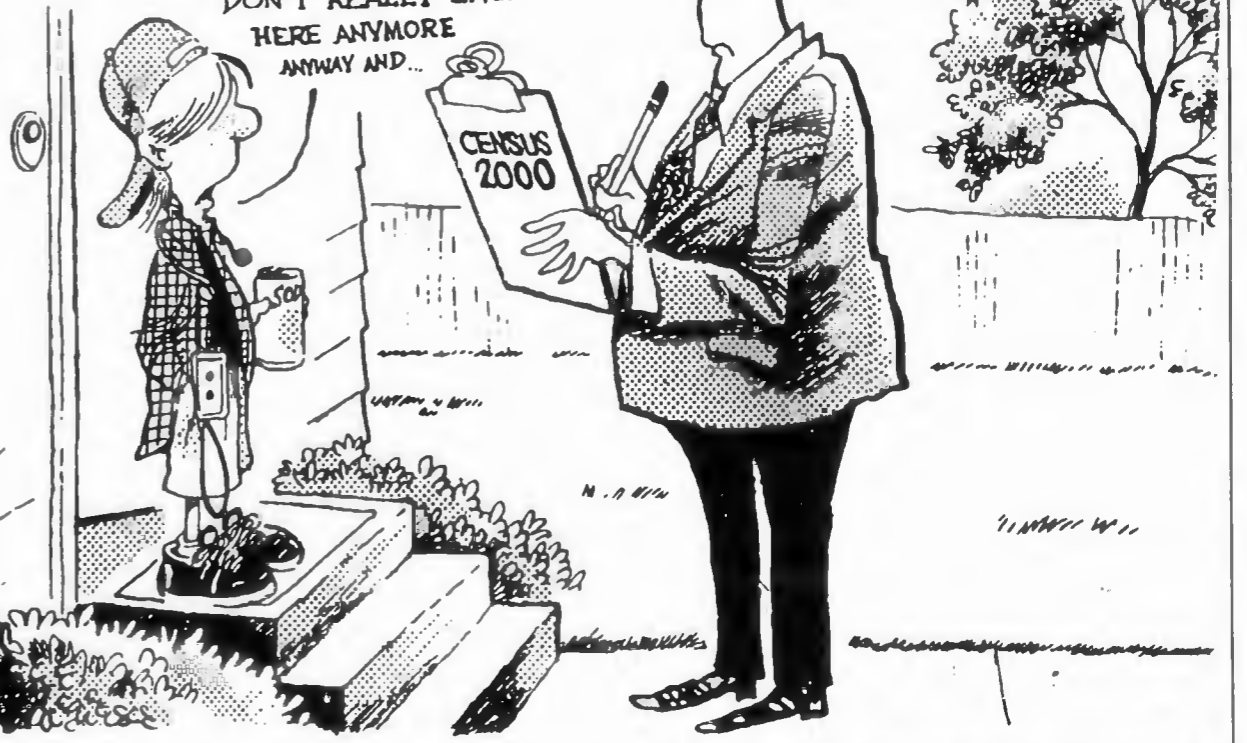
He would look great riding the back of a mule from his house to the church with a hat on top of his head saying, "Go Pirates."

My parting thought — If you don't know the price of success, the Internal Revenue Service will gladly furnish you with an income tax table.

ASBURY PARK PRESS © 2000
 WWW.IN.JERSEY.COM / GREEN



WELL, LET'S SEE...
 MY MOM'S THE HEAD OF THE HOUSEHOLD, BUT SHE WORKS THREE JOBS, SO SHE'S NEVER HOME. HER BOYFRIEND SOMETIMES LIVES HERE WITH HIS TWO KIDS, BUT HE'S IN REHAB RIGHT NOW. MY HALF SISTER AND I ARE MOVING IN WITH MY GRANDMA TOMORROW, SO I DON'T REALLY LIVE HERE ANYMORE ANYWAY AND...



Letters to Editor policy

The News-Journal welcomes Letters to the Editor and encourages readers to express their opinions.

Letters must be signed and include an address and phone number. The street address and phone number will not be published, but are required so we may verify authenticity. The name of the writer and the town the writer is from will be published at the end of the letter.

We reserve the right to edit letters for grammar, as well as those that exceed 300 words. We will not publish letters that we consider to be in poor taste or slanderous. In some cases we may add an editor's note as a post script when we believe a correction, explanation or amplification is warranted. We may also, at our discretion, limit the number of times an individual writer may submit a letter for publication.

Gubernatorial candidates, Democratic and Republican, agree to disagree

Have you decided how you are going to vote in the May 2 primary elections?

Most people haven't begun to think about their choices. If you know the names of the candidates, you are ahead of most North Carolinians. Even in the governor's race, most people are not yet paying attention.

Last week, I observed all five candidates answering questions and exchanging views at a couple North Carolina Press Association sponsored forums. I welcomed the chance to watch the candidates and try to get some idea about how they would be trying to get our attention and our votes during the next few weeks.

Here is what I learned.

The main areas of disagreement and contention among the candidates in each party were about issues that they agreed upon.

Sound confusing? Let me give you some examples.

First, on the Democratic side.

Both Democratic candidates, Attorney General Mike Easley and Lt.

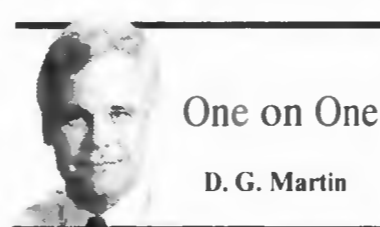
Governor Dennis Wicker, support a state lottery, with the proceeds to be used for education.

But they argue passionately about whose lottery plan is better.

Wicker proposes a plan similar to Georgia's lottery — including guaranteed scholarships for high school graduates with at least a B average. He wants the proceeds to be "locked-up" constitutionally so they can't be diverted by the legislature. He says Easley's plan won't give the same protection.

Easley wants all the proceeds to go to pre-college education needs and does not propose the kind of "straight-jacket" limits on the use of the funds, as does Wicker. Easley also quietly makes the point that Wicker was once opposed to the lottery on moral grounds. He then questions how Wicker could change his mind on a "moral" issue.

These differences may be very important to Wicker and Easley. But for me to remember them, I have to refer to my notes.



One on One
D. G. Martin

Both candidates are strong opponents of hog lagoons. They support restrictions on hog farming and they promise a phase-out of the controversial waste lagoons.

But they argue strongly about which one of them could and should have done something about the problem.

Wicker says that Attorney General Easley should have been tougher on the enforcement of existing environmental regulations. Easley says that the legislature (and Lt. Governor and former Representative Wicker) should have come up with stronger regulations long ago.

On the Republican side, Representative Leo Daughtry, former Representative Chuck Neely, and former

Charlotte Mayor Richard Vinroot also argued about minor details in areas where they were in fundamental agreement.

In contrast to the Democrats all of them oppose a state lottery. Their argument with each other was about who was the strongest opponent. For instance, Neely and Vinroot questioned Daughtry's "anti-gambling" position since his law firm had represented clients that have pro-gambling interests.

All the Republicans were for limiting government spending, but Vinroot said Neely and Daughtry should be criticized for their legislative votes in favor of state budgets with "pork barrel" spending.

The Republican candidates all take "pro-life" positions. But Neely and Daughtry question Vinroot's "anti-abortion credentials based on his support some years ago of Planned Parenthood in Charlotte. Neely had to explain a newspaper's characterization of him as a "pro-choice" candidate in 1994.

And Vinroot raised questions about Neely's and Daughtry's votes on state funding for abortions.

When the Republicans finished their discussions I had just as much trouble remembering their small differences as I did with those of the Democrats.

What does all this mean for the rest of the primary campaign? If these minor differences are all that now separate the candidates, how are they going to try to persuade us to give our support and vote?

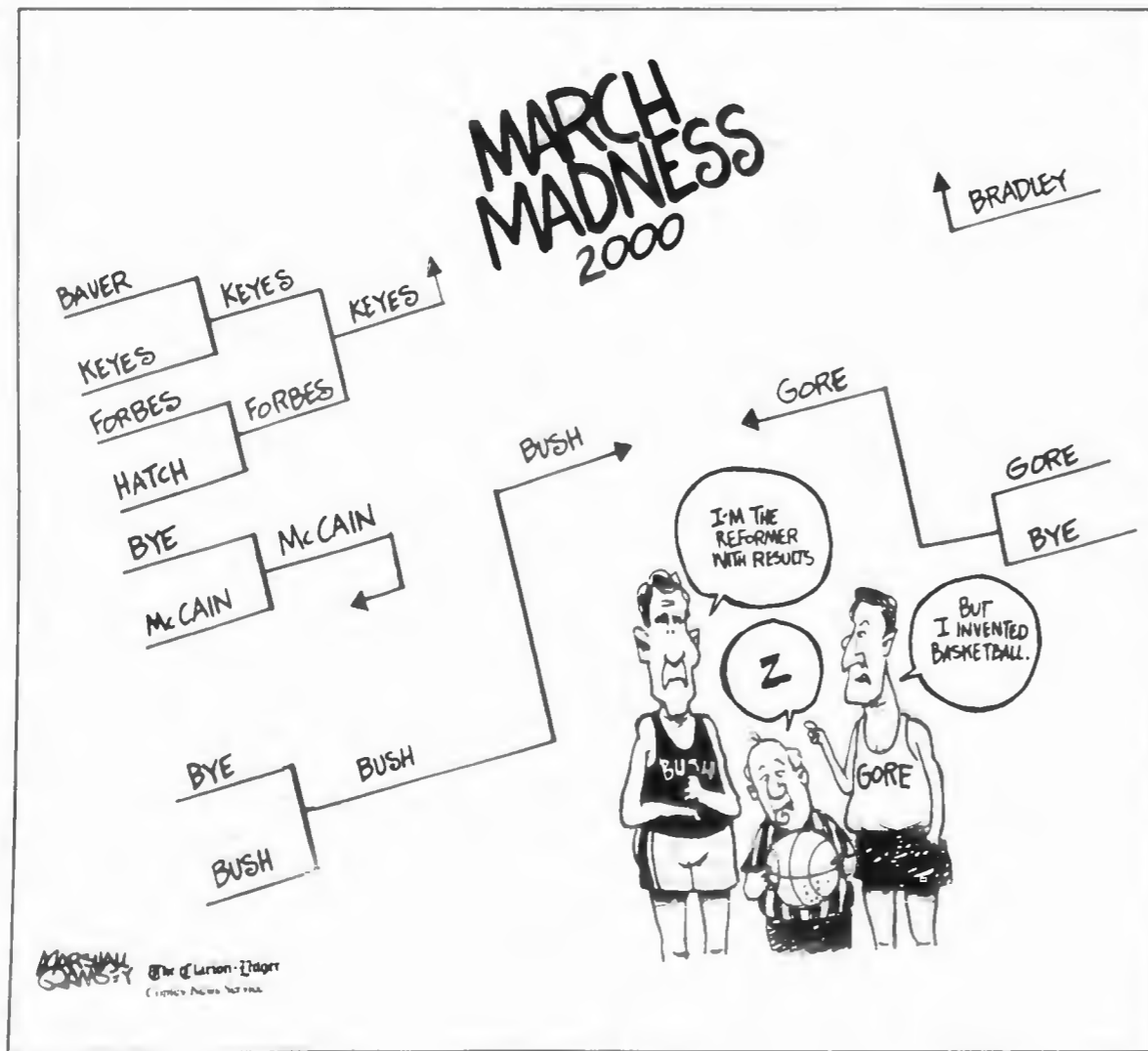
I am afraid it means that we are at risk of negative campaigns in both primaries.

Here is why.

If the candidates cannot separate themselves on the issues, the only way to show a difference is to show that there is a difference in "character."

Unfortunately, the only way for a candidate to show a difference in character is to show that his opponent has character weaknesses. And the only way to do that in the last few weeks of a political campaign is to mount a negative and misleading television campaign. Such campaign can take "minor differences" and make them seem like high crimes.

I hope I am wrong. But if you don't like to watch negative 30-second political ads, be careful about watching television the next few weeks.



The News-Journal

Published every Wednesday by
 Dickson Press, Inc., Paul Dickson Pres.
 119 W. Elwood Avenue
 Raeford, North Carolina 28376
 (910) 875-2121

Call for fax number
 Home Page: <http://www.dicksonpress.com>
 e-mail: Njournal@coastalnet.com
Njournal@aol.com

Subscription Rates in Advance
 In Hoke County: \$14 — one year \$8 — six months
 Out of county: \$17 — one year \$9.50 — six months
 Out of state: \$20 — one year \$11 — six months

Robert Dickson Publisher
 Ken MacDonald General Manager
 Pat Allen Wilson Editor
 Victoriana Summers Reporter
 Kristin Guthrie Reporter
 Henry L. Blue Production Supervisor
 Mantise Andrews Press Foreman
 Sam C. Morris Contributing Editor
 Teena Jones Advertising Representative

Composing Room Staff
 Robin Thompkins, Sandra Wiggins

Postmaster:
 Send address changes to:
 P.O. Box 550
 Raeford, N.C. 28376

Periodical Class Postage at Raeford, N.C.
 (USPS 388-260)

The News-Journal is sold at these locations:

Bo's S. Main St	J. M. Exon Hwy 401 N.
Wagon Wheel Rest. 509 Harris	Woody's Rockfish Rd. at King Rd.
401 Shop N Save Harris and 401	Hargis's Rockfish Rd. Rockfish
Short Stop #14 401 & Palmer	R&R Grocery Hwy. 211 East
CVS Drugs 401 Bypass	O & J Conv. Mart Old Maxton Rd.
Food S. Stop W. Prospect Ave.	Short Stop #66 745 S. Main St.
Fast Shop W. Prospect Ave.	Short Stop #68 N. Fulton St.
Short Stop #64 Hwy. 211 West	Home Food Supermarket Main St.
Tucker's Grocery E. 7th Ave.	Averette's Central Ave.
Poco N. Main St.	Howell Drug Main St.
Daniels' Exon E. Central Ave.	Daniels' BP 401 Bypass
Edinborough Rest. S. Main St.	Community Grocery Five Points
Butlers Grocery Arabia	Parks Grocery McCain
The News-Journal 119 W. Elwood	Zip N Mart 401 N.
401 Shop & Save #2 E. Central Ave.	McNeil's Grocery Antioch
J&L Clover Scurlock School Rd.	David's #5 Hwy 20 & Central
Short Stop #54 Hwy. 401 Bypass	Miller's Cash & Carry Dundarrach
Short Stop #23 Rockfish Rd. & 401	

Subscription Form

New subscription
 Renewal
 Newcomer (3 free months)
 Gift (We'll notify recipient)

Clip, mail with payment to:
 The News-Journal
 P.O. Box 550
 Raeford, N.C. 28376
 (910)875-2121 for more information

Subscriber information:

Name _____
 Address _____
 City _____ State _____ Zip _____
 Phone _____

Rates (including N.C. tax)

In Hoke:
 One year \$14
 6 months \$8
 Senior Cit. \$12

Outside Hoke:
 One year \$17
 6 months \$9.50

Outside N.C.:
 One year \$20
 6 months \$11

Your name, address (if different from above)
 Name _____
 Address _____
 City _____ State _____ Zip _____
 Phone _____