



Joé Lanier

**SON of A  
GUN**

I am sure the mailman has delivered your new tax bill by now and that a tax increase has been forced upon you is no longer just a news story — it is fact. The printed figures on that card verify you are to pay more of your income to the Duplin County Tax Collector by order of your county commissioner. Your county commissioner has said you are to pay more regardless of whether or not your income is more or less, regardless, regardless, regardless. . . Your income has nothing whatsoever to do with the increase in county taxes. If income did have some basis for the rate hike, there would have been a rate decrease in Duplin County. Two of the commissioners who said to increase the taxes in Duplin County are off in Milwaukee, Wisconsin having a good old time listening to Helen Reddy sing at the National County Commissioners Convention. . . They are spending some of this increased tax that was "needed." When I am told a tax increase is needed just to keep things at status quo. . . and then a couple of commissioners using this tax money, take off for a convention, I feel a little frustrated. . . No wonder no one believes government when it speaks. While you were sweating in the tobacco fields, or shoveling whatever one shovels in a chicken house, in this 100 degree weather this week, Commissioners Calvin Turner and Dovie Penney were cooling it in the beer capital called Milwaukee. . . They took along Russell Tucker for company, and probably took spouses and friends. . . It will all come out as usual — the taxpayer got it in the end. . . I suppose I should be thankful though. . . After all, there are four more commissioners that could have gone. . . They could have taken the county manager, Ralph Cottle, and his secretary, Judy Brown, on this pleasure parade. . . I am sure the county employees would have liked this convention money put in the form of salary increases, since there was extra money on hand to waste. . .

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The Friends of the Hospital (Duplin General Hospital in Kenansville) have invested their moneys in decorating the maternity wards. The drab blue and grey walls now have lively, bright and cheerful wallpaper covering them. The change is almost as great as the hearts of those who are paying the bill. It really makes me feel good to see or hear about someone investing their resources in a project to help others just for the pleasure of helping.

Down the hall away from the O.B. unit, there is another project taking place — a decorating project. This project is being handled by one lady. She is buying the wallpaper and installing it herself in the Out-patient recovery rooms. I am told Dr. Mure's wife was wallpapering into the wee hours of the morning.

When talking of good things happening at Duplin General Hospital, there is no way to put a value on the great job the Ladies Auxiliary is doing. Not only are these fine ladies helping the hospital, they are helping the patients and visitors as well. . . Like the wall decorators, their only pay is the satisfaction of knowing they are helping — an perhaps a "thank you" now and again. . . Son-of-a-Gun. . .

### County Approves Hospital Board

The Duplin County Board of Commissioners last Tuesday approved the 9-member hospital board nominated by the former hospital board of trustees.

Last week, the hospital board, following wishes of the county board and recommendations of a study of the hospital's financial situation appointed a new hospital board consisting of eight voting members and one non-voting member. The board previously numbered 28 members.

The old board dissolved itself at midnight June 30.

The new board took office July 1, subject to confirmation by the county commissioners. The county owns the hospital which was financed by county bond issues. It leases the facility to the hospital board.

The commissioners rejected a Board of Education request for an additional \$87,750 to pay the salaries of 2 1/2 principals and eight teachers aides to help the system retain accreditation by the Southern Association of Schools and Colleges. The commissioners last month budgeted \$1,890,586 from county funds for the school system. The appropriation was the same as that for the 1982-83 school year.

Commissioners Chairman W.J. Costin responded to the plea of School supporters for the additional money with, "The county is poor. We have a lot of people out of work. The state has not added funds to reduce class size. We're obligated to keep up the school buildings and we receive no money from

the state for that."

In other action, the board approved a resolution asking the Farmers Home Administration to obligate funds for the proposed Albertson community water system project in northeastern Duplin County.

During a hearing on the water system proposal, Bob Pittman of Rivers and Associates of Raleigh, a consulting engineering firm, estimated the project cost at \$1,325,000. He said an FmHA grant of \$697,900 and a state grant of \$313,100 may be available if local residents would approve a bond issue of \$313,100 in a referendum. FmHA would buy or guarantee the bonds, he added.

Pittman said the first two payments of such a bond issue would consist only of the interest. He estimated the interest would be \$30,000 each of the first two years. The proposed system would take in \$58,000 a year in fees, a study by FmHA indicated. The estimated water rate would be \$12 per month for a minimum of 2,000 gallons. Pittman estimated the average fee would be \$16 a month for 5,000 gallons.

The board also voted to combine the positions of landfill secretary and gate attendant in an effort to save \$7,000 a year. The latter position had been vacant for some time due to the retirement of the previous attendant. The current secretary will handle the combined position. The secretary's salary will be increased from \$8,745 to \$9,906 a year.

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