

# Why No Race Tracks In Eastern N.C.?

By JONATHAN PHILLIPS  
Special Correspondent

Larry doesn't trust the postal service. "They lost two checks of mine just in the last two weeks he fumed. "One to Charlotte and one to Richmond. Ain't no way I'm gonna ever let 'em touch anything important again!"

So rather than risk a buck or two to send business papers to Virginia that might have gotten there three days later, he decided to waste \$10 worth of gas and drive to Virginia himself.

Larry doesn't like to ride alone, either. So, despite the dozens of better, more important things that needed doing, I let Larry con me into making the trip to Emporia with him.

Once you adjusted to the static-laden stock car race Larry insisted on tuning the radio to, there was time to reflect on matters of great import that occurred to us as the Northeastern North Carolina countryside flashed by.

### Look away, look away

We encountered the first one in Halifax County—sharp white puffs stood out starkly against the brown-gray late-winter background. It was something folks who grew up in Craven County 60 years ago saw all the time; something I've seen but a few times in my life—the winter remnants of a cotton field.

There was no need to wonder what happened to the cotton in this area. The economic, political and environmental factors involved have been exhaustively documented and discussed by a variety of academicians.

What you wonder about is what it was like when King Cotton stood alongside tobacco (and ahead of the soybeans) in Eastern North Carolina. What was it like when you had to break your back picking cotton instead of cucumbers or flue-cured?

What kinds of sounds did it make when the great cotton gins that stand silent among the weeds hummed with life? What has happened to all the gins?

"I know of one they turned into a drive-in," Larry said.

## Draft Registration

At present failure to register for the draft is considered a felony and carries a penalty of \$10,000 fine and up to five years imprisonment. Those that are delinquent should register at once. There is a move to get the penalty reduced to a

misdeemeanor which would carry a \$200 fine. This move has come about because it is noted that the draft is not being used at present time and the present penalty seems to be too severe.

The deadline for eighteen year olds was February 28.

## Unemployment Up

January showed higher unemployment percentages across the state. Unemployment rose in 95% of North Carolina's 100 counties. There were fifty four counties in the double digit unemployment for January. Dare County had the highest rate at 22.1% while Orange County was the

lowest with 4.0 percent unemployment.

The national average for January was 9.4 percent, well above 8.3 percent in December.

The labor force in Craven County was 29,970, employed 27,590, with 2,380 unemployed which gives Craven a 7.9 percent rate.

## Energy Saving Is Major Concern

By CHRIS TIEDEMANN  
N. C. State University

Homeowners today are most concerned about energy

savings and less concerned about the home's appearance and comfort, says Dr. Glenda Herman, extension housing specialist at North Carolina State University.

... look away, Dixieland.

### Diggin' dirt

Other burning questions of the day popped up as Richard Petty made his way around the track at Richmond, injured foot and all.

Why, Larry wanted to know, were there no significant racetracks in Eastern North Carolina?

In the piedmont they have major tracks at Rockingham, Charlotte and North Wilkesboro, and a dirt track in every county. Why not down east, where the feet lie just as heavily upon the accelerator pedal, and where the number of Cat hats per capita is just as high or higher?

Sure, they've got the Craven Dragway and the Kinston drag strip, but no roundy-round tracks. What gives, Larry wanted to know?

I could only offer theories, not facts, and I told Larry that the answer might lie in four-wheel-drive pickups and jeeps and such.

The young men of Craven and surrounding counties with a taste for automotive thrills see little need to pay entry fees to go in circles on some dink racetrack when they can dig dirt with their four-wheelers on the Neighbors' farms.

How could going around in circles be as much fun as destroying swamp forest vegetation, I asked Larry? I told him the oft-told (I didn't say it was true, because I don't know. Just often told) about the two Vanceboro men who, on a bet, hooked their four-wheelers together with a logging chain and commenced to pulling.

After five minutes to three hours (I never said the often-told story was told the same way, either) one of the engines blew, and the defeated driver reportedly wept.

Out the window, Larry pointed out what he claimed was "Simone's French Cuisins Truck Stop" as we crossed the state line.

With two burning issues of the day already dealt with, I wasn't about to start debating the existence of French truck stops, though I did wonder aloud about some trucker barging in and ordering some pate de fois gras and a Budweiser to go.

Cotton fields and racetracks are enough for a man to ponder in a day.

# 30% Of Coast Guard Budget Cuts Reinstated

WASHINGTON, D.C.—Honorable Watler B. Jones, Chairman of the House Merchant Marine and Fisheries Committee, today applauded the cancellation of some Coast Guard budget cuts previously announced by the Administration.

"This is a step in the right direction", Jones stated. "I believe that the bipartisan support for my bill, H.R. 5348, which would provide enough money to prevent all the cuts, helped convince the Administration that its priorities were misguided. Even with these reinstatements, however, there still remain cuts of over \$31 million from a Coast Guard budget that was already inadequate. I will continue my efforts to seek Congressional approval for sufficient funds to enable the Coast Guard to protect life and property at sea, and to enforce our drug, immigration, and fisheries laws."

Chairman Jones will testify in support of higher Coast Guard funding levels next Tuesday before the Transportation Subcommittee of the House Appropriations Committee.

The Administration indicated that it would restore some \$15 million to the Coast Guard budget. This will mean that no search and rescue stations will be closed or reduced, that air stations will not be shut down, that seven vessels will stay commissioned, that the 2nd and 11th Coast Guard Districts will remain intact, and that an effective Coast Guard presence in Puerot Rico will be maintained.

## Spring Litter Campaign

RALEIGH—In a continuing effort to help cut the costs of maintaining the state's highways, the North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT) is inviting city and county officials and other interested organizations to join with the department in a concentrated campaign to clean-up litter along the highways of the state.

State Secretary of Transportation Bill Roberson has designated April 19-24 as "Clean-Up Litter Week in North Carolina" to bring to the attention of the public the need to keep the state's highways litter free.

To accommodate youth groups that want to participate in the litter pick-up campaign, April 24 has been set aside as "Youth Involvement Day." Secretary Roberson commented, "This is a good opportunity to educate our young people and focus their attention on littering which costs our state approximately \$2.2 million each year.

He added, "With the public's cooperation, we will be able to divert some of the annual litter pick-up costs to the higher priority items such as patching and resurfacing our highway system," said the secretary. During the last spring campaign 191 citizens' groups comprised of over 3500 individuals cleaned up 7300 miles of the state's highway system.

"Since its inception in 1979, the department, with the help of citizens across North Carolina, has been responsible for removing litter from 30,000 miles of the state's highways," he said.

In 1980, North Carolina was presented the "Distinguished Service Citizen Award" from Keep America Beautiful, Inc. for the pilot clean-up litter campaign of 1979.

The April clean-up litter campaign is the first phase of a two-part program to be conducted by the transportation department in 1982. The second phase of the program will be held September 13-17.

Local groups may contact the following NCDOT personnel in their areas for assistance in the upcoming litter pick up this spring. Call or write Mr. L.A. Kelly, Box 2275, New Bern, N.C. 28586, (919) 637-3411.

### AUTO DEATH COSTS

Auto crash deaths and injuries cost the nation \$20.1 billion a year; more than the total cost of either coronary heart disease or stroke.

West Craven

## HIGHLIGHTS

Craven County's Family Weekly Newspaper

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