

'Official Register' remains important to us today

Anyone looking for facts and statistics about North Carolina in 1913 had only to turn to "the Official Register, A Manual of North Carolina." Issued primarily for use by members of the General Assembly, the small, thick book provided "in convenient form, information about the state" believed to be of "value and service." Today, the publication is an important record of our history.

Woodrow Wilson was inaugurated as president in early 1913; the Official Register informs us that 663 people in Chowan County had voted for Wilson, 60 voted for Taft and 77 for Teddy Roosevelt. No one in Chowan

County voted for Eugene V. Debs, the Socialist candidate, or for the Prohibitionist candidate. Serving in Wilson's cabinet were two North Carolina men: David Houston was Secretary of Agriculture and Josephus Daniels was Secretary of the Navy. North Carolina men were ambassadors to Costa Rica and Great Britain.

Governor Locke Craig received a salary of \$5,000 a year, plus \$600 for traveling expenses, and a residence. Chowan County's representative in the United States Congress was John Humphrey Small of Washington, a lawyer and newspaperman. In the state Assembly,

Edenton HISTORY



Mary Ann Coffey

Chowan County's representative was P. H. Bell, while our senators were D. C. Barnes, a lawyer and banker from Murfreesboro, and W. T. Woodley, a farmer and real estate agent, of Tyner. The Secretary of State was

J. Bryan Grimes, who was paid \$3,500 annually. He proudly reported that in the preceding two years, 74 banks had been incorporated, 16 railroad companies had filed articles of association, and 105 corporations had been admitted to do business in the state. The Secretary of State also announced that "All bills are now typewritten which change is very much in the interest of economy and accuracy." In addition, "everything has been indexed and systematically filed, and the dangerous and unsightly paper boxes and files in wooden cupboards have been replaced with steel, fireproof filing cases."

There were 6,106 cars registered in the state, for which the Treasury received \$16,462 in licensing fees. North Carolina produced 50 million bushels of corn, and 1,196,000 bales of cotton.

There were 16 Superior Court judges, each earning \$4,000 a year, which included \$750 for travel around the circuit.

North Carolina continued to pay pensions to disabled Confederate soldiers; in 1913, there were "in round numbers 15,000 pensioners." The state contributed to the Soldiers' Home, and for "totally blind and disabled Confederate soldiers the law allows \$120 each per year."

The State Board of Health had an annual budget of \$26,500.

The total school enrollment in North Carolina was 525,507, but daily attendance averaged only 332,546. The school term was 108 days. Instruction was provided by 11,914 teachers, who were paid an average monthly salary of \$35.80. There were 7,688 schools, but the average value of the schoolhouses was \$534 in rural areas and \$11,760 for city schools.

North Carolina had one prison in 1913, which held 695 inmates. Located "about a-mile west of the Capital,"

See COFFEY On Page 5-A

Tarheel tax more than one-third of income

Carolina BEAT

By MICHAEL LOWREY
And JONATHAN JORDAN

The real cost of local government paid in the median North Carolina county has grown by nearly 20 percent from 1992 to 1997, we at the John Locke Foundation have found. Thanks to that growth and other tax increases, North Carolina citizens pay an average of 36 percent of their income to the government.

Using data on property taxes, sales taxes, and miscellaneous taxes and fees from the State Treasurer's Annual Financial Information Report (AFIR), we calculated county and municipal tax and fee burdens, (1) as a percentage of income (for counties) and (2) per capita (for counties and municipalities). We then constructed a set of rankings to more clearly view the cost of local government. Though this analysis is by no means definitive, it was designed to move citizens one step closer to grappling with this complicated issue.

Our report, By the Numbers, looks at taxes and fees for the 1996-97 fiscal year (the latest available), as well as similar data for the 1991-92 fiscal year for comparison. Below are some of the major findings:

- North Carolina collected almost \$12 billion in state revenues for fiscal year 1996-97, including highway

See BEAT On Page 5-A



Campaign finance swampy land

Last week's action by the Forsyth County District Attorney is just one more reminder that our system of financing election campaigns is grounded on swampy land.

In case you missed the news, the DA has demanded that several of North Carolina's most prominent officeholders return thousands of dollars of allegedly illegal campaign contributions.

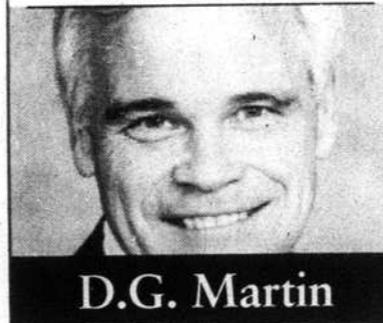
My sympathies go to the politicians, most of whom have earned good reputations for honesty and commitment to public service.

But I have to put my sympathies aside. They can't get off the hook. Nor can the rest of us. We are all on the wrong side of the barb when it comes to political fundraising.

Every time I read about the problems that big campaign contributions can cause, I know we have to change the way we do things. Then I think about why it is so difficult to get any meaningful campaign finance reform legislation passed in this state.

There are lots of reasons. The main one is that the public (that is you and me

One on ONE



D.G. Martin

and our friends) has no passionate interest in this issue. We may want things to be better, but we won't fight for it.

Most campaign reform advocates believe that the only meaningful way to eliminate the power of big money in politics is to have some kind of public support for candidates who are willing to limit their campaign expenditures.

Constructing a workable publicly assisted campaign system would be a difficult task under any circumstances. But the task is impossible if the majority of public is not willing for taxpayer money to be used to finance any part of election campaigns.

When put to the test, no

matter how much we complain about our election process, we are not willing to pay anything to make it better.

Election campaigns are like some other things we complain about—broadcast television, for instance.

We would like for our election process and TV to be better. We would like to improve the content and character. We would like to have more variety and choice.

But we would rather have terrible television for free than pay anything to make it better. And we feel the same way about elections.

There are some good reasons for this reluctance to spend public money on the election process.

Some people just can't stand the idea of our tax-dollars funding the kind of expensive negative TV campaign ads that are blasted at us during election season.

And then there are those who say, "What is the problem? What is so wrong with our government? I am getting along pretty good. I don't

See MARTIN On Page 6-A

Dealing with some legislative warlords

The west side of the Legislative Building in Raleigh is beginning to look like Mogadishu - again. Warlords everywhere, each with a fiefdom of only a few square blocks but each able to assure that there is no peace in the land.

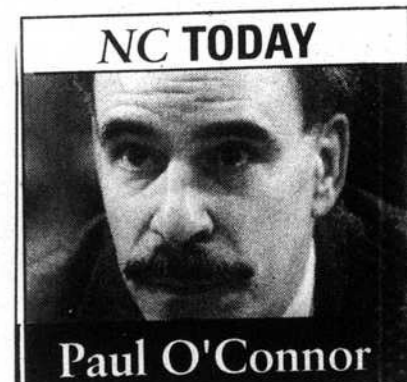
No peace in the North Carolina House, in this case. With a May 15 target date for passage of a state budget, House Speaker Jim Black and his budget lieutenants are struggling to put together a spending plan that can win 61 votes in the state House.

But Black faces something of the same political problem that Harold Brubaker endured in four years as speaker, and which the Somali warlords face every day: Asserting discipline in the ranks and getting those 61 votes is proving difficult. There are two traditional methods for collecting enough votes to pass a budget: purchases and extortions.

You can either load the budget with enough goodies to buy the votes of individual legislators, or you can threaten to destroy any legislator who bucks the system and votes "no." Neither of those methods appears to be working very well this year. Black can't buy many new votes because there is little new spending money.

Gov. Jim Hunt presented a spending plan with an \$800 million shortfall and left it to Black and Senate president pro tem Marc Basnight to fill in that hole. Black won't win votes by cutting spending. He'll lose them.

Until last week, Hunt and others were hoping that a big revenue windfall would fill that hole and provide them with enough money to start buying votes. But, a May 3 revenue report indicates that, according to the rosiest scenario, the budget hole is still \$100 million deep - and



Paul O'Connor

that's a very rosy projection. So Black must face individual legislators, Raleigh's equivalent of warlords, who will vote down his budget unless they get what they want.

Take Rep. Mickey Michaux, D-Durham, who is the most vocal black Democrat in this regard. Michaux has placed a \$21 million price tag on his vote for the budget. Either the state's historically black colleges and universities get that much in supplemental operating funds, or Michaux votes no.

But to get that \$21 million, Black might have to cut something like funds for UNC Hospitals (Michaux's suggested cut) and that is sure to lose him votes. In the old days, Speaker Liston Ramsey would have used force to get Michaux's vote. Ramsey had 80 or 90 Democrats, and he could afford to make an example of any dissidents.

Black has only 66, and nine of them voted for Dan Blue to be speaker. He can't afford to discipline anyone, which is the same problem that Brubaker had for four years as the GOP speaker. Black does have some disciplinary tools. Anyone who votes against a budget faces the consequences of voting against all the included goodies like teacher pay raises, Smart Start and school funds.

His press office has copies

See O'CONNOR On Page 6-A

HERALD MAILBAG

Club Going Strong

Dear Editor:
May 6, 1999 marked the 13th anniversary of the Edenton-Chowan Kiwanis Club's official acceptance by Kiwanis International as a family member in its worldwide organization. As we begin our 14th year of service to our community, the members of the Edenton-Chowan Kiwanis look back and say, "Thank you, Edenton and Chowan County, for allowing us to serve you. And

Notice To Our Readers

If you have something you would like to get off your chest, take the time to write the The Chowan Herald. All letters must include your current address, telephone number and signature of the writer. Deadline for the letters is 4 pm on Monday prior to each week's publication.

thank you also for helping us to serve you."

Some of the projects in which your Kiwanians are involved include: Tech Prep and John A. Holmes scholarships for youth; sponsorship of the Terrific Kids Program at D.F. Walker Elementary School; Key Club sponsorship at John A. Holmes High School; roadside cleanup along parts of NC 32; food distribution through Chowan County Social Services; community beautification with our Crepe Myrtle plantings; and raising money for the Kiwanis Worldwide Service Project to combat Iodine Deficiency Disorder in Third World countries.

Financing for these projects has come from community support for our sales and fundraising activities, such as the Kiwanis Fish Fry. We are especially grateful to the Holmes High

School Key Club members who worked so hard on our fish fry this year as in past years. We appreciate the support of those who have purchased our limited edition "1767 Chowan County Courthouse" medallions, another fundraising project.

Trends seem to be running in the wrong direction as we learn that across the nation civic clubs are losing members. Your Edenton-Chowan Kiwanis Club is growing, and we believe we are growing because of the deep personal satisfaction our members receive from community service. Each Wednesday morning when we gather for breakfast at the Golden Corral and face the Stars & Stripes to recite our nation's Pledge of Allegiance, we can't help but recall how lucky we are to live in and work for this wonderful community. Our service

through Kiwanis is a privilege, and we are grateful for the chance to serve.

Thanks again, Edenton and Chowan County, for your support for our programs, and for giving us the chance to serve. We pledge to be here as long as there are community needs to be met.

Earl Bassett
President
Edenton-Chowan
Kiwanis Club

Wrong Way Used

Dear Editor:
The May 5 edition of The Chowan Herald includes a report on computer upgrades at a local school. An associated photo shows a number of computers arranged with the monitors sitting on top of the computer processor box.

While this is a common way

See MAILBAG On Page 6-A

The Chowan Herald

(USPS 106-380)

Telephone: (252) 482-4418

PUBLISHED EVERY WEDNESDAY
By Cox North Carolina Publications, Inc.

Entered as a second-class matter August 30, 1934 at the Post Office of Edenton, North Carolina, under Act of March 3, 1870.

E.N. Manning - Publisher

Rebecca Bunch.....Editor

Laurie Hufford.....Staff Writer

Pamela Virzi.....Advertising Mgr.

Susan Bunch.....Office Manager

SUBSCRIPTION RATES

One Year in Edenton or Tyner: \$15.95

One Year Anywhere Else in North Carolina: \$18.50

One Year Out of State (except for Zone 8): \$21.95

Zone 8 (Zip Codes 21, 831-864, 889-999): \$22.95

Subscription Breakdowns Available Upon Request

• 10% Discount Available To Senior Citizens

POSTMASTER: SEND ADDRESS CHANGES TO:
The Chowan Herald • P.O. Box 207 • Edenton, NC 27932