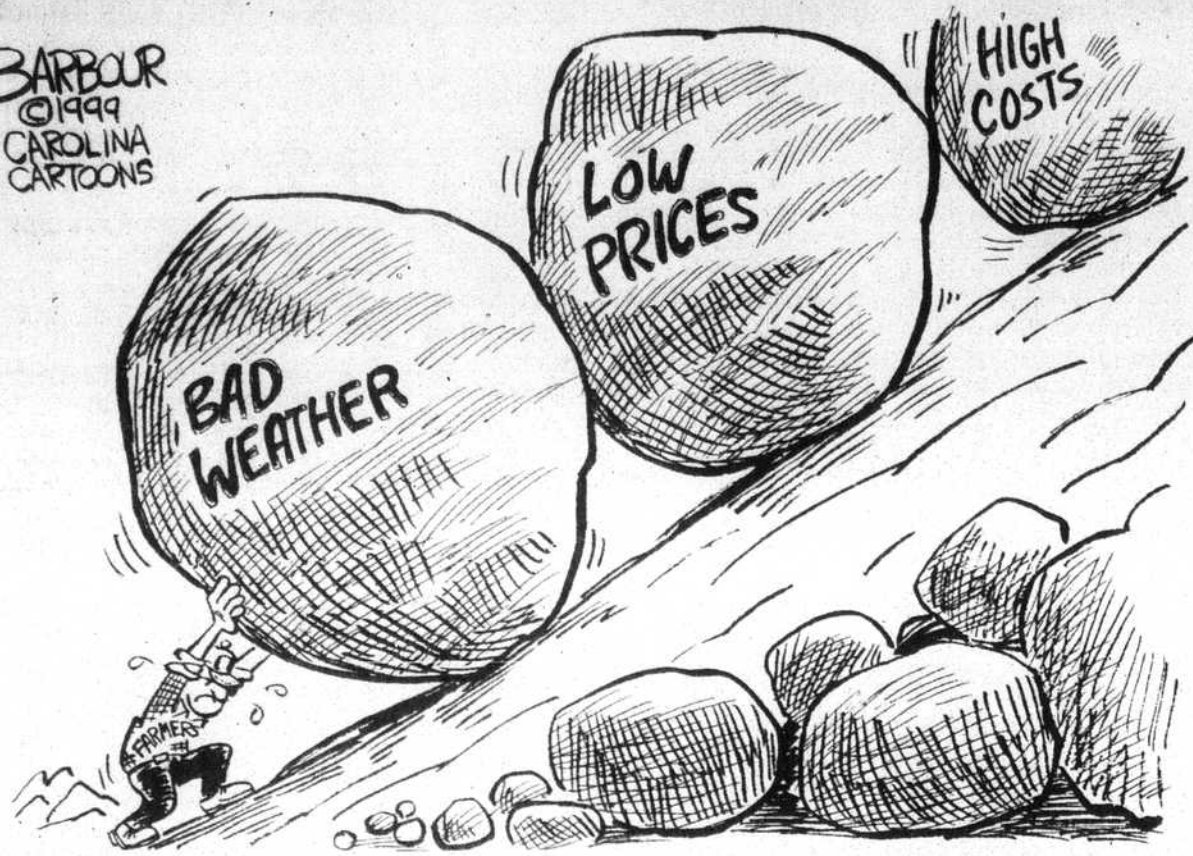


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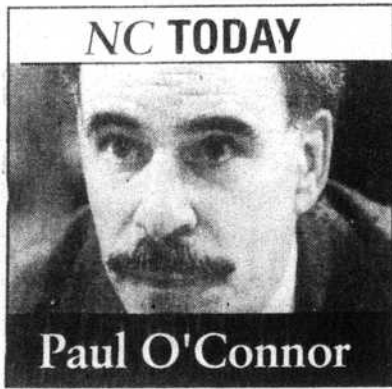


Will Black's past really rise up to haunt him? Watch and see

RALEIGH - Anyone who helped elect a Republican to the state House of Representatives this year can take consolation in one fact: Your side tied the other side in spots all session long.

The GOP House delegation which started the session with a bold attempt to grab power from Speaker Jim Black, basically had two agendas this year: Help Leo Daughtry get elected governor and make life miserable for Black. Once Rep. Daughtry, R-Johnston, resigned as the House minority leader, Republicans could focus on making Black miserable.

For purposes of making Black feel insecure, House Republicans did all they needed on the first day of the



NC TODAY

Paul O'Connor

session. That's when they joined with some dissident African-American Democrats to try to elect former Democratic Speaker Dan Blue as speaker. From that point on, Black had to be wondering how many Democratic votes he could count upon for any given bill. Black did exhibit strength

at one time in the session. That's when he pushed a budget through the House. He did so with considerable compromise skills, buying off a lot of Republican votes.

He also did so with intimidation. He reminded Republican legislators that a vote against the budget is a vote against a lot of initiatives, like teacher pay raises, that can haunt a candidate in the following election.

Still, the threat of a Republican black caucus coalition on an alternative budget hunt over Black's head for much of the spring and probably helped delay the House's passage of a spending plan. The GOP's minority strength was far more evident in what

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Yes, Virginia, there is a Democratic Party - in the hearts of millions

"I am not a member of an organized political party," Will Rogers used to say. Then, after a short pause, he would explain.

"I am a Democrat." When people ask me why the Democratic Party doesn't do this or that, I remember that Will Rogers story and sometimes I tell it to them. Other times I say, "Find me the Democratic Party, and we will ask it," knowing that they won't be able to find it anymore than they could find Santa Claus if they had some complaint about the way things were going at Christmastime.

Like Santa Claus, the Democratic Party is real, but it is hard to put your hands on it.

"Yes, Virginia, there is a Democratic Party. It lives in the hearts of millions of voters who go to the polls and vote Democratic on Election Day."

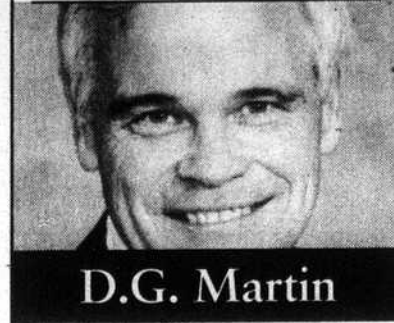
Am I making any sense? Maybe it would be easier to understand if I compared the Democratic Party to the "Christian Church." The Christian Church is real and it is powerful.

There is no doubt about it. But if you have a complaint or a request or a demand about the Christian Church, where do you go to make it? Rome? Istanbul? Jerusalem? Salt Lake City? Montreal?

You could find good Christians at these places—but not The Christian Church.

Same thing with the Democratic Party. You could go to Washington and find the headquarters of the National Democratic Party. And you could find a long document that explains how the party is

One on ONE



D.G. Martin

organized and how the leaders are elected, but you won't find anybody who can get the Democratic Party to do anything.

Closer to home, you can go to Raleigh and find the headquarters of the state party. You can find its chairperson and a small, hardworking, loyal staff. But you won't be able to get your hands on the Democratic Party there.

Like the Christian Church, the Democratic Party doesn't live in any one place. It is broken up into so many different power bases that it is impossible to put your hands on its source of power.

I would be the last person to discount the power of ideals in underpinning the strength of any political party. But I am not talking about that kind of strength.

I am thinking about the day-to-day power to get things done—to get an appointment to an important state government board or commission, to get a favorable ruling from a state agency, to get funding for a worthy project, to get a road built, or to get a law passed to help my region or my industry or my community.

From time to time in the

past, the Democratic Party and its leaders had great influence over such matters.

When the party had this kind of influence, you could find it (or the other party, if it were in charge) if you wanted to get some things done in government.

But people who know how to "get things done" will tell you that there are at least three Democratic Parties in Raleigh these days.

First of all, there is the party of the governor. While he supports (and has substantial control of) the state party, he has his own overlapping organization. And those who want something from the governor will do better to work through his key supporters and staff.

Those who want something from the Democratic state senate or state house will find two independent party wings there.

On the senate side, its Democratic leaders don't look to the state party for the resources to win enough elections to keep its majority. Those leaders raise money for key contested senate elections on their own. They hire consultants and staff to plot their election strategy.

When the elections are over the folks who supported the Democratic senate leadership's fundraising and election organizational efforts are more likely to have influence than the regular party organization.

The house Democrats have a similar election effort. It is separate from the senate and

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Changing the tax system: Would a flat tax work in North Carolina?

BY DR. MIKE WALDEN
NC Cooperative Extension Service

Changing the tax system is a popular topic among many citizens and policy analysts.

Nationally, the idea of a "flat tax" has been extensively discussed as a substitute for the current income tax. But would such a flat tax work for North Carolina? What would it look like, and perhaps most important, would it be good for the state?

The academic origins of the flat tax go back to the early 1980s and two professors, Robert Hall and Alvin Rabushka, who argued that a tax system should follow four guiding prin-

ciples: Tax dollars once; tax dollars closest to their source; tax all dollars at the same rate; but do not tax spending on essentials.

Taxing dollars once certainly makes sense but can be violated in today's tax system.

For example, corporate earnings often are taxed twice, once at the corporate level; then again when shareholders receive dividends. Other savings can be taxed more than once; for example, when earned and again by the inheritance tax when passed on to descen-

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dants.

Taxing all dollars at the same rate is the essence of a flat tax system. It replaces the idea of a progressive tax system, in which "higher income" dollars are taxed at higher rates than "lower income" dollars. Not taxing spending on essentials is a way to reduce the tax burden on lower and middle-income taxpayers.

The idea of taxing dollars closest to where they are earned in the most interesting of these guiding principles. Hall and Rabushka

argue that as dollars move away from their source, "leakage" is more likely to occur, meaning there's a greater chance that parts of dollars will escape taxation.

How is a flat tax implemented?

In Hall and Rabushka's model, there are separate flat taxes on households and businesses. For households, first income from wages, salaries and pensions is added. From this sum is subtracted a single, large household deduction to represent spending on essentials. The remainder is then taxed at a single rate.

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HERALD MAILBAG

Cantaloupes Judged

Dear Editor:

My wife and I spent a delightful few days in your fair city in July. We were visiting our friends who just moved there as their retirement location and we will use every excuse we can think of to visit them as often as possible. You live in an enchanting, beautiful part of the state.

While there our hostess

served us some Rocky Hock cantaloupe. It was extraordinary in both taste and texture.

We also enjoyed reading your paper. I thought you might want to run the following as a bit of levity. Since I'm egotistical enough to think it is amusing, you know I would love to see it in print. If you elect to use it, please send me that copy of your newspaper.

Bob Bartlett
Greensboro, NC

Rocky Hock versus California

Cantaloupes: Which is Best?

I went grocery shopping at a chain store with my wife the other day and saw a big display of cantaloupes in the produce section. The produce manager had a big sign announcing that these were California cantaloupes. If he is so proud of this fact, maybe California melons are better!

To fairly compare the two similar but very different melons, let us look at some comparisons. We will make the comparison like a consumer research magazine.

Use this code:

RHC = Rocky Hock Cantaloupes

CAC = California Cantaloupes

SIZE:

RHC are smaller than CAC, however, the meat, the melon colored part that you eat may be about equal. However, in the USA everyone knows that bigger is better, so the vote goes to CAC.

Score: RHC - 0 CAC - 1

Looks and Freshness:

RHC are picked vine ripe and must languish on a wagon bed, in the hot coastal air, albeit in the shade of a big oak tree, for three or maybe even four hours before they are purchased. CAC are picked while still young and a bit green. They are packed in waxy green paper and a cardboard box,

stored in a refrigerated box car and sent on a coast to coast train trip across two deserts, two mountain ranges, and a seven hundred mile wide prairie. They arrive at the East Coast distribution center after a couple of weeks with a beautiful color and look vine ripened. For looks and freshness, pretty counts, so the vote goes to CAC.

Score: RHC - 0 CAC - 2

Taste:

After carefully cooling both melons, they were cut into chunks and served with salt and pepper. The RHC are announced in advance by their aroma and explode with flavor as soon as you start to chew. On the other hand, the CAC have a much more subtle taste. It is a good idea to look at your plate (this will remind you what you are eating, and you will be able to detect the cantaloupe taste.) Like wine, flavors in California are not expected to explode.

Score: RHC - 0 CAC - 3

Cost:

The RHC only cost an average 67 cents each. CAC cost one dollar and ninety-nine cents each. We Americans know more is better, therefore the vote again goes to the CAC.

Final score:

RHC - 0 CAC - 4

Maybe those folks in Rocky Hock can feed their cantaloupes to the hogs, and buy some real melons at the chain

food store!

I hear the Rocky Hock watermelons have a similar comparison!

Hospitality appreciated

Dear Editor:

What we witnessed during the four day period between Thursday, July 29, and Sunday, Aug. 1, was overwhelming to say the least. The amount of work and pride that over 40 volunteers put into the 1999 State, Tarheel Leagues Inc., Little League All Star Tournament was absolutely amazing. Everybody wanted to put on an impressive event that would leave a strong, positive, lasting impression in the minds of all those that attended. They were very successful in doing so.

Teams came from Rocky Mount, Williamston, Burke County, Wilkes County, Jacksonville, Clayton, and Hillsborough and most of them were in Edenton for the first time. The images of Edenton that they were left with will no doubt have them wanting to come back again and again, thanks to the hospitality, dedication and friendliness of all the volunteers associated with this tournament.

The heat was at times unbearable but it never stopped anyone from getting the job done. Everyone worked through the tournament's entirety with a smile on their face and a desire to contribute. The

fields were the best in the state, the concessions provided the best eating in town, the hospitality was unmatched. We were kept entertained by our announcers and a host of wonderful ladies greeted us with programs, t-shirts and raffle tickets for sale.

Thank you to all of the businesses and sponsors that supported us through your paid advertising in our program. We wouldn't have been able to fund such a wonderful event without your support. Thanks to Chowan County EMS for your presence and excellent service. This was truly a community event that should leave us all feeling very proud.

If Edenton is the South's prettiest town, we think that after the All Star Tournament weekend, we will have to add to that that Edenton is also the South's most hospitable town.

Thank you, Edenton, for a fantastic tournament and a wonderful weekend. It is impossible for us to truly thank you for all of your work and support of this tournament.

Cliff Ogburn
Parks and Rec. Director
Kathleen Elmore
Tournament Director

Residents thanked

Dear Editor:
The hosting of the 1999 Thistle Nationals Sailing

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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

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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

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