

Life's most precious gifts come straight from the heart

My youngest daughter, Joy, called Friday morning to let me know she would be home for the weekend. "And you are?" I chided her. "Can you tell me what you look like now?" I tormented. "Oh, you want me to cook lots of good food for you too. And who told you I had won the lottery and a can buy all this food. And from whence did you hear that I wanted to spend my weekend in either the kitchen and/or laundry room?"

"MOM!" My reply, "Oh yes, I think I know who you are now. That wail is oh so familiar." Of course I'm really glad she is coming

home. That last baby is the hardest to let go of and turn loose in today's world.

As we talked and made some plans she eventually expressed hurt and disappointment in a recently overheard conversation. Someone had made what she considered a judgmental and unkind comment aimed at her Mom.

What upset her the most was the fact it was a family member. Welcome to the real world baby girl. Even though there is a biological connection, we are all human beings and carriers of the faults, unkindness, and weaknesses

Some passing thoughts

HELEN OUTLAND



found there in. Since it was Friday I wanted to tell her that I had reached the point where those famous words of Rhett Butler work quite well for me. However, that "be a good mom and don't move away while they are at school" thing

kicked in. So I have pulled a little something out of the past that I will give to her. A wise friend shared the following with me some years ago to help me over that same hurdle. It goes something like this.

People are often unreasonable, illogical, and self-centered; forgive them anyway.

If you are kind, people may accuse you of selfish, ulterior motives. Be kind anyway.

If you are successful, you will win some false friends and true enemies; succeed anyway.

What you spend years building, someone could destroy overnight; build

anyway. If you find serenity and happiness; there may be jealousy; be happy anyway.

The good you do today, people will often forget tomorrow; do good anyway.

Give the world the best you have. It may never be enough; give the world your best anyway.

A woman was traveling in the mountains and found a precious stone in a stream.

The next day she met another traveler who was hungry. As she opened her bag to share her food the hungry traveler he saw the stone and asked the woman to give it to him. She did so

without hesitation. The traveler left rejoicing in his good fortune that was worth the security of a lifetime. But, a few days later he came back to return the stone to the woman.

"I've been thinking," he said, "I know how valuable the stone is, but I give it back in the hope that you can give me something even more precious. Please, give me what you have within you that enabled you to give me the stone."

You see my precious, kind, and loving Joy, in the final analysis, it is between you and God.

It was never between you and them anyway.

Extortion equal to someone getting funds via blackmail

That's from Webster's "New American Handy College Dictionary." Keep that definition in mind as we discuss the proposed "local option" sales tax hike that the House Finance Committee passed last week.

Today in North Carolina

PAUL O'CONNOR



According to "The Financial Responsibility Act," the state would grant to the 100 individual counties the authority to raise sales taxes by one-half of one percent. That would raise \$400 million a year.

Commissioners in each county would have to vote for the increase, and voters would have the right to petition for a referendum to repeal that authorization. Thus, the General Assembly would only authorize the tax.

Local officials would end up putting it into place.

But the bulk of new spending available to governments each year would not accrue to the local governments. That's because once the sales tax bill passes, the state will end \$330 million in reimbursements that it currently makes to local governments.

So, let's look at the math here. Taxes go up by \$400 million, on the vote of county commissioners. But of the new money, state legislators get to spend \$330 million and commissioners only \$70 million. Why would commissioners go along with a deal like that?

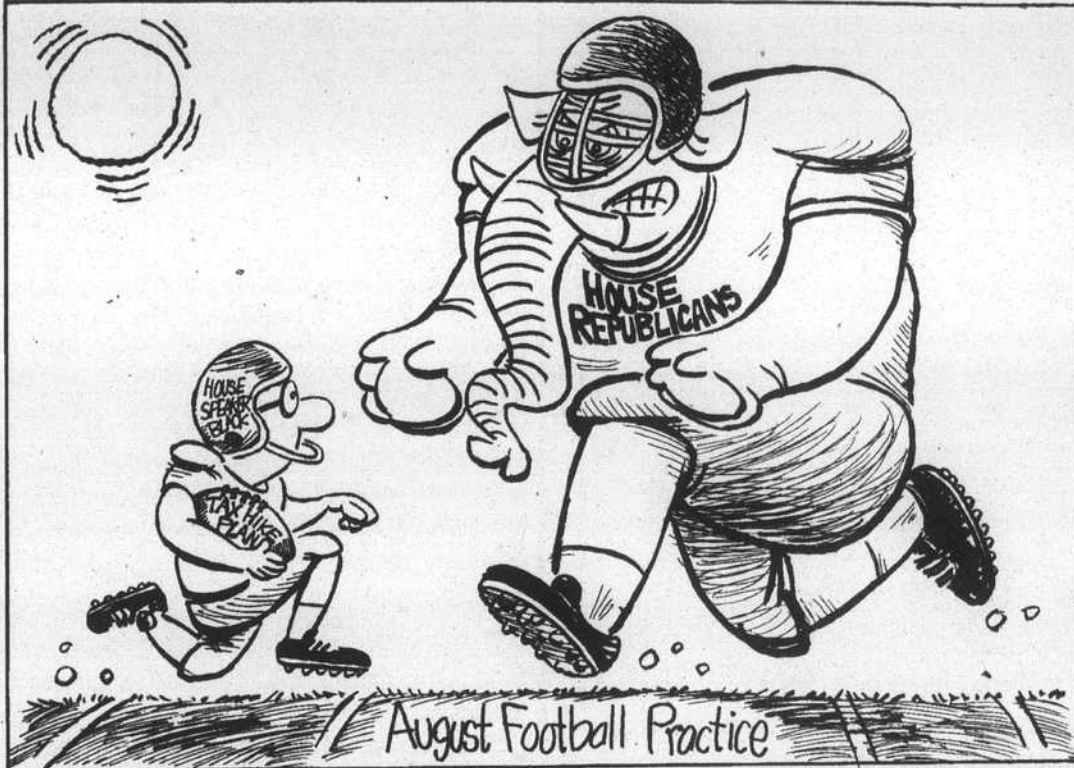
Because of the first line of this column: extortion.

Local governments are in a financial bind, and Gov. Mike Easley demonstrated to them this year how tenuous the reimbursements are. He suspended \$95 million worth of reimbursements for three months as he tried to balance last year's budget.

The reimbursements are for local property taxes — the inventory tax repealed in 1987 and the inventory tax repealed in 1996 — that the legislature took away from them. At the time of those repeals, legislators could have given local governments authority to raise other taxes and offset their loss. But, they chose not to do so. Instead, legislators pledged to make up the lost revenue from General Fund taxes.

So here is the extortion the local officials face:

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What constitutes economics?

BY DR. MIKE WALDEN

Soon I'll begin my 24th year of teaching economics. In my first lecture to undergraduates I discuss the fundamental meaning and application of economics. Here's a summary.

Most people have a rather narrow view of economics.

They think economics is only about money, investments, and business. In fact, if someone wants to emphasize the importance of an issue, they often say "this is too important for economics", or "money can't measure the importance of this".

Does economics have a limited focus? Actually, the contrary is true - economics has a virtually unlimited focus because it exists for a very simple reason: all of us want more than we can have at any particular time. Consumers want more clothes, bigger houses, and better cars than their budgets will allow. Businesses want to spend more on advertising and equipment than can be supported by their revenues. And elected officials must constantly wrestle with demands for various kinds of government spending, the total of which usually exceeds the tax revenues available.

The simple fact is we all want to buy more than our resources will support. So we have to make choices, and economics is the science of choice. Economics is a discipline about making choices to achieve the highest level of satisfaction for consumers, the highest level of profits for businesses, and the highest level of societal net benefits for governments.

Economics has been called the dismal science, and in a way this is an apt description. Economics forces us to think about

trade-offs. Since resources are limited, using resources in one way means they can't be used in other ways. If I spend \$250 on a new suit, then I can't spend that \$250 on a weekend vacation to the beach. Economics forces us to think about whether we're using our limited resources in the best way to meet our goals.

But wait a minute, surely economic decision-making doesn't apply to very rich people, who have enough money to buy suits, weekend vacations, and anything else they want.

Aren't the economic resources of rich people unlimited?

There are two ways to answer this question. One is that even rich people face meaningful decisions about using large sums of their money where economics can be helpful. And second, all

people, including the rich, face a resource that can't be stretched - time. How we "spend" our time for its best use to us is an economic decision.

Economic trade-offs don't always deal with the present and don't always explicitly involve money. An important trade-off involving young people is the implications of following poor health habits for future health and lifespan. For example, eating tasty, yet unhealthy foods and not exercising can provide pleasure today but at the cost of poorer health in the future. Economic principles are integral in understanding and evaluating this trade-off.

So economics is certainly about more than money.

Money is merely used as a convenient measure of resources.

Money is important only because resources

You DECIDE

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The real story of truth and the column writer's views

What am I supposed to be doing with this column anyway?

Usually I don't think about this question when I sit down each week to fill this space. I simply try to identify a topic that interests me and share my thoughts with you.

Two things happened last week that challenged my way of doing things.

First of all, I got an angry letter from one of you about a recent column. It was a statement accusing me of presenting a biased and undocumented endorsement of the U.S. House member David Price.

I reread my column about Representative Price's newly revised book and his decision not to run for the U.S. Senate seat currently held by Jesse Helms. Although I intended by column to deal with the question of why an experienced and capable member of the U.S. House of Representatives would not run for the U.S. Senate, my personal admiration for Representative Price was evident.

"What's wrong with that?" I asked myself. And I have been thinking about the answer ever since.

The question of a writer's responsibility to the community came up again last weekend at the annual North Carolina Writers Conference held this year at Barton College in Wilson. In connection with the program honoring Johnson County poet and the UNC Pembroke professor Shelby Stephenson, a panel of North Carolina writers discussed their responsibility to the community.

Durham Detective storyteller Katy Munger and the mystery writer Margaret Maron talked about the conflict they sometimes feel between telling a gripping story for their readers and using their writing to influence public attitudes about matters that are very important to them. Jan DeBlieu, a writer about nature from Manteo, pointed out how difficult it was for a woman with family responsibilities to be active in community projects and still have the energy and time for writing.

All of them agreed that all writers have a responsibility to "tell the truth" - even fiction writers.

But what is truth?

One on One

D.G. MARTIN



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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, 1879.

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SUBSCRIPTION RATES

1 Year.....\$21.95
6 Months.....\$11.95
Edenton/Tyner.....\$21.95
Anywhere Else in NC.....\$19.95
Outside NC.....\$28.95
Zone 8.....\$17.95

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

HERALD MAILBAG

Doesn't Make Sense

Dear Editor:
With regard to the survey printed in last week's newspaper concerning the proposed move of the Edenton Police Department and 911, I guess that one must assume the decision to move them has already been made since the survey form does not give the option of keeping it as it is.

In my opinion, any use

that would produce a larger volume of vehicular traffic would only exacerbate the existing parking problem. There have also been concerns raised in the past about nighttime activities at the waterfront even with the close proximity of the Police Department and 911. To remove this presence will certainly not enhance the sense of security of residents or of visiting boaters that are hoped for with the addition of

the new pier and breakwater.

I have only been a resident of this community for 33 years so I don't know how long it has been said or by whom that the best use is not its current use, but it's news to me. I for one think its present use will be hard to improve upon, not to mention more economical than any relocation and renovation.

Gil Burroughs
Edenton

Not in My Yard

Dear Editor:
Regarding the usage of Old Hertford Road as a proposed bypass route by the North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT), I'd like to make the following observations:

• Since the objective of this proposed truck route is to "get the through trucks OUT of Edenton town limits", it is an erroneous proposition at best, to route trucks ONTO Old Hertford Road, for Old Hertford Road happens to fall WITHIN Edenton town limits! (Hello...are you serious???)

• The "wisdom" of this hare-brained option escapes me: Running a state-maintained, truck route THROUGH a residential neighborhood (that cannot even accommodate bicycles and pedestrians safely at this point) thereby displacing AT LEAST 333 children and their bikes as well as long-time residents in order NOT to

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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 12 noon Friday prior to each week's publication.