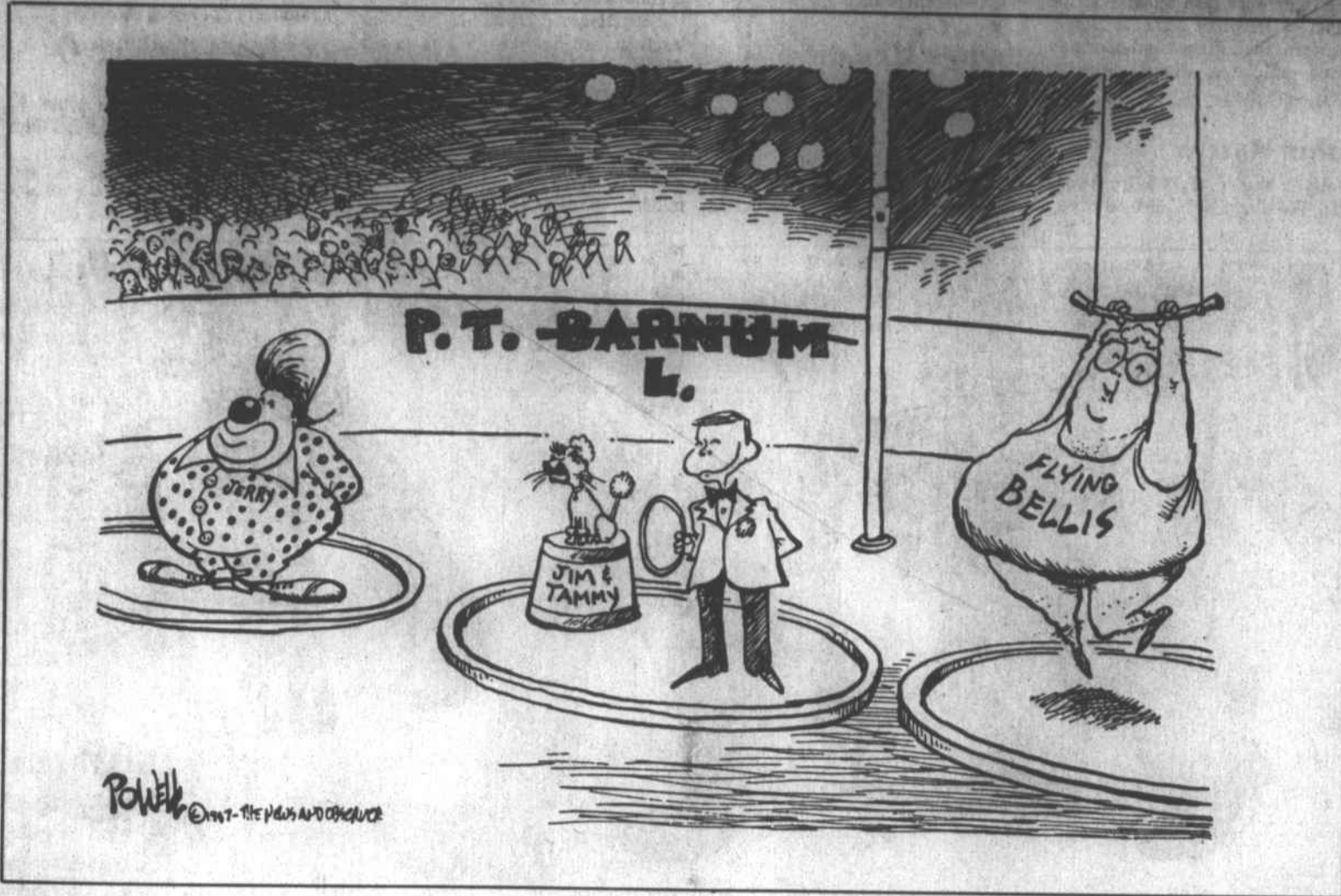


# Commentary

# THE NEWS RECORD



## Heard And Seen

By POP STORY



## Fourth Of July Was A Real Blast

By POP STORY

The customary Fourth of July celebrations in Marshall, Mars Hill, Hot Springs and other centers were successful, with plenty of fireworks, outside attractions, contests, country music, etc.

As usual, the festivities again proved to be popular entertainment, despite the torrid temperatures.

Personally, I enjoyed just sitting up home where it was quiet. That is, until nightfall when loud firecrackers and mountain music filled the air, which could be heard clearly while I sat outside.

The rodeo in Marshall again proved to be a popular attraction, and the spectators evidently enjoyed the show. So much for the Fourth of July celebrations.

### EVERETT'S JOKES

Here are several jokes submitted by Everett Barnett:

In a small Southern town, there was a boy who had the reputation of being not very bright. People had fun with him several times a day by placing a dime and a nickle on the open palm of his hand. Whenever they told him to take his pick, he would always pick the nickle. The crowd would always laugh. One day, a kind-hearted woman asked him, "Don't you know that the dime, though smaller, is worth more?" The boy answered, "Sure I do, but they wouldn't try me out on it if I ever took the dime."

### LODGE SECRETS

A man and his wife were sitting by the fireside in their cozy home. He had just returned from a lodge meeting. "You're always asking me to tell you a lodge secret. Well, I could tell you one now, but you wouldn't like it." "Oh, George, do tell me. I would like it. Tell me!" the wife nagged on. "Okay," said the husband, "here's the secret. I just paid my dues so you won't be getting a birthday present this year."

### SHORT AND SWEET

A speech should be like a woman's skirt, long enough to cover the subject . . . but short enough to be interesting.

### PAINFUL DELIVERY

Speeches are like babies . . . easy to conceive, but hard to deliver.

## U.S. Constitution Not Part Of Plans At 1787 Convention

By RHODA BILLINGS

Former N.C. Supreme Court Justice The delegates to the Constitutional Convention in 1787 weren't supposed to write a constitution.

After declaring independent sovereign states, each was governed by an individual state government established by a state constitution. During the Revolutionary War, those states had banded together for their "common defense" in an alliance called the United States of America, established by the Articles of Confederation.

After the war, as the states got down to the peacetime business of governing themselves, the loose "league of friendship" provided for in the Articles of Confederation failed to provide a satisfactory working relationship among the states. Because each state was a separate "sovereign" government, it could and sometimes did, treat people and goods from other states as "foreign."

Primarily because of a need to secure free interstate trade, the Continental Congress called a convention of delegates from the states for the purpose of drafting amendments to the Article of Confederation

that would provide for a closer working relationship among the states.

Because the new "federal" government would exist only if the states agreed to create it and to relinquish certain of their sovereignty to it, a written constitution was necessary so that the people of the states (or the state legislatures) could read and understand the nature of this new government and the scope of authority that they were being asked to bestow upon it.

What was surprising to some was that the proposed constitution did not contain a "bill of rights" — a list of individual rights which the government could not violate. Although a written bill of rights was considered unnecessary by many of the founders, several states, including North Carolina, refused to ratify the constitution until an amendment adding a bill of rights was proposed.

This is part of a series of columns celebrating the Bicentennial of the U.S. Constitution. All of the columns are written by members of the Wake Forest Law School faculty and student bar association.

### Editorial

## Only Serious Candidates Need Apply

Although November 1988 is still 16 months away, the nation is already turning its attention to the race for the presidency. Democrats galore have announced their plans to seek our country's highest elected office, and a handful of Republicans want to move into the Oval Office after Ronald Reagan and company move out.

But 12 months before November 1988 comes November 1987. That's the month when voters will go to the polls to select the men and women who'll be governing their respective towns for the next couple of years.

In terms of advance publicity and interest, municipal elections are a far cry from the hubbub of presidential elections. But, in terms of importance, municipal and national elections are on equal footing.

In fact, when it comes right down to it, municipal elections could well be considered more important than the presidential race. After all, the folks who serve as mayors and aldermen are the folks who set your property tax rates, who figure out how much you'll pay for water and sewer service, who determine what streets will be repaved and which ones won't and who decide whether the police department will get a big enough slice of the town budget to purchase a new patrol car.

In terms of immediate impact on the life — and wallet — of the voter, municipal elections win by a landslide.

The time for candidates to file for municipal office is now upon us. Some folks currently serving won't be running for reelection, and that means there will be some seats up for grabs.

Here's hoping that folks who throw their names into the hat have the proper attitude about the jobs they'll be seeking. Here's hoping that they, unlike some current office holders, see their monthly meetings not as a time to do some constructive work for the betterment of their town, but as an annoyance and a conflict. Would-be mayors and aldermen who don't have the time to attend monthly meetings because of "conflicts" — be those conflicts a son's little league baseball game, a new job with late hours, or an episode of "ALF" — shouldn't waste the space on the ballot.

Marshall, Mars Hill, Hot Springs and Weaverville are full of intelligent people with good ideas about where their towns should be going and how they should get there. Here's hoping that several of them throw their hats into the ring. Governing a town is simply too important an endeavor to leave to those suffering from apathy.

## Plan A Fair Solution To School Woes

Weeks of legislative posturing and maneuvering, pawing and snorting have paid off with a plan that would inject reasonable amounts of money into the construction of new schools. If the plan becomes law — and if the General Assembly maintains its resolve to impose higher business taxes over the next several years — North Carolina's crowded, dilapidated public school systems will make welcome progress toward respectability.

As endorsed by leaders of the House and Senate, the proposal hinges on a rise in the corporate income tax from 6 to 7 percent. That is a sound choice. Income taxes pass the equity test because they fall most heavily on those most able to afford them. And using a corporate tax to fund school improvements would be appropriate. Many companies profit from the state's economic growth, yet fail to do their share to meet the costs of that growth, including school expansion.

The pain of an income tax hike would be somewhat offset by eliminating a longtime business bugaboo, the tax on inventories held by manufacturers, wholesalers and retailers. The inventory tax has been worth keeping so long as the

corporate income tax remained at 6 percent, its original level. But if the income tax is increased, the inventory levy can prudently be jettisoned.

The chief virtues of the compromise are that it would rely on a progressive tax and that it would provide substantial new revenues to the schools — \$830 million over 10 years — instead of merely borrowing from Peter to pay Paul. None of the other plans launched during recent weeks of jockeying could meet both requirements. Other features in the package would push the 10-year total earmarked for new schools to \$3.2 billion.

The \$1.5 billion bond proposal supported by Gov. Martin would have made low-interest state loans available to counties for school construction. But unless counties wanted to slash other spending, they would have had to raise taxes to repay the loans. How likely is that when all along, the counties' inability or unwillingness to tax themselves adequately has been a root cause of school building deficiencies?

At the debate's other extreme has been the one-cent sales tax increase favored by House leaders. Although such an increase would have yielded the most new revenue — \$1.75 billion over four years — it would have used a tax that weighs disproportionately on ordinary residents, who pay it whenever they purchase basic necessities.

Nobody has a definitive handle on the magnitude of North Carolina's school facility needs. There can be no doubt, though, that those needs are staggering. If the state is to maintain its economic momentum — and do justice to its younger generation — it now must compensate for years of penny-pinching that have left many school systems terribly ill-equipped to provide the quality of education Tar Heel students deserve.

The new tax plan may not be the ultimate answer, but it could be supplemented readily with a bond issue or additional revenues. At any rate, it represents a fair and responsible approach to a problem that North Carolina needs desperately to solve.

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