

The News - Journal

NATIONAL NEWSPAPER
ASSOCIATION
From Press
A Day
NNA SUSTAINING
MEMBER - 1973

North Carolina
PRESS
ASSOCIATION

Published Every Thursday at Raeford, N.C. 28376
119 W. Elwood Avenue

Subscription Rates In Advance
Per Year - \$5.00 6 Months - \$2.75 3 Months - \$1.50

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Second Class Postage at Raeford, N.C.

THURSDAY, JULY 22, 1976

Travel by public employees

A news article in this issue gives some facts and figures about travel costs to Hoke County for trips inside and outside the county by employees and officials. Before anyone jumps to the conclusion that such expenses are improper or bad for the county in any way, several points should be considered.

As a start, we would generally agree with County Manager T. B. Lester's contention that most of these trips are worthwhile. The fact that an exchange of ideas among administrators, supervisors, planners and others who are trying to accomplish the same objectives in different places and environments is beneficial and leads to better performance is so undeniable that the Internal Revenue Service allows businesses to report such trips as legitimate operating expenses. Many times methods and ideas being used elsewhere are learned at meetings which result in savings to governments and institutions far beyond the cost of sending the personnel to the meetings. True, some trips wind up being just pleasure trips, but we would say that generally good employees and officials make good use of the associations and bad ones don't, and there are better ways of measuring performance than the trips one takes.

It has not been and is not our purpose, as one official suggested, to single out anyone in reporting the facts on travel to the public, who after all foot the bill. We did report the board of education's trip to the west coast and have not intentionally overlooked anyone. We do not feel that just because many of the taxpaying public don't get such trips can be a valid excuse for them knowing their employees are getting them. After all, most of the public these days is not paid as well as its employees anyway, and most seem willing to accept the fact. Our business is not to make any judgments primarily, but to see that the public does know what is going on, and to this we are dedicated.

We would not like to see any taxpayer accept the conclusion that as "only 28 per cent" of some travel costs comes from local tax budgets, the other 72 per cent is not coming from his or her pocket as well. Most of us have a clear awareness of where the money disbursed from Raleigh and Washington comes from, and we should not forget it. Our taxes pay this 72 per cent, along with the non-typing secretaries in Washington, our social security checks, the postal employees, welfare checks, Jimmy Carter's campaign expenses, and all the rest.

A news item last week reported that the county school superintendent and his assistant would be at a meeting at the Great Smokies Hilton for about a week in July. The Great Smokies Hilton, in case you didn't know it, is about as comfortable a place for a conference as there is, east of the Mississippi and above sea level. As Lester asserted and we agreed, these conferences serve a worthwhile purpose, and certainly they wouldn't be as well attended if they were held in a cabin on some swamp. Facilities have to be adequate, and conducive to thought and exchange of ideas, certainly, and the nicer the place — California, Utah, the Great Smokies Hilton — the smarter the crowd that's going to attend. Of course, there may be a point down the line somewhere beyond which we shouldn't go, and it may be that this should be getting some thought.

The suggestion that newspapers shouldn't even print this information about public servants, that they "have to give up so much of their privacy," does give us some concern also. It is our attitude that part of what a public servant is paid for is that his masters have a right to know what he is doing in his official capacity. We also consider it our duty as a newspaper to go look it up in the records and tell the public. If it is a fact that the public doesn't have an interest in these matters, then it's past time the public changed its attitude, before we all wind up working eight months a year for the government instead of about four.

Browsing in the files of The News-Journal

25 years ago

Thursday, July 19, 1951

An average loan rate of 50.7 cents per pound for 1951 - crop flue-cured tobacco and a schedule of rates by grades were announced today by the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

The State Highway Commission recently announced the completion of 21 additional miles of hard-surfacing in Hoke County under the \$200,000,000 bond issue program.

About 35 members and guests attended the luncheon meeting of the Raeford Chamber of Commerce at the Hoke School cafeteria Tuesday.

From Rockfish News:
Recent rains have been of great

benefit in this vicinity. Tobacco barning is in full swing now and everybody is busy.

15 years ago

Thursday, July 20, 1961

A million dollar hail storm slashed across Hoke County late Tuesday afternoon, and veteran agricultural observers said the stripped fields were "the worst we've ever seen."

Mrs. Mary Virginia McDougald, 62, of the Wayside Community was buried Saturday afternoon in the cemetery of Galatia Presbyterian Church.

Hoke officers of the Highway Patrol reported an unprecedented total of nine wrecks occurring in the county last week, with two persons critically injured and damage totals running into the thousands of dollars.

'He wants to measure the drapes'



by Marty Vega

A Rush Of Hoofbeats

(Part II of last week's or last month's, story)

And suddenly there was a thunderous rush of hoofbeats and a cloud of dust on the road and a galloping horse pulled up. A rider dismounted, breathless from the journey from Raeford taken at breakneck speed, and leaned against his mount to steady himself, as the crowd of settlers emerged from their homes and began thronging about him.

For it had been four and a half days since the young colonist had ridden off to meet secretly with the Raeford settlers to make plans for a daring invasion of Ft. Thunderclap, the sprawling encampment of soldiers to the north who were believed to be responsible for all of the rain which fell nearly every day.

Puppy Creek

Philosopher

Dear editor:

It's too late to do anything about it now, but during the Democratic National Convention the main problem it seemed to me, since the platform and the nominee were settled on ahead of time, was getting the delegates to stay in their seats and be quiet.

The TV cameras kept showing the delegates milling around and talking while the chairman pounded his gavel. Part of this I suppose was due to the upbringing of the delegates, most of whom I'm convinced had parents who kept telling them to be quiet when they were children and couldn't make it stick. I kept expecting a voice on TV to come on saying "Do not adjust your set, this is a political convention you're watching."

Some of the inattention of course was caused by the speeches, some of which were so dull you knew for sure the speakers had written them themselves.

Regardless of the difficulty, the problem ought to be solved. Such a spectacle going out on the air could damage a party's image, and would have if it had gone into more homes, which it would have if there hadn't been regular programs on other channels.

Therefore I have rolled up my sleeves and tackled the problem. Oh I know people will say it can't be solved, that it's like trying to solve inflation, when any thinking person knows the way to stop inflation is to make other people reduce their prices and leave mine alone.

But I have the solution. It came to me during the first two hours of the convention.

The answer to the milling-around delegate problem is seat belts. Lock 'em in. When the chairman's gavel falls, it hits a button that makes every unfastened belt in the hall shriek with that awful buzzing sound car owners know about. With two-thirds of the belts buzzing away, the noise will be so fierce and ear-splitting the delegates will sit down and buckle up to keep from going insane. Once buckled up, the release button for all is maintained at the chairman's podium. First-aid people will have to be stationed around the hall to take care of over-enthusiastic delegates who try to leap to their feet and pull their seats up by the roots. This won't cost much. There are thousands of unused seat belts available in cars all around the country.

Yours faithfully,
J.A.

The others swarmed around the messenger eagerly, anxiously waiting for the information he was about to impart - that their loyal friends in Raeford would join them in the battle with Ft. Thunderclap.

"I have bad news, my friends", the rider spoke at last.

"They won't help?" everyone cried out.

"Who?"

"The Raefordians!"

"I never got to Raeford, that's the bad news", the rider exclaimed.

It was indeed bad news, as the settlers would have to reimburse him his expenses out of their dwindling travel budget, but before they got down to details, he explained.

"I met an old man on the road who had a newspaper and what he showed me was so grave I rushed right back to tell you", he said, his voice breaking with emotion.

The rider went out to say that the newspaper reported CT&T, Callous Telephone & Telegraph, with headquarters in Tar Bog, N.C., was about to go on strike.

"Do you realize what that will mean? Poor service, equipment breakdown, unaccountable delays in repair, increased costs-

The colonists pondered this new threat, and all agreed the most distressing part was they would be unable to discern when the strike began, or when it ended.

The settlers began mumbling among themselves why the Callous Telephone & Telegraph Co. workers felt it was necessary to strike for higher wages, as the Callous management had plenty of money to give to workers in raises. For it was no secret to the colonists that if they had to call Raeford it would be 20 cents for the first three minutes if they dialed from their home phone, but if they had to call from a pay phone, the Callous Telephone & Telegraph Co. charged EIGHTY FIVE cents for three lousy minutes.

"I wonder if it works the same for the citizens of Raeford who want to call here", mused one in the crowd.

"You must go immediately and find out", shouted the crowd to the rider, who had begun to unsaddle his mount. "There's not a minute to lose. Leave now and find the truth. The Raefordians have a stake in the outcome of this struggle".

Wearily, the young colonist mounted his steed and turned the reins to the west, to Raeford.

(To be continued next week, or sometime)

CLIFF BLUE ...

People & Issues



PRESS CONVENTION -- As has been my custom for years I attended the annual N.C. Press Association's annual meeting at Wrightsville Beach last Thursday, Friday and Saturday. It is always refreshing to meet with fellow members of the fourth estate from over the state to talk "shop", current events with a little politics thrown in.

Most members of the fourth estate in North Carolina are registered Democrats, although many vote "independent". Most seemed to think that the Carter-Mondale ticket was as good as the party could have come up with, although some were out-spoken in their disappointment, or opposition, particularly with Mondale.

James C. High, publisher of the Whiteville News Reporter was elected president of the Association for the coming year. Richard B. Wynne, publisher of the Asheville Citizen-Times was elected vice president and Margaret Harper was reelected secretary-treasurer. New directors elected were Myrtle Tomlinson of the Clemmons Courier and Bill Horner, Jr. of the Sanford Herald.

JUDGE BAILEY -- Superior Court Judge James H. Pou Bailey was the guest speaker at the Friday night dinner and was well received being heartily applauded for his address which ranged from rib-tickling stories to a serious discussion of court procedure as it might affect the First Amendment and newspaper reporting. Judge Bailey saw no reason why the newspapers and the courts could not get along well and safeguard the First Amendment if both sides would be reasonable and respect what the other -- the courts and the newspapers were honestly trying to do.

CRIME -- In the lobby of the Blockade Runner Friday afternoon for an hour or more I discussed crime with Judge Bailey and what might be done to curb the continual rise, year by year. Judge Bailey, a plain-talking, hard-hitting judge, admitted that he didn't have all the answers. From his own standpoint as a judge he seemed to feel that if the judge who tried the cases had a longer period in which he might alter the sentence it might be preferable to the present system. Frankly, I have talked with District judges and candidates in recent

weeks about the matter and the answer is not as simple as many might think.

Back to Judge Bailey: The newsmen left the meeting feeling that Judge Bailey was a solid defender of the First Amendment and tries to be firm but practical in running his court.

LIEUT. GOVERNOR -- In the seven-person race for the Democratic nomination for lieutenant governor, E. Frank Stephenson Jr., of Murfreesboro has mailed out press releases on the Long Poll which shows Stephenson with 19.9% of the vote to be led only by House Speaker Jimmy Green with 21.6%; Waverly Atkins 9.7%; Howard Lee with 8.2%; John Jordan 7.6%; Herbert Hyde 8%; Kathryn M. McRacken 1.2% undecided 22.2%; no answer 1.7%.

May we remind you that straws votes and polls, unless scientifically made, are like straws in the wind can lean one way, then another!

PLEASED! -- The liberal Democrats are quite happy over the nomination of Senator Mondale for vice president by the Democrats and the conservative Republicans seem to be jubilant over the Mondale nomination. Question is: Who will do the shouting after the November election?

GIVING 'EM FITZ -- "Giving 'Em Fitz" is the title of a new 50-page "Bunch of Jokes and Stuff" just off the press by J.D. Fitz, publisher of the News-Herald in Morganton. We quote in part from the introduction or preface to "Giving 'Em Fitz" by W. Stanley Moore, Editor of the News Herald: "J.D. Fitz has been a collector of jokes -- but he has never been a hoarder. He's no miser with the anecdotes which gravitate to him from many directions. He has been a regular one-man Joke Exchange for many years, swapping tales with friends like he used to trade pocket knives or marbles as a boy and like men now swap stocks and bonds. His profit is in the joy of sharing; his dividends come from the laughter of those who hear his jokes."

Yes, Morganton is rich in the way of homespun raconteur of funny stories in the person of former Senator Sam J. Ervin, Jr., and in good jokes, no other than the publisher of the town's daily newspaper -- J.D. Fitz!

Report To The People

by Senator Robert Morgan



With the Democratic Convention being held in New York last week and the Republicans meeting next month in Kansas City, it is interesting to observe that the Democratic nominee and one of the two Republican candidates for that nomination are making much of their lack of ties with Washington.

They feel, and probably rightly so, that the people are getting fed up with the manner in which the Federal Government is trying to regulate their lives. Having been in the Senate only 18 months, I can hardly qualify as an expert on Washington, but I have seen enough of this meddling to understand the growing public disaffection.

Two recent actions by regulatory agencies illustrate why Washington is turning people off these days.

One was an announcement that the Consumer Product Safety Commission will take steps to require

that match books have latching covers to make them "child proof". The agency's spokesman said that evidence showing that the locking devices may cause more danger than they prevent has caused some people to doubt the wisdom of the requirements.

A gentleman from Cary, noting this action, wrote to protest the government "wasting my money to protect me from myself."

"This will be," his letter continued, "the end of the free match. I realize you have important things to do, but I would appreciate anything you can do to keep me in matches."

He certainly makes a valid point.

The second almost unbelievable action came from the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare. There, officials decided that schools where Mother and Daughter or Father and Son Banquets were held were scenes of sexual discrimination and that any school system that permitted them could lose federal funds.

The ridiculous ruling was made in answer to a query from a school system in Scottsdale, Arizona, which wanted to be sure that it was in compliance of anti-discrimination laws. After pondering the question for some five months, the general counsel for HEW decided, yes, such mother-daughter affairs are discriminatory.

President Ford, to his credit, said he was "shocked" by the action and ordered David Mathews, the Secretary of HEW, to review it. That effectively suspended enforcement of the new policy, and Mr. Mathews, to his credit, said he agreed with the President, and with a lot of the rest of us in the Senate who were watching developments.

These two incidents are not of earth-shaking importance, but they are symptoms of what is going on in Washington and what I tried to talk about in a newsletter last

See REPORT, page 13

This Is The Law

By Robert E. Lee
Sponsored By The Lawyers
of North Carolina

Residence Requirement
For Divorce

To obtain a divorce in North Carolina, at least one of the two parties must reside in the state for at least six months immediately prior to the divorce action.

The law does not require both parties to be residents of North Carolina; it is sufficient if either of them is a resident of the State for a minimum period of six months. Some other states have shorter residence requirements but permanent residents of North Carolina should consult a lawyer before investing their time and money in a quickie out-of-state divorce.

A divorce decree may be valid under the laws of one state and not under the laws of another, and for most persons it is important that a divorce be recognized in all jurisdictions.

North Carolina cannot be classified as a "quickie divorce" state. In the first document filed by a lawyer in a divorce proceeding, there must be a statement to the effect that the ground for the divorce has existed for at least six months prior to the filing of the complaint.

If a person states in a divorce proceeding that he has been a resident of North Carolina for more than six months, when he has in fact not been a resident, the court's judgment may be vacated and any divorce granted may be set aside.