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THURSDAY, AUGUST 19, 1976

## Voter registration by mail

Is nationwide voter registration by mail an idea whose time has finally come? A few years ago it was passed by the Senate, defeated in the House. Now, in partial form, it has passed the House (with a nudge by Jimmy Carter), is pending in the Senate, and if passed is expected to be vetoed by President Ford.

We hope Mr. Carter's motives are for the good of the country, as he said, rather than simply the prospect of all those extra voters. We hope that, of the motives being attributed to Mr. Ford, it is his concern about expense that predisposes him against the bill rather than concern about registering more of the low-income and minority citizens who often tend to vote for Mr. Carter's party.

But even the cost of mail registration is less than in-person registration, according to Ford Foundation studies of two of the states - Maryland and Minnesota - that already register voters by mail. The cost by mail was from 35 cents to 52 cents a voter, contrasted with 81 cents to \$2.46 in person.

Some local governments have gone so far as to provide 24-hour telephone answering services to handle requests for registration forms. New Jersey, one of the later states to join the club, requires that forms be delivered door to door in presidential election years.

It was New Jersey Rep. Frank Thompson who managed the bill now passed by the House, which dropped the original provision for mass mailing of forms to voters. This deletion might save \$25 million but undercut the whole idea, according to proponents of full "postcard registration." But Mr. Thompson looked on the brighter side, saying, "You can't mail 'em out, but you can mail 'em in."

Whatever the fate of this particular bill, it represents a needed impulse toward government responsibility in finding and registering eligible voters. Most other democratic governments assume more responsibility than does the United States. And the recent steady decline in the percentage of the voting - age population going to the polls shows the problem.

Even though the actual numbers of voters has risen since 1960 the percentage in presidential elections has gone down from 63.1 percent to 55.4 percent in 1972. The 1974 vote for U.S. representatives lapsed to a shocking 36.2, the lowest since 1942.

But the citizen has to take the prime initiative to make democracy work no matter how much the government helps. The highest voter registration of 1974 (90.3 percent) came in Maine, which has no statutory mail registration except for the disabled. --*Christian Science Monitor*

## Browsing in the files of The News-Journal

25 years ago

15 years ago

Thursday, August 16, 1951

At the continuation of their monthly meeting on Monday night the town fathers hired Robert Gatlin to survey or lay out the town of Raeford and set house numbers for each house and lot in town and furnish this information to the Post Office so that it may have the information in order to begin mail delivery service in town when the street marking equipment is to be furnished the town by the Chamber of Commerce and is expected in the next few days.

The Rev. W.B. Heyward, pastor of the Raeford Presbyterian Church, announced this week that a non-sectarian Kindergarten would be operated at the church this winter and that it would open on Oct. 1 under the direction of Mrs. John Scull.

Coach Robert Rockholz has issued a call for all candidates for the 1951 Hoke High football squad to report to him Monday.

From Poole's Medley:  
Nothing Americans have invented has revolutionized travel so much as gas driven vehicles. Gasoline has annihilated distance.

Arlie Crisco, about 52, Cabbarus County native who was living with his brother, A.L. Crisco, near Five Points in Quenahille township, died suddenly in the front of the News-Journal office at about 10:30 yesterday morning.

Thursday, August 17, 1961

With the international situation rapidly worsening, and the Selective Service quota for September set at 25,000 men, the local unit of the National Guard announced this week that it was now authorized to accept enlistments that will bring it up to full strength.

Hoke lawmen knocked over two stills early Tuesday morning on Raft Swamp in Antioch Township.

Five Main St. clothiers have joined forces with the Fine Arts Department of the Raeford Women's Club to sponsor the annual "Parade of Fall Fashions" to be held next Thursday, August 24, at 8 p.m. at the Raeford Elementary School auditorium.

One way traffic is being maintained of N.C. 20 from Raeford to the Robeson line, highway officials reported this week.

A total of 43 boys checked in Monday evening for the football camp being held this year at Hoke High.

Airman Third Class Thomas G. Harrell, Jr., son of Mr. and Mrs. Thomas G. Harrell, Sr. of Route 2 Raeford graduated recently from the aircraft mechanic course here.

Mrs. John Scull, director of Raeford's only Kindergarten for a number of years, announced this week that she was expanding to include day nursery care for the children of working mothers.



## Events Reaching Crisis, Mules Try Takeover

Life went on in the rugged Fayetteville colony during those oppressively hot days in mid August, but events were quickly reaching the crisis stage.

All day Sunday the loyal settlers hoped for rain, as they not only needed a cooling shower but there was a chance a good storm might knock off the cablevision and therefore they might be spared from viewing the ultimate disgrace-the televised coverage of the opening of the GOP convention where the movie acting mule from Death Valley, Calif., would try to take over the party.

Although they wished for rain to wash out the Death Valley mule from their sets, they did not wish to miss seeing their great leader, President Ford, arriving in Kansas City with his fine family.

So they were clearly caught in a dilemma, to keep the set tuned to Crafty Broadcasting Schemes (CBS) in order to see Ford, they would run the chance of having to be subjected to viewing the cinema's mule idol and his movie acting wife.

So one young colonist decided on a compromise she would keep the set tuned to Crafty, but at the first sign of the Death Valley mule, who was clearly the death knell of the national GOP, disembarking from the plane, the volume would be quickly turned down to zero, and only his

## Puppy Creek Philosopher

Dear editor:  
According to what I read the other day, to run for President it takes a paid staff of around 250 people. That's more people than it took to run the entire government 200 years ago.

Some more odds and ends:  
Some outfit has taken a public opinion poll to see what people think of public opinion polls. Thirty-six per cent said they thought they were worthless. This is bad news, as I was just getting ready to save the country some money by proposing a poll on whether or not there's life on Mars. Personally I doubt if there is, not even microscopic life. People might be willing to live on a planet where the temperature drops to 122 degrees below zero at night and rises to only 40 below in the daytime, but microbes have more sense.

Politicians, like generals who want to fight the next war with the weapons of the last one, are usually behind the times in their figures of speech. They're still talking about sweeping out Washington with a broom in this vacuum cleaner age. Also, some of them every once in a while will say electing so-and-so would be like using a fox to guard the chickens, when no supermarket manager would think of turning one loose in the frozen food department. I don't even know how this figure of speech got started. Even when chickens were kept in a hen house, no farmer was ever dumb enough to try putting a fox in there to guard them. A more apt figure of speech would be: electing so-and-so would be like using F.B.I. agents as mail clerks, or like Castro's hiring the C.I.A. as a body guard.

One final one: H.L. Mencken always argued it was impossible to underestimate the intelligence of the American public, but he was wrong. The producers of television shows and commercials have done it.

Yours faithfully,  
J.A.

## CLIFF BLUE... People & Issues



PRIMARY DATE...Have you ever witnessed so complete a turn-around as has taken place since the General Assembly a little more than a year ago shifted the primary date from May to August? Everybody, so it seems agrees that it was a mistake--and a pretty big mistake at that!

Rep. T. Clyde Auman, veteran state representative from Moore County says he will have a bill ready when the next General Assembly meets next year, changing the date back to May--to the third Friday in May.

When the West End peach grower first said Friday it hit us that Saturday would be a more appropriate day. But Clyde went on to point out that Friday had advantages over any other day in the week.

People going away for the week end could vote in the morning before leaving home. Students and others away from home for the week would have plenty of time to vote after getting back home. We agree with Rep. Auman's proposal.

SECOND PRIMARY...While speaking of primaries, to our way of thinking it would be far better to have the second primary two weeks after the first primary rather than four weeks. In some states the second primary is two weeks after the first primary.

The four weeks between the first and second primary goes back to the horse and buggy and model T days when travel and communications were much slower than it is today. We would like to see Rep. Auman or some other legislator move to close the gap between the first and second primary.

HUGH CANNON...Could it be that Hugh Cannon decided to take a leaf from Jimmy Carter and start his campaign for the Democratic nomination for the U.S. Senate two years in advance to lay plenty of ground work?

Hugh Cannon is a smart person and was one of the chief architects of the Terry Sanford administration. He is a knowledgeable person, but in seeking to unseat Jesse Helms, he or anyone else really has the work cut out for him. Some people will tell you that Helms will be harder to defeat now than four years ago.

INNOVATIVE SYSTEM...Chief District Judge Leonard H. van

Noppen of the 17th Judicial District held court in my home county of Moore a couple of weeks ago. Judge van Noppen pointed out how Mecklenburg was dealing with heavy loads of court cases. He said that in Mecklenburg County the courts got behind with the cases and the legislature authorized some extra assistant district attorneys and that more sessions of court were being held. He said that the public defender system as implemented in Mecklenburg and was saving the state some money in providing counsel for indigents.

"I held court there a month ago, and tried general misdemeanor cases. In the courtroom two district attorneys were on duty and one would question witnesses, plea bargain, and confer with lawyers while the other was in the trial of a case. Then the district attorneys would change places, and it worked well," said Judge van Noppen, who added that often a district attorney will be so rushed that he does not get a chance to talk to State's witnesses before a case is called for trial.

POST CARD REGISTRATION...We note that the Democrats in the U.S. House of Representatives jumped like a firecracker had been thrown their way when Jimmy Carter asked the honorable boy to pass the Post Card Registration bill. We have been leary of the bill all along. We like to see heavy registrations and big votes but we can imagine election frauds and corruption by wholesale creeping in through Post Card Registration. A republic, or a democracy if you prefer is often times not the simplest form of government but even though it is slow, costly and often times cumbersome it is well worth the price. In a democracy you have to have some check-reins and we are afraid that Post Card Registration will remove some needed restrictions around the ballot box.

REPUBLICANS...Should the winner of the GOP nomination for president be able to go on to victory this fall over Jimmy Carter it will be the biggest national political upset since Harry Truman defeated Governor Tom Dewey of New York in 1948. However, in 1948 Humphrey finding himself in about the same circumstances at the Republicans are today, almost won over Richard Nixon.

## Report To The People

by Senator Robert Morgan



Congress is considering a way to change the method by which retired civil servants and military personnel are given cost of living increases in their annuities.

Under the present system, retired federal employees receive automatic raises when the Consumer Price Index rises by three percent and remains at the higher level for three months. The retiree's check is increased on the first day of the third month following this period.

Because there is a time lag between the cost of living increase and the day the raise becomes effective, a one percent "kicker" was added on the compensate for this interval.

The result of this has been that the annuities have increased by 72 percent since 1969, although the Consumer Price Index has gone up only 56 percent.

This is a much more liberal formula for the federal retiree than is given to a Social Security recipient, whose benefits are figured but once a year and who gets no one percent for the long lag.

According to the General Accounting Office, only four percent of private industry's retirement plans even have a cost - of - living provision -- and a bonus "kicker" is unheard-of.

Now I know that persons living on a fixed income in retirement are not having an easy time as the costs of goods and services seem to go up and up.

But it must be emphasized that no one is trying to take away the cost - of - living increase. The bonus on top of it is the problem -- there is just no point in having a cost - of - living increase which is more than what the cost of living actually goes up.

As more and more people are

added to the civil service and military retirement rolls, the costs are going to strain a federal budget that already is in very bad shape, with deficits growing larger each year.

Military retirement payments have increased 600 percent between 1964 and 1977, and for fiscal year 1977 the sum was \$8.5 billion -- an increase of \$1.2 billion over the present year. This is about eight percent of the entire military budget.

There are many fine former military people living in North Carolina and I want them to have proper benefits for what they did for our country, but there must be some sort of balance achieved.

Congressman David Henderson of North Carolina is sponsoring a bill in the House of Representatives which would settle this problem in a fair manner. The bill would remove the time lag for the cost - of - living increase, and would do away with the kicker.

The lobbying against the bill is very heavy, but it deserves to pass. We would still be generous, but not generous to a fault.

The long awaited and much heralded Tax Reform Bill passed the Senate last week by a rather decisive margin, but I found I could not support the bill in its final form because of what it promised to do to the national budget.

The wire services reported that I was not listed as voting on the bill. What actually happened was that when my name was called, I announced that I was paired with Senator Stennis of Mississippi, and that if he were here he would vote for the bill and that if I were to vote I would vote against it. Pairing is a common courtesy that one Senator extends to another who must be absent, and does not lessen one's

position or effectiveness.

As for my reason for opposing the bill, it was because of what it would do to the already swollen deficit that the nation is experiencing annually.

Senator Muskie of Maine, who is chairman of the Senate Budget Committee, summed up in a statement at the end of debate.

"The losses escalate until 1981," he informed the Senate, "when we will lose, under provisions of this bill, \$3 billion on an annual basis from the revenues we would otherwise realize in 1981."

Our federal budget is already in very bad shape. Within the last few days, the Treasury Department offered \$7.6 billion in bonds at eight percent interest. It seems that the Federal Government needs all the money it can get its hands on.

As originally proposed, the Tax Reform Bill was expected to increase revenues \$2 billion a year, principally through the closing of loopholes. I had expected to support it on that basis.

But closing loopholes proved to be elusive. We were constantly put in the position of hurting the honest person who has a legitimate tax break, in order to get at the few who abuse it. The only real reforms were of the sort which actually loses revenue--increased deductions for the sick and the elderly, a credit for child care, and improved deductions for the average taxpayer. These are worthwhile--but where is the money to come from when federal spending will not cease?

As the weeks of debate continued, our expectations of what we could realistically raise by closing loopholes declined. A final look at the balance sheet showed we were going farther into debt than we already were. It was time to stop, in my opinion.

A little over a year ago, Congress

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