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PAUL DICKSON Publisher-Editor
 SAM C. MORRIS General Manager
 MRS. PAUL DICKSON Society Editor
 MARTY VEGA Reporter
 SUZANNE APLIN Reporter

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THURSDAY, JULY 21, 1977

Congressional stonewall

The United States Congress is not a model of speedy action in the best of circumstances. But when it is investigating wrongdoing in its midst its deliberations slow to a crawl. So it is not entirely surprising that the House ethics committee looking into alleged South Korean influence buying gives every sign of stonewalling its delicate task.

But this was supposed to be a new era, a post-Watergate era in which high ethical standards were to be zealously pursued and charges of "cover-up" avoided. Why then, is the House committee dragging out its probe? Why has it met only seven times in six months? Junior members of the House warn that less than three months remains before Congress adjourns. Possibly no major findings will be disclosed this year.

It is not only the younger legislators who are concerned. Philip Lacovara, the respected former Watergate counsel who is now serving the House ethics committee, reportedly is also highly disturbed by the slow pace of the investigation. According to the New York Times, Mr. Lacovara has written a strong memorandum to the committee members criticizing chairman John Flynt Jr. for his handling of the case. The memorandum is said to complain that an agreement has not yet been signed with the CIA in order to obtain needed information on Korean Bribe attempts and that subpoenas, depositions and other testimony have been delayed.

The foot-dragging presumably can be linked to embarrassment over the magnitude of the South Korean lobbying effort to influence U.S. foreign policy. Far more congressmen apparently were involved in receiving Korean cash, gifts, entertainment, and honorary university degrees than earlier thought. The New York Times reports that at least 115 lawmakers, among them many figures of prominence, accepted something of value.

The public should not jump to conclusions. It is not yet clear how much of this might have been illegal. Some of it, perhaps most of it, was not. But until and unless the House ethics committee investigates the matter with more zeal and determination than it has shown to date and produces its findings, the suspicion will remain strong that a Democratic cover-up is in the making and that a shockingly high number of American lawmakers are guilty of corruption at the most or of poor ethical judgment at the least.

We are reassured by Attorney General Griffin Bell's statement that he will tolerate no cover-up in his department's investigation of the scandals. But we wonder if the present machinery of the Justice Department is adequate to dealing expeditiously with the case, if indeed more than 100 congressmen are implicated. The Justice probe has been going on for a long time. Unless Mr. Bell can assure the public that it will be completed soon, the time may be ripe to consider appointment of a special prosecutor to do the job.

--Christian Science Monitor

Browsing in the files of The News-Journal

25 years ago

Thursday, July 17, 1952

Mary Sue Upchurch, better known as "Miss Hoke County," will depart for Winston-Salem Thursday, July 24 to participate in the Miss North Carolina Beauty Pageant.

Earl Huggins, 29, graduate of Newberry College, Newberry, S.C. has been signed as the coach to fill the vacancy left by Haywood Faircloth who recently resigned to go into business, according to W.T. Gibson, Jr., principal of Hoke County High School.

The number one spot in the Eastern Carolina Textile League was at stake last night as the Raeford Rebels journeyed to McColl to play their seventh game of the league season.

From Poole's Medley:
 It has grown into a custom for a retired governor to run for the United States Senate. I do not know how being governor qualified a man for the Senate, but it seems to work on his lawmaking qualifications.

From Rockfish News:
 The tobacco curing season is on now so there is no time for loafing at Rockfish. The nail kegs are all deserted.

15 years ago

Thursday, July 19, 1962

A savage hail storm battered sections of Allendale and Blue Springs townships Monday afternoon, causing an estimated \$200,000 worth of damage.

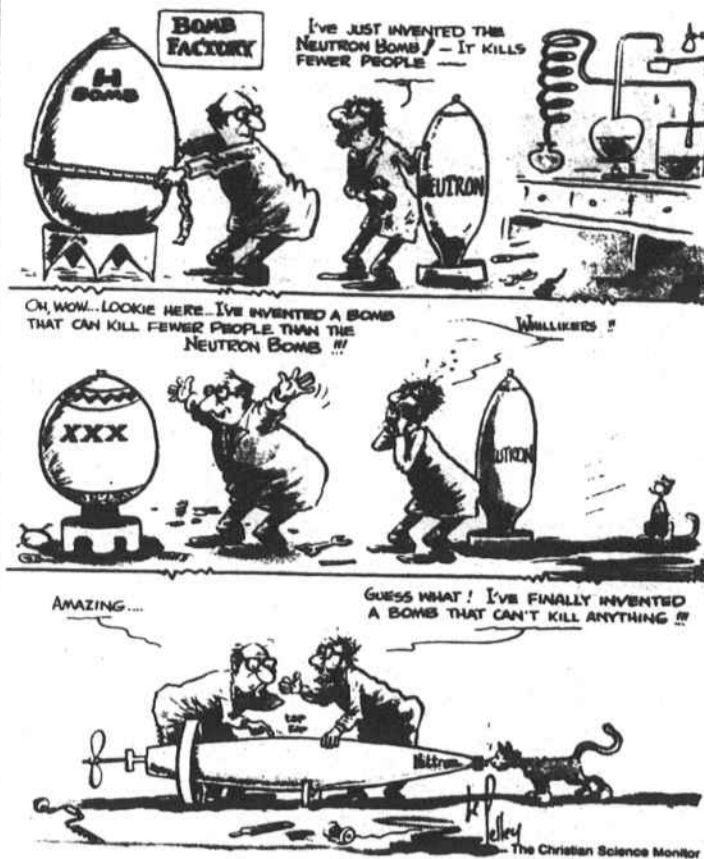
The Raeford-Hoke Chamber of Commerce has a new manager. He is R.B. Stone, who was on the job Monday morning bright and early attempting to apply his professional knowledge to a host of local business problems.

A native of Raeford, now living in Laurinburg, Herb McKeithan, Jr. has opened the new Family Pharmacy there.

James T. Peek, son of Mr. and Mrs. Willard Peek of Raeford, has been commissioned as a second lieutenant in the U.S. Air Force.

Scouts from Raeford Troop 403 went off to Camp Tom Upchurch last week, and on Wednesday held an Aquatic Day with parents and friends visiting.

Services were held Tuesday afternoon at Antioch Presbyterian for William James McBryde, who passed away Sunday at Scotland County Memorial at the age of 80.



by Marty Vega

Food For Thought

The new school lunch program for the senior high students announced last week by the Board of Education may have some parents puzzled. After all, most parents of adolescents are worrying about the almost-steady diet of cheeseburgers, fries and milk shakes that their teenagers consume, believing that their offspring are surely ruining their bodies and their future health by downing vast amounts of "junk food."

So, now, the school board has seemingly put its stamp of approval on all this and has decided to make these tantalizing foods available in the lunchroom.

Although it sounds a bit radical, actually, the real plan is that it will be a savings to the taxpayers. Although the regular school lunch will now be free to everyone who wants it, the educators are betting that more students will forget their acne and happily munch away on cheeseburgers, washed down with a triple-thick, frosty shake.

But in case this doesn't happen, the schools have another plan. In order to generate sales at the fast-food counter, the school board has bought up (at a very shrewd price) a substantial stock of McDonald's drinking glasses (which were drastically marked down) which they will offer for a special, grand-opening promotion celebration price of -- well, we'll learn that later.

And when those run out, the board members are going to introduce another fabulous, colorful glass collection that everyone will want to grab up: A special, limited edition of cartoon glasses

which will feature the countenances of the school board members (a different one each week) living it up in some familiar habitat, like Las Vegas, or Houston, etc., etc.

(All proceeds from the sale of promotional glasses will go to a special fund to send board members to a very important summit meeting next year on the Mediterranean entitled "The Serious and Profound Sociological and Physiological Effects of Choosing the Right Color of Ink for Grading Report Cards in Today's Changing, Turbulent Educational World.")

Hate Mail

Regrettably, one of the misfortunes of those of us who choose to make crusading journalism our mission in life is that some psychopathic minds find pleasure in sending hate mail. This bit of poison prose was delivered to the office one week ago, its cowardly author hiding in anonymity.

"IMPORTANT PRESS RELEASE"

In an upset of staggering significance, Monday night, the Setmakers trounced the Headliners in Hoke Recreation Volleyball action. The Setmakers needed only five "persons" to spike The News Journal entry in straight games 15-5 and 15-4. Notably absent from the typesetters team, however, was Marty (Most Valuable) Vega their leading spiker, setter, and server. Her all-round prowess was missed immensely! Thus another pre-season power falls by the wayside.

The only comments we have to make about this trash are that the author should be told noticeably has an "e" and prowess may be a female prowler.

Puppy Creek Philosopher

Dear editor:

Right after Watergate when most of the culprits had been tried and convicted, newspaper pundits began writing about the post-Watergate morality, how the lessons of that big scandal would slow down law-breaking in high places, would frighten the short-cutters into towing the mark, for a while at least.

Most big-city columnists seem to know more about typewriters than human nature. Skulduggery kept right on going.

Witness the news about the rip-off of millions of dollars from the Small Business Administration by people who elected janitors as presidents of their company in order to qualify their firms as minority-run outfits.

Or how about all those Congressmen who're now checking their records and admitting that, by-the-way, they did get some of that South Korean money?

It looks like Watergate had as much effect on morality as hanging pickpockets in England a hundred years ago had on other pickpockets still on the loose.

The pickpockets discovered that the best time to lift people's purses was while they were staring goggle-eyed at the public hanging of a convicted pickpocket. They learned that when the trap door was sprung, the spectators were so transfixed by the gruesome sight that even an amateur could pick a pocket without being noticed.

This is a short letter this week. I'm going to go off by myself and think about human nature.

Yours faithfully,
 J.A.

Letters To The Editor

I am writing this in response to statements made in last week's News-Journal by Hoke County Sanitarian M. Russell Mills and by Fred Snyder, Lumberton manager of Sanitary Container Service, the company now providing our county's garbage disposal service.

Let me first thank our County Commissioners and the citizens of Hoke County for giving me the opportunity to serve them for the past ten years. I am sure many of our county residents know that I provided them with garbage pickup and disposal services without any assistance from the county until June 29, 1972.

When I started the business about 1967, I operated my own landfill, charged \$2 per customer, and went from door to door recruiting customers. It took years of hard work at a small return to build up my business to the point where any other firm would want to compete for it. To illustrate how my services expanded, my first contract with the county consisted of 50 containers or dumpsters; now there are 107.

I noticed with a great deal of concern that Sanitary Container Service plans to pick up only that garbage that is deposited by the roadside or by the mailbox. Apparently they failed to consider the hardship this will impose on their elderly and handicapped customers. However, they are a fine company, so perhaps some exceptions will be made to the above rules.

As I said at the beginning of this letter, I am especially concerned about a number of incorrect statements made by Mr. Mills and Mr. Snyder. Mr. Mills charged that I imposed a hardship on my former customers by refusing to give the new company their names and addresses. Surely Mr. Mills and Mr. Snyder would not give away what it took ten years to build. I did write all my customers on June 24 informing them that a new company would take over on July 1.

Mr. Mills claimed the reason for the pileup of garbage was that the containers were left in a mess. I requested that the container sites be inspected prior to the change-over and that I be informed of the results in writing. Mike Wood, Assistant Sanitarian, inspected all of the container sites on June 28 and informed me by telephone that everything was satisfactory and that he would write a letter to this effect. On July 13 he told me he had been advised not to provide me with the letter.

According to Mr. Snyder, all of the containers were serviced by noon on July 2 and were in fine shape. If things were in fine shape after his company had been on the job for only 1 1/2 days, I must have left matters in satisfactory condition, or they could not have been cleaned up properly in a mere 1 1/2 days.

Sincerely,
 Clyde A. Leach

Dear Mr. Dickson:
 The North Carolina Federation of Humane Societies now has 40 society members throughout the State. Our hope in the not-too-distant future is to realize a society in each of North Carolina's 100 counties.

To the best of our information there is no humane society in Hoke County and we hope that among your readers are one or more persons who would be interested in organizing a society with the assistance of a Federation's representative.

While a humane society is mostly interested in helping animals in distress, it is also much concerned about the impact upon a community where stray and unwanted pets are producing serious health problems and are sources of danger and considered by most city and county officials throughout the country as the cause of the greatest number of complaints they receive from the public.

These are the reasons humane societies are laying great stress upon educational programs acquainting the public, both young and old, with responsibility to pets, the desirability of spaying and other connected matters including advising city and county officials in respect to adequate control ordinances.

Our member societies are interested in assisting pound personnel whose efforts are, too often, unappreciated and, where there is no pound, in influencing the community to build a modern facility.

The undersigned is a Board member of the N.C. Federation and will be happy to meet with any interested person or persons who writes him at Box 590, Pinehurst, N.C. 28374 or telephones 919/295-6268.

Hopefully,
 Burton M. Parks

Dear Editor:

Last year, the people of North Carolina gave Insurance Commissioner John Ingram a solid vote of confidence. In the Democratic primary he had a three to one margin over Joe Johnson, the industry candidate and in the general election Ingram got more votes than any other council of government candidate.

In Raleigh, however, the insurance people were able to get what they could not get from the electorate. Through a massive lobbying effort they were able to get the General Assembly to pass a bill that takes away the rate-making powers from Commissioner Ingram. This means that we shall over the next two years have premium increases of twelve per cent, despite higher profits in this state than the national average for automobile liability insurance.

David Parnell of Parkton voted for the bill and the people of this district ought to be aware of the fact. He there by showed his contempt for the people who supported Ingram and sided with a special interest against the consumer. He was the only one of our three representatives in the N.C. House to thus side with the insurance companies.

I suggest that at the time of next year's elections we let the insurance people give David Parnell their campaign contributions and their votes. The rest of us can then give our support to another candidate who will represent the people rather than special interest.

Sincerely,
 Kenneth N. Smith
 1418 Biggs St.
 Laurinburg, N.C.

CLIFF BLUE... People & Issues



legislature may have made a martyr out of Ingram. Senator Wynne himself is not an admirer of Ingram and voted against him and the insurance industry...He conceded that insurance companies are doing Ingram a great favor by fighting him so hard.

PAUL GREEN...We note that Paul Green, noted author and playwright of Harnett County entered N.C. Memorial Hospital recently but was released after a brief stay. He was ordered by his doctor to "relax and rest." Green, now 83, is one of the great playwrights of the nation. He is probably best known for his symphonic outdoor drama "The Lost Colony" which is now in its 37th season at Manteo. Green has not only provided the script for other dramas but has assisted in many across the nation.

CURRITUCK...In the small northeastern county of Currituck a woman has been named Superintendent of the County Schools -- Ms. Jeanne Meiggs. She is said to be a most capable, dedicated and outstanding young woman, and the only female superintendent in the state among the 145 local education districts. In the past two years women have been coming into positions of leadership quite fast.

BLACKOUT...The New York blackout goes to show again that with men as well as mice plans often go astray. Probably the most disheartening part of the tragedy was the looting which took place during the blackout.

The blackout dramatically pointed up the importance of electricity in life today. You can have ample fuel but without electricity thousands and thousands of modern-day conveniences would be worthless. It was Tom Edison back about 1880 who invented the electric light who gave tremendous stimulus to the use of electricity and without it today we would be set back about 80 years.

POSTMASTERS...We note that an organization of postmasters are seeking to take the U.S. Postal Service to the U.S. District Court in Washington in an attempt to stop the agency from announcing their salaries. It is a long and sound established policy that the expenditures of public funds is open to scrutiny and people unwilling to stand the heat of public scrutiny should report to private employment. When officials from the president, congressmen, senators and all the way down have their salaries publicized, why the exception for the postmasters?