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THURSDAY, AUGUST 14, 1980

## Change of mind

Last week's action on the requested \$4,000 advance on contract for payment of mechanical repairs and other expenses of the Hoke County Ambulance Service was a sloppy piece of work, not in what was done as the way it was done.

The advance had been voted down on July 21, by a 2-1 vote. Two weeks later, the matter was brought up again by Commissioner Neil McPhatter, who had cast one of the votes against the request. McPhatter said in effect he had reconsidered the matter since voting, then changed his mind. Commissioner Mabel Riley, who had voted against giving the advance, cast the lone "no" vote on the second round.

The single favorable vote of July 21 was cast by Commissioner James A. Hunt. Hunt refrained from voting in the second round because he was acting as chairman in the absence of board chairman John Balfour. The other favorable vote was cast by Commissioner Danny DeVane, who was absent from the first meeting.

After the motion rescinding the July 21 action and authorizing the advance was adopted last week, Commissioner Riley commented that "we have a majority one week, then next week on the same subject we reverse it."

Commissioner DeVane replied that the commissioners ought to be able to correct a "mistake" when one has been made the first time (whether declining to provide the advance was a "mistake" is a matter of opinion).

It's logical that a governing board should reverse itself if new information which would have affected the first decision comes to light. In this case, no information that hasn't been presented at the July 21 meeting was presented. Commissioner McPhatter, who brought up the subject last week, indicated he'd been thinking it over after the earlier meeting, then changed his mind.

The commissioners in the past year have changed their minds on other decisions also.

The conclusion drawn from the switches in decisions is that what the commissioners do today isn't necessarily permanent.

In the latter case, the action on the ambulance service request should have been postponed till all the commissioners could vote on it, including the chairman.

Whether the commissioners should provide an advance is open to question. Making such an advance is legal but as Balfour indicated at the July 21 meeting it withdraws interest-earning deposits and is supplied, in effect, as a loan on which the borrower does not have to pay interest. In fact, Balfour expressed doubt that the county could charge interest.

Commissioner Riley said at both meetings on the subject that a loan should be obtained from a private bank or other lending institution, that the county "isn't in the lending business," and that the county in making such an advance is competing with local lending institutions.

-- BL

## 'Freeing' delegates

"Freeing" delegates committed by earlier caucuses and referenda to specific candidates would make the caucuses and referenda nothing more than popularity contests with no significant other than showing how a majority of voting citizens feel about a candidate.

It's been said by old pros among others that this "freeing" also would send the choosing of the nominees back to the hands of the back to his undemocratic (small "d") way of choosing.

This was written Thursday before the Democratic National Convention opened.

The only reason for "freeing" delegates committed by results of their home state voting should be a new development showing a favored candidate for the nomination unfit for office by reason of criminal act or long-incapacitating illness or injury since the voting was held.

In reference to the presidential-preference primaries, their proliferation has been criticized and properly, and we'll also agree that the news media push of the results of the first -- the New Hampshire--primary in a presidential election year gives a head start to the winner that is unwarranted in view of the small number of electoral votes New Hampshire contributes in the presidential elections.

The presidential primaries should be held as a single nationwide primary, just as the North Carolina primaries for choosing the parties' nominees for state, federal and local office are.

This would -- or at least could--reduce the amount of campaigning the presidential candidates now must invest, with its tremendous cost, in trying for the majority vote in each of a crowd of primaries and prevent the first of the statewide primaries from gaining unwarranted value for a candidate.

If any rule is to be made regarding the results, it should be that delegates to the parties' national conventions shall be bound by the results of the primary unless the candidates to whom they are committed is rendered unfit, following the primary, for receiving the nomination; or the candidate frees the delegates from their commitment to him or her.

The rule should apply, however, only to the first ballot at the convention.

We've always felt that the primary is the democratic way of nominating anyone to public office when more than one person is running for his or her party's nomination.

Eliminating the national convention, cold turkey, however, would be too hard for the devout supporters of the various parties to take, so a national nominating primary, keeping the parties' national convention, would be a proper step in that direction.

-- BL

'I ought to be in New York in about three days'



The Christian Science Monitor

## CLIFF BLUE...

## People & Issues



**PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS** -- With the Democratic National Convention now underway in New York City and with Congressman John Anderson making it a three way race, it is probable, but not likely, that the results will go to Congress to decide the next President and Vice President.

Let's check back into history a little. The first four presidential elections (1789, 1792, 1796, and 1800) were held under Article II, Section 1 of the U.S. Constitution, which provided for the College of Electors to vote for two candidates -- the one with the majority of votes to be President and the second highest, Vice President.

A tie in the Electoral College in 1800 led to the passage of the Twelfth Amendment which provides for separate ballots for President and Vice - President.

Prior to the election of 1824 records of popular vote are scanty and said to be somewhat inaccurate.

**MINORITY PRESIDENTS** -- Under the Electoral College System, 15 Presidents have been elected who did not receive a majority of the popular votes cast. Three of them -- John Quincy Adams, Rutherford B. Hayes, and Benjamin Harrison -- actually trailed their opponents in the popular vote.

In writing the U.S. Constitution, evidently the gentlemen did not envision the type of popular election of the president as we witness today.

They had in mind to let the people elect an "Electoral College" and let the members of this Electoral College select the next President of the United States.

Most of our early day leaders had come from England or Great Britain where the Kings came up through the royal family, and our framers of the U.S. Constitution had no idea of permitting the ordinary rank and file electing a President of the United States.

We have no idea as to how many people voted for the electors who elected George Washington Presi-

dent in 1789 and again in 1793. Checking history books we find that the popular election figures first show in 1824. John Quincy Adams, Andrew Jackson, William E. Crawford and Henry Clay were candidates. Andrew Jackson received a plurality of votes, 152,933 popular votes and 99 electoral votes. Adams came next with 115,696 popular votes and 84 electoral votes. Crawford had 46,979 popular votes with 41 electoral votes.

Since no candidate had a majority of the electoral votes, the House of Representatives, voting by state, and each state having one vote, chose Adams on the first ballot. John C. Calhoun had a clear majority for vice president, and again in 1828 was re-elected vice president.

The people were evidently beginning to feel their importance in our new democracy and in 1828 gave Andrew Jackson (Old Hickory) 647,292 votes to 507,730 for John Adams, then serving as president.

From 1828 on it was the people who were the "kingmakers" instead of the College of Electors.

**1824 & 1828 ELECTIONS** -- in 1824 more than two-thirds of the electorate had voted against Adams. This circumstance negated his hopes for a successful administration, and the Jacksonians evidently commended their plans to defeat Adams in 1828 by electing Jackson, by a big majority.

**20th CENTURY ELECTIONS** -- Presidents elected since the turn of the century without a majority of the popular vote were:

Woodrow Wilson in 1912 was elected with 41.84% of the popular vote. Theodore Roosevelt received 27.42% Taft 23.15% and others 7.58%.

Wilson in 1916 received 49.26%; Hughes 46.12%; Benson 3.16%; and others 1.46%.

In 1948 Truman received 49.51%; Dewey 45.13%; Thurmond 2.40%; Henry Wallace 2.38%. In 1960 John F. Kennedy received 49.71%; Nixon 49.55%; others 1.19%.

## Puppy Creek Philosopher

Dear editor:  
The problem of lying by public officials has been in the news lately, as it has been since governments were invented.

Some people are outraged when they hear of some official's lying, but that's because, most of us set higher standards for politicians than we do for ourselves. As Mark Twain said, truth is a precious commodity and should be used sparingly.

Studying a politician's lies can be useful. The nature of his lies is one of the best standards I know for gauging his importance and estimating how far he will go. For example, a six-bit politician (in pre-inflation days known as a two-bit one) will lie whenever it's handy or he's cornered, with no thought of how he's going to get out of it. This variety rarely gets past the state legislature level.

On the next level there's the politician who will lie only when he believes there's little likelihood of getting caught and has an ex-

planation if he is. Congressional material.

At the top level are the truly successful politicians. They'll lie only when they know there's no likelihood of getting caught, at least in their lifetime. History is full of them. Some have been excellent leaders and produced national holidays.

Now there's another side to this truth-telling business. For every politician who has lied to voters there are thousands of voters who have lied to him. This explains his defeat when everybody was telling him he was winning. It explains why he led in the polls and lost at the ballot box.

It's said that the people get the kind of politicians they deserve, and it's possible the politicians get the kind of voters they deserve, excusing the readers of *The News-Journal*.

You'll notice I sign this not yours truly but

Yours faithfully,  
J.A.

## It's a Small World

by Bill Lindau

One way to start a column is finish what you were saying in part of the last one.

I'm talking about that World War II paratrooper joke. American Paratrooper recuperating from wounds went to Paris. During a tour of the tomb of Napoleon, the guide said, "And there lies the greatest soldier the world has ever known." (Well, maybe those weren't his exact words.)

To this the paratrooper asked skeptically, "Oh yeah? And how many jumps did he ever make?"

Another joke is about karate players (players?). They work out barefoot and get skilled at all sorts of dangerous moves with hands, feet, head, and also voice (that yell they give). They learn to disable not one but two and even three attackers coming at the same time.

The joke goes like this. A guy with a 10th degree black belt in karate (that's heavy, man) is walking through a tough neighborhood about 2 in the morning when he is attacked by two big hoods.

Of course, he can handle them quickly, without working up a sweat.

But they beat him up and made off with his wallet, because he couldn't get his shoes off in time.

Even the Israeli-Egyptian differences have had their light side.

One story goes like this. Back in the 1967 war, an Israeli recruit asked his first sergeant for a three-day pass.

"No way," the sergeant said. "Will you give me the pass," the recruit persisted, "if I bring back an Egyptian tank?"

"sure," the sergeant laughed. "Just bring back the tank."

"Okay," the recruit said and left.

Later that day he showed up driving an Egyptian tank.

The first sergeant was shocked but happy, and wrote the recruit his three-day pass.

The next week, the recruit asked the first sergeant against for a three-day pass.

"I'll give you one if you bring back another Egyptian tank," the sergeant said. He knew he had the recruit there. By plain dumb luck, the sergeant figured, the kid had bagged an Egyptian tank. But not in a million years could he get another.

The kid left but didn't look very worried. Next morning, he shows up in the Israeli camp, driving an Egyptian tank.

After the first sergeant was revived and could stop his hands from shaking, he wrote the kid a three-day pass.

Before he gave it to him, he said, "Tell me. How did you get those Egyptian tanks?"

"Simple," the recruit replied, taking the pass. "I just drove one of ours over toward the Egyptian lines till I saw an Egyptian in a tank. All I did was ask him, 'How would you like to get a three-day pass?'"

In case you didn't read that National Geographic feature in last week's paper, you'll be relieved to know that "dog days," which run six weeks in July and August, have nothing to do with dogs. It says here that since the time of the ancient Egyptians they have been associated with the appearance of Sirius, the brightest visible star in the sky. Sirius is known as the dog star of the constellation Canis Major, which means "Greater Dog."

I've heard, however, from an unreliable source, that dogs call them "people days." The reason is those days are too hot for sleeping, so the Giant Purple People Eater comes out of his den and prowls the earth, hunting, because he blames the weather on people. Also because he's hungry, and, after all, a feller's gotta eat.

People who know the People Eater best says; however, that an excellent defense against the Eater is bit of Limburger cheese behind each ear and on the toes of your shoes, or on your feet, if you're not wearing shoes.

The Eater can't stand the odor of Limburger.

He'd probably enjoy the taste though, if he could get the cheese past his nose.

Two cars collided, and the drivers, Pat and Mike, got out and looked at the damage.

"No hard feelings," Pat said. "Lets drink on it."

"Okay," Mike replied, and took the bottle Pat offered him, took a long drink out of it and returned it to Pat. Pat recapped the bottle and put it in his car trunk.

"Aren't you gonna have a Drink?" Mike asked.

"Sure," Pat replied. "After the patrolman leaves."

We've heard grim reports that the West German and the Japanese are way ahead of the Americans in productivity in auto and other kinds of manufacturing.

But a bright side is contained in a report issued recently by an economist for North Carolina National Bank.

It says Americans are way ahead of those foreign competitors in textile manufacturing, because of innovations in machinery and other areas of production.

These protests against the July draft registrations for 19- and 20-year-olds remind me of an old World War II story.

An imaginative youth called up for induction faded his way through the eye examination, thus getting himself classified 4-F (unfit for military service). Shortly after taking the exam, he was at the movies when to his distress his draft-board chairman appeared and took the seat next to him.

Recovering quickly, however, the youth turned and asked him, "Pardon me, madame, when does the next bus leave for Chicago?"

Another reluctant youth did get drafted into the Army despite all he could do to avoid it. Not long after he went on duty, he showed strange behavior. He went around looking into closets, and under books and furniture, even in the stew in the mess hall, and each time after looking he would mutter, "That's not it."

His commanding officer, coming upon him while he was searching, asked him what he was looking for. The soldier only looked under the officer's shoes and muttered, "That's not it."

The officer sighed and said, "Well, there's only one thing to do." He led the soldier into his office, wrote him a medical discharge, and handed it to him.

The soldier took it, grinned, and said, "That's it."

On the other side, there was John Brunette of Black Mountain, near Asheville.

When the draft for World War II started, John was too old for military duty.

But he died his hair, took years off his age, and enlisted.

It was months later, after surviving training that left many teenager exhausted, that the truth caught up with John.

He fought and yelled and raised all kinds of Cain, but they put him out of service, though with great regret.

Then there was another of the same kind. He was called up but his physical showed defective eyesight, so he was classified I-B (limited service, no combat duty) and turned loose to await another call.

Six months later it came again. This time, he faked through the eye exam, and was classified I-A (fit for any kind of service.) At that he was headed for an office assignment. To avoid that and get into action, he volunteered for parachute duty, survived the tough training, then saw combat and nearly starved in the Philippines and came home with a decoration.

He keeps his I-B rating document next to his war-record document, for laughs.

## This Is The Law

Under North Carolina law, a person signing his will is not required to have his signature or the signature of his witnesses notarized.

However, notarization of such signatures is permissible and often it is extremely advantageous. The procedure is simple:

The person making his will and his witnesses may appear before a notary public or other person authorized to administer oaths and have their signatures notarized. This can be done at the time of signing or later.

If this procedure is followed, the will is said to be made self-proved. This means that at the time of death, the witnesses will not have to appear before the Clerk of Court to acknowledge that they signed the will as witnesses.

Other facts concerning wills are in a free pamphlet at your public library, published by The Lawyers of North Carolina.