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Sound investment

The Hoke County adults who are illiterate or nearly so compose an outrageous failure of the public schools of as recently as 24 years ago to do their simplest duty. Most of the 53 students who have taken the courses range between 30 and 45 years in age.

To meet the most important of needs, the Hoke Ready-Literacy Council for the past 3½ years has been trying to do the job, with the help of unpaid volunteers and an office staff of three.

The federal government through the Library Construction and Services Act of Title I, Elementary and Secondary Education Act, has been providing most (\$55,000) of the \$58,000 needed. The government money has been supplemented by private donations and, in the past two years, by \$2,000 of county money.

But starting with the new fiscal year 1981-82 the federals are dumping the financial burden the teaching necessarily carries back onto the local people. The federal grants were available for only three years.

The Hoke Council has been doing the job because the public schools cannot, since adults are involved, and neither can the community colleges. Though Sandhills College provided adult education courses to Hoke County people, but isn't equipped to take on people with less than the equivalent of a fourth-grade education.

The result is the separate agency is necessary to fill the gap: give the adults the chance to learn to read and write at least well enough to get a higher education in the Sandhills courses and to handle the requirements of reading and writing in everyday life -- filling out forms of various kinds, including income tax, and reading at least the simplest kind of literature, for their pleasure as well as their enlightenment.

Now with no more federal aid coming, the Hoke Council must depend nearly entirely on private donations while hoping the county commissioners can come up with the \$5,000 the council requested for 1981-82, to do the job the public schools failed to do with taxpayers' money.

The failure is not all Hoke County's of course. Though the 53 people who have gone through the Hoke literacy courses are now Hoke residents, some certainly attended schools in their early childhoods in other counties.

Furthermore, illiteracy and near-illiteracy among adults exists in most if not all of North Carolina's counties and in most counties throughout the nation.

If the Reagan administration is sincere in its pronouncement to take care of the neediest of the needy, then it should provide enough money to community colleges to teach the illiterate and nearly literate adults to read and write efficiently enough to advance to higher-paying jobs as well as to a greater enjoyment of plain living.

Besides this, intelligent business and industry welcomes as a benefit to operations, any improvement in the education of their present and prospective employees.

Here federal funds would constitute a practical investment. The illiterate who gains literacy will be qualified by this gain to hold a higher-paying job. This means he or she will pay more in state, federal and local taxes, to help support necessary government programs, including the one which benefited them.

Most of the 53 students who have taken the Hoke literacy courses and those now in it hold fulltime jobs, and though some may not be earning enough to be eligible to pay government taxes, others are taxpayers.

It's common sense to spend to increase the private citizen's contribution to support public programs, besides being common justice to make up for the failure of public schools which has left so many adults without an ability that is essential to making a satisfactory life in modern society.

--BL

Training resort unneeded

U.S. Postmaster General William F. Bolger has complained because the price of stamps was raised to 18 cents, from 15 cents, instead of to 20 cents he asked for.

He also has said the price of the first-class stamp will rise to 23 cents next year, to produce enough revenue to meet anticipated operating costs in the next few years.

At the same time, Maryland State Delegate Robin Ficker reports the Post Office Department, "which recently increased stamp prices...is about to start building what amounts to a resort training site in my State Legislative District in Potomac, Md."

"There, the Post Office Department spent \$6.5 million for 80 acres of land in a residential area next to homes selling for \$300,000 to \$700,000."

Ficker furthermore quotes the department as saying that, at one time or other, it will provide at the training center cocktail lounge, swimming pool, gymnasium, jogging trails, eight tennis courts and a par-three golf course for 500 postal employees from throughout the country for six-week periods. This means, of course, the 500 at a time spending six weeks in training.

Ficker also says that no public transportation will be available to the "panoramic vistas of this 'Taj Mahal' postal training resort."

The Cash-on-the-barrel-head cost of construction is \$28.3 million. But the department will finance it over a period of years, so that the interest charges will shove the final cost above \$50 million, Ficker says.

The land for the project, incidentally, was about October 2, 1980 -- a few weeks before the election that made Ronald Reagan president, and it's 10 miles from the White House.

'I've TOLD you guys to be quieter!'



The Christian Science Monitor

Ficker says the "training resort" violates Reagan's pledge to cut government waste.

But since the land was bought before the election, the Reagan administration is stuck with it, unless it chooses to go through a legal hassle to invalidate the purchase contract.

The Reagan administration, however, can halt the extravagant waste of the postal revenue by stopping the spending with the land purchase and eventually selling the parcel to private people, probably getting the money back, in view of continuing inflation of real estate values.

Exactly what the Postal Service needs technically to make its employees as efficient as possible in their jobs, we don't know. But we can't see where a cocktail lounge, gymnasium, jogging trails, a golf course, and tennis courts could contribute as much as a tenth of an inch to an employees' professional development.

Aside from paying for the construction costs there will be heavy maintenance costs, the costs of paying the postal employees' travel and living expenses while they are off the job and in training, and the costs of paying their temporary replacements to do their jobs while they are away in school.

If training for the highest possible competence is the goal of such a center, then the postal department can do the job just as well in existing government buildings in the Washington area, for District of Columbia, Virginia, and Maryland employees; and, for the other employees, in public buildings in their home states -- North Carolina, for example, at Ft. Bragg, Pope, Seymour Johnson, Camp Lejeune, and the state universities. And they all have jogging trails, swimming pools, tennis courts, golf courses, gymnasiums and -- at the military bases, at least -- cocktail lounges.

For a long range conservation of government money, future government employees of all types, including military and naval uniform people, and state and federal congressmen and senators should be started immediately in classes to indoctrinate them in a scorn for fat-cat living and pride in performing public service and in Spartan living. In fact, with such goals in mind, they should be given their instruction at the Army Ranger, Marine Recon, and Navy Seal schools.

In some future year, such a program might even bring the price of the stamp back to 3 cents (5 cents air mail), since all those luxuries wouldn't be needed or wanted, and congressmen and senators wouldn't be giving themselves pay raises on top of their \$60,000-a-year (plus office expenses) salaries.

A side effect certainly would be government employees, elected and otherwise, would regain the respect and trust of the people they are supposed to be serving.

--BL

Puppy Creek Philosopher

Dear editor:

A popular phrase tossed around in Washington these days is "supply-side economics."

I wasn't sure what it was until a big city columnist explained it for me. He said it was this: cut tax rates and eliminate some of those stiff regulations on business and people will respond by working harder, investing and producing more.

Thus by working harder at more jobs and making more money, people will naturally pay more income tax and the government will still have a steady flow of revenue.

I'm in favor of cutting taxes and eliminating regulations, even those I don't pay any attention to, but deciding to work harder isn't something you rush into headlong without serious study. In my case, I may have to think about it for

several months, maybe a year or two or perhaps from now on.

The trouble is, most people I know are already working as much as they intend to, and cutting their taxes so they can work harder and pay more taxes may not produce the anticipated results.

Nonetheless I'm in favor of giving supply-side economics a trial. More production may be the answer, excusing farmers and ranchers, who've produced themselves into a hole.

Nearly anything will beat the production system tried by car manufacturers. When many families found themselves unable to buy two cars, the car makers offset this by making one car cost as much as two used to.

Yours faithfully,
J.A.

Upper Room

I could squeeze nothing else into my luggage. But what about my Bible? I could not return home without it. I unpacked, then repacked both bags. Still no room for the Bible.

I'll carry it in a paper sack, I decided.

But the thought of that hidden Bible bothered me. Leaving the house for the trip to the airport, I was stopped suddenly by a verse of scripture which sprang uninvited into my mind and heart: "I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ."

I drew the Bible from my paper sack and cradled it in one arm, not caring who noticed it.

While sitting in the waiting room, an elderly woman approached me. "Will you help me,

please?" she asked.

"I'll be glad to," I said. "I've never flown, and I don't know where to go."

I assured her that I would help her board the correct plane. She confided, "I wouldn't have spoken to you if I hadn't seen your Bible."

The Christian need never be ashamed, even briefly, of God's word. Through it God speaks, guides, comforts, and makes love known.

PRAYER: Thank you, Lord, for Your word. Help us to use it wisely. Amen.

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY: To be ashamed of the gospel is to deny Christ.

--copyright--THE UPPER ROOM
--Leland Mayberry (Ohio)

It's a Small World

by Bill Lindau

It pays to know whom you are about to bug.

A friend in Asheboro was driving back to work after lunch one day. As he entered the company parking lot, he saw what he thought was a girl from the office.

Her back was to him, and she was bending over looking at something.

Grimacing with devilish glee, he turned off his motor, let his car roll slowly within a couple of feet of her back -- then he sounded a blast of his horn.

She did exactly what he knew she would do: jumped about five feet off the ground.

When she landed, she turned and faced him, and her expression showed a tremendous urge to commit homicide.

The joker, however, expected that, too.

What he didn't expect, though, was that the girl wasn't any girl from the office. She was a total stranger.

What happened next is best left enshrouded in the mists of the distant past.

kind of government ever heard of on earth."

For a break from grim thinking, there is this dialogue?

Felix, the cat: "What's wrong with you?"

Bowwow, the bulldog: "It's these fleas. They're buggin' me."

The editorial suggesting Spartan training for future government employees, elected and otherwise, of all types, was inspired (well, sort of) by the Japanese "West Point" I happened to see right after World War II ended.

We were assigned to the institution to wait for the ride back home.

The bedrooms at this Japanese version of the U.S. Military Academy were in plain, one-story wooden buildings -- one bedroom to the building. Each bedroom was filled with plain iron cots, from one end of the building to the other.

So, you say, the Japanese lost the war.

Sure. But not because they were less of fighting men and less in courage or endurance.

If they'd had our equipment, we'd still be trying to get them out of Manila.

These makes sense, sorta.

Woman in another county was interviewed by a reporter getting opinions of private citizens about the proposed school budget.

She told him she was opposed to the part of the budget that was giving money for school buses, including keeping them running.

"Why?" she was asked. "I'm against busing," she replied.

In another county also a woman told her county commissioners they shouldn't allow Daylight Saving Time.

"That extra hour of sun will burn up my garden," she said, explaining her objection.

Letters To The Editor

Editor, *The News-Journal*

I do not know what your policy is in regards to printing letters to the editor, but it seems to me that the only criteria is to write a letter of complaint about the Hoke County Sheriff's Department. During the past few months you have published a letter from someone complaining about the Sheriff's Department and Rescue Squad/Ambulance Service, then a letter from someone complaining about the visiting procedures, and this week (June 18, 1981) a letter from Richard Hunt complaining about the cleaning lady at the jail. Two of these letters were written by inmates at the jail, and one by the mother of an inmate. We must consider this when we consider the validity of their argument.

I would like to respond to Richard Hunt's letter. He claims the women are cooks and cleaners at the same time. I believe there is one woman employed primarily as a cleaner, and two others employed primarily as cooks. While one is in the jail cell area cleaning, the other two prepare the food.

As for Mr. Hunt's question about whether the cooks wash their hands, that should go without question. Everyone has to go to the bathroom sometime, you, I, the cooks, and the surgeon. However, without actually watching the clean-up afterward we can not be certain there was one, except for our own.

I realize as Mr. Hunt does that there is no respect for the cleaning woman in the cell block area. The intellect of the inmate is usually lower than average, and the inmate has already shown that he has no respect for the law, or else he wouldn't be there. Now how can we expect him to have respect for anyone else when he can't even respect himself.

I would also like to state that the jail is regulated by both state and federal regulations. The North Carolina Department of Human Resources in particular regulates jail procedures in North Carolina. This organization is headed by Dr. Sarah Morrow in Raleigh. The jail staff is certified by the Department of Human Resources in jail operations, and the chief jailer also has certification in Jail Administration from the U.S. Department of Justice. The jail is also inspected periodically by the Hoke County Grand Jury. Also, a state inspector stops in on an irregular schedule, always unannounced.

Contrary to Mr. Hunt's belief, the jail is run by a staff of professionals headed by one of the most knowledgeable sheriffs in the state and not by a staff of germ-spreading careless people.

In the opening paragraph of Mr. Hunt's letter he claims to be speaking for the citizens of Hoke County. I do not know how he was appointed as spokesman, but he certainly does not speak for me.

I also believe a check of official records will show no record of Richard Hunt being in the Hoke County Jail. So let me leave you with this message, whoever you are. "But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death."

Revelation 21:8
Name withheld by request

Editor's Note: In reference to the first paragraph, The News-Journal publishes letters not only of complaint about the Sheriff's Department but also of complaint and praise about other agencies, institutions and people, as a look at previously published editions of The News-Journal will show. Also, The News-Journal does not publish names without a signature, except when the letter-writer's name is known to the editor and the writer submits a good reason for withholding his name. Also, The News-Journal has no way of knowing that a name signed to a letter is fictitious, since all but a few letters [such as this one] come in the mail and bear no telephone numbers, except in rare instances.

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RESCUE SQUAD