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## Answers needed

The Hoke County commissioners ought to take time out to explain why the county needs a rural area water system, which will take about \$800,000 of county money.

The explanation is due in view of the fact that the county financial priorities have been questioned by statements pointing to needs of the county school system.

A column written by the county schools' superintendent, Raz Autry, last month made pointed remarks concerning financing and pointed to school building needs, specifically at J.W. Turlington School. Autry also pointed to the fact that though a majority of Hoke County's voters in 1975 approved issue of \$1.25 million in bonds for county school improvements, the school system received only \$325,000 through bond sales, and the county commissioners gave \$250,000 "to replace a portion of that amount if we agreed not to sell more." The commissioners at the time was "fully committed," the column adds, to using federal revenue-sharing funds to help finance construction. The revenue-sharing money would replace the rest of the unsold bonds.

The present board, Autry adds, has given "excuses": for examples, interest rates are too high, and "the people" don't want any more bonds sold.

A letter to the editor says in effect an area water system would cause deferment for "twenty years or more ... the more fundamental issue of school improvements."

In view of the Reagan government's deep reductions in federal aid to public schools and their programs, and the state's position still uncertain, the commissioners should explain to the public what the priorities in county fund spending are based on. In the case of the proposed area water system, the needs may be to replace the dependence on wells with a more reliable water system; and to provide more water for future industry, thus providing another sales point for attracting new industry.

In the public interest, the critical statements should be answered.

--BL

## Campaign vandalism

James Peterkin, one of the two candidates for Hoke County sheriff in this year's elections, reports many of his campaign posters have been torn down.

We're sure his opponent, Sheriff Dave Barrington, will try to stop the vandalism. The sheriff doesn't need that kind of "support," and that kind of "support" backfires anyway, bringing from outrage votes the victim wouldn't receive ordinarily.

--BL

## Remember Chile

From The N.Y. Times

Chile's military chiefs have evidently decided that the Reagan Administration will cause them no trouble on human rights. On Dec. 10, which Mr. Reagan had just joined in proclaiming as Human Rights Day, they arrested at least seven dissidents, including three officers of Chile's Human Rights Commission.

Last August, the junta showed comparable brazenness. Jaime Castillo, the commission president, was banished immediately following a visit to Chile by Jean Kirkpatrick, the United States delegate to the United Nations. Mrs. Kirkpatrick was thus repaid for her call for improved ties with Santiago. The more Chile persists in these jailings and expulsions, the more insulting the implied judgment about Mr. Reagan's backbone. At the United Nations, American delegates have persistently voted against any censure of Chile on grounds that Latin America has been invidiously singled out for censure.

But Latin democracies, in making the same point, abstain. And in regional forums like the Organization of American States, Washington has yet to utter a critical peep about Chile where a return to civilian rule is not even promised before the end of the decade.

To be sure, "quiet" diplomacy is supposed to produce reforms in anti-Communist tyrannies like Chile. The arrests on Human Rights Day show just what the silent approach truly produces.

## Buck-passing, not justice

A couple of separate, unrelated court cases constitute an undesirable throw-back to an ancient practice used by some American judges.

The practice is to suspend a sentence provided the culprit leaves town (or county) by sundown.

In the recent cases, a woman many times convicted of prostitution in a Florida county was given a suspended sentence provided she leave the county.

In the other, a man who recently moved to Houston, Tex., from Michigan, was given probation provided he leave Texas within 30 days. He had been found guilty of carrying a gun at a rock concert.

In view of the fact that few convicted people would prefer jail to leaving the community, the effect of these judges' actions is to dump one community's problem on another.

That's not justice. That's just passing the buck.

--BL

Meanwhile, the subsidy dance goes on



## It's a Small World

By Bill Lindau

The Charlotte Humane Society says bringing in hawks is the only solution left in the city's quest to get rid of a bodacious swarm of blackbirds in the city's plush Myers Park section.

Before the city fathers bring in any hawks to get rid of the blackbirds, they better review the experience of the Marine Corps with a similar problem on Vieques Island off the coast of Puerto Rico.

Seems Vieques, which is a Marine training area, was overrun with rats. So after rat poison and other stuff failed, somebody came up with the idea of importing one of rats' natural enemies -- snakes.

So the Marines imported some snakes. Sure enough, the snakes gobbled up everything that looked like a rat on the island. While they were doing this, the snakes multiplied.

But after the rats were all gone, they kept right on multiplying.

So pretty soon Vieques Marines were up to their hips in snakes.

Well, after trying to get rid of the surplus serpents unsuccessfully by various means, somebody remembered Rikki Tikki Tavi of Rudyard Kipling's "The Jungle Books." Rikki is small, but he's got guts. If you got a cobra in your yard, you can sic Rikki on it, and that will take care of surplus cobras, even if you think only one is surplus. Rikki the mongoose is just about the only animal who has the courage to attack a cobra.

So the Marines imported a bunch of the little critters from India, where they are popular, or somewhere, and put them to work, even though one kind of snake the island was short of was cobra.

Sure enough, before they could even start hunting a new pit to hiss in, the snakes were gone.

Not only were the snakes gone, but not long after the snakes vanished, so did every frog and other amphibious creature, except Marines.

So, as of May 1966, Vieques had no snakes or frogs or stuff like that.

But it had plenty of mongooses. Somebody suggested they go back to the drawing board and find a critter which would get rid of the mongooses.

But wiser heads prevailed, so I heard, and quickly rejected any more of that "natural enemy" technique. After all, you might wind up being overrun with critters a lot more bothersome than mongooses.

Then, too, the mongooses proved very useful in another way. After they ate all the snakes, they got rid of the Marines' garbage, every day.

And besides being useful, they're so darn cute.

\*\*\*

I made a guess about the plural of mongoose. It might be mongeeze. But I'm too lazy to look it up in the dictionary.

Like the guy who was bothered with cobras in his back yard. A friend told him about the mongoose, and where to get the little beasts.

So he sat down and started writing a letter to a mongoose supply company in India.

"Dear Sir," he started. "Please send me two mongooses."

That "mongeeze" didn't look right, so he tore up the letter and tried again.

"Dear Sir," he wrote. "Please send me two mongooses."

Well, that "mongeeze" didn't look right either. So he tore up that second letter and thought and thought. Finally he came up with a good solution.

Taking another sheet of paper, started a new letter.

"Dear Sir," he wrote. "Please send me a mongoose."

"And, by the way, send me another one."

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There was a mistake in the column about Sewanee. In one place, it came out "Sewage." That's not what I meant at all.

## Puppy Creek Philosopher

Dear editor:

There's a man working for the Internal Revenue Service in Washington who can solve the nation's economic woes.

Some big stores brought him a problem about the IRS rule that says a store, when it winds up with a lot of merchandise that won't sell, can donate it to "needy infants" and deduct the full cost of the stuff from its income tax.

But, they pointed out, stores frequently have un-sold merchandise that won't fit an infant. For example, a batch of unpopular size 12 shoes or women's dresses that have gone out of style.

No problem, the IRS man said. From now on an infant is anybody not over 21 years of age. Fair enough, the stores said.

That's the man we need to solve our economic problems. As everybody knows, the size of the Federal deficit is a scary thing. But if that IRS man can raise the age of an infant, why can't he by the same method lower the size of the deficit, now calculated at \$92 billion?

All he'd have to do is rub out one little zero at the tailend. The deficit then, instead of being \$92,000,000,000, would be \$9,200,000,000 and everybody knows we could live with one no bigger than that, a mere \$9.2 billion. In fact, he could round it off to an even \$9 billion, on the grounds that decimal points always have been confusing.

And there are other possibilities. If he can rub out a zero, certainly he can add one. For example, just add a zero to a \$1 bill and automatically it becomes a \$10 bill.

It wouldn't be necessary to print up a new batch. Just declare the \$1 ones now in circulation are automatically upped to \$10. Doesn't the post office get by with declaring a stamp with no price printed on it is worth whatever it says it wants it to be, in the current case 20 cents?

Enclosed are three \$1 bills amounting to \$30. Please renew my subscription and mail me a check for the difference.

Yours faithfully  
J.A.

## CLIFF BLUE... People & Issues



CARTER... Former President Carter, when running for President in 1976 led the people to believe that if elected he would balance the budget in the third or fourth year of his administration. He didn't and was defeated.

Unless President Reagan changes his policies, he is very likely to follow in the foot steps of his Southern Predecessor!

After reading the newspapers, and particularly the financial sections, one must admit that conditions have not improved in the past 12 months and more.

BALANCING THE BUDGET... It is imperative that the Federal budget be balanced in the not too distant future if our government is to remain a strong democracy and a world leader.

This can be done by the President calling upon the Congress to join him in reducing government salaries by 10 percent, of those making \$22,000 or more per year; and those making less than \$22,000 and more than \$12,000 by 5 percent.

This would be an incentive for State, County and municipal governments to do the same thing.

Government in the United States has become overly expensive, and municipal, county and state is following closely behind.

It will take a strong president and a dedicated congress to follow such a course. It will take a "Franklin D. Roosevelt" to lead! President Reagan could possibly do it. It will not be a popular move and might mean a "one term" president.

HOLLINGS...With more than two years before the nominating conventions, we predict that Senator Hollings' name will be presented to the 1986 Democratic National Convention for nomination for president. Remember: I don't predict that he will be nominated, or not nominated, but his budget proposal has much to offer in the direction of a balanced

budget.

THAD EURE...A few days ago I chatted briefly with Secretary of State Thad Eure. I asked him about his running for re-election and he replied, "I've never stopped running." Word comes pretty straight to me that Thad will be opposed by Betty Ann Knudson, come primary time 1982. Mrs. Knudson makes it clear that she will be running for Secretary of State and not against Mr. Eure.

HOME OWNERS...It used to be that when a couple married, one of the first things they began to think about after the honeymoon was over, was a home of their own or maybe some years away.

The cost of homes and financing today is out of the reach of many and no doubt but that they are regarding "home ownership" as little more than a passing dream.

Despite the bleak outlook, we would advise young couples to think toward "home ownership," yes, "Home owners make better citizens," is an old phrase we have often heard.

FEDERAL LANDS...We have been reading right much in recent days about Federal land and the thought of the U.S. Government selling the land and paying off the National debt.

We would be opposed to the sale of the land if there were any particular use that it might be needed for the good of the country.

Senator Charles Percy, Paula Hawkins and others have introduced legislation to authorize the government to sell Federal lands and pay off the nation's debt with the funds received.

Certainly there is vast Federal acreage in the west and in Alaska. Whatever is no longer needed by the Federal government, and one suspects it's more than anyone realizes, and whatever its value, and one suspects it's considerable, might well be auctioned off to help pay off the nation's debt which has reached the trillion mark!

## Letter To The Editor

Editor, The News-Journal

Perhaps it's premature to be making plans for the summer, but high school and college students are already filling out employment applications, considering attending summer school, or thinking about visiting places of interest.

Many of the young people in Hoke County are looking forward to heading north and spending those "hazy, crazy days of summer" in New York, Newark, Baltimore, and Washington, not to enjoy the tourist attractions but to live in the crowded "ghetto" tenements and roam the streets.

When I was growing up, my family joined the post-war mass exodus from New York City to a bungalow-styled "dream house" on a 40'x100' lot in the "country" (suburbs) purchased under the G.I. Bill. During the '50's and '60's the *Herald Tribune* had a program in which families like mine could share the "great outdoors" with underprivileged city kids so they could escape the ghetto for a week or two during the summer.

So why then would a teenager brought up in the country, even under the poorest conditions, want to spend those hot summer days on the steaming, congested streets of Northern cities where drugs and crime are an accepted part of every day life?

Crystal Glover, a 14-year-old freshman, who grew up in Queens, N.Y., has seen her share of violence. Her brother-in-law was shot down in his own apartment. She said anyone can buy drugs easily on just about any street. She now lives in Raeford with her grandmother and during vacations visits her mother, who still lives in New York.

A sophomore, James Grace, will be staying in Baltimore with his 18-year-old cousin again this summer. He saw "some guys" pull a gun on his cousin last year. Fortunately, they realized in time that he was not the one they were after. James said pot and speed are easy to buy, and prostitutes are always waiting for business. "We got into a whole lot of fights. Almost every time we went out, there was a fight." They went to the movies several times, Bruce Lee and other Kung Fu movies, and twice ended up in fights.

Does he enjoy staying in Baltimore? "No, not really, but my aunt goes to Washington to work, so I stay with my cousin."

Danny McPhaul and James Peguese both lived in Brooklyn when they were young. James witnessed the results of a man who was shot and then fell from "about the fourth floor."

"We seen lots of good movies - *The Chinese Connection* and other karate movies. We go about every day."

They both like going to N.Y.

because there is "lots to do. We hang around and maybe play ball." What they don't like is having to be home early. No, there aren't any curfews, but "if you have on expensive sneakers or clothes you better be in before dark or someone will grab 'em."

On Halloween "the big dudes beats up and takes the candy and stuff from the little jokers."

None of these young people have been inside of a museum, to the Statue of Liberty or to any of the government buildings in Washington. James Peguese did go to the zoo once, with his first grade class.

Naomi Johnson



Read Luke 6: 27-36

A widow came up to two of us and offered us some money for relief work in Uganda. We knew that she had recently come from that country and that her husband had been brutally murdered there. We had decided earlier that we would not approach her for a gift.

The money she offered obviously represented a considerable sacrifice, and we were staggered as she made her gift. We explained our feeling to her. She replied, "It is true that I suffered severely in Uganda, but God has been merciful in forgiving my sin and in bringing me out of the country alive. I want to show the same spirit to those sufferers who are left in the country." How active God was in this woman's life!

Most of us find it hard to show mercy to those whom we feel have hurt us. Yet Jesus was merciful to all those who treated Him badly, even Peter, who denied ever having known Him. When we recall Jesus' spirit, we can follow His example and be merciful to those who injure us.

PRAYER: God of forgiveness, we rejoice in Thy mercy shown to us. We especially thank Thee that it is spontaneous and full. Help us to show the same spirit to those who need mercy from us. Amen.

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY  
By God's grace I can show mercy today.

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--Gordon Chilvers (England)

