

The News - Journal

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THURSDAY, APRIL 29, 1982

Life-saving investment

Last December, the Hoke County commissioners voted \$1,330 to buy advanced life-support system for the Hoke County Ambulance Service.

A few weeks ago, the first members of the Ambulance Service staff completed training and were certified to use the equipment.

Not long afterward in a relatively short period of time, the advanced life-support system was used in emergencies on four patients. This was reported by Jim Henley, Ambulance Service director, to the commissioners at their April 20 meeting. He reported these emergency uses in displaying and explaining the equipment the Ambulance Service bought with the county appropriation.

Furthermore, he told a reporter earlier in April, the certification and training of the Ambulance Service's EMT people in the advanced life-support system use was also a great step toward training the Ambulance Service staff as paramedics. He told the commissioners April 20 the training would start in August and would be completed four months later.

The purchase of the advanced life-support system and training of people to use the equipment was a huge advance in improving the chances of emergency patients to live till they could get hospital treatment.

Before getting the new equipment, the Ambulance Service did a good job of keeping patients alive, but it just wasn't enough in some cases, for example in cases where the patient's heart had stopped.

The sophisticated equipment probably saved some if not all four lives, which might have been lost, without it.

That \$1,330 was probably the most valuable investment the commissioners have made of county taxpayers' money.

John Balfour, the commissioners' chairman, praised Henley and his staff for their devotion to the lives of patients, beyond the call of duty.

The appropriation was a great bargain; its use for equipment in the hands of these dedicated people makes it priceless.

The training of people to be paramedics will make the chances of heart-attack victims and patients severely injured to survive even better with treatment at the scene of their attacks and injuries and enroute to hospitals.

Hoke County has no general hospital; the nearest are in Pinehurst and Fayetteville, about 25 miles from Raeford; but with the advanced emergency training and equipment the Ambulance Service has gotten and the paramedic training it will get, the county certainly has the next best thing to a hospital and, apparently comfortably close to the real thing.

--BL

Embattled farmers

From *The Christian Science Monitor*

If any particular quality describes America's farmers, it is resiliency. Through lean years as well as periods of plenty, farmers have found ways to innovate and overcome obstacles. And the proof of such creativity is that the United States has repeatedly been blessed by abundant crops that have helped feed much of the world.

That quality of resiliency is needed now in US agriculture more than at any time in recent years. The extent of the terrible toll being paid by farmers because of the current recession is not yet fully known, but the indications are troubling. Net farm income is now at the lowest level since the Great Depression. Yet farm costs - and that mainly means interest rates - remain prohibitively high.

At a recent series of regional field hearings conducted around the US by the National Farmers Union, it was brought out that between 20 and 35 percent of the farmers in each area are going out of business. "For Sale" signs are uncomfortably common on many a dusty rural roadway. The delinquency rate on low-interest loans from the Farmers Home Administration (FmHA) is running at around 58 percent, the highest level many farm experts can recall. Total US farm debt is now estimated at over \$200 billion.

What has led to such conditions? And, most important, what can be done to help the farm economy?

Agricultural economists and farm organizations are as divided in their assessment of the depth of the current downturn as they are about the reasons for and solutions to the problem. Still, there is general agreement that, given the combination of high farm costs, large crops, low commodity prices, and sagging world food demand, many farmers would have difficulty today even under nonrecessionary conditions. The 1980 grain embargo against the Soviet Union clearly hurt many farmers. And it must also be noted that many farmers financially overextended themselves throughout the 1970s, in effect buying land "on margin" during that period of high inflation and widespread land speculation.

A number of solutions suggest themselves:

- The FmHA should consider a one-year moratorium on foreclosures. Lower interest rates (than current rates running between 13 percent and 15 percent) should also be made available through this period.
- The question of food embargoes should be seriously rethought. A strong argument can be made that such embargoes should be undertaken only in the most extreme of cases.
- Farm exports must be promoted even more vigorously. Some steps are encouraging. Right now, for example, a delegation from the American Farm Bureau Federation is visiting Japan to try to pry open that market to more imports of US beef. Congress, for its part, should provide funding for the Commodity Credit Corporation Export Revolving Fund to help promote exports. It might also consider using Export-Import Bank funds for farm sales abroad.



Little in-the-red schoolhouse

•Soil erosion is now such a serious problem that as many as 25 million to 62 million acres of land could be lost during the next half century. Farmers have to be encouraged not to exhaust the land but to ensure its long-range productivity.

Long-range solutions should be geared to developing economic conditions. If the farm slump has bottomed out, or soon bottoms out, then more drastic action may be unnecessary. If conditions worsen, Congress might want to consider mandatory set-aside programs for commodities, rather than the current voluntary programs. Another option for Congress - federal red-ink notwithstanding - might well be to reconsider the Farm Act of 1981 which sets support price levels.

By all indications, Congress and the Reagan administration need to get "out on the farm" to ensure that they are gauging conditions properly. Of all US "industries," none has been more efficient or productive over the years than agriculture. To overlook that now would be to ignore one of America's - and the world's - greatest assets.

Letter To The Editor

Editor, *The News-Journal*,
Since I contracted the dread gar-
rulous pen-and-mouth disease last
April, many of my colleagues and
associates seem to think I'm in
quarantine, possibly because my
room assignment this year is in a
rather isolated place, formerly used
for lockers. I wish to assure them
the disease itself is not contagious;
however, the effects of close associa-
tion to its victim may have similar
repercussions. Therefore, I quite
understand their sentiments and feel
no animosity for their actions.

It does surprise me that a co-
worker would be so immature as to
tear down (not once but three
times, one of which it was torn to
shreds and placed in my school
mailbox) *The News-Journal's*
August 13, 1981 publication of ad-
ministrators' salaries and sup-
plements which I posted in the
teachers' lounge at the request of
another teacher.

It seems strange that the
teachers' supplements in Hoke
County went from the original
\$200 to \$100 and finally to zero
last year, whereas supplements in
most other counties have increased
or at least stayed the same. When
the New Hanover Board of Educa-
tion attempted to do away with
that county's teachers' sup-
plements, over 200 teachers pro-
tested at a Board meeting.

On April 21, 1982, the teachers
at the high school received the
following "ballot":
To: All Teachers
From: Dr. Lenwood D. Simpson
Date: April 20, 1982
Last year all teachers were told
that Federal Impact dollars coming
to Hoke County would be used for
teachers' supplement. At that time
no one would speculate the amount
of federal dollars that Hoke County
would get.

Recently, the school board
received \$3100.00 in Federal Im-
pact money. Needless to say, we
are all disappointed over the small
amount that we did receive.

The school board has asked that
teachers be given a choice on how
the money is spent. They have asked
that all teachers vote for one of
the choices listed below. A majori-
ty vote by all Hoke County
teachers will decide how the money
is spent. Please vote for one of the
following:

- A. Personnel supplement \$6.00
 - B. One million dollar liability insurance policy for the 82-83 school year
 - C. Instructional supplies
 - D. Library books
- First of all, why should there be a ballot when we were already told

that the Impact money was to be
used for teachers' supplements?
Secondly, why are items B, C and
D even mentioned on the ballot
when the high school has
\$25,000.00 invested in certificates
on deposit? What is to become of
that money plus the interest? And
why is it that the superintendent
and other administrators' sup-
plements have not been equally af-
fected by Federal cut-backs? Per-
haps teachers are not supposed to
realize the three zeros following
the 6 in the superintendent's
supplement are not the same as the
zeros following the decimal point
in the teacher's proposed \$6.00.

On the same day that we received
the ballot concerning our sup-
plements, I receive the following
letter:

To whom it may concern:
You say you love me, but
sometimes you don't show it. In
the beginning, you couldn't do
enough for me. Now you seem to
take me for granted...some days I
even wonder if I mean anything to
you at all.

Maybe when I'm gone, you'll
appreciate me and all of the things
I do for you. I'm responsible for
getting the food on your table, for
the clean shirt you wear each day,
for the welfare of your children
and your home...for the thousand
and one things you want and need.
Why, if it weren't for me, you
wouldn't even have a car to drive!
I've kept quiet and waited to see
how long it would take for you to
realize how much you really need
me.

Cherish me...take good care of
me, and I'll always take good care
of you.

WHO AM I? I'M YOUR JOB.
In response to the first part of
the letter, I can only say that I feel
that I've done more than an ade-
quate job in a field in which I am
not certified. Four of my remedial
reading students were on the honor
roll the last grading period, and I
expect two or three more to make
it this grading period.

As for the letter itself, could it
be a threat from the administration
to curtail my Constitutional right
to free speech or just a slight har-
assment from a concerned co-
worker who is trying to "save" me
from making a fool of myself in
public? I wonder -- there was no
signature.

I suppose that if it's from the ad-
ministration, I have to decide
which is more important to me, my
job or the preservation of my self-
esteem and personal digni-
ty. Hmm?

Sincerely,
Naomi Johnson

It's a Small World

By Bill Lindau

Every now and then people
criticize a newspaper for "playing
up" the "bad" news and "burying"
the "good" news somewhere inside,
next to the classifieds.

Well, look at the bright side:
"bad" news gets prominent treat-
ment-- take the high school drug
busts as an example -- because it
happens rarely. If high school drug
busts weren't news, we'd be in real
trouble.

The Charlotte Observer, for
example, doesn't carry reports of
fatal traffic accidents that occur
outside its home county, unless
there's something unusual about
them -- like five vehicles involved or
a dozen people killed. This is a
commentary on the frequency of
the "ordinary" fatal accident, in
which "only" one person is killed:
it's not news any more, unless it
happens in the paper's home
county.

It is reminiscent of the reporting
of World War II: the war corre-
spondent didn't bother writing a
story about a battle in which "only"
a dozen Americans were killed,
unless one happened to be from his
paper's home town. The reason was
there were many such patrol ac-
tions in which a few soldiers on
both sides were killed, consequen-
tly they weren't "news."

But as far as *The News-Journal* is
concerned, anyone looking at the
paper can see that there is little
"bad" news in any one edition: the
"bad" news generally is confined to
the listings of the court and
magistrates' records and the Area
Incidents--the reports of com-
plaints made to the police and
sheriff's departments. And even the
court records aren't exclusively bad
news: we get a lot of "not guilty"
and "dismissal" judgments in those
columns. These, obviously, are
"good" news to some people--the
defendants if nobody else.

Then, too, what lands on the
front page is a matter of opinion of
news values and the mechanics of
putting the paper together. For
example, if the West Point appoint-
ment had been just an inch or two
shorter, or longer, it might have
gone on the front. On the other
hand, in that particular week,
other news took precedence over
the appointment. The news value is
based on, among other things, the
number of people affected by the
event: for example, a change by the
school board in the attendance
districts would be a front page
story, replacing one about a West
Point appointment, for example,
important as such an appointment
is.

On the other hand, also, a Hoke
County student winning a More-
head Scholarship to UNC would be
a story that would shove a school
board story of narrow public
significance off the front page and
to an inside spot. The same also
would happen to the board story if
a West Point appointment was
announced the same week that the
board met.

News is relative: everything is
important, but some things are
more important than others--and
what's more important than others
is a matter of the opinion of the
people who are putting the paper
together and writing the headlines.
That goes for the "play" of a story
also: one week, if little has happen-

ed, comparatively minor action by
the board of county commissioners
will get a long "fat" headline--say
about three-quarters of an inch
high and five columns long. On the
other hand, if in the same week the
whole police department joined the
FBI, that one would rate a one-inch
high, six-column headline on the
front, and the commissioners' story
would get an itty bitty head maybe
two columns wide. That of course
would depend on what else was
significant enough for the front
page, and what was needed to fill
the space.

There's more to it than this brief
explanation tells, but books have
been written on the subject.

One important thing that deter-
mines whether a story gets in the
paper at all and what kind of play it
will get is its time of arrival and its
length at the time. For example, a
1,000-word piece of strong public
significance that arrives at the
office by noon Monday is practi-
cally certain to make the front
page, though not all of it may (the
latter part of the story probably
would be "jumped" to an inside
page). On the other hand, if the
same story doesn't reach the office
till mid Tuesday afternoon, it's
likely to get inside treatment and
reduced; and if it's less than serious
in public significance it probably
will be held over till the next week's
edition.

Then, too, what else has come in
and what other news has "broken"
also affects the "play" of the story.

If you've got the information you
want published in one week's
paper, it's a good idea to get it to us
by Friday of the previous week.
Mondays and Tuesdays -- particu-
larly Tuesdays-- are "rush" days,
when most of the material for
publication comes in, and there are
still news stories for the reporter to
get and sometimes pictures to be
taken.

We also have had a complaint
that a letter to the editor wasn't
published the same week it was
submitted. The reason is letters to
the editor are published on the
editorial page, which is one of the
first to be made up.

So the best bet is get your letter
to us by Friday if you want it
published in the following week's
paper. Otherwise it will run a week
later.

There are rules governing publi-
cation of letters: of course, we can't
publish anything libelous or mis-
leading; and we have to have a good
reason for publishing a letter
without the writer's name -- one
good reason is the writer's job
would be endangered if the name
were published. However, we have
to know who the writer is before
we'll withhold the name from
publication.

I might add here that every news
item that comes to the office is
considered, because we know that
it is important to someone. Then,
too, if you don't see in the paper
something you think is important,
the reason probably is someone
didn't tell us about it, or the
reporter can't be in more than two
places at the same time.

After considering what I've writ-
ten here, I am surprised that a
newspaper is published at all.

The reason a weekly is called a
"tri-weekly" is it "tries" to come
out once a week.

Puppy Creek Philosopher

Dear editor:
Washington officials have been
criticizing the television networks
for broadcasting too much bad
economic news. They say the more
the public hears about the recession,
like long lines of the unem-
ployed or factory closings or un-
sold new cars and such, the worse
the recession gets. They say there's
a psychological effect there.

There are two things wrong with
this (1) It over-estimates the power
of television and (2) it under-
estimates the mentality of the public.

It's said that three-fourths of the
people get their news from TV, or
all the people get three-fourths of
their news that way. I forget which,
but I think it averages out to a lot
of people being misinformed three-
fourths of the time. Not that it
matters, so long as it's entertain-
ing.

For example, a TV reporter with
his hair well-groomed will stand in
front of Buckingham Palace and
say "Tonight, all London feels
...such and such," as though he or
anybody could tell what London
feels when most folks in London
don't even know what they feel or
what he's talking about.

Or a TV reporter in Washington,
standing in front of the capitol, will
say "ABC (or CBS or NBC) has
been told...such and such," with-
out ever saying who did the telling.
For all we know it could have been
a janitor at the Pentagon. Which is
not to say the janitor doesn't know
as much as some of the Generals.

When it comes to reporting a
volcano or the results of a tornado
or a flood or ten feet of snow, TV is
very good, but when it comes to

politics and the international
situation you need to listen with your
fingers crossed.

And as for reporting bad economic
news, I doubt if it has much
effect either way. Very few people
have to wait for the evening news to
come in to find out if times are
good or bad.

Yours faithfully,
J.A.

This Is The Law

CHANGING YOU WILL

A will remains, valid until it is
amended or revoked.

However, there are changes in
circumstances which make it desir-
able to change a will, such as new
tax laws, marriage, birth of a child,
death of a beneficiary or moving to
another state. Even a substantial
change in the nature or amount of
your property may call for a change
in the way your estate should be
handled. For example, if you buy
or sell a business, the old will which
refers to that business may be
inadequate.

You may change your will as
often as you wish, by drafting a new
will or by adding an amendment
called a codicil. Simply striking out
and adding new words will not
amend a will.

For more information, see the
free pamphlets in N.C. library
called "Making Your Will."