

# Editorials

## Applause for city

It was good news last week that the House of Raeford has started construction on a sewage pre-treatment plant.

What was better news was how the Raeford City Council handled the delicate negotiations with the firm in a meeting which was held open to the public.

Under the protection of the state's Open Meeting Law, council members could have gone into an executive session to work out the problem of the turkey plant's discharge into the city sewer system.

However, the doors remained open and now the voters and taxpayers of the city have a clear picture of how one major problem which has been plaguing Raeford for almost 10 years was resolved.

Perhaps other public bodies in the county should make note of the commendable action taken by the city.

## Another drum roll

The Israeli cabinet's acceptance of the Beirut massacre report, and the apparent departure of Defense Minister Ariel Sharon, may or may not be the end of the controversy over Israel's complicity in the killings. For in so many eyes, including those of the U.S. State Department, what is involved here is not merely atonement for errors made in the midst of war, but changes in Israel's policy and if necessary its government.

Even before the massacre report, a familiar chorus had been building in Western public and official opinion. To wit, that the only problem in the Middle East is the "intransigence" of Israel, of the Begin government, of Mr. Sharon. Thus, the logic goes, the "solution" is to "replace" Mr. Begin or, failing that, Mr. Sharon or at least to bring "pressure" on Israel for "flexibility." So President Reagan himself staged an outburst last week against the Israeli delay in pulling out of Lebanon, and with this report and its acceptance, this campaign may not subside but escalate.

We've heard this drum roll before. It was betwixt when they broke out the tumbrils for the shah of Iran. It was loud and clear when the U.S. tried to win the hearts and minds of the Vietnamese by unburdening itself of Diem. It rattled when the U.S. tried to "replace" such nuisances as Batista in Cuba and Somoza in Nicaragua. But the aftermath of American meddling with these other governments, no matter how malodorous they were, has been so diastrophic that we fear the worst from any gestures toward destabilizing the twice-elected Begin government.

The situation now may be no more than understandable exasperation with the Begin government, which indeed can be exasperating, and the Regan administration's aim to keep its Mideast peace plan on track. The proposals announced by President Reagan on Sept. 1 were quite sensible as Mideast peace plans go. But the key to an eventual settlement along these lines is getting Jordan's King Hussein to guarantee the peaceful nature of any Palestinian West Bank government. Hussein has been a lot more reluctant to sign on than the State Department had hoped, setting preconditions, such as a freeze on Israeli West Bank settlements, which is reasonable, and a quick Israeli withdrawal from Lebanon, which is not. Perhaps this is all the king wants—or perhaps he has real doubts about the responsibilities he is being asked to assume.

So when President Reagan calls for an early Israeli withdrawal to further his peace plan, he ought also to consider what might happen if the Israelis acceded to his demands lacking a true settlement in Lebanon and the West Bank. Such a pullout would leave a murderous vacuum, in which the Lebanese war of all against all would resume with redoubled fury. The area of Israeli control contains some 200,000 disarmed Palestinians, farmers and camp dwellers, surrounded by other vengeful ethnic groups. Christians and Druse have been slaughtering each other for centuries. Even the factional fighting among the Christians has produced shocking atrocities.

The PLO, interestingly, wants U.N. forces sent in, under the control of the Security Council so that no single country could unilaterally pull out its troops. But the U.N. peacekeepers have a record of futility. And who else is there to replace the Israeli army? It will take more than 800 Marines to patrol this territory. Does President Reagan, or President Mitterrand, really want to commit a force sufficient to do the job? Do you call back the PLO, or the Syrians, and start the whole thing over again? The ultimate solution, of course, is for the Lebanese army to reassert national sovereignty over all its territory, including the large Bekaa Valley occupied by Syria and the PLO. But no one seriously believes that the Lebanese Army is yet equal to this task.

In the meantime, the domestic peace of Lebanon depends, as it has so often in its history, on the intervention of outside forces. For the previous six years these forces were Syrian (Who remembers now that the Syrians originally came to save the Christians from a decisive defeat at the hands of the Moslems and Palestinians?) Now the forces are Syrian and Israeli, with a dash of French and American. Once in, these forces have a certain moral responsibility for what might happen if they withdraw too soon. In remarking on events leading to the Beirut massacres, the Israeli commission's report noted, with no little understatement, "One might also make charges concerning the hasty evacuation of the multi-national force."

The Reagan administration might keep this thought in mind when it talks about the morality of withdrawal from Lebanon. More broadly, nothing could please us more than to have both Israel and Jordan find their way toward a solution like the Regan formula. But we doubt that this — or anything else constructive — is likely to come of attempts to rearrange the Israeli government to suit Washington's momentary pleasure.

— The Wall Street Journal



YOU'VE GOT TO ADMIT ... FARMER JONES TRIES TO KEEP US HAPPY!!

## Letters To The Editor

### Ambulance decision sparks questions

To the Editor:  
Regarding last week's News-Journal editorial calling attention to the closed meetings of the county commissioners, you state that the financial problems facing the ambulance service are important to all Hoke County residents.

I wholeheartedly agree. However, you also assert it is "difficult to imagine what matters were so delicate that the commissioners felt compelled to go into executive session".

If you will permit me I have a few ideas to answer that question which may interest the taxpayers.

(a) Since Mr. Henley stated he was no longer willing to fulfill the terms of his contract, as he is legally bound to do, some of the commissioners and the county attorney suspected they were on very shaky legal ground by simply tearing up the old contract and doling out another \$41,000.

(b) Since the commissioners failed to publish a notice of intent to draw up a new ambulance ordinance prior to acting, (as required by statute) a closed meeting was necessary so they couldn't be confronted with competitive bids. The chairman of the board had been advised verbally that a former ambulance service provider offered to take essentially the same contract for \$65,000 annual subsidy, \$35 patient charge and NO MILEAGE FEES.

(c) Since Mr. Henley provided the commissioners with figures showing the number of trips he made with patients last year, any taxpayer who can do simple arithmetic can divide his previous \$64,000 subsidy and discover he received \$53 of county money for each and every trip.

(d) Since few citizens of this county can afford to lease a \$100,000 home in one of the city's choicest neighborhoods with monthly payments in excess of \$500, Joe Taxpayer might wonder how Mr. Henley manages this lifestyle while his business is supposed to be so financially distressed.

Hunt how much the taxpayers were expected to contribute toward this swanky house, he replied he didn't know about the Henley's living arrangements until the meeting. He failed to say if this new insight of his came BEFORE or AFTER voting.)

In conclusion, I urge that every taxpayer of voting age re-read the letter to the editor signed by Johnny Melton and published in last week's News-Journal. Then go out and talk to the members of that organization.

John Balfour, chairman of the commissioners, has made the statement over and over that the voters have elected the commissioners to make the decisions. Apparently he has lost track of the idea of informed decisions.

Based on the actions of the commissioners and the county manager in recent weeks, it would come as no surprise to pick up the newspaper and learn that they have decided during executive session that the most economical and sound alternative available is to move the entire Hoke Ambulance Service into the Pilot Building.

Yours truly,  
Marty Vega  
(Mrs. Danny Morrison,  
as on  
Morrison Ambulance Service)  
624 E. Donaldson Ave.  
875-2090

### Chorus a smash

Dear Editor,  
Last Thursday night was a rainy, cold, and windy one in Raeford, but at Upchurch School auditorium there was an abundance of warmth, sunshine, and even a breath of spring!

I am referring to the outstanding performance of the Upchurch Chorus and seventh grade band.

Both groups exemplified a spirit of cooperation, discipline, and a high degree of musicianship under the able direction of Miss Ellen Heidenreich and Mr. Gil Clark.

The chorus and band each received standing ovations for their remarkable efforts.

Hoke County can be proud of its Cultural Arts program. Students in our schools are involved in a pro-

gram that many systems "dream about."

Sincerely,  
Betty D. Upchurch

### Puppy Creek Philosopher

Dear editor:  
There are two groups of people in this country none of whom anybody has ever personally met: (1) the TV listeners selected to tell the Nielsen TV ratings people what they're watching, and (2) the people selected to tell what the inflation rate is.

I'm not much interested in the TV ratings. If I owned one of the three networks and mine came in third, which means instead of making say \$50 million I made only \$45 million the first six months of the year, I believe I could swallow my pride and live with that.

But I would like to know who the inflation rate people talk to.

According to the latest government figures, the rate of inflation is now a little over 5 percent, down from 12%.

This has me baffled. It's hard for me to understand how the rate of inflation is coming down while the price of things I buy is going up. It's like balancing the budget by quadrupling the deficit.

It's like getting out of debt at one bank by borrowing from another to do it with.

I can understand that if you have a \$250,000 house for sale with no takers and you reduce the price to \$225,000, then the way the government figures it the inflation rate on that house has fallen 10%. But at the same time the cost of utilities for that house, like electricity, gas and telephone, keeps going higher and higher.

Every time you turn around, there's another rate increase.

One of the reasons the government statisticians miss this I guess is that all their office utility bills are paid out of our pockets, not theirs.

Finding out how the inflation rate is got at is like hunting for a needle in a haystack, although come to think of it I've never heard of anybody needing a needle so bad he'd look for one in such an unlikely place.

Yours faithfully,  
J.A.

## St. Valentine would be amazed

by Lucien Coleman  
Question: What does a third-century Roman bishop have in common with a heart-shaped box of chocolate candy? Answer: The name "Valentine."

St. Valentine was a courageous churchman who remained loyal to the Christian faith during a terrible persecution under the Emperor Claudius.

Thrown into prison for a while, he was eventually beheaded. The date of his death was February 14, about the year 270.

Mark the date carefully, for February 14 also happens to be the day in the year when husbands bring home flowers, sweethearts exchange sentimental gifts, and boys summon up the courage to send pretty girls cards that say "I love you."

But how did a martyred bishop ever manage to get his name associated with a tradition like our Valentine's Day? St. Valentine would be just as puzzled about that

### Things That Matter

as anybody else.

In truth, historians can't speak with certainty about the origin of our annual celebration of romantic love. But some believe it grew out of an ancient Roman festival, the "Lupercalia," which was observed in the middle of February.

A part of that celebration was the custom of putting the names of young ladies into a box and letting young men draw them out, thus choosing partners for the festival.

The custom continued long after the beginning of the Christian era, and since this celebration took place on the anniversary of St. Valentine's martyrdom, some believe, the romantic partners came to be called "valentines."

The custom took root in England, where the young couples who became partners for the day often became partners for the rest of their lives.

In Scotland, the first young lady a boy happened to meet became his "valentine." This undoubtedly encouraged young men to scout the terrain carefully before venturing into the streets.

In many English villages, children would get into the act, going from house to house singing choruses and receiving pennies, sweets, and other rewards for their effort.

Early in the 19th century, printed valentines started making the rounds.

These became increasingly popular as the cost of both printing and postage went down, and by the mid-1800's, everybody was sending them.

Today, of course, the only thing cheap about printed valentines are the verses that appear on them.

If St. Valentine could see some of the insipid sentiments and obscene gags bearing his name now, he would be amazed.

## CLIFF BLUE... People & Issues

1984 CANDIDATES? — State Senator Kenneth C. Royall of Durham and Judge Lacy Thornburg of Sylva are the latest to be mentioned as possible candidates for the Democratic nomination for governor in 1984.

Other Democrats who have been mentioned and some are already quite active are:

Attorney General Rufus Edmisten; Insurance Commissioner John Ingram; Charlotte Mayor, "Eddie" Knox; U.S. Rep. Charles G. Rose of the Seventh District; Commerce Secretary, "Lauch" Faircloth of Clinton; and Thomas Gilmore of Guilford County.

BY-GONE RACES — Recalling the 1948 race for governor, State Treasurer, Charlie Johnson was the leading candidate for two years before the primary. Most people thought he would be the next governor.

Well, about this time of the year, 1948, Commissioner of Agriculture Kerr Scott, began to be mentioned and soon announced his candidacy for governor. He had a hard time getting a campaign manager and finally said he would manage his own campaign. His campaign lagging, Scott finally interested Capus Waynick of High Point to be his "Assistant manager" since he had already said he would be his own "manager."

Well, Waynick made a fine manager for Scott. In the first Primary, Johnson received 170,141; Scott received 161,293. In the second primary Scott led with 217,620 votes with Johnson coming in second with 182,684.

Other gubernatorial Democratic candidates in 1948 were: R. Mayne Albright with 76,281; Oscar Barker, 10,871; W.P. Stanley, Sr., 2,428; Olla Ray Boyd, 2,111.

STATE WIDE RACES — Another interesting Democratic race in 1948 was between William B. Umstead, who had been named by Governor Cherry to succeed Josiah W. Bailey who had died in office and J. Melville Broughton. In the Democratic Primary, Broughton won, 207,981; with William B. Umstead, 183,865.

In 1952 William B. Umstead, Democrat, won the nomination over Hubert Olive, 274,170; with Olive receiving 265,675.

PRESIDENT — President Reagan was elected more as a conservative than as a liberal. However, he has had the greatest spending spree of any President in peace-time history.

Fiscal conservatives say that what is needed is action now, 1983, which would freeze spending and spending increases in various categories and limit the cost of government.

Mr. Reagan was the candidate who so much abhorred huge deficits. He promised to end them by 1984. In his recent statements on the subject he has explained that no one could have foreseen such a sharp recession. That is accepted by many.

But that doesn't mean that huge deficits are acceptable for the rest of the decade. What it means to many in Washington is that every effort should be made now to see that deficits are substantially reduced every year.

That might be impossible for the current fiscal year but it could be attained thereafter if defense spending is cut and new taxes are enacted to balance the budget, or government expenditures reduced.

But, it is just a realistic dream to think seriously that the budget will be balanced in 1984, or within the next decade!

NEW RULES — The Reagan administration issued tough, new parole guidelines recently designed to keep violent criminals and drug offenders in prison longer. The new guidelines took effect January 31.

### Letters Policy

Letters to the editor are encouraged and welcomed. Writers should keep letters as short as possible. Names, addresses and telephone numbers should be included and all letters must be signed. Names will be printed, however, other information will be kept confidential. We reserve the right to edit letters for good taste and brevity. Letters should be received by The News-Journal by 5 p.m. on the Monday of the publication week.

**The News - Journal**

**NNA**  
NATIONAL NEWS PAPER ASSOCIATION

**North Carolina PRESS ASSOCIATION**

Published Every Thursday at Raeford, N.C. 28376  
119 W. Elwood Avenue

Subscription Rates In Advance  
In County Per Year—\$10.00 6 Months—\$5.00  
Out of County Per Year—\$12.00 6 Months—\$6.00

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(USPS 309-268)