

Editorials

A matter of service

In order to best serve the 20,000 members who elected them, the Lumbee River Electric Membership Corporation Board of Directors should resign.

In the last two months board members have not only refused to answer charges levied against them by a membership group, but they have also apparently:

- Denied a recall election, although a petition requesting it was signed by the required number of coop members. Over 2,000 signatures were certified.
- Held at least one unannounced public meeting in which the 40-year-old coop's bylaws were changed to give the present board an upper hand in recall elections.
- Consented to a Superior Court order allowing another recall election to be held April 24, and then, while a coop spokesman was explaining to the press about the order, the board voted in executive session not to go along with the mandate.
- Continued to take trips to coop conventions, despite being under fire from members because of money wasted on these affairs. Since January, board members have attended meetings in Las Vegas and in Florida.
- Held almost every meeting during the last three months behind closed doors, and have failed to keep the membership informed about their actions.

The original idea of a cooperative was to bring inexpensive power to rural families and businesses, who could not afford electrical service provided by privately owned utilities. Any profits made by the coop were to be returned to the membership in the form of lower rates.

Lumbee board members have been charged with drawing fat allowances, allegedly higher than any other coop board in the state, in addition to a \$100 per meeting salary.

The board has also been accused of taking frequent trips to "exotic" places to attend conventions and electrical cooperative meetings. Membership money was allegedly squandered on these excursions.

All of these charges would have little weight, if Lumbee Cooperative did not have the highest electrical rates of any membership cooperative in the state.

The Lumbee board is not serving the membership and should resign to clear the way for an April 24 election.

If present board feels they have been wronged by a small handful of members, those directors should seek reelection. Their case would then be placed before the entire membership.

According to the unanswered charges levied against them, the coop board members are serving only themselves.

Perhaps, it is time for the directors to think about the 20,000 members they have been hired to serve.

Perhaps, a good plan

It now seems likely that McCain Hospital will become a medical facility for the North Carolina Department of Corrections.

During the last few years, the tuberculosis sanatorium has been trying to survive despite efforts by state Department of Human Resources Chief Sarah T. Morrow to close it.

While under fire from Morrow, McCain administrators have found it difficult to fill vacancies on the staff and have been forced to care for the needs of over 900 patients admitted yearly with a "bare bones" workforce.

Had it not been for the dedication of the McCain staff, the task of maintaining an excellent care facility would have been impossible.

It was good news that if the hospital is converted to a prison facility, that state legislators plan to look out for the well-being of present McCain staff and their patients.

Staff members will be placed in other jobs, and patients will be placed in other state hospitals which have vacancies.

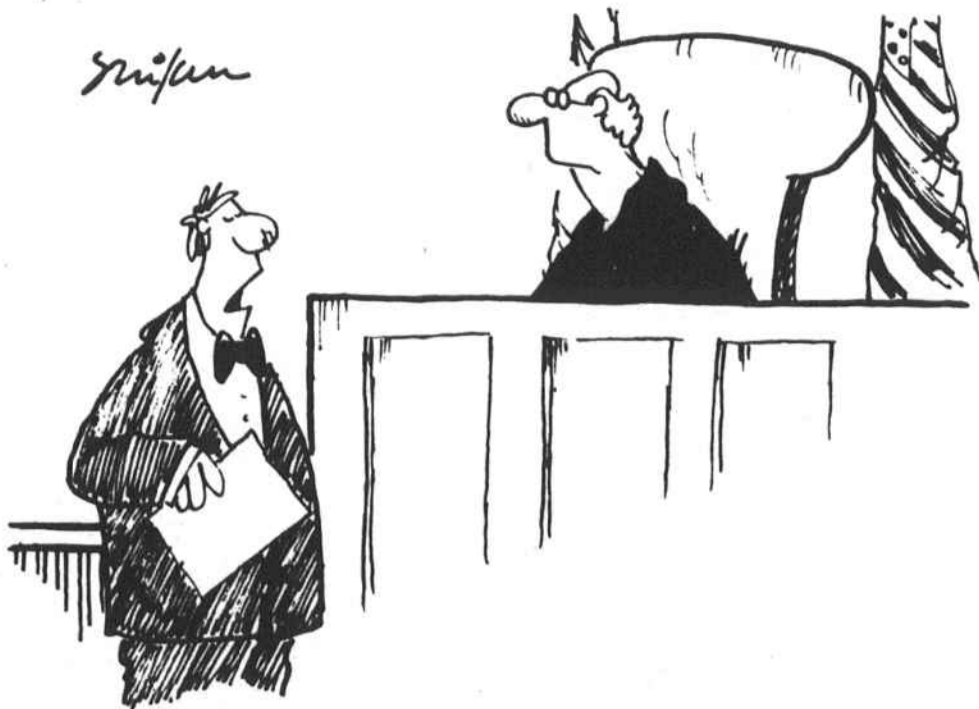
If these promises are carried out, then the new prison hospital could be a good thing for McCain and Hoke County.

Hospital buildings are in excellent shape, but only about one-third of McCain is now being used. Under the proposed plan, the entire facility would serve all state prisons, which apparently do not have the capacity to care for ill inmates.

An expanded hospital at McCain would mean more jobs for Hoke County workers, as well as additional outside funds which would be spent here.

Although members of the Hoke County Legislative Delegation apparently have been unsuccessful in their efforts to keep McCain open as a TB treatment center, they may have earned their pay by saving the facility and the jobs of the present hospital workers.

We agree with state Rep. Danny DeVane that rather than letting McCain die a lingering death as a tuberculosis treatment center or closing it completely, the prison hospital seems the best alternative.



YOUR HONOR, MY CLIENTS, SETS. WOLF AND BROWN, SAY THAT IF THEY ARE CONVICTED THEY'D LIKE TO SERVE THEIR SENTENCES ONE WEEKEND A MONTH...

Letters To The Editor

LREMC members chided

To The Editor:

Where is our sense of values anymore? Do people not realize that the efforts underway, by the LREMC action group, is not only to get rid of excessive spending, self-indulgent directors, but also to bring those light bills down.

Has no one bothered to figure a comparison between utility companies in the area served by LREMC. Do their figures not show that LREMC customers are having to pay 20-30% more than CP&L, four-counties EMC, Brunswick EMC, South River EMC, or Fayetteville PWC.

It is possible, that for each \$100 the LREMC customer pays for his electricity, he is willing to pay \$20 extra for poor management.

How about the poor soul who can't pay food, medical, and light bills?

Do we only go to church and pray for this poor soul? Or, do we get off our rear, and attend an LREMC action group meeting to get something done?

Are the people in this area afraid to call their directors and ask why our light bills are higher than other people's?

These directors may not talk to me, but maybe they will talk to the people who voted for them, or will they?

Is it possible that the LREMC members are willing to pay \$200,000 extra each month to avoid fighting to correct this big rip-off?

Just because some bigot screams racism is no reason for that person of values not to fight for what he knows is right.

A good question for that director is, "Where does the extra \$2,000,000 plus go each year?"

That is a **really big rip-off**. Check the records, and see for yourself, if you've got the nerve.

Carl Branch

Coop board questioned

Dear Sir:

There are many false statements being propagated concerning the LREMC that need correcting. A few of these are as follows:

Fallacy: The meetings of directors are open to the members.

Fact: When the board discusses anything beyond the routine, they go into executive sessions with the members excluded.

Fallacy: The books are open to the members for inspection, upon written request.

Fact: The directors will tell no one anything that is not general knowledge.

Fallacy: We must pay fantastic amounts to get the directors certified.

Fact: Certification of directors is neither required nor desirable if it does not result in minimum rates as evidence of efficient management.

Fallacy: The amount of money wasted by the directors is insignificant, averaging only \$.05 per account each month.

Fact: This amount is visible evidence of why we pay the highest rates for electricity in this area.

Fallacy: The directors can be voted out at the annual meeting in October.

Fact: Directors are elected for 3 year terms. Terms are staggered, therefore only 4 can be voted on at annual meetings. It would require 3 years to remove them all.

Be informed, get involved, it can be our Coop.

Sincerely yours,
Claude A. Thomas
Red Springs, N.C.

EMC vote urged

To The Editor,

I doubt there are many people in Hoke, Robeson, Scotland or Cumberland Co. that are not aware of the controversy concerning Lumbee River EMC.

There may be, however, a great many that don't really understand what's been going on. The majority of the 20,000 member customers of LREMC may be very much like myself and my neighbors. We pay our light bills, work every day and usually don't question or get involved in things like this unless we recognize an urgent need to.

February's edition of the "LREMC News," which is sent out along with the members' power bills, is very interesting to say the least.

The heading in bold letters proclaimed "Board Cuts 1983 Budget,"... "Budget Trimmed \$500,000," then goes on to say that "without cutting services, your LREMC Board has sliced the 1983 budget in an attempt to stabilize the electric rates."

This is of course welcome news, but you simply cannot help but wonder why in a non-profit organization, and without cutting services to members, there would even be half a million dollars that could be cut.

The newsletter also states, "The adjustments in the budget include a reduction of more than \$50,000 for Board meetings, travel, expenses and school tuitions," and "The Board will complete policy changes which reduce their per diem expenses from \$100 to \$75 a day and regulate the number of meetings to be attended and the number of directors who attend."

Isn't \$75 still too much?

Welcome news again, but why now all of a sudden are they doing this? Do the directors think we are all crazy? If they were concerned about our (the member's) interests, why didn't they do something to help us a long time ago?

I think most of us are now realizing the answer to that so what's the solution?

Those who started Lumbee River EMC had the wisdom and fortitude to give us ways in which to do something about just such situations as this. Copies of the corporations by-laws can be obtained upon request from the Red Springs office....The LREMC Action group is circulating a new petition to call once again for a special meeting (requested for April 28, in Cumberland County Auditorium) for the purpose of removing the current Board of Directors, in accordance with Article IV, Section 4.08 of the corporation by-laws.

A lot of people have put in a lot of work to do this. When the time comes, the least we can do is GO AND VOTE!

Charles E. Fields
Raeford, NC.

Gun hunting illegal?

To the Editor:

Sometime within the last several months you ran a report of several men who were arrested at night hunting from a car. Several guns and a spot light were confiscated in this case.

I believe that you said in your article that hunting deer with anything but a shotgun is illegal in North Carolina. In any event, I have gotten into a heated argument over this.

The article was thrown away, so I have no way of proving my point. Since you mentioned this in your article, I felt that perhaps you could clarify.

Could you please tell me if it is legal to hunt deer in North Carolina with any type of firearm except a shotgun. If you are unable to provide the answer, could you please refer me to some one who can.

I hope that you can help me in this matter, since you are the only official contact in Hoke County available to me.

Sincerely yours,
Keith Wade
Miami, Florida

Editor's note: A spokesman for the North Carolina Wildlife Department's enforcement division said this week that game laws in the state vary from county to county. In Hoke County it is illegal to hunt deer with any type of rifle, only a shotgun can be used.

Puppy Creek Philosopher

Dear editor:

Because too many people in his administration are leaking news and he doesn't know who they are, President Reagan has clamped down and announced that if necessary lie detector tests will be given to find the culprits.

If anybody refuses to take the test, he says, that'll be grounds for firing.

I think I know what's causing some of the leaks. It's human nature. You see, the people in Washington are no different from the people in Raeford.

Both recognize that a secret is no fun unless you can let somebody else in on it.

But what I started out to discuss is the lie detector machine. If it's accurate enough that the President would rely on it, then there's another, more far-reaching use for it.

You've seen the time clock up in the corner of your TV screen during the last 2 minutes of a football game, showing how many seconds are left.

All right. What we need is a lie detector machine hooked up to a politician as he speaks on television. Up in the right hand corner of your screen will flash the results at the end of each comment, reporting whether he's telling the truth or lying.

At the end, a computer will flash the total results: Truth, 3. Half-truth, 8. Lie, 14. Non-answer, 38. Or whatever the score is.

Any politician who refuses to be hooked up to the lie detector machine probably will have a better chance of being re-elected. Use of the machine on columnists is un-thinkable.

Yours faithfully,
J.A.

CLIFF BLUE... People & Issues

LACY THORNBURG...Lacy H. Thornburg, former Superior Court Judge and a three-time member of the State House of Representatives is the first person to announce for Governor on the Democratic ticket.

Judge Thornburg, of the mountains in Sylva, is highly regarded by those who know him personally.

Some people may think that he is trying to accomplish what Governor Dan K. Moore did in 1964 -- twenty years ago.

Moore was from the mountains, and like Thornburg, had served as a superior court judge.

Leading in the first primary race in 1964 were Judge Richardson Preyer, Dan K. Moore and I. Beverly Lake. The run-off was between Richardson Preyer and Dan K. Moore. Preyer had led and Dan Moore was the runner-up.

Lake had the support of the segregationists, and in the second primary Moore received the majority of the Lake vote, and won. Of course, segregation is not an issue now as it was in the Moore-Preyer run off in 1964.

While Thornburg's home is now in Sylva, (Jackson County) he is a native of Huntersville in Mecklenburg County, the home of another candidate, Charlotte Mayor Edward Knox who is preparing to announce his candidacy in the near future.

Among others who are feeling the urge to run are, Lt. Governor Jim Green, Insurance Commissioner John Ingram, Attorney General Rufus L. Edmisten, U.S. Rep. Charles L. Rose, III of Fayetteville, Former State Rep. Thomas Gilmore of Guilford County; Commerce Secretary D.M. "Lauch" Faircloth of Clinton and probably others.

It is still about 18 months before the next general election and many things can happen before primary deadline more than a year off in 1984.

CAMPAIGN EXPENSES...Lt. Governor Jimmy Green has come forward with a suggestion to limit campaign expenses.

Attorney General Edmisten has rebutted with the idea that its unlawful to limit campaign expenditures.

If men with sufficient integrity to be governor of North Carolina, can't agree on how much to spend in a reasonable way to inform the people, then they shouldn't be in the contest for the office.

Why not ask the candidates, with an assistance to each, to meet and decide what's a reasonable amount to spend in a campaign for the Democratic nomination and that their expenditures be open to the public.

The same program should be used by the Republicans, and for the U.S. Senate race as well as the governor' race.

If there are those who refuse to join in such an effort to hold down campaign expenses, let it be publicized and the public will take care of that candidate or candidates.

1926...Back in 1926, Republican senators elect in Pennsylvania and Illinois went wild and spent too much. They were denied seats in the United States Senate due to too much money being spent in the General election.

If the candidates were held to \$1 per vote for each candidate in the contest in the primary, and the same amount in the general election it might be a reasonable figure. If there were a run off in the primary, probably 50% of what was allowed in the first campaign might be allowed.

FILING...The candidates should be forced to file their expenditures 30 days before the first primary, and a final one five days before the primary; and also five days before the second primary, of the candidates involved.

MONEY WASTED?...Lots of money is wasted in political campaigns. But in a close race a candidate and his friends hesitate to hold back, for in some contests a few votes can mean the difference between victory and defeat.

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 noon on the Monday of the publication week.

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