

Editorials

Harbinger of waste

In the coming weeks Hoke County officials may be facing the dilemma of what to do about three apparently illegal dump sites in the McCain and Ashley Heights areas.

The county is in a vulnerable position and may be faced with two unpalatable choices if the problem is not handled properly.

Taxpayers may face the choice of either paying exorbitant cleanup costs, or allowing the county to become a hazardous waste dumping ground for all of North Carolina.

Early soil samples have shown that the sites contain low to mid level concentrations of cancer causing PCB's, and local health officials have said that the "mess" will have to be cleaned up.

However, if property owners do not perform the task, the cleanup may become a local problem. The sites are apparently not dirty enough to alarm federal authorities, and although North Carolina officials consider the dumping serious, state laws covering the matter are hazy.

Thus far samples have shown that PCB concentrations are below the level considered dangerous by the Environmental Protection Agency, and therefore strict federal laws do not apply and "Super Fund" cleanup money cannot be used.

There is also the problem being mulled over by the state Legislature of what to do with the 400 million pounds of hazardous waste produced each year in North Carolina.

Some lawmakers, particularly those whose counties are being eyed as likely locations for a hazardous waste landfill, might see Hoke's bad fortune as a welcomed solution.

If the persons responsible for the dumping will not cleanup the Hoke County sites, the burden will fall on the taxpayers.

The cost of digging out the "contaminated" material, loading it on trucks and hauling it to the nearest approved landfill, which is in Alabama, may be prohibitive without state or federal assistance.

The alternative would be to create a hazardous waste landfill.

In the minds of some state salons, the sites are probably considered to be ideally suited. The soil is the right consistency. The dump areas adjoin an isolated portion of the Ft. Bragg Reservation and would be easily accessible to Moore and Cumberland counties where industries are now having problems disposing of hazardous waste.

Besides, the McCain area also contains a state prison, youth correctional center and soon-to-be-converted state prison hospital.

In order to avoid the fate of a hazardous waste landfill, Hoke officials and the local Legislative delegation may have to rely on the support of Governor James Hunt and Department of Human Resources Chief Dr. Sarah T. Morrow.

Despite efforts by Hoke citizens to dissuade them, both these state officials recently knuckled under to demands from the Department of Corrections to convert McCain Hospital from a tuberculosis treatment facility to a prison unit.

If faced with the problem of what to do about the Hoke County cleanup, it is hoped that Hunt and Morrow will not bow to pressure from 1,400 North Carolina firms handling hazardous waste, and arbitrarily target Hoke for a dumping ground.

Hoke County residents have a long history of doing their part to be good state and federal citizens.

Not only has the county provided a place for state correctional institutions, but in 1918, Hoke gave up 92,000 acres to the federal government for Ft. Bragg.

The county also lost additional acreage and tax dollars to Moore County in 1959 because of an inability to serve the Little River Township, which had been cut off from Hoke by the federal government's failure to maintain promised highway access across the reservation.

In the past Hoke residents have taken it on the chin with little, if any, compensation, and as a result of their sacrifices, the rest of North Carolina has benefited.

The future for Hoke County is looking brighter, with recent announcements of industrial expansions, new businesses and more jobs, but that future could be darkened quickly by the creation of a hazardous landfill.

As landfills in Alabama and other states fill up, and residents there become weary of receiving the nation's dangerous refuse, it is evident that North Carolina must face the need of creating its own disposal area.

Hoke County should not be that site. Residents of Hoke County may need all the state help musterable to clean up McCain and Ashley Heights.

It is time to repay the debt to Hoke County, not reward its residents with the woes of a hazardous waste dumping ground.



Letters To The Editor

Puppy Creek Philosopher

Dear editor:

For what seems like years now the newspapers have been full of arguments, bickerings, proposals and counter-proposals on arms control, arms reductions, nuclear freezes, negotiations and high-level name-calling.

It gets so complicated it's hard to understand. One side wants to count missiles but not warheads, the other side wants to count both. Another question is: do ground-to-air missiles equal air-to-ground missiles and how do you equalize submarines when you never know which ones have to come up for air?

Furthermore, one nuclear bomb piled on top of another in a mad race by each side to stay equal if not ahead, will eventually use up all the money there is, forcing Congress to work for nothing.

Two countries run by grown men, with a woman thrown in here and there for good measure -- the United States and Russia -- are simply trying, sort of half-heartedly, to reduce the number of nuclear weapons from enough to kill everybody on earth nine times down to four and a half times, a program that'd suit cats and reduce the cost by fifty percent.

When you've got enough bombs to kill everybody once, it seems like the sensible thing to do would be to shut down the factory and spend your money some place else.

Congress could think of something to do with it. But getting countries to act sensibly these days is as hard as it's been since countries were invented. In fact, even since tribes were invented. Ask the tribes of Biblical times, the American Cherokees and Comanches, Republicans and Democrats.

It used to be proposed that warring nations beat their swords into plowshares but it won't work these days; they wouldn't fit on modern tractors. I don't know what you could beat a nuclear bomb into or who'd want the job. But the world would be a pleasanter place if Russia and the United States were armed to the teeth with nothing but water cannons and adjectives.

Yours faithfully,
J.A.



1920 steam shovel, a mistake

Editor's Note: It was about this time 63 years ago that Editor D. Scott Poole offered his opinion in the June 3, 1920, edition of the Hoke County Journal on a recent county purchase of a steam shovel. Here is what he said in an editorial headlined "What A Mistake."

"Some say the purchasing of that steam shovel to load clay on trucks by the county commissioners was a mistake for the reason that it is too much expense for the use to be made of it.

"The reasons for the purchase are: there are few laborers, and the work must be done, and Mr. W.E. Blue says he can do twice as much work.

"But the machine is too large. It's the thing to load cars at the sandpit, or the gravelbed; but it is too ponderous to be moved about.

"With only a few trucks to load it may be standing idle burning coal with the operators waiting on the haulers.

"There are but few bridges in this county we would like to drive that thing over.

"And as some see it, it is like buying 10 mules to run a two horse farm; like buying a \$5,000

About This Time

lyntype machine to do \$2,000 worth of work a year and like building a hotel where nobody stops.

"However, if it has been bought, and there is now no remedy, 50 or 100 trucks or carts should be procured and the roads clayed to everybody's satisfaction, and we'll have as good roads as they have in Robeson, eh?"

Ballots burned

In the June 10, 1920 edition, Poole noted that there had been a problem during the recent election.

"J.A. McDiarmid, a candidate for sheriff in the primary election on June 5, demanded a recount of the vote from the Raeford precinct, "but it was found that D.J. Kinlaw, janitor, had cleaned out the commissioners' room, where the primary was held, and burned the ballots.

"We do not know what will be done about this.

"A.D. Gore, chairman of the board of elections, has asked the Attorney General.

"The law requires that the

ballots be preserved for four months, but Mr. Kinlaw did not know this, and says that he has cleaned up the room and burned the ballots the day following every election since he has been there; he had no intent to do wrong.

Memorial Day

"A regular Memorial Day (1920) program was carried out by the local chapter of Daughters of the Confederacy with the Raeford School in the school auditorium.

"Flowers were placed upon the soldiers' graves that day too. "The Daughters of the Confederacy are rarely derelict in the duty of doing homage to the memory of the Southern heroes whose bravery and chivalry made them worthy of the admiration of the world.

"The Daughters of the Confederacy entertained Camp Lamb Confederate Veterans at a bounteous luncheon in the graded school building last Thursday.

"After dinner Sheriff Hall set up all who smoked to cigars and Sheriff Hall, Rev. W.C. Brown and others made short speeches.

"There were only 14 of the boys of the 60's, but they had a very pleasant day.

CLIFF BLUE... People & Issues

CC COMMUNITY COLLEGE
... A couple of weeks ago we attended "Open House" and an "Arbor Day Tree Planting" in front of the Administration Building at the Coastal Carolina Community College in Jacksonville.

Dr. James L. Henderson is president of the college and Board Chairman is Louis Shields.

They have ten fine buildings there, situated on a beautiful campus. Many improvements have been made throughout the college and the people of that eastern town in Onslow County have every right to be mighty proud of their college.

EARLY DAYS...This nation was founded in the beginning by people seeking religious freedom.

In this country, religious affiliation has been reflected somewhat by members of Congress. For centuries, for one example, millions of Americans feared putting Roman Catholics in office as the history of the Catholic Church's heavy involvement in government was contrary to the U.S. Constitution.

All this has been changed rapidly. The most rapid change has taken place in the last 20 or so years. In 1928 the Democratic Party nominated a Catholic, Al Smith, for president who was defeated; did so again in 1960 when John F. Kennedy was elected, but only after allaying the fears of Protestants by pledging to give first loyalty to the U.S. Constitution, and not the foreign Pope.

But as the power of the churches waned, and Catholics in this country, and others, began to exhibit personal independence, the worry over possible foreign church dictatorship lessened. There are today about 50% more Catholics in Congress than there were in 1962 -- according to Americans United for Separation of Church and State.

Jewish membership is also up, tripled since 1962.

Until the present Congress every member listed a religious affiliation. But last year, for the first time in memory, five members did not list a religious affiliation. And for many years many members of Congress have left it out of their biographies, printed in the Congressional Record.

Protestants still hold the majority of seats in Congress, though their numbers are declining. The biggest single listing Roman Catholic which lists 141 members.

Others are: United Methodists, 73; followed by Episcopalians, 61; Presbyterians, 56; Baptists, 47; Jews, 38, Lutherans, 25; Protestants, 24 and the United Church of Christ 13, Mormon, 12; Unitarian Universalist, nine, Church of Christ, seven; Eastern Orthodox, seven; Disciples of Christ, seven; Quakers and Christian Scientists, two.

Thus the United States of America is truly a multi-religious state, as it is a multi-racial state.

All Americans should be proud of the nation's history, which shows the way, in behalf of religious tolerance, liberty and opportunity.

HISPANICS...There is a steadily increasing number of Hispanics in the United States, millions here illegally. The latest estimate is that there is a minimum of 14.6 million whose leaders are now organizing into a political bloc.

There is now a Hispanic caucus in Congress. There is a legal and educational fund with a direct lobbyist.

As the influx of Mexicans and other Hispanics into this country continues, legal and illegal, the Hispanic bloc will grow stronger. This is the traditional American process of the past. Heretofore, ethnic arrivals have been assimilated into the main stream, have learned the nation's language, and have been proud to call themselves Americans.

One hopes the Hispanic bloc will follow the traditional American process, accept the idea of a one-language nation and adapt to American society and customs.

Hispanics will probably evolve as a bloc in this same process. Even though it is important to constantly stress this process, it is also important to constantly stress the American tradition, which has provided unity, prosperity and effective government.

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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