

Editorials

James Albert Hunt no longer serving

In the May 7, 1974, Democratic Party Primary election, James Albert Hunt carried 10 of the county's 14 precincts, and lead the balloting to gain the nomination for county commission without a runoff.

Hunt's popularity grew. In November of that year, he was the top vote getter in the general election and was later sworn in as the first Indian to serve on the Hoke County Commission.

In 1974 and again in 1978, the South Hoke trucking company owner promised to represent all the people of Hoke County and to perform his duties to the best of his abilities.

As a younger man, Hunt saw U.S. Highway 401 as a "death trap" and pledged to work to get it widened to four lanes. He stressed a need for better working conditions in the sheriff's department, and aired plans for improved recreation and rural fire protection.

In addition to his duties on the commission, Hunt served on the Sandhills Mental Health Board and the County Fire Board.

Throughout his tenure, Hunt has been a leader, not only for the South Hoke Community, but for all of Hoke County.

Although he declined to comment prior to his re-election in 1982, in a 1978 interview with *The News-Journal*, Hunt again pledged to remember all county residents when making a decision.

"I promise not to forget our main responsibility -- the people of our county," Hunt said.

During the last six months, James Albert Hunt has not been living up to that pledge.

As a result of his apparent irresponsible handling of personal and business finances, the South Hoke Commissioner has landed in jail in Scotland, Hoke and Robeson counties. He also faces charges in at least two other North Carolina counties.

Not only have Hunt's financial antics and comments like "if you are not bouncing checks, you're not doing business," been an embarrassment to his constituents, but they have raised questions about his ability to handle the finances of others.

Despite his apparent inability to control his own checkbook, Hunt has continued to cast ballots on county spending matters which affect the lives of all Hoke Countians.

In addition, Hunt's leadership on the board has been diminished, and other members of the commission are having to carry the load.

Under North Carolina law, Hunts actions are not considered to be a felony. If they were and he was convicted, he would no longer be able to serve in an elected office.

The law also does not provide for an impeachment of the South Hoke commissioner, and there is no provision for a recall vote by the public.

According to a spokesman for the state Attorney General's office, if Hunt wanted, he could stay in office for the next three and a half years, and not attend a meeting of the commission.

However, to do so would not be in the best interests of those who elected him.

James Albert Hunt should resign from the Hoke County Commission.

His resignation would allow another person to complete the term who would be less encumbered by outside pressures.

Hunt has served with dignity during the last eight years, but by stepping aside now, he would be doing the right thing for Hoke County, and the people he has pledged to represent.

CLIFF BLUE... People & Issues

PRESIDENTIAL... As we look at the potential Presidential candidates for the Democratic National nominees, come convention time, 1984, U.S. Senator John Glenn and U.S. Senator Ernest Hollings could well head the Democratic ticket.

The first U.S. Senatorial endorsement for Glenn came a few days ago from Massachusetts Senator Paul Tsongas. Is he jumping on what some may say to be a centrist bandwagon for Glenn?

Meanwhile, Gary Hart seems to be out of it. California's Alan Cranston has hardly been taken seriously by many Democratic leaders. Mixed into the political pot, John Anderson may well be a candidate again. He says he will run again in 1984 as he did in 1980 when he received 5,551,551 or 7% of the popular vote.

Reagan received 42,951,145, and incumbent Carter received 34,663,551; Reagan received 489 electoral votes; Carter 49.

Anderson says he will likely run again in 1984, hoping to build a party as did Abraham Lincoln in 1960, with the smell of federal money. Anderson is an independent, and would probably hurt Democrats more than Republicans.

Hollings and Askew are in a very strong position for second place, if either Glenn or Mondale is nominated for the number one spot.

A southern moderate would be almost necessary for the Democratic Party if it hoped to carry the South against Reagan.

Bert Lance reminded both Mondale and Glenn who visited him in Georgia recently, the fourteen states of the Southern Governor's Conference will send more than 1200 delegates to San Francisco next summer.

They won't favor a far-left candidate, the Georgian warned. That shot seems to hit Mondale and Cranston hardest, as did the Thatcher victory in England. This is where Hollings and Askew come in.

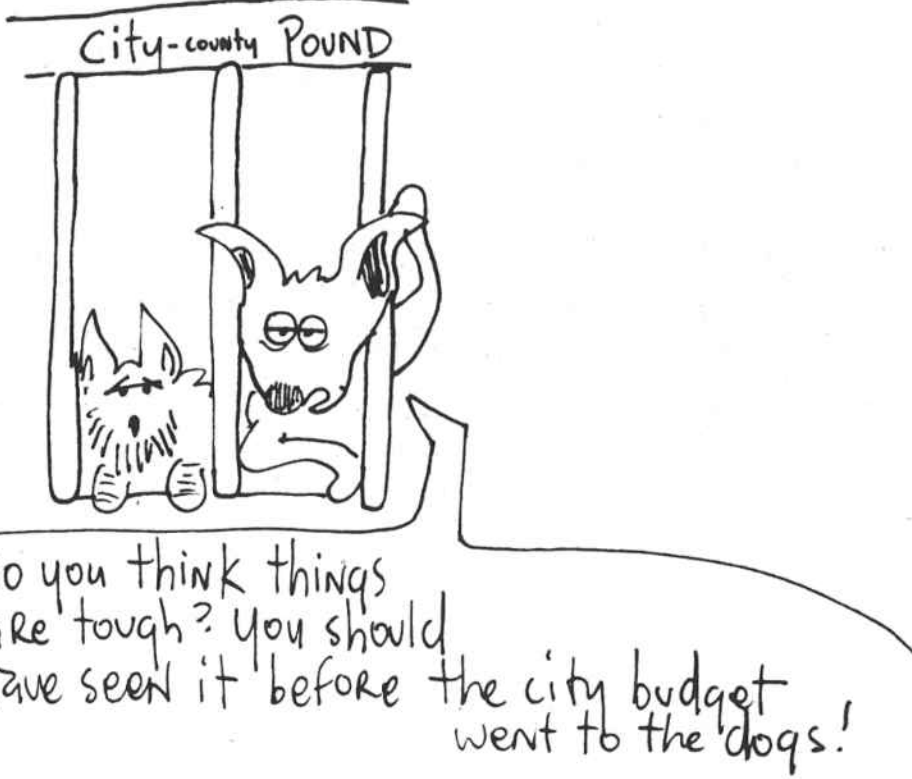
HEFNER... U.S. Rep. Bill Hefner of the 8th N.C. Congressional District has sold his radio station in Kannapolis for \$1,345,000, effective June 1. Hefner has represented the 8th District for several years and evidently feels pretty sure of holding the seat for the foreseeable future, having won by a comfortable majority in the election last November.

HIGHEST TAXES... In which state do residents pay the highest total of state and local taxes? You might have guessed -- New York State.

But surprisingly, Wyoming residents are next in line for the dubious honor of second place. The District of Columbia, despite lavish financial aid from Congress, taxes its citizens the next highest amount.

The next most costly state and local tax states are New Mexico, Hawaii, Massachusetts, Montana, Vermont and Wisconsin, in that order. The range between the total state and local tax, per thousand dollars of income, is from \$158 in New York State to \$122 in Wisconsin.

The disturbing part of the picture is that taxes in most states and localities are now going up, so that, fairly soon, some may be paying close to 20% of what they earn in the form of state and local taxes -- not figuring in the federal income tax!



Letters To The Editor

Puppy Creek Philosopher

Dear editor:
There's an argument going around that Congressmen should be limited to two terms instead of holding on to their jobs for life, but I've discovered an argument on the other side.

An ex-Congressman sometimes draws more money from the government than he did when he was in office. A former Speaker of the House for example pulls in \$85,000 in pensions, \$20,000 more than he got when he was on the job, and over \$75,000 more than he'd get on Social Security.

Or take the Presidency. From a tax-saving standpoint, it's now cheaper to keep a President in office than it is to turn him out.

According to an article I read the other day, the cost of maintaining the three ex-Presidents we now have on hand is \$27,000,000 a year, which comes to an average of

\$9,000,000 per ex-president. In addition, practically any ex-President can make at least a million dollars writing a book, which I don't understand as I've never encountered anybody who's ever read one.

When a President is defeated or decides to run again or quite just ahead of an indictment, the government allots him \$1,000,000 for moving expenses, which seems like a lot just to get him out of town.

Also, I guess maybe to cushion him against another one of those periodic rate increases, he is given \$32,000 a year for his telephone bill.

Moreover, it costs about \$15,000,000 a year to staff and maintain ex-Presidents' libraries scattered around the country, which seems a little one-sided as all the books and papers in any of them is confined to just one subject. Even a small town public library has a wider range of books than that.

So it appears that once we elect somebody to something we're stuck with the bill from then on, whether he's in office or out. The British are ahead of us on this. You don't hear of them swapping their Kings or Queens every few years.

Yours faithfully,
J.A.

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.

US food inspection is best in world

by John Sledge
N.C. Farm Bureau Federation
Food product inspection programs in this country are considered to be the most comprehensive in the world. Clearance procedures for new drugs and pesticides are so stringent that they discourage manufacturers from pursuing new product research.

There also is no provision in present food safety laws for review of research studies by "outside of government" scientists. This peer review procedure is needed to obtain the best opinions from the entire scientific community.

A few years ago, the FDA sought to phase out nitrites based on a single inconclusive study and in the process severely hurt pork producers. The agency later retracted its action when its study was discredited but, in the opinion of producers, the damage already had been done.

A scientific review mechanism

would prevent faulty studies from raising havoc within an industry in the future.

Scientific analysis can now detect the most minute trace of a substance -- one part per trillion compared with one part per million in 1958. This heightened capability to find trace amounts, combined with the increasing consumption of processed foods, means there is now a greater chance for additional food scares and the heated regulatory battles that usually follow.

Agricultural producers have worked closely with government to assure that proper drug and chemical product application procedures are followed. Cooperators continue to monitor product usage to identify possible residues.

If problems are found, prompt steps are supported to solve them. Chemicals and drugs are essential tools of agricultural production.

Rainlessness sparks vegetable unrest

By Warren Johnston

Before last week, it was hard to remember when my wife and I had sat in the rocking chairs on our front porch and watched the rain. "Do you remember the last time we sat out here and watched the rain?" my wife asked, while the wet wind washed our faces and the lightning cracked nearby. "Seems like, it was March, or maybe April," I said. "It's hard to remember."

Before the rains, it had gotten more and more difficult to go to the garden and face our crop of drooping vegetables.

It was a little like being in a room full of disgruntled workers, who were considering a strike.

"You expect me to produce in this sort of heat," the tomato plants griped, as I pruned the suckers from their upper branches. "This place is a real sweatshop."

"If I don't get some rain, I'll just die," the cauliflower moaned. The lettuce and cabbage chimed in that if I didn't do something, "heads" were going to roll.

"Stop complaining," I responded in a cheery voice.

"Why, the sun is out. It's beautiful. If you don't believe me, watch the television weather reports."

Just the other night we had watched a report from Raleigh. The meteorologist had said that it would be a "wonderful" week with little chance of afternoon thundershowers.

Oh, there might be a few light scattered showers, but "nothing to mess up your fun," he said.

From his seat in front of the camera, the viewing audience must look like a group of beach-crazed sun worshipers, I told my wife.

"I'd like to see him come down here and try to explain this drought to that crowd out in the garden," I added.

"They're getting ugly."

When my wife talked me into planting this year's garden, she never told me that I would have to suffer this sort of abuse. It is bad enough to have to pay the water bills, hoe and weed, but then to have to hear the complaints from the vegetable union was a bit much.

Back in February, when it was too wet to plow, she had used beguiling logic.

Attempting to appeal to my monetary instincts, she told me a garden was worth at least \$800 a year to a family of four.

The Puppy Papers

"But we are only a family of two," I countered, attempting not to be suckered by one of her "get rich quick" schemes.

The money doesn't matter, the garden will be fun, good exercise and we will save on food costs, she responded.

I trusted my wife. She was raised in a more rural community, and I had assumed that she knew her way around a garden. Besides, it was obvious she had been reading the bulletins put out by the extension office.

As I was beginning to weaken, she hit me with the hook.

"You're from Atlanta. Ralph McGill was from Atlanta, and he had a garden. He won a Pulitzer Prize," she said.

Naturally, I was supposed to make the connection.

She expected me to believe that the late *Atlanta Constitution* editor must have gotten the inspiration for his award winning columns while working in the garden. If I worked hard tilling the soil, perhaps I too would win a Pulitzer.

Following the same logic, there will probably also be a long line of farmers waiting for the coveted award, I said.

Before I knew it, we were laying out the rows and planting happy little seeds in the damp spring soil.

How was I to guess, that what the Raleigh weatherman said wasn't true. That things really weren't "beautiful."

Who would have guessed that the vegetables were quietly stewing over the bright sunny days of May and June.

It seemed to happen suddenly. One day I went out to the garden, and the entire group had become surly. The cucumbers were particularly bitter. The beans and squash were tough.

When the showers finally started last week, the "o-o-o-hs" and "ahhs" coming out of the yard were disgusting.

"I sure hope this rain keeps up," I said to my wife as we rocked in our front porch chairs.

"If it doesn't, things could get real ugly around here," she said.

That night, the weatherman assured us that the whole thing had been caused by a cold front.

"You don't have to worry. It should all be gone by the weekend," he said.

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