

# Opinions

## We're slaves to ringing phones

By Lucien Coleman

I had waited longer than I really wanted to. It was already 20 minutes past the time of my appointment.

So I was more than a little grateful when the receptionist finally beckoned me over to her desk.

The moment I began to state my business, the telephone rang, and, of course, she answered it.

As I waited for her to finish that 10 minute phone conversation, I wondered, "Why is that person on the other end of the line receiving preferential treatment?" He had made no appointment. He hadn't driven 12 miles across town to get to the office, as I had. I had arrived before his call had come in. Yet, here I was waiting on him to finish his business. How come?

But I knew the answer, already. In our society, we make a fetish of the telephone. Our one inviolable rule in that the phone

### Things That Matter

must be answered, no matter what else is going on. Most of us are compulsive about it.

Recently I was sitting in a religious meeting, when a phone rang somewhere out in the hallway. Someone got up, paraded through the congregation to the hallway and answered the phone. The phone must be answered.

At a dinner party, we were enjoying congenial conversation over coffee, when the telephone rang, off in another room. The host got up to answer it and, leaving his guests to fend for themselves, talked with the caller for 20 minutes. The phone must be answered at all costs.

Even in those torrid bedroom scenes on TV dramas, no embrace is too passionate to be interrupted by the telephone. The telephone must be answered, no matter what.

But why? What's so special about the telephone that it takes precedence over everything else? Why should someone who has gone to the trouble of making an appointment with a busy man sit and wait while he handles an unscheduled phone call? Why should an electronic communication device take precedence over face to face conversation? Why will a person step out of the shower and parade through the house dripping wet in order to answer a ringing telephone?

"It might be important," we tell ourselves. But, really now, how many of your calls turn out to be all that urgent?

The real problem, I suspect, is that we are conditioned to jump at the sound of a phone, just as a trained dog reflexively obeys the command of his master.

Maybe we ought to try kicking the habit. Maybe we need to organize a "Telephonics Anonymous."



THE RIGHT STUFF

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## ... Letters to the editor

(Continued from page 2B)

you will do your Christmas shopping with the Hoke/Raeford Humane Society.

Not only will you be getting some delightful gifts, but you will be helping support us in our efforts to help the animals. We will let everyone know the exact date of this craft and bake sale as soon as everyone's schedules are coordinated.

If you would like to help in any way, either by baking something or donating an item to sell, please contact any member of the humane society or call me at the number listed below.

Again, thanks to everyone who helped us.

Sincerely,  
Sheryl McGinnis, Sec./Treas.  
Hoke/Raeford Humane Society  
875-5746

### Minor problems must be addressed

Dear editor:

When there are mammoth problems facing a country, problems nobody has the answer to, you might as well take time out and think about a little problem.

Consequently, I have practically nothing to say about Lebanon, except that it seems to be the wrong country to send a peace-keeping force of 1,200 to, where there are nine different fanatical factions shooting at each other, an inherited trait I suppose because it's been going on for a couple of thousand years. Switzerland would have been a better place to send a peace-keeping force. That country hasn't had a war in 100 years.

I have no answers to that problem and don't know anybody who does, therefore I will concentrate on professional football.

The question there is how do

fans, when they settle down before their TV sets on Sunday afternoon or Monday night, decide which team to pull for?

If a team from your own area is playing, it's natural to pull for that team. But what if two teams, neither of which you're for or against, are playing? What if you're from Idaho and the Washington Redskins are playing the Los Angeles Raiders? You've got to pull for one to get the maximum fun out of the game.

I have done some research on this. For example, one guy I know would be against Washington because the Redskins and Congress live in the same town.

Another guy I know would be against Los Angeles because he was stationed at a miserable camp in California during World War II. He's opposed to everything from California, except maybe the A-Team and seedless grapes.

Others of course pull for a team

they've got a bet on. They are contrasted to those who bet on the score per quarter. They don't care who wins. They are somewhat like the Houston Oilers and the Tampa Bay Buccaneers.

There is a parallel between world problems and professional football. Even when a world problem is solved and the football championship decided, you know a new series will start over again next year.

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.

## Law provides penalty for convicted felons

By Charles C. Lewis  
Assoc. Prof. Law  
Campbell Univ.

### Law For Laypersons

Criminal acts are divided into misdemeanors and felonies. The felony is the more serious of the two and generally brings a stiffer punishment.

In North Carolina, a felony is defined as a crime which was a felony at common law, or a crime which is or may be punishable by death, or a crime which is or may be punishable by imprisonment in the State's prison, or a crime which is termed a felony by statute.

All other crimes are misdemeanors.

Some examples of felonies are murder, rape, kidnapping, arson, incest, bigamy, perjury, felonious assault with a deadly weapon with intent to kill, malicious use of explosives or incendiaries, larceny of property exceeding \$400 in value, and bribery of officials.

There are many other felonies than these mentioned, and most of these are broken down into various other types of felonies.

Most people know that a conviction for a felony usually brings a stiff punishment.

Indeed, although the punishment for a felony may be a mere fine, punishment for some felonies may be death or life imprisonment.

Besides death, imprisonment or a fine, a person convicted of a felony in North Carolina also loses some rights of citizenship.

General Statutes § 163.55, which sets out the qualifications for voting in North Carolina, provides that any person found guilty of a felony against the State or the United States or found guilty of a felony in another state that would be a felony if it had been committed

in North Carolina may not be allowed either to register or to vote. Article VI, § 2(3) of the North Carolina Constitution also provides that a person's right to vote may be taken away as a result of a felony conviction.

In addition, Article VI, § 8 of the North Carolina Constitution provides that a felony conviction will result in a person's being disqualified for election to office.

The reason sometimes given for the loss of citizenship rights upon conviction of a felony is that the electoral process will be protected from those who have not been responsible citizens. Also the loss of citizenship rights may serve as an additional punishment for the commission of a felony.

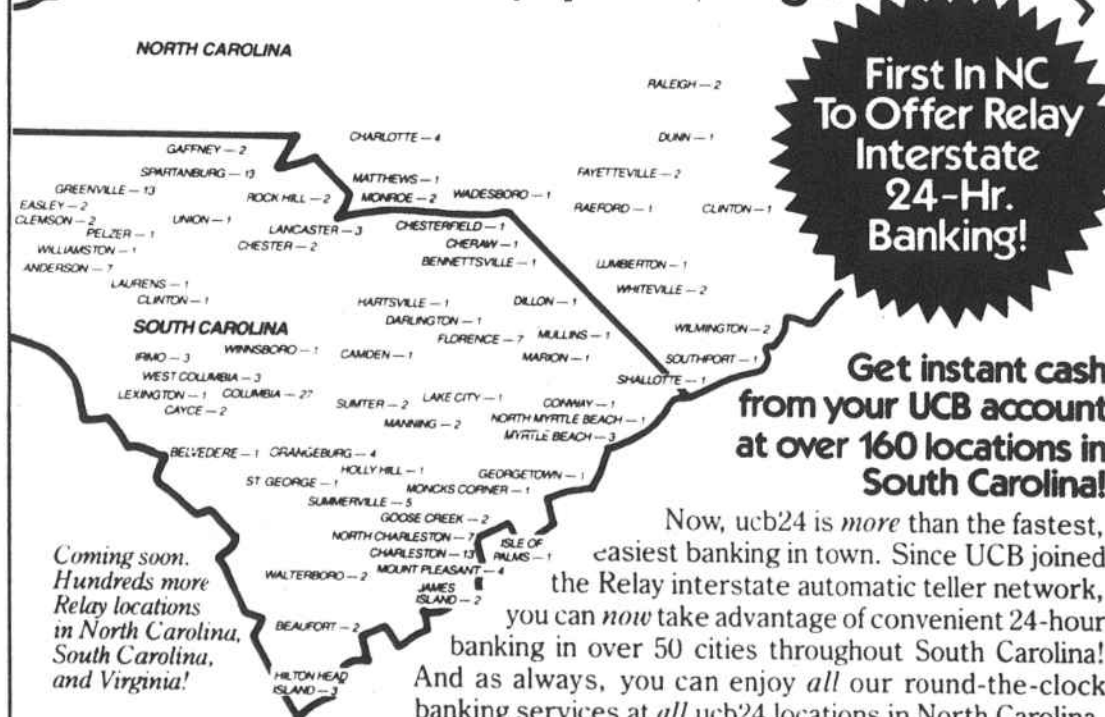
North Carolina's statutory and constitutional provisions depriving convicted felons of the right to vote were attacked in the case of *Fincher v. Scott*, 352 F. Supp. 117 (1972).

The Federal District Court which heard the case, however, decided that these provisions in North Carolina were not unconstitutional, either under the United States Constitution's Equal Protection Clause or the clause prohibiting cruel and unusual punishment.

*Editor's Note: This article is written as a matter of general interest only. It is not to be construed as legal advice, and you should not rely on the statements made in the article to govern your actions in any specific case. If you have a particular question or problem, you should contact an attorney.*

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