

Viewpoints

School decision was correct one

Hoke County Commissioners have taken the right approach to funding a proposed school rehabilitation plan.

As requested by a citizen's study group who recommended the plan, the commissioners have earmarked an extra 20% of the county's portion of the one-half cent sales tax to fund the school improvements.

In addition, the commissioners wisely fended off a proposal from the Hoke County Board of Education to designate the funds for five years and promised the money only on a one-year review basis.

The rehabilitation plan calls for the extra sales tax proceeds to be used to repay a \$2.5 million bond issue, which would fund the construction of 78 new classrooms in the county.

According to North Carolina law, the bond

issue is subject to public approval in a referendum. Had the commissioners followed the school board's suggestion, the right of public approval would have been moot.

With the money already in the budget, the costs being paid by the taxpayers for the next five years, the die would have been cast for the program and the referendum would have meant little more than a rubber stamp.

Following the action taken by the county, the decision on the future of the schools still remains where it should be, in the hands of the voters.

Airport commission moving on target

Members of the recently appointed Raeford-Hoke County Airport Commission have gotten off to a flying start and appear to be on the way to helping make this community a better place to live.

Editorials

This county suffers from a lack of aggressive leadership, and it is heartening to see a group with the initiative of the airport commission.

During their first "working" session, the commission members cancelled all prior leases at the airport, condemned a eyesore hangar and are attempting to garner federal and state money for taxiways.

By cancelling the leases, the commissioners are now in a position to re-negotiate the use of the airport on terms which will benefit not only the facility, but the entire community.

Plans are also underway to clean up the existing terminal. The building, which could serve as a welcome center for pilots and visiting industry hunters, now has broken windows, is kept locked and is cluttered with random personal items.

Commission members have also given owners of a disheveled hangar 60 days to remove the structure from public property. In addition, plans are underway to spruce up the entire airport facility and make it a representative doorway to the community.

During the session, the commissioners laid out plans to construct taxiways which would be funded by combining federal and state grant money with local dollars.

Pilots now using the airport must taxi airplanes on the same runway as the one being used by aircraft which are taking off and landing. Commission members say the situation is not a safe one and is recognized as an improvement need worthy of funding by the Federal Aviation Authority.

In the past, federal, state and local money has been used at the Raeford-Hoke County Airport to construct runways, provide lighting and make other improvements. If the facility were to be reconstructed today, the price tag would probably be over \$1 million.

Until the commission took over two weeks ago, the airport has been operated only to benefit a small group of county residents.

Now, it appears the facility will be operated for all of Hoke County.

If the commission members keep their current pace, it will not be long before the Raeford-Hoke County Airport will serve as the million dollar doorway to the community that the taxpayers deserve.

Computers starting cottage industries

By Lucien Coleman

My friend Mavis works as a curriculum specialist and program designer for a large religious publishing house. More and more, nowadays, she takes work home from the office. The reason? She can do her work faster and more efficiently on her personal computer.

"Sometimes," she was saying recently, "it seems silly for me to drive 36 miles a day commuting to work, when, really, I could do my writing better at home, then transmit it by phone to the office."

Another friend, Albert, does just that. Semi-retired, he is presently writing a book on a contract basis. He writes copy on his personal computer and sends it by telephone line to the publisher. There a manuscript assistant proofreads his material, makes editorial corrections, and sends a copy back to him for final approval.

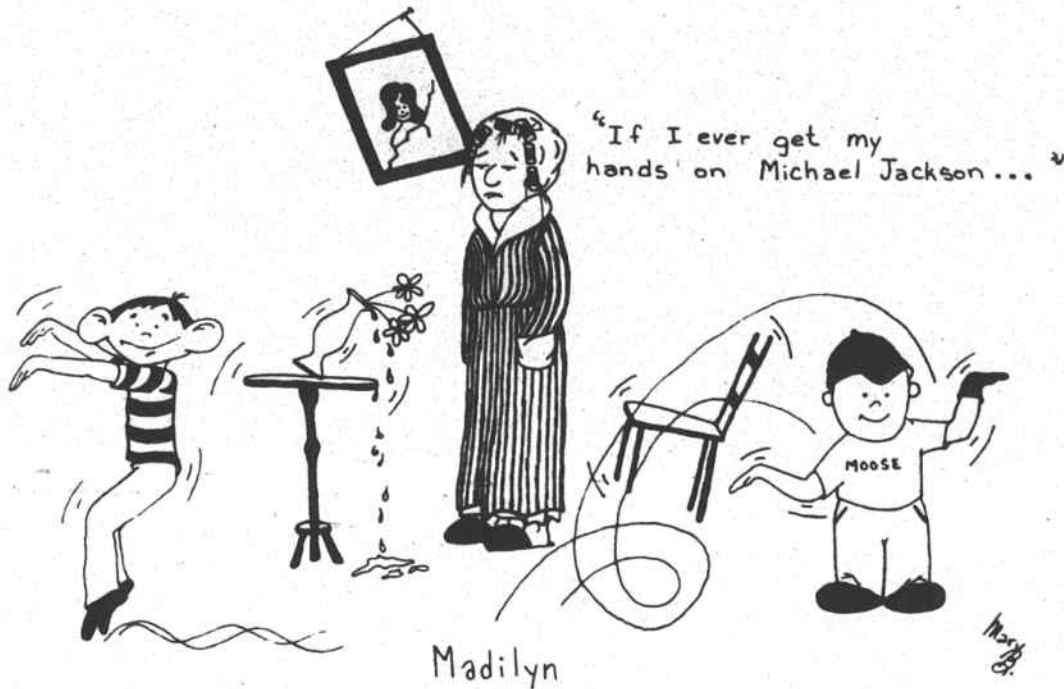
A sports writer in Houston, who also happens to be a nationally syndicated cartoonist, does most of his work at his house. Like the others, he writes most of his copy at a computer terminal in his home, then sends it by wire to his paper's newsroom.

Writers aren't the only stay-at-home workers today. More and more employees in the thriving "knowledge industry" are finding it possible, even preferable, to "telecommute" to work. Processing words, managing accounts, maintaining mailing lists, researching by way of information networks and data banks, and even high-level executive planning functions can be carried out at home, where comfort is greater and distractions are fewer.

The home computer is creating a modern-day cottage industry.

This trend worries labor unions, who find it difficult to organize at-home workers. Employers, too, are skeptical. But the benefits are many. Consider the savings on transportation alone.

And just think of being able to go to work in your old grubby jeans and a comfortable sweat-shirt. If this catches on, we might not even need vacations.



Booze age hike needed

By Bill Hefner
Congressman

A movement to raise the nation's drinking age to 21 is becoming a bandwagon. Just a few days ago, the U.S. House of Representatives passed a bill that would make it a law in every state to set the drinking age at 21 years of age. Right now, twenty-two states limit drinking of all alcoholic beverages to 21 or older. Nine, including North Carolina, have 21 as a minimum age for drinking hard liquor but younger persons can buy beer and unfortified wine. The rest of the states have minimum drinking ages of 18, 19 or 20.

Under this new bill, which still must go through the Senate, highway funds would be cut off from the states that do not raise their drinking age to 21.

I think the 21 year old minimum drinking age makes sense. Too

many of our young people are dying on the roads because of drunken driving. Not only that, but youngsters below 21 are simply too young to be drinking.

According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration young people 18 to 20 are more than twice as likely as others to be in an alcohol related accident. Another startling fact is that 18 and 19 year olds make up about 8% of the drivers and 6% of miles driven, yet they make up a whopping 17% of alcohol-involved accidents.

It would be best if states were to raise the drinking age to 21 themselves, and they must be given more of a chance, however, if they still fail to do so. Congress should do what it can to help solve this national problem.

I believe that youth drinking is growing to the point of becoming a national epidemic.

Letters To The Editor

Center survives on local gifts

To the Editor:

Without the help of the various clubs, organizations, churches, businesses, industries and private individuals, Hoke County Children's Center would not be serving special children as it has for a decade.

The staff expresses gratitude to each person who has continued to provide physical therapy, speech therapy and educational programming to our children. However, I wish to add two specific groups of individuals to our Center's advocate list.

Gratitude from Hoke County Children's Center is extended to the Raeford City Council and the Hoke County Commissioners.

People in the City and County should be proud to know that their political representatives care about the quality of life of individuals. Sure our children could be locked away in an institution and never be given a real chance to be someone. Your leaders want our special children to have an extra edge on life.

Because of the Center's mandatory relocation to another facility,

financial problems exist. This condition will disappear as the enrollment increases.

However, the summer months will be difficult. Knowing this, County officials volunteered free legal counsel to demand insurance payment on delinquent claims. Raeford Councilmen appropriated \$1,000 to the center as local match for a new van to transport the children.

The gentlemen from both governments listen to many worthwhile requests; I do not envy their responsibility of decision making. Both groups have given assistance when we need it most.

The Hoke County Association for the Developmentally Disabled Board of Directors, staff, parents and most of all the children of Hoke County Children's Center appreciate our local political representatives sincere desire to build a better tomorrow.

Anne H. Johnson,
Director
Hoke County
Children's Center

County should be proud of graduates

To the Editor

I was privileged to be present

in Durham on June 9 when two residents of Hoke County, Lisa Gillespie and Amy Schuchard graduated from the North Carolina School of Science and Mathematics.

Coursework at the school, which is the first of its kind in the country, is widely known to be very demanding. All North Carolinians should be proud of the accomplishments of these graduates and their classmates.

The business community has long recognized that continued growth and development in our state will only be possible if it is undergirded by a strong educational system.

This must include not only specialized schools like the School for Science and Math, but strong local school systems that enjoy the active support of the entire community. Our state and nation will be inadequately prepared to face the challenges of tomorrow unless we all give strong support to our schools today.

The North Carolina School of Science and Mathematics is an excellent example of what a business/educational partnership can accomplish. The Business

Committee for Math/Science Education urges all businesspersons to become involved in actively supporting education. It's the key to our future.

Sincerely,
Bland Worley

Doby still in business

To the Editor

I understand there are rumors circulating that I am no longer in business.

Doby Funeral Home is still doing business and will continue to do business as long as the Lord is willing.

Whoever is circulating these rumors should contact me and find out the truth.

There are some people who would like to see us out of business.

Some people are getting the wrong impression about the news article in the newspaper last week that the persons whose names appeared in the paper would be paid \$7,133.39.

This is not true. One of the per-

sons named was refunded their premium in December, 1983 because medical information was not sent to the company by the doctor at the prescribed time.

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Summer afternoons are ripe for parsley and stealing apples

By Warren Johnston

The evening was cool for summertime. The oppressive humidity had cleared. It seemed like a good time to work in the garden.

"There's a lot of work to be done in the garden," I told Calhoun, as I got my hoe out of the shed.

I knew Calhoun didn't care much for gardening. My plot was outside his domain, and besides, he had grown accustomed to sleeping in the shade of the high weeds which were growing among my cucumbers. Their shadows drifted across his fence and created a cool spot.

"There's a lot of work to be done in the garden," I told the cat, who was cycling a hovering dragonfly.

In addition to the weeding, there was the replanting. It was past the time to replace the onions and the spinach. For too long, I had used the excuse of the heat to avoid having to rework the rows. There was also the question of what to replant. I had spent three weeks worrying about which vegetables would survive, if planted in late May. Now, it was late June, and it was too late for anything practical, except soybeans.

The Puppy Papers

I wasn't sure of the soybean market, so I had ruled out planting the two five-foot rows with the "food of the future."

"I think I'll plant parsley," I told the cat, as we walked to the garden.

Sure, I had already planted three rows of the green herb, but parsley is high in iron and good for the breath, I said to my wife earlier. She had become fed up with my gardening antics and had refused to discuss the replanting.

"When all this comes in, don't ask me to help you give away three tons of parsley to the neighbors," she had said, washing her hands of the whole affair.

The cat liked gardening. She enjoyed relaxing in the cool fresh soil which had recently been replanted with parsley, and she liked chasing the grasshoppers that fled as I pulled handfuls of weeds from the struggling zucchini.

On the most recent venture, I was using my perfected method of hand and hoe weed pulling, and the cat was waiting for a winged

quarry to be flushed from the underbrush, when I noticed a youth slipping around Billy Jones' apple tree.

He didn't see me. I watched leaning on my hoe, like the farmer I had seen in a late-night version of the "Grapes of Wrath."

The nicely dressed boy, who was probably about eight years old, selected a plump green apple and stealthily plucked it from the tree.

I didn't stop him. It wasn't any big deal. Even the police might have looked the other way. Boys have been stealing apples and plugging watermelons since the Garden of Eden. As long as he doesn't do it after he reaches the age of 12, it's accepted thievery.

"It's sort of like fudging on the IRS, or lying in politics," I told the cat. "As long as you don't get caught, it's OK."

I wanted to tell the boy that it was wrong and about the IRS, but he was long gone with his purloined spoils, back to the world of the "innocent" and down the street.

"I hope he knows he was wrong, and I hope Billy Jones doesn't catch him," I said to the cat, as I turned back to my wedding.

The sun was dropping. The air was cooling. There was a lot of work to be done in the garden, and there was parsley to plant. I couldn't be worried about boys and apples.