

Viewpoints

Reagan should take cue from recent Gallup Poll

President Ronald Reagan should take a hint from the most recent Gallup Poll which shows the American people believe 4-to-1 that too much is being spent on defense and 2-to-1 that funds being earmarked for social programs are too small.

Of course, Mr. Reagan only has to look at the deteriorating condition of the nation's schools, cities being held hostage by crime, the plight of the American farmer, the growing drug epidemic, lengthening youthful unemployment lines and the survival struggles of the elderly, to know that his budgetary priorities are out of kilter.

The bottom line on the Reagan budget is allegedly a zero increase over the previous year, but the spending bill calls for money for defense to be generated by cutting social programs.

In the face of mounting evidence of defense contracting ripoffs and continued undisciplined fiscal activities by the military, one has to question the sanity of the President's proposals.

Perhaps the Gallup Poll will show Mr. Reagan that it is difficult to convince a nation that we must tighten our belts and pay more federal taxes for bombs and missiles, when at the same time we must do without such programs as revenue sharing, housing, WIN, juvenile justice, endowments for the arts, farm subsidies, Amtrack, social services block grants, Conrail, social security increases, interstate highways, college loans and others.

There is little question that some social programs are excessive and could stand some cutting. But we believe the ax should fall evenly throughout the federal budget and reductions should be made for efficiency.

Before the budget process ends this year, it is hoped that Mr. Reagan and Congress will heed the recommendations of the President's Grace Commission, which found that \$424.4 billion in government spending could be saved in three years by cracking down on excesses, like the defense department paying \$91 for a 3 cent screw and \$14.6 billion being spent in erroneous social security payments.

Cutting social programs is easy. Few people affected by the cuts will vote. They will only suffer.

Eliminating waste in defense spending and reducing the size of Congressional benefits is another matter.

If Mr. Reagan wants to be recorded as a great President, then he should listen to the results of Gallup Poll and cast an incredulous eye on the advice of those who are being served by his present posture.

Commission's position might raise questions

One has to wonder about the allegiance of the North Carolina Utilities Commission, when a public staff member implies that he would question the wisdom of the effort by Hoke County to establish direct telephone hookups with Fayetteville.

Surely the staff member, whose job it is to look after the interests of the customers, not the utility companies, does not realize the economic importance of the direct telephone link with Ft. Bragg and Cumberland County.

Last week in an interview with *The News-Journal*, the staff member quoted Carolina Telephone Company costs figures for the increased service and suggested that Hoke County's efforts might be futile.

Despite deregulation of the nation's telephone systems and separations of local and long distance companies, Carolina Telephone still maintains control over the lines from Raeford to Fayetteville.

Currently Carolina Telephone derives the extra revenue from each long distance call made between Hoke County and the Cumberland exchanges. It is not the company's immediate benefit to offer the direct service at no extra charge.

Revenues would be lost, and the company would have to replace them with higher rates, spokesmen for Carolina Telephone have said.

We believe, as do most Hoke County residents, that higher rates quoted by the company and the public staff member would not be justified, and that in the long run, the change in service would benefit not only local customers but the utility company also.

Direct telephone service could mean more industry, residents and businesses moving to Hoke County, which will be more revenue for the company.

Hoke County is going to have a tough battle to convince Carolina Telephone of the need and to develop affordable rates.

It is hoped that when this county's case is brought before the utilities commission, that we have an impartial hearing, and the attitude expressed last week by the public staff member is not an indication of the overall body's feelings.

"Those guys at the Chamber of Commerce are pretty nice. Even when I told them I couldn't help with their 'Restore the depot' drive, they insisted I take this new housecoat as a gift."



Madilyn

Mara

Photographs, stories of depot sought

You knew it was coming. Before you were asked for money the first time. You knew folks would be asking you to help in the restoration of the Raeford Aberdeen & Rockfish Depot.

The Hoke Historical Association is asking you to help in a way that will be fun.

If the restoration is to be what it says it is -- restoring a special old building -- there is a need for facts about what it was. The depot has been right there on Main Street all our lives, or all the time we've lived here. What was happening there that made it important in the life of this community?

I remember it because there was a wonderful rose garden there when I was a child. That rose garden may have existed until recently, but that is my earliest memory. I know nothing about the

business that went on there.

Information about that business is needed to document the historical significance of the depot. Photographs are especially important in this documentation. Photos will actually show events in the life of the community and how the depot looked at these times.

I know that in one period of Hoke development watermelons were a very important agricultural product. Tons of watermelons left Raeford on the A&R. I've heard stories of people who worked in melons all my life. (My Pa and his family were among them. Uncle Cecil had a wreck with a melon truck in Emporia, Va....But that's another story.)

If the watermelon shipping was an important segment in the life of the depot, we must find photos, newspaper stories, letters, old bills



Kay Thomas

Looking On

of sale, or we must establish some oral history, from credible sources, that will supplement the information that's available.

In your family album you may have a photo of Uncle Whoever leaving on an important trip from the depot. That might just be the photo that shows how the depot looked in 1918. The daily existence of the train and the part it played in the lives of people is known to be significant. To show that to committees who make decisions about historical markers and

registers of historical places is an essential step in putting this building back into service for the community.

If the building is to be restored, the renovation cannot be simply a new coat of paint and some carpet.

There must be research which shows that the building was the site of community activity that was significant, and there must be an attempt to return it to its appearance at that time.

Now, go look for that photo in Grandma's trunk of her brother going off to the Great War. When you find it, leave a message at *The News-Journal* with a name and number.

Warren Johnston and the Hoke Historical Association want to hear from you.

Environmental issues need balance

By John Sledge
N.C. Farm Bureau Federation

Environmental concerns are constantly in the limelight... and justifiably so. Every rational human being realizes that we must maintain a life-sustaining planet. That is fundamental.

We'd like to point out, however, that rational people understand that there must be a balance between the totally pure concept and the necessity of using some things

that may contaminate the environment.

Farmers, for example, use pesticides and herbicides. So far, there's no alternative if they continue to produce the food and fiber that sustains human life. There may, however, be a scientific solution.

Significant research is being done to develop plants that are insect and disease resistant. Such a breakthrough would reduce the need for chemicals. It's even possi-

ble that such plants would require no pesticides and herbicides.

Greater emphasis on many research projects could speed the day when we will be rid of exhaust fumes, factory smoke, acid rain... and, yes, agricultural chemicals, too. Working toward that goal seems to be more rational than protesting the way things are now.

We all want to protect our planet Earth. At this point, it's all we have.



Pecan trail brings back youth

As I was walking to work the other day, I noticed a pecan smashed on the sidewalk. It led to a trail of smashed pecans.

"This is the work of misspent youth," I said to myself. "They should hang the little ruffian by his toes."

I imagined the youth jumping into the air, and making a noise like a bomb whistling from the belly of a B-29 followed by a throaty explosion as both feet landed squarely on the pecan smashing it to a little yellow and brown pulp.

"The target's destroyed, sir," he probably cracked into his hand, held over his mouth as a microphone, like a bombardier would have reported to the pilot.

I used to play a similar game when I was young. I smashed burned out light bulbs against a brick wall, allowing the glass to shower down on a company of toy soldiers camped at the base.

The bulbs made a nice "pop" as they hit the wall, and with the sound effects I added, it made a convincing destruction of the enemy below. At least I thought so.

When I could not scrounge enough bulbs out of the garbage can to complete the mission, sometimes I would steal into the house and remove new ones from where my father kept them stored.

"I could have sworn we had more light bulbs than this," my father would say, discovering the shortage. I never confessed. I feared the sting of "the belt."

As I walked along the sidewalk on my way to work, the number of smashed pecans grew and so did my intolerance of the waste.

"Someone should tell this kid how good pecans are to eat," I thought.

I remembered the time my mother roasted a pan of salted pecans in butter, and how they smelled when she brought them to us as my friend and I "camped out" in the back yard.

"Hey, we're supposed to be roughing it," we told her. It was our



Warren Johnston

The Puppy Papers

first campout. It was important to be authentic. We were six. After some coaxing, we accepted the pecans. We relished them as we sat around the flashlight, covered with a red cloth to simulate fire, and made up cowboy stories.

Once it got really dark, my parents came out and suggested we finish the night in the "bunk house," particularly since my dog, who had been playing the role of a herd of cattle, had already gone to sleep and needed no more supervision.

We didn't want to go. "What? Leave this fine tent, this glowing campfire and this great star-filled night? Not on your life," we argued.

The argument did not hold up and before long we were dragging our sleeping bags across the yard and grumbling into the house.

"I'll never treat my children like this," I swore to my parents, vowing that when I grew up, I would not forget what it was like to be a kid.

It was obvious as I walked along to work that I had forgotten what it was like to enjoy those callow days of childhood.

Ahead on the sidewalk was a fat, unmolested pecan. It was a prize which would have been cherished by any maven of nuts.

For an instant, I thought of retrieving it to enjoy with my morning coffee, but I changed my mind.

I jumped into the air, made a whistling sound and landed both feet on the pecan with a throaty explosion, and then I went to work.

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