

Viewpoints

Junkyard revisions reassuring

The Hoke Board of Commissioners' tentative decision to soften the County's junkyard ordinance is a reasonable response to a tricky problem: Hoke needs junkyards, but junkyards need regulation. The ordinance was putting one after another existing junkyard out of business because it was not physically possible for them to comply with setback requirements — rules that specify how far from the road junked cars and appliances can be located. Most junkyards now in business simply don't have the additional land and can't purchase it.

The Commissioners are planning to ease the setback requirements to allow the junkyards now in operation to remain open with the stipulation they meet other ordinance requirements such as fences and shrubbery. New junkyards will have to comply with all the regulations.

"Grandfathering," which is what this plan amounts to, is a time-honored way for govern-

ment to take new directions with rules, regulations and laws but without unduly penalizing people and businesses who set up operations before the new rules.

Hoke's junkyard ordinance was harsh in that respect. In fact, it was particularly unfair in that it didn't apply to junkyards in Raeford or along U.S. highways such as Highway 401 (Those junkyards are controlled by other regulations, but, in the case of the federal highways, the rules aren't enforced).

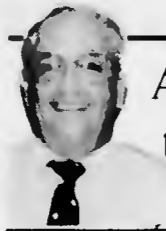
People who have watched the debacle of the dissolving of the Raeford-Hoke Planning Commission have wondered if Hoke's Commission was going to turn irresponsible behavior into an art form.

The approach to the junkyard ordinance problem is a reassuring sign that things may get better.

Some folks don't respond too nice

As I get older I try to remain calm when a situation occurs which drives me up the wall. Such was the case when I received a letter from the Motor Vehicle Department informing me that my insurance was going to expire on my 1961 Falcon. I further stated that if I did not answer the questions and return the form by a certain date my plates would be picked up.

My insurance was going to expire because the company which insures that relic had informed my agent they were not going to do business in North Carolina after 1993. The thought kept crossing my mind that surely those overpaid politically appointed campaign contributors in the Motor Vehicles Department knew when a company decided to take their insurance business out of the state. However, being a forgiving soul, I decided to overlook their absentmindedness. Perhaps they were too busy to deal in such trivialities. I had decided long before I got the form that I would sell my beloved Falcon. After all, I drove it only three or four times a year. Being a good citizen, I informed the proper authorities in the department of my intentions, with the explanation that the car would sit in my backyard with a cover on it until it was sold. Apparently the post office goofed because two weeks later I received the same



A View from the Country

Raz Autry

form with the same message. No one was perfect, I thought, and besides, I was trying to improve my Christian life — getting mad wouldn't be a plus.

Once again the post office screwed up. Two weeks later I received the same form in the mail. After gazing into space for several minutes trying to remain calm, I turned to my wife and said, "You answer it this time because I am going to blow my whole Christian life if I answer it."

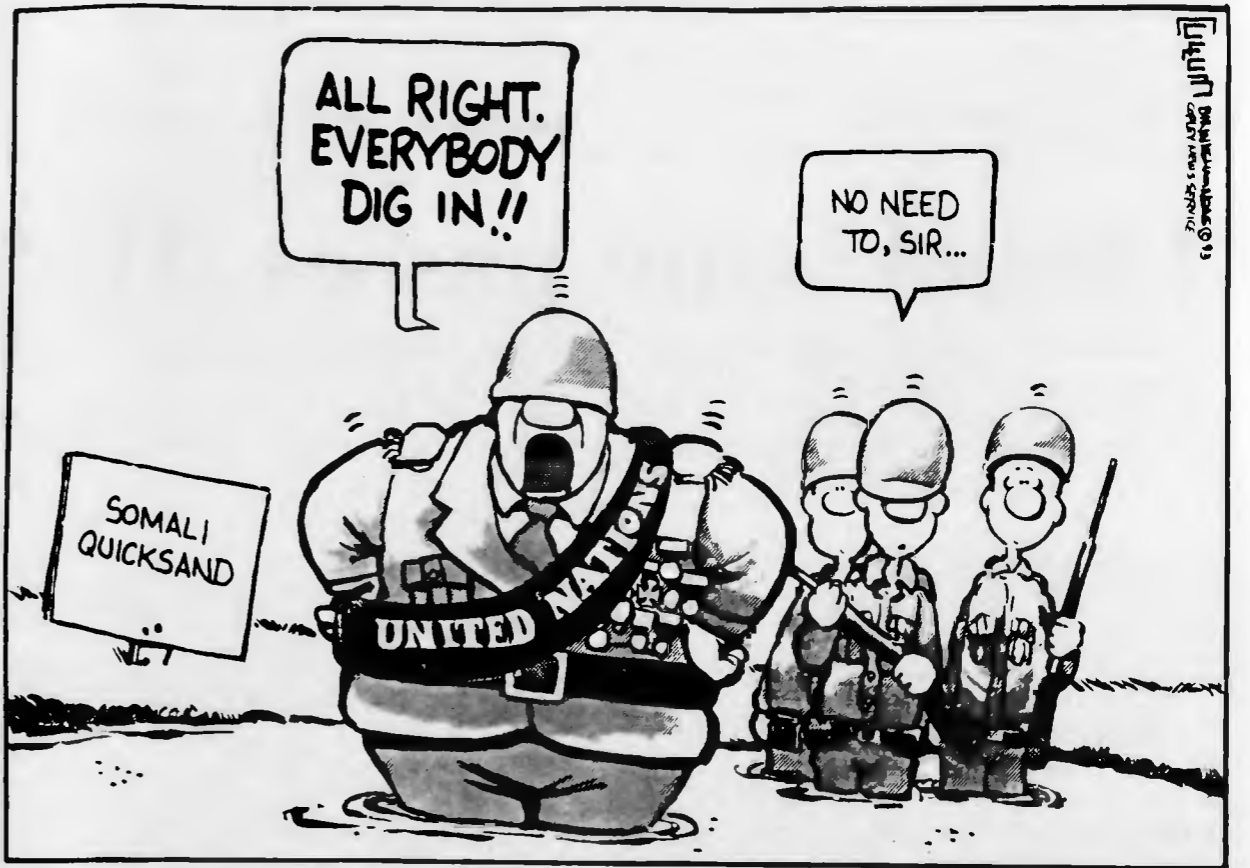
My beloved is a calm woman in most situations. In all of our married life I can't remember her getting up tight when we encountered stupidity of such a high degree. Very calmly she wrote a lengthy explanation about the whole matter. Even a kindergarten could have understood. This would settle the matter once and for all. Wishful thinking. In a couple of weeks, in rolled the same form with the same threatening message. However this time I decided to answer them in language they could understand. I am sure my first sentence

which stated, "My father taught me to never argue with folks who have less sense than I, but in your case I am going to make an exception," went over their head.

I carried liability insurance, like most responsible folks, before it became a law. Unfortunately, in the eyes of the authorities, law abiding citizens are like criminals, because no one had come up with a plan to separated those who have no intention of doing right from those who follow the law. Regardless it makes me madder than a rooster who has been separated from the hens to have to constantly prove that I am not a crook, especially to people who don't take the time to read a letter.

There is only one way to correct the ills of the world and it's illegal. Let me leave this sad tale by passing a good story on. While in Colorado Springs I met a gentleman from Kansas who was as country as I. He asked me if it was as dry in North Carolina this past summer as told by a fellow tarheel. It was so dry that the Baptists couldn't duck their sinners; therefore they sprinkled them. The Methodists wet a cloth and washed their face. Presbyterians did neither; they were dusted and given a raincheck. Friends that is dry.

My parting thought — Some individuals are pure-minded because they never think.



Hidden twists in this political deal

Only the very naive pass their 16th birthdays unaware that politics is a duplicitous game, that the appearance of interests is not always the reality of interests.

Take, for example, the congressmen in Washington who say they favor a bill, but who, in the background, are working to keep the bill from ever being brought to a vote. A couple of years ago, U. S. House Speaker Tom Foley got into deep trouble with his Democratic colleagues when he allowed several such bills to come to floor votes.

Over 14 years of covering the General Assembly, several committee chairmen have confided to me that they were holding bills at the secret request of the sponsors. A bill is filed to satisfy a local constituency, and the sponsor needs a bad guy — who doesn't run back home — to blame for its defeat.

Then you must ask if there isn't some truth spoken when the lobbyists kid that their personal interests are best served by the occasional success of their adversaries. If an industry gets everything it wants in one session, will it pay huge lobbying fees two years hence?

Finally, do liberal political action committees really want to see Sen. Jesse Helms defeated, and, on the other hand, do conservative PACs really seek to end the career of Sen. Ted Kennedy? Each man is tremendously valuable to his adversaries when they send out fundraising letters.

In this setting, comments made by Rep. Joe Mavretic, D-Edgecombe, last week were quite interesting. Mavretic is asking voters to defeat the four bond issues on the November ballot as a way of forcing a special session of the General Assembly for this winter. Mavretic says that the Assembly should then re-approve the bonds at that session, along with a lottery referendum and a constitutional amendment for the veto.

Gov. Jim Hunt is backing the bonds to raise \$740 million for the universities, community colleges, state parks and for local governments to use for water and sewer lines. On the record, Hunt is opposed to Mavretic's plan. "The governor supports the bond package and is working very hard to pass it," says Rachel Perry, Hunt's press secretary.

Rather than characterize his proposal as adversarial to Hunt, a man he opposed in the 1992 gubernatorial campaign, Mavretic says that he's providing Hunt with a fallback position. "My traveling around the state (making this proposal) allows him to say, 'if the bonds go down, that's the reason and I'm going to call for the special session'" the voters requested.

In such a special session, Mavretic hypothesizes, House members would be under considerable pressure to approve the veto, the lottery and the bonds, again. Citing polls that say the public supports both issues by more than two-thirds, Mavretic asked: "About this time, we'd be going into filing period (for legisla-



Watching

Paul T. O'Connor

ests are tied in with lottery and veto. So, if Hunt loses in November, he may prosper in the long run. It's kind of like losing in the final weeks of the NFL season to get a better draft choice.

There's a problem with Mavretic's twisted scenario. He's mentioned it out loud. Given public skepticism of politicians, many will probably figure there's still one more hidden twist in this deal.

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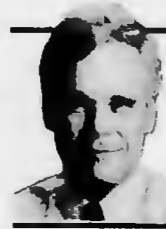
Should the U.S. rush into trouble?

Am I hearing what I think I am hearing?

Who is saying that we need to get out of Somalia immediately? Is it some of the same people who also say that this country should be ashamed of itself for not helping out in Bosnia?

A lot of these people are senators and members of congress. They take the pulse of the people back home — you and me and our fellow citizens. And, like you and me whom they represent and reflect, they sometimes get caught saying inconsistent things.

Our shifts from enthusiastic interventionists to "get out on the next plane" extractionists make it hard for our country to maintain a credible, consistent foreign policy.



One on One

D. G. Martin

Our people want to help other people when we can. Sometimes, too much so. We tend to rush to help when something tugs at our hearts like the oppression of a small ethnic or religious group or because of other wrongs committed in another land.

These tendencies explain why sending troops and other help to Vietnam in the early 1960s was popular — at first. It helps explain why, until now, few people objected to our help-

ing the Somalis get on their feet again. And it explains why some people wanted us to get involved in the Bosnian civil war on the side of the government against the Serbs.

Maybe it will always be our natural impulse to help. We should always be ready to help — when we can help without getting bound up in local disputes. And when we don't let ourselves commit unless we have a way (and the will) to impose a solution.

But there is another "rush" that goes to work once we get our country committed in some international military project. It is the rush to get out when things get complicated. Whenever our fighting men and (See MARTIN, next page)

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