

# Viewpoints

## Library needs support

For almost a year, the Hoke County Public Library has asked for funds to replace a staff member who resigned. For almost a year, their requests have fallen on deaf ears. For almost a year, the library has been closed on Saturdays.

Despite attempts from the library staff to cooperate with the county during the budget crisis — even to the point of asking for less money and two part-time positions — they have gotten little support from the commissioners. The county continues to spend money building jails and transporting prisoners and continues to rob children of the chance for a better future through education.

The students in this county deserve a better opportunity to use the wealth of resources available at the library. The dedicated, hard-working staff deserves the opportunity to serve residents. The only thing standing in their way is a Board of Commissioners whose

priorities lie elsewhere. Instead of cooperating, the board has dodged the issue completely.

The two part time positions requested would only cost \$10,000 — not a lot of money in a \$12 million budget — but that \$10,000 will be invested into the education of Hoke's children and the future of the county.

Working parents, adults continuing their education, college students home from the weekend all deserve the chance to use the library. The library is one resource that can benefit every resident of Hoke County — but only if the opportunity is there.

Investing in education, in the library, means investing in the future. A future with lower crime rates and fewer prisoners. The two are connected: as education levels rise, crime is lowered. It is their choice to make — hopefully, the commissioners will choose wisely.

—Amy Clarkson

### Letters

#### County needs new commissioners

To the Editor:

After reading Mr. McLaughlin's praise of Mr. Jordan and Mr. Leach I just had to find a response.

Mr. McLaughlin states the county has done better under their reign than any other. But I guess that it's hard to see what's wrong when you are also part of the problem. If the two incumbents do not get reelected then Mr. McLaughlin loses his little majority. Then maybe we will see some changes in the way the county is run.

In having traveled in 48 of 50 states, I find Hoke County one of the worst run counties around. One thing I do know is that if we elect "NEW" commissioners into the government they cannot do any worse then the current two we have now. I, for one, could probably do just as bad a job as they are now or maybe just a little better, who knows?

Just remember we need some new faces in here. We just may make it to the 21st Century. But first we have to get out and vote.

Shayne MacKinnon

#### Remember to vote on the issues

To the Editor,

As you well know, I have not submitted any letters in the past couple of weeks, rather I have sat on the side lines watching those that have written you with great interest.

My last letter received response both in the paper and on my telephone at home. Of the responses I received, one was partially negative towards my writing. The gentleman called me at home, asked if I wrote the letter and then told me that if it were not for Rockfish there would be no Raeford. The gentleman then told me there were no decent restaurants in Hoke County and he had all his meals in Fayetteville.

The man was incensed over the fact that I was picking on Dr. Riley Jordan. I responded to the fact that Jordan was a politician and subject to public criticism as well as praise in regards to his job performance as a commissioner. When I pointed out my goal was to see this county go forward and of course using "LBD" as a way to open the

door to possible new revenue, this man thought that education for our children was more important. I quite agree with him on that point. You know, I have poked a little fun by mentioning the Applebee's Bar & Grill in Aberdeen. Well, I am starting to really wonder, because there is a new restaurant (bar & grill type) going up on Highway 211 about three miles from the Hoke County line and is called "The Brewery". I guess the people are building it there to attract the first Hoke residents entering into Aberdeen on Highway 211.

The Democratic primary is drawing near, I hope all eligible voters will get out and vote. I sincerely hope that people will take the time to listen to the candidates, see who is qualified through academics and business experience. It takes a good amount of education to be a doctor, but it does not mean that person has good sense when it comes to making business-related decisions. Being a preacher is great, that person may have the ability to talk to people and say things they want to hear, but that does not mean that person has the ability to make good business decisions.

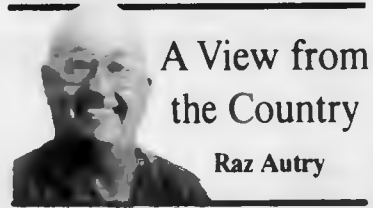
(See LETTERS, page 3A)

## Grandkids easy to spoil

A lot of your grandparents have been invited by your grandchildren to eat lunch with them at their school.

If such an invitation comes your way, you are going to go, regardless of how much you have to do. When the grandchildren call, you are on the way. If you are suspended in air a hundred feet from the ground, you are going to find a way to get to the ground. If your best friend is being buried and the grandchildren call, someone else will have to attend the funeral, because you must be at school at the appointed hour. My youngest one called the other night and said, "Papau, will you come and eat lunch with me tomorrow?" I had three weeks of work to do in one day. And an appointment with a person at noon. What do you think I said to her? Naturally, "Peaches name the time and place." I showed up 15 minutes before lunch time.

When the teacher welcomed me to the class, her tiny second graders hovered around me. I wanted



A View from the Country  
Raz Autry

to pick each one up and give them a big hug. No hugging, I kept my hands in my pockets. The only one I could hug was Peaches. What a shame we find ourselves in this fix. Only a few short years ago I could have hugged every child in the class, without giving it a second thought. Now if I did such a thing, I could be accused of everything except having religion. In fact, a man is almost afraid to kiss his wife, he could be taken to court for sexual harassment. My ol' buddy Rufus found out there wasn't any room for good ol' boys anymore. Got news for you Rufus, there is no more room for hugging anymore. You got careless with the taxpayer's money, which was a no-no. All us huggers wanted to

do was show children we cared. Tough world, Rufus.

I realize that many children are abused. Therefore to protect all children, rules have to be made and people who truly care about children are going to suffer because of the action of a few. Needless to say, the world needs more love. Unfortunately, we aren't headed in the direction that will lead us to it. Now on to a different subject.

In many different articles, I have mentioned my speaking engagements. I will admit I am not Jerry Clower, but I am a lot cheaper — I speak for nothing. Most clubs will give me a dinner, which I don't have to list on my income tax form. Recently I got into a terrible jam, simply because I speculated and a person never should speculate.

A couple of years ago I was asked to speak to a group of high school students from across the state. It was the annual meeting of

(See RAZ, page 3A)

## Easter is time for new life

Now that all of the little girls are finished flitting around in their frilly Easter frocks, and all of the little boys have yanked off their bothersome neckties and button-down shirts and gleefully tossed them into the floor, we are left with mountains of dirty laundry and boiled eggs — and chocolates in assorted stages of meltedness. All thanks to the silly tradition of the great Easter Egg Hunt.

It's fun all right, but you really need to love deviled eggs a whole lot in order to enjoy the aftermath of the search. Or you need a dog who loves them.

Fortunately, my family enjoys deviled eggs. We are trying to come up with a better name for them, something a little more



Sampler  
Lenore Morales

wholesome. Like smashed eggs, mashed eggs, whipped eggs or stuffed eggs — but no, those names lean toward the violent side. How about make-the-cholesterol-taste-real-good-and-eat-a-bunch eggs? That's probably the most accurate name yet.

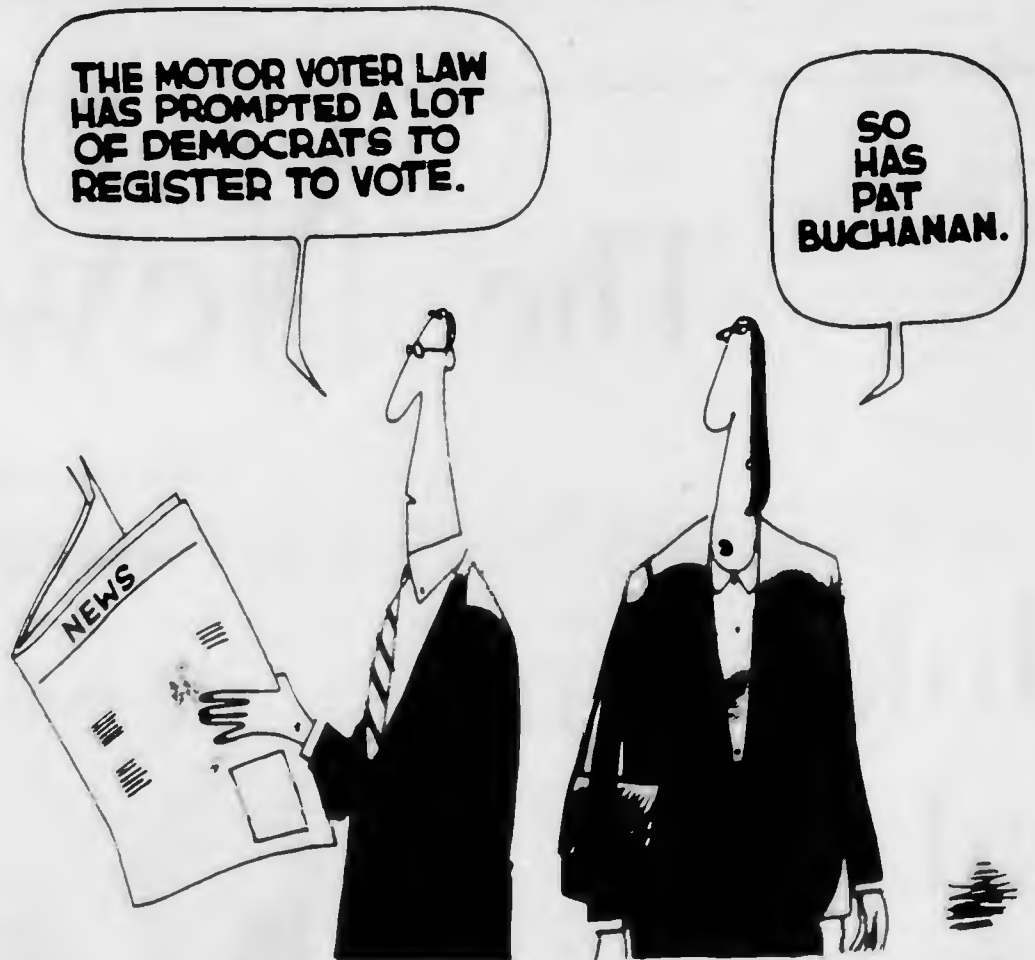
But the problem of renaming the eggs fades into the background for a person with a sweet tooth who lives in a house where baskets full of candy eggs and bun-

nies lurk on every countertop. I am not going to embarrass myself and tell how many chocolates I ate on Easter Monday.

Now I am faced with either throwing all of the candy out or exercising my willpower until the kids are able to consume it all. Tossing it out takes a lot less gump-tion, but I couldn't take the guilt trip the little ones would give me — "But we wanted some, Mom!"

So I guess I'll have to try to remind myself constantly that the chocolates are perfectly happy in their wrappers, rather than thinking of how lonely they look with nobody eating them up. I'll have to remember that Easter is a time to celebrate new life, which is not

(See Easter, page 3A)



## Let us vote as we wish

Who does Frances Cummings think she's fooling?

The two-term state representative who changed her party affiliation from Democrat to Republican right after the 1994 GOP landslide is pushing legislation that is so self-serving it is almost microwaveable. But she's trying to convince a legislative panel that her motives are freedom of choice for voters.

It's curious that Rep. Cummings, R-Robeson, would promote choice by taking away one choice which voters have when they vote: that of pulling the straight party lever.

Cummings has made one of the oddest political odysseys in recent state history. A former teacher and president of the N.C. Association of Educators, she was elected in 1992 with a solid backing of political liberals in her home county of Robeson, one of the last bastions of the Democratic Solid South.

Somewhere along the line, Cummings started to act really kooky. She's involved with something called the Divine Sounds Ministry and she allows her spiritual adviser to write many of her press releases. During the 1995 legislative session, she informed a committee that if members voted against her bill, they were opposing the will of the Lord.

After a 1994 campaign that involved shots being fired through windows and other similarly Robeson-like events, she converted to Republicanism.

Now it's dawned on her that she has no chance of being re-elected given the Democratic Party's grip on Robeson. So she's trying to eliminate straight ticket voting on the misguided fancy that that will somehow save her.

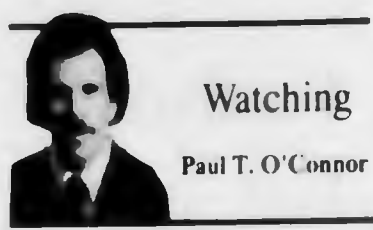
Cummings asked the Election Laws Study Commission to recommend that the General Assembly outlaw straight party voting this year. The party lever denies voters a choice, she said. Voters only have free choice, she "reasoned," when they are required to vote individually for each office.

Other members of the committee pounced on the weakness of her argument. Rep. Willis Brown, D-Harnett, said that voters choose to pull the lever.

They're not required to do so. Eliminating straight ticket voting is eliminating a choice, he said. It also makes voting more difficult for some. Rep. Leo Mercer, D-Pitt, questioned another of Cummings' assertions — that eliminating the party vote would fight fraud. Buying someone's vote is already illegal, he said, whether or not it's a straight ticket vote.

Sen. Wib Gulley, D-Durham, worried that Ms. Cummings' proposal would reduce the strength of the parties. Mercer added that voters often don't know all the candidates but have some faith in the philosophies of their parties.

North Carolina is one of 20 states that still permits straight



Watching  
Paul T. O'Connor

ticket voting, although voters must

vote separately for president. The proposal had little support with the committee, and won't be presented to the full Assembly in May. It appears that Cummings will have to go home and face the wrath of voters who feel cheated that she was elected as a Democrat and then switched parties on them.

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