

Viewpoints

Project Graduation deserves accolades

Juvenile crime is on the rise. Even in places like Hoke County, young offenders are arrested daily — thefts, robbery, drugs. Hoke County has programs to reach at-risk children — alternatives to detention, the alternative school, the youth task force. But what about countless children who are not identified as "at-risk"? What about programs for those kids?

One program, held on graduation night, showed the difference the community can make.

Thanks to a group of parents, Hoke's teenagers were provided a safe alternative to the usual graduation-night drinking, carousing and fighting. While there are several organizations geared toward teenagers in Hoke County, none show the commitment of the entire county like Project Graduation. Businesses and individuals helped foot the bill, and volunteers helped make the night a success. Parents solicited donations and

prizes. Everyone got involved in the effort to make graduation night memorable, fun — and safe. The parents, businesses and volunteers responsible for months of planning and organizing should be commended for their efforts. They did a wonderful job.

But it shouldn't stop there. The long, lazy summer months stretch before high school students. Keeping those kids out of the danger of the streets, away from drugs and alcohol is an on-going challenge for parents and community leaders.

Parents should be challenged to get their kids involved in other projects available — in a Parks and Recreation team, in a scout troop, in a church youth program. Hoke County needs more programs like Project Graduation. It needs more people dedicated to students. It can be done — just ask the people involved with Project Graduation.

—Amy Clarkson



"This curfew law worries me. What are we going to do if they pass legislation saying we have to be good parents?!"

Letters

Carolyn Phillips will be missed

To the Editor:

As I read and heard the many positive things said about city manager, Tom Phillips in the wakes of his leaving, I became afraid that Carolyn Phillips might leave Raeford without her well-deserved accolades.

Carolyn Phillips has heightened my appreciation for the joke about the pig and chicken's discussion to personally donate to a ham and egg breakfast. While there are many people who donate eggs to keep Hoke Reading/Literacy Council functioning, few donate

ham. As a volunteer tutor, Carolyn gives the ham. Two nights a week, she gives her time, talent and patience to teaching an adult to read. She expands our basic curriculum to ensure that her student's personal reading goals are included. She brings a sense of humor to the lessons that is deeply appreciated by her student.

Phillips is a senior tutor and our One-to-One Volunteer of the Year. We will always be grateful that she became a tutor and wish the best for her.

Sincerely,
Barbara J. Buie
Executive Director

We welcome your letters

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 Tuesday of the publication week. Due to space limitations, we will only print three letters a month from an individual.

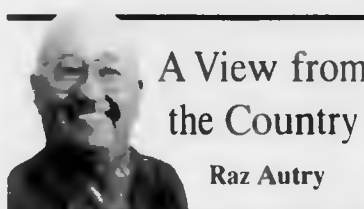
Farmers will lose in audit

Most of the decisions made by the local elected officials I have supported.

However, one of the most recent decisions made by the county commissioners is a puzzlement. It is hard for me to believe that four people with no ax to grind would agree for a group of so-called specialists to come into the county for the sole purpose of auditing anyone, company or individual, who has equipment valued at \$50,000 or more. The individuals doing the auditing do not have long, white beards or travel with people who have wings coming out of their shoulders. No, indeed, they do this for profit — 25 percent of the take.

To take such action, the commissioners must have understood they were saying to the company or individual that you are not trustworthy. You didn't list your equipment for tax purposes correctly. Simply put, you are a liar. Man, that is heavy stuff for neighbor against neighbor.

When I visited Dale Teal, who heads the tax office, to get my facts straight, he assured me that this was a first-rate outfit. According to Dale they had done wonders in making people come forward who had cheated on the listing of their equipment. Furthermore, it was all within the law, which I suppose makes it right. The folks



A View from the Country
Raz Autry

from Charlotte must have done a whale of a selling job. Apparently most of the commissioners or the county manager had second thoughts about such action.

As Dale and I continued to talk, he showed me a letter from the ones doing the auditing which said to an individual, "You have correctly listed your equipment." Now you must admit that is nice and says something for the company. Being a skeptic, I want to see the letter which says, "You didn't list your equipment correctly, therefore you owe the county x number of dollars, of which I will get 25 percent." Dale Teal is a fine man, trustworthy and does an excellent job for Hoke. The information he gave me was strictly above board and is public record. Therefore I have nothing but compliments to throw his way.

While I say this, I find it necessary to challenge him on another statement. He said, "The farmers are the only ones complaining to me." I can well understand. Farmers have a defensive attitude and

rightly so. In this day and time, they have no one to speak for them. In times past it was different. From 80 to 90 percent of the American people were engaged in agriculture. Today less than 2 percent feed and cloth America and most of the world.

Anyone with one eye and half sense knows you can not use the same yardstick on farm equipment as you do in other areas. If a \$150,000 cotton picker burns and the farmer has enough engineering knowledge to take parts from several other older pickers and rebuild it, is he to pay tax on a new picker? Most tractors have interchangeable parts. Some times it takes three old tractors to get one that works. How do you pay tax on such a piece of equipment? Sure they are mad and I don't blame them. As for me, I am not on the \$50,000 list. If I am put on it, I will sell my equipment to the gentlemen for \$40,000 and they can resell it for 50 and make themselves 10 grand.

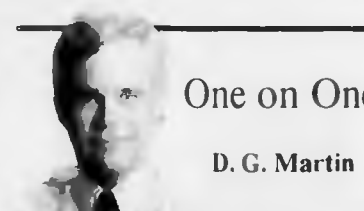
Hoke County has been a special place for my family and me. I have enjoyed my years here. Unfortunately, we are going the way of the world. Instead of letting trust count for something, a decision has been made which says it is more profitable to be a county of greed.

Inoculation protects Clinton

"Inoculation." Remember that word. You are going to hear it a lot of times during this upcoming presidential campaign.

And the political meaning of that word might be the most important determinant of the result of the Clinton-Dole contest this fall.

Why is the word so important? Inoculation in health terms means gaining immunity from a disease by taking an injection of a mild form of it. You get a little bit sick, build up your body defenses, and when you are exposed to the real disease, your body throws it



One on One
D. G. Martin

off. In politics, inoculation means about the same thing.

When you run for political office these days you can expect one thing for sure. Your opponent is going to run a negative campaign against you. (He is going to do it even if you start out the "best of friends.")

Knowing that is going to happen, if you are a wise candidate you get prepared for the negative campaign that always comes.

One of the most prudent things you can do is to inventory all the "bad things" in your background. Put them on the table and evaluate their potential negative impact when they are disclosed by your opponent. And then consider whether or not you can minimize the damage by taking some kind of action now.

You know that your opponent will put the very worst slant on the information if you let him be the

(See MARTIN, page 3A)

Bill protects hog farms

RALEIGH — Is your back to the political wall? Are the politicians rallying against you just because your industry has dumped tons of hog waste into the state's rivers, thus killing millions of fish and ruining the tourism season for hundreds of businesses?

Then you need lots of lobbyists, lots of campaign cash and a cooker so you can serve a barbecue pork lunch some day outside the Legislative Building. Do that, and legislators will quickly forget that the folks back home are tired of swimming with the feces and breathing hog odor.

The hog industry, which has been on the defensive all year, has found a way to render meaningless all of the reforms that will be passed by a General Assembly that is trying to look sensitive to environmental concerns. The industry proposes to have farms inspected not by environmental regulators, but by its best friends in government.

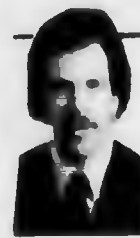
The industry turned to its old friend from the Blue Ribbon Study Commission on Animal Waste, Rep. John Brown, R-Wilkes. His bill says that a number of agencies that consult with farmers will regulate and inspect for environmental problems. The bill says that the Division of Environmental Management will not inspect farms, unless a major problem is found first.

If such a provision became law, the state would be asking consultants who have always worked with farmers to suddenly become inspectors who must regulate them. There are also serious questions about the ability of these consultants to conduct the inspections adequately.

Brown defends his action saying, absurdly, that DEM failed to protect the state's waters from last year's hog spills and do not deserve another chance. (That's absurd because DEM didn't have the manpower to protect rivers from hog waste last year, and doesn't now, either. They need more people.)

Brown, a chicken farmer, probably doesn't have to worry about voter backlash at home. It's not a big problem in the mountains. But Sen. Beverly Perdue, D-Onslow, who sponsored a similar provision in the Senate, has had to back away from it as public awareness of this scam grew. Unlike Brown, her constituents are tired of being at the terminus of all the floating hog poop. Now she has re-written her bill to say that DEM will conduct the inspections annually and that water and soil officials will also check farms for environmental problems when they conduct their annual inspections.

Ms. Perdue tried to argue that DEM doesn't have the manpower to do the inspections. There's some truth to that. But her solution to that problem was not plausible. It was akin to relieving the Nuclear Regulatory Commission of authority to inspect nuclear power plants and giving the job to Good Humor



Watching

Paul T. O'Connor

men because they're in the neigh-

borhood already. Ms. Perdue's conversion doesn't solve the problem. The House must stand up to Brown, and the hog lobbyists, and say that real environmental regulators will do the inspections that will protect North Carolina's air and water.

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