

VIEWPOINTS

Good mule for the letting

If any of you grandparents are worried about the Supreme Court ruling, not giving you the right to see your grandchildren, remember you have an ace in the hole. Tell the parents of your grandchildren not to show up for the reading of the will, there won't be anything there for them. I bet that will get their attention.

I want all of you to understand that I have over the years had a great relationship with my mother-in-law. Unfortunately, as she approaches her 90th birthday, her recollection is not as sharp as it once was. Telling you the above is in defense of the story passed on to me by a dear friend. It seems this mother-in-law was giving her son-in-law a hard time. As she approached him in the garden giving him one more piece of advice, his old mule kicked her and sadly she left this world. The mourners came to pay their respect. The ladies shook their heads up and down, the men shook their heads from side to side. One sad soul said, "Why are the women shaking their heads up and down and the men from side to side?"

A wise old bird sitting near by, replied, "When the women shake their heads up and down, they are saying they are so sorry. When the men shake their heads from side to side, they are asking if they can borrow the mule."

There are some things you just can't give away. Nobody wants one's cold, neither do they want to assume one's debt. Sometimes it is hard to give a building away. From the latest report in *The News-Journal*, the city wants to give the county the Raeford Hotel.

This grand old building has been passed from pillar to post, from owner to owner; none can make it work again. I am sure the county commissioners would much rather have the city council members a good case of poison ivy, rather than the building. To put it in working order would deplete not only all of the county money, but require several fund raising events. The mayor is a good friend



A View from the Country
Raz Autry

of mine — although we haven't seen eye to eye on all topics and I don't doubt his sincerity in offering this solution to the county's space problems but in my opinion there has to be a better one, with adequate parking. Besides, at the risk of upsetting some of my friends, the good folks of Raeford must remember there are two sides to this coin, we have a great many people in the county who feel like some of the goodies should be shared with them. Recreation facilities and library services are only two of the needs. After all, we all can't go to Raeford.

Before someone decides in a letter to the editor that I have lost my marbles, I am well aware that a park has been started in Rockfish, which is for the enjoyment of the people in that area and there are some things in the works to provide library services to our county folks. However, in all fairness it shouldn't have taken this long. Many citizens who love Raeford, once were country folks. To them I say gaze on this logic and see if it fits. It is taken from the book entitled "Grandfather was a Preacher."

"In a preachers' luncheon a preacher told them that he dreamed he had gone to heaven and looked and grandpa was not there.

They laughed.
Then it was grandpa's time to reply, and he said, "You know, that's funny, Jim, I had a dream last night, too. I dreamed I went to heaven and the Lord gave me a piece of chalk and said,

"Go over there and write down all your sins," and just at that time I met you leaving. I said, 'Jim, what are you doing? Why are you going that way?' And you said, 'I'm going to get some more chalk.'"

Letters to Editor policy

The *News-Journal* welcomes Letters to the Editor and encourages readers to express their opinions.

Letters must be signed and include an address and phone number. The street address and phone number will not be published, but are required so we may verify authenticity. The name of the writer and the town the writer is from will be published at the end of the letter.

We reserve the right to edit letters for grammar, as well as those that exceed 300 words. We will not publish letters that we consider to be in poor taste or slanderous.

In some cases we may add an editor's note as a post script when we believe a correction, explanation or amplification is warranted. We may also, at our discretion, limit the number of times an individual writer may submit a letter for publication.



If you're this close to a waterfall...



...you're this close to dying.

Letters to the Editor

Church music director applauds Hoke County High's program

Dear Editor:

Recently I had the opportunity of attending the annual band concert at Hoke County High School. Miss Lindsay Orem, one of our fine youth at the Raeford Presbyterian Church, invited me to attend. It was well worth my time to be present, and a revelation as to the exciting things that are happening in the Music Department at Hoke County High School. I want to express my sincere appreciation to Mr. Al Strickland and his students for the outstanding musical skills demonstrated at this year's concert. I am the director of music at the Raeford Presbyterian Church.

Here are some of the qualities and musical skills that I noticed being learned by the students. I appreciate the opportunity of passing this information on to our community.

These young musicians were well disciplined and demonstrated much dedication. I took note of the posture of the students. When possible the students watched their director for cues. This says so much as for the kind of training these students are getting.

The intonation of the woodwind

section was way above average for most high school musicians. This is the section of the band that is most difficult to maintain proper pitch.

The articulation of the brass section was very well executed. The sound from the brass section was exceptionally clean and demonstrated much time spent in rehearsal.

The percussion section played with enthusiasm, but were well trained in proper dynamics. In other words, they were not overwhelming but just right.

I was impressed that the band gave opportunity for a string player to be a part of the organization. This added a nice touch.

The level of difficulty of music selected was most impressive. The students played their instruments with a very high level of competency and it was evident proper dynamics and rhythms are being taught.

I was also impressed at the number of students who are taking advantage of the music program being offered at the high school. I can remember in the past when I attended these concerts, there did not appear to be as much interest as in these days.

I am very impressed with the teach-

ing skills of Ms. Jenni Lazauskas, the present choral director of Hoke County High School. I had the opportunity to attend a rehearsal recently and was thankful with what is being accomplished in the area of choral music. Do your best as a parent, relative or friend, to encourage your student to join one of the fine choral organizations being offered. Also, make it a high priority to attend all concerts being presented during the school year.

I want to take this opportunity to encourage all parents and students to take advantage of the wonderful music program being offered in our school system. Hoke High School has a his-

tory of strong support for music and the arts. I hope it will continue for many years to come. Many people have made music a career because of the training they received through our Hoke County School System. I believe the State of North Carolina would do itself a valuable service to require every student be enrolled in a music class, chorus, band, orchestra or theory class. It has been proven over and over again that people who study music in high school, make the best SAT scores, and are far more harmonious in their relationships with teachers, parents, and friends. They demonstrate discipline in dress, and are

(See LETTERS, page 3A)

Beauty pageants and political conventions — relics of another time?

What does the Miss North Carolina pageant have in common with the upcoming political party conventions? Nothing.

Or at least that is what I would have said until last Saturday. But when my daughter told me last Saturday how disappointed she was that the Miss North Carolina Pageant would not be on television, I first wondered why such a grown-up, serious law student would care. Then I started thinking. Our state's beauty contest (I know I am not supposed to call it that) used to be an event that brought many of us around the television sets for a common experience every year. We would admire and criticize and judge — picking our favorites, expressing our amazement at the talent and poise of some of the contestants, and the lack of such qualities in others. The contrived aspirations of some of the most attractive candidates sometimes brought out our laughter and sometimes our envy at their sincerity or their creativeness.

We felt an exciting fearfulness for them up on the stage, where they were putting themselves up into the public eye, hoping for glory, but knowing there might be defeat and even ridicule.

In days gone by, the Miss America

and Miss North Carolina pageants provided the most prominent route to "fame and success" for ambitious young women.

And it gave many others a way to follow that pathway and identify with it.

Today vast numbers of us watch Regis Philbin guide potential millionaires.

We are excited for the contestant and often imagine ourselves in their place. In that same way, the pageant contestants once drew us to the television and perhaps sparked a secret long-shot hope that we, or someone in our family, could be there too.

The pageants still open doors for successful contestants — and, of course, provide valuable training and experience for all participants. (I confess cheerfully my delight in the winner, Lorna McNeill, a rising senior at UNC-Pembroke, and I rejoice in the recognition her new title will bring to a university that doesn't get as much attention as it deserves.) But the bloom is off the beauty pageants. Even the winners sometimes feel compelled to explain their participation. You hear them saying pageant recognition is not at the center of their life's ambition. The JonBenet Ramsey model unfairly taints the entire enterprise.



One on One
D. G. Martin

Proof of our disengagement is that there are no longer enough potential television viewers to justify the broadcast of the Miss North Carolina pageant.

Part of the problem for the pageants is that there are now so many other pathways to fame and success for talented women. As the doors have opened in business, politics, academic leadership, the pageant has passed from a place of real importance to be merely a living relic in the social history of women. Like the debutante balls and the crowning of homecoming queens, the pageant is no longer a reflection of the way things are, but is reminder of the way things used to be.

It just doesn't make as much sense to glorify women's feminine attractiveness when it is other traits that are leading them to presidencies of universities, the chairmanships of large business enterprises, and the networks of community leadership throughout our state and country.

Later on last Saturday, I thought about all this again when I dropped by the Democratic Party's state political convention. Just a few years ago, this activity would have been an all-male event.

Women would have been there, of course, doing a lot of the work, but the men would have been in charge. The featured statewide candidates would have been men.

Not so these days. A party chair-

woman ran the convention and presided with authority. A woman candidate for lieutenant governor inspired the convention with her speaking — showing that she will a formidable contender this fall when she opposes the other party's candidate, who is also an impressive woman. These women are attractive, and part of their attractiveness no doubt comes from the qualities of grace, good looks and talent that the beauty pageants celebrate. But much more of their appeal today rests on their ability to organize, lead, and recruit support, and on their success in securing and using power.

All that said, let's go back to my original question. What do the pageants have in common with the upcoming political conventions? The party conventions are going the way of beauty contests.

They, too, are becoming relics of a time gone by, of a time when those gatherings made important decisions and introduced us to our future leaders. Historically, these events — like the beauty pageants — brought us together around our television sets to watch the drama of the selection process, and to identify with the participants.

But it won't be that way this year. The important decisions have all been made. Fewer and fewer of us will watch the acting out of scripts written by political staffs. With such declining viewership, the networks will back away. And the party conventions, like the Miss North Carolina Pageant, will fade away from our television common experience, leaving it to Regis Philbin and his colleagues to bring us together and give us compelling real life drama.

Avoiding lightning strikes

When a summer thunderstorm approaches and lightning begins to strike, most people heed the warning and seek shelter. But for many who work outdoors, including farmers and farm workers, there may be little time to find suitable shelter.

The rule of thumb is to seek a low-lying area because electricity is always looking for the fastest path to the ground. Water, metal, trees and even people can serve as a ready conductor for this natural form of electricity. Hilltops, hillsides and buildings surrounded by flat fields, all tend to attract lightning. A stand of trees or a wooden rain shelter does not provide adequate protection according to farm safety experts.

Get off tractors or other open metal vehicles. Avoid wire fences, clotheslines, metal pipes and rails. The idea is to keep low. A ditch could make a suitable refuge in case of emergency, but not if it is filled with water! Remember, water attracts lightning.

Also, noteworthy is the fact that lightning can strike several miles from its point of origin. Considering the speed with which a summer storm can

travel, it's a good idea to seek shelter before a storm reaches overhead.

What to do if struck

First of all, people struck by lightning do not retain an "electric charge," so it is not dangerous to provide assistance. Even if a person appears lifeless, quick action may help to revive them. The American Red Cross suggests using mouth-to-mouth resuscitation if a victim is not breathing. Also, administer Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) if both pulse and respiration are absent. Provide additional medical services as soon as possible.

Even if a lightning-struck victim appears uninjured, he or she should be treated for shock. Look for burns around the fingers and toes and where metal objects such as jewelry or belt buckles are worn.

The best overall advice is to keep abreast of weather conditions in your area, especially when planning outdoor activities. For further information or personal protection from lightning and emergency response, contact your local fire dept., EMS personnel or county extension service.

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