

# VIEWPOINTS

## Don't repeat mistakes of '98

Do not let the upcoming sheriff's election turn our community into a racial battleground again. Citizens, rise above the threats, the name calling, the finger pointing and the nastiness that accompanied the election of 1998. Bigotry and insinuations of racism reared ugly heads at that time, and it has taken us some time to recover from the fallout. Now racial

tension involving the sheriff's race threatens again. Don't buy into the racial slurs and don't give in to racial slights. Be ever vigilant that racism (sadly) exists and do what you can to abort it, but don't let the racists win; they would pull us apart. Good folks of all colors need to continue to work together side by side, pulling together for the good of us all. Keep the

dialogue going — the sort of positive communication that leads to understanding. Voters will hopefully make the right choices when they go into the ballot booths to have their say. But what happens before that time can mean a great deal of difference to the health of this community. We don't need a repeat of 1998.

## Youth has not experienced the good ol' days

My granddaughter came home for a week. Apparently she has seen something in Florida that I haven't discovered. It must be the beach and all those people, many of whom I can't understand when they talk. Regardless, she is one of the loves of my life. Those girls will get to a grandfather. I open up my pockets, and have a car ready for her to drive. If she had said, "I want you to go to Florida with me," I would have packed my suitcase. However, she didn't say that, which wasn't any surprise to me. First of all, what would a 20-year-old granddaughter do with a 75-year-old grandfather underfoot? She would want to go dancing, I would want to stay home and soak my feet. She would accept others who wear earrings in their noses and tongue. I would want to pull them off — the rings, that is.



**A View from the Country**  
**Raz Autry**

Nevertheless, I am a realist — of sorts. I long for the good ol' days. She never experienced them. Each generation does its thing. I am at the age where I can look across the room and remember the person's last name; before I can get to him I have forgotten it. My granddaughter can remember everything from the time she was six years old to her present age. I am like the ol' man talking to a reporter. The newsman said, "I want to talk to someone who can remember the things which happened yesteryear." The elderly gentleman said, "I am your man. I can remember yesteryear just like it was yesterday." The reporter soon discovered the gentleman couldn't remember any-

thing about yesteryear. He said, "I thought you told me that you can remember everything about yesteryear just like it was yesterday." "I can," he replied, "but I can't remember what happened yesterday." Now there is one thing I could do if I stayed with my granddaughter, I could chase the boys away. She is a pretty young woman, even if I am bragging. I have tried to tell folks she looks like her granddaddy, but no one agrees. She does have one trait she inherited from me. You always know where she stands. I have told her being outspoken will not bring a lot of presents at Christmas. She will have to have tough skin to digest those letters to the editor. By the time you read this, she will be gone and I will miss her greatly. Those of us who are grandfathers must remind ourselves that each life takes its own turn and we must accept and be happy that we have been a party of that life.

For some reason I have piled doctor appointments on top of each other. I need to be working; I don't need to spend time in a doctor's waiting room. Not many of us are still working; I am one of the chosen few. First

it was the eye doctor. Next I had an appointment with a urologist. I don't have to tell you men what that means. It will not be a pleasant experience. There are no gentle fingers. When I got a physical, it was suggested I get an ultra sound test on my carotid artery, since it was opened up and cleaned out. I can't understand that; it took me 68 years to stop it and each year I am supposed to see if it is stopped up again. I took one year ago; when the results came back the doctor didn't mention what they found. Finally I asked about the test. He shuddered his shoulders and said, "Oh, it was nothing, only a flake." He didn't explain what a flake was, the only time I heard a flake mentioned other than a snowflake was when I was in high school. When the term was used it was referring to a person who was nutty or drifting in another orbit. As much as I respect doctors, they can make mistakes, just as they did at a lunch counter that a gang of them visited during their lunch hour. One day when they were sitting waiting to order, they suddenly noticed that Willie, the counterman, was doing a lot of fidgeting. Between times folks ordered he would scratch his rear end on the corner of the counter.

Several of the doctors tried on the spot diagnosis, coming up with as many answers as there was MDs present. Finally one asked, "Willie, have you got hemorrhoids?" Pointing to the bill of fare above the counter, he answered, "Just what's on the menu, doc."



## We Get Letters

### 'Obstructionists' keep Hoke treading water, she says

To The Editor:  
Again this week, the county commissioners find themselves divided 3 to 2 on another issue. No surprise there!

These three obstructionists, (Tony) Hunt, (James) Leach and (Cleo) Bratcher, are the primary reason that Hoke County has been treading water for so long instead of moving forward. These three vote along color lines without regard for what would be good for Hoke County. They all have personal agendas.

When the citizens of Fayetteville were faced with a similarly divided city council a few years ago, they threw the scoundrels out and that's

exactly what responsible citizens of Hoke County should do. We need to do away with the good ol' boy system in county government, which has been going on far too long and replace these three commissioners and their crony Jim Davis with ethical,

responsible leaders. I urge every registered voter to go to the polls and cast your vote for change in Hoke County. We owe it to ourselves and to our children.

Theresa Imperial

### Thanks to News-Journal

To The Editor:  
Kudos to you and your staff on the thought-provoking editorial you penned on the Jim Davis dog and pony show. You are to be commended on exposing Davis' muck-raking techniques. The harm he is doing to the citizens of this county is beyond reproach.

A gold medal to Vicky Summers on the expose' she did on the Hubert Peterkin charges trumped up by his potential opponents. I thoroughly liked the way Ms. Summers went straight to the horse's mouth (former Fayetteville police chief Ron Hanson) to get the truth of the matter. The way she built the story was awe inspiring, from a sloppily copied (enhanced) press release of 1993, passed out at a local restaurant by Peterkin's opponents; to the the former Chief of Police in Fayetteville was a thing of art. I know The News-Journal is sure to be slammed by those who don't want Peterkin as sheriff, but let me assure you that you raised the bar to previously unheard of heights, for that, the other 85 percent of Hoke Countians thank you.

Jeff Sumner

### Says Sutton 'out of order'

Dear Sir or Madam:  
I am writing this letter to share with Rep. Sutton's constituents his behavior on Wednesday, June 5th. On that day I was sitting in on a legislative session. During this session Rep. Daughtry asked Rep. Sutton a question relating to redistricting. Rep. Sutton replied, "Why don't you ask the judge?" in a very curt and sarcastic manner.

I ask Rep. Sutton's constituents whether this is the behavior they expected from him when they elected him to serve as their representative. Although recognizing that redistricting is an emotional issue for our representatives, I firmly feel that this behavior was unprofessional, unbecoming, and uncalled for.

I would hope that the good people of Hoke County would write Rep. Sutton to tell him that they want better and more appropriate behavior from him.

Sincerely,  
Christopher Michalec  
Goldboro

**Letter to Editor**  
**Deadline,**  
**Monday Noon**

## Not a magical potion, but it is a beginning

There is no magical potion to give our communities and county to make it better. In order for us to be better, we have to come together. Mr. Robert Blue, coach at West Hoke Middle School, and Mr. Rodney Fairley, coach and founder of "Better Way," are organizing a basketball tournament.



**All Together Now**  
**Ray P. Owens**

The "Means of Excellence," a group of Hoke County men, are sponsoring this event. R.P. Owens Ministries, and Sandhills Mental Health Center are underwriting it. This tournament is taking place in the Robbins Heights neighborhood on Saturdays

from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m. during the month of June. Trophies and awards will be given at the end of the tournament. The idea of the tournament is to have the community of Robbins Heights come together. The youth

can come out and play and intermingle in a safe and drug-free environment, and the parents can come together and "dialogue" about issues regarding their neighborhood.

The City of Raeford has placed new stands on each side of the basketball court for spectators to sit, and Purcell Funeral Home is placing a canopy-tent for shade. This event will culminate June 29, 2002.

For teams desiring to participate in the basketball tournament, please contact Mr. Rodney Fairley at 875-9221; or Mr. Robert Blue at 875-4736.

## Jenkins' map: Which party will win the senate?

"We are going to be in charge around here next year — and for a long time to come — no doubt about it."



**One on One**  
**D. G. Martin**

This was my Republican state senator friend talking to me last week in Raleigh. He was bursting with enthusiasm about his party's chances in this fall's elections as a result of Judge Knox Jenkins' new election maps. The judge ordered the new districts into existence late last month—after he ruled that the legislature's efforts to redistrict did not meet the requirements of the state constitution. The Democratic senators I talked to were angry about the judges ruling. But they expressed confidence that they could retain control of the senate during these years elections.

by the Republican minority of the Senate.

Once Judge Jenkins determined that he could not approve the legislature's Senate redistricting plan, he should have found some other way to do the job than adopting an alternative that was identified as Republican. He should have gotten as far away from partisan politics as he could.

Ultimately, I believe, the courts will rule that it should not be done this way — if not in this case, then someday.

However, in the meantime, any complaints about the judge and the process he followed are falling on unsympathetic ears among the public. Why is this? Most ordinary citizens and legislators do not think the process of redistricting in the same way. Legislators, both Republicans and Democrats, believe that when they are in control they should design legislative districts that help their party retain control—even if they have to gerrymander the maps. Most ordinary citizens, on the other hand, do not approve of gerry-

mandering—whether it is done by Democrats or Republicans. The public does not like the idea of drawing contorted voting districts for any reason.

The problem for the Democrats is that the public thinks that the map Judge Jenkins adopted is less gerrymandered than the legislatures plan. As long as the public believes this, it is not going to be as disturbed about the courts usurpation of legislative prerogatives as I am.

Assuming that the Democrats are going to have to live with the new Senate districts, are Republicans as certain to win control as my Republican senator friend believes?

We will not know for sure until November (or maybe afterwards if this matter is delayed again by the U.S. Department of Justice or further action in the courts). But thanks to the Carolina Political Report, a weekly nonpartisan analysis of North Carolina politics edited by Ryan Thornburg we can make some preliminary judgments.

Thornburg has analyzed the new districts and their prior voting records. He has identified those which are solid Republican or Democratic, those which lean toward one party or the other, and those which are tossup districts. According to Thornburg's analysis, the 50 seats in the Senate are broken down this way: There are 19 solid Democratic seats and two that lean Democratic, for a total of 21. There are 15 solid Republican seats and nine that lean Republican, for a total of 24. In (See MARTIN, page 12A)

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