

# VIEWPOINTS

## Tractor safety is no accident

As spring approaches in rural areas, thoughts turn to planting season. Schedules are hectic. Many farm family members have off-farm jobs as well as their jobs on the farm. When planting season arrives, it is a busy time, but it is important to think about safe practices on the farm.

March 1-7 has been designated as ASAP (Agricultural Safety Awareness Program) Week. Its purpose is to remind agricultural producers that in the rush of completing the tasks on farms and ranches, they need to take time to act safely.

The theme for 2004 is Tractor Safety Is No Accident. Tractor overturns without rollover protection structures (ROPS) account for nearly half of agricultural fatalities. While tractors are an essential part of agriculture, there are safety issues to consider when operating this equipment. During ASAP Week, we are asking all agricultural producers to take these "10 commandments of tractor safety" to heart:

- Know your tractor, its implements and how they work. Teach your family members and employees how to shut off equipment.
- Use ROPS and seat belts whenever and wherever applicable.
- Be familiar with your terrain, and drive safely. Use caution on slopes, show down for all turns and stay off the highway whenever possible.
- Keep SMV signs on your equipment.

- Never start an engine in a closed shed or garage.
- Always keep your PTO properly shielded.
- Keep your hitches low and always on the drawbar.
- Never jump off a moving tractor or leave it with its engine running.
- Never refuel while the engine is running or hot.
- Keep all children off of and away from your tractor and its implements at all times; and enforce a "no riders" policy.
- Never be in a hurry about anything to do with your tractor.

— Adapted from Kubota Ten Commandments of Tractor Safety

You are important to your family and your community. Be safe!

thought about the first-grader who couldn't stop talking about the recent school fire.

"I knew it was going to happen," he said. "We've been practicing for it all year."

While in the mountains I, along with the committee, was invited to visit a winery. The man who owned it enjoyed talking as much as I do. He told us about how the town came into being and also the history of the winery. In addition, we were asked to taste eight wines he made. I figured if everyone tasted eight wines I would be the only sober one in the crowd.

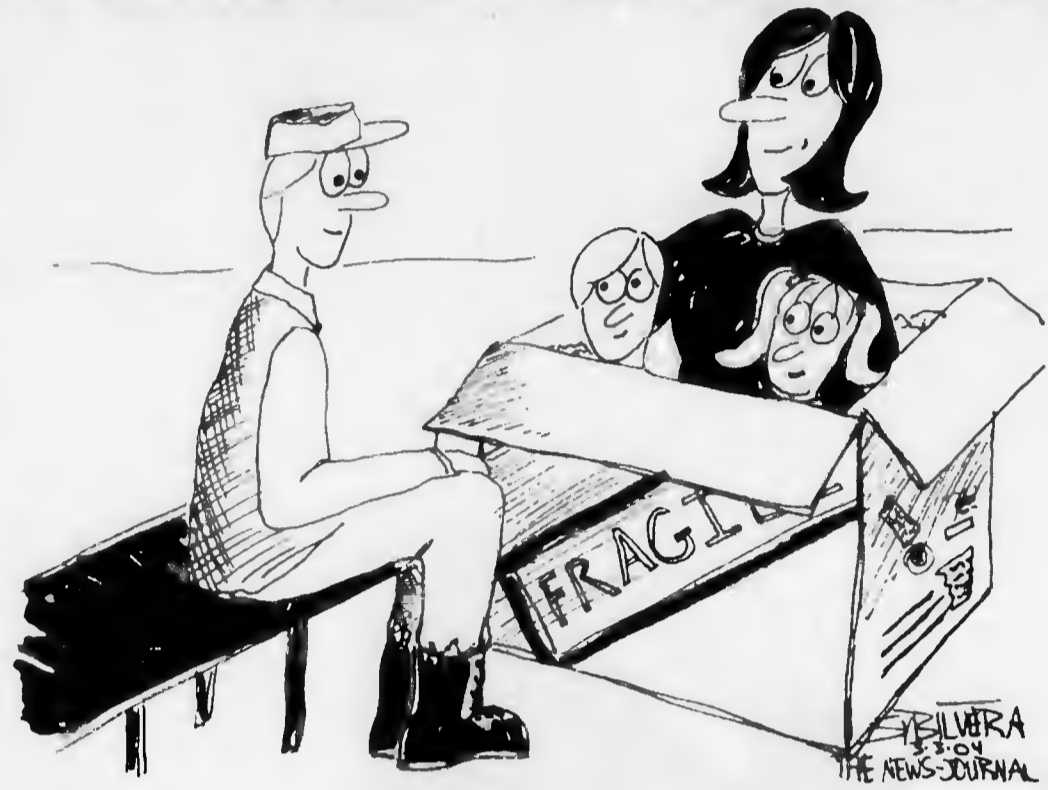
Being a drinker is not one of my sins. I can still hear my grandfather at one of his revivals singing out, "All of you drunkards are destined for hell."

I don't think I agreed with him then. However, I grew up a sober man. The only time I ever got drunk was when I came back from overseas. A buddy and I consumed a fifth of Southern Comfort.

I didn't remember for two days what I had done and where I had been. That trip broke me from drinking.

My grandfather may have been right. I could have sworn he was when I finally got my head straight.

My parting thought — I heard about a public transportation vehicle: "When you exit the bus, please be sure you lower your head and watch your step. If you miss your stop and hit your head, please lower your voice and watch your language. Thank you."



## Snow flakes: from zero to blizzard

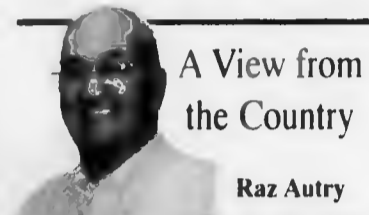
What a winter! It reminds me of when I was a boy. It snowed so often that you only needed one pair of pants. They got so stiff from wearing them in the snow that you could wear them all winter because they didn't need any washing or ironing.

Which brings me to my subject. My good wife has been appointed to a state advisory committee. I tried to tell her that she was too elderly to take all of these appointments, but it didn't bother her in the least. In fact, over the years she has stopped taking my advice altogether. Regardless, her first meeting was in Morganton, which is a nice mountain town.

She was going alone, but I, the dutiful husband, insisted on going with her. After all, I could get a good rest and see the sights. I didn't have to attend any meetings; I was along for the ride.

When I travel with my wife I learned a long time ago to stop making suggestions about how many clothes to take. We take everything except the five goats, horse and the fixed-up cat. If we stayed a month we would never have to wear the same clothes twice.

It was an uneventful trip to the mountains. The traffic was heavy on the interstate, as usual. Unfortunately, our time was cut short because the folks who predict the weather kept talking about the big storm. I wasn't worried too much about the predic-



A View from the Country  
Raz Autry

tion. These people get paid for being wrong about 50 percent of the time. Nevertheless, they continued to talk and the folks took it seriously. We left Morganton at 6:30 a.m. Very few flakes were falling at this time. The travelers on Interstate 40 weren't worried about the weather; they were speeding to the tune of 80 miles per hour and if you didn't get out of the way they would run over you.

We stopped for breakfast, not worrying about the weather. Afterwards, we traveled for many miles without encountering any flakes (at least the snowy ones). As we entered Montgomery County I remarked to Ireni that a thick fog was ahead. Fog indeed! It was a blizzard and continued until we reached our home which was four hours later.

Folks, you don't travel far going eight miles per hour. A lot of cars were on the road and, for a change, they weren't in any hurry to get home. Apparently they were all leaving a meeting. I have a lot of experience in snow. Traveling to check the roads during my school years gave me a great deal of time in snow. I

thought about the first-grader who couldn't stop talking about the recent school fire.

"I knew it was going to happen," he said. "We've been practicing for it all year."

While in the mountains I, along with the committee, was invited to visit a winery. The man who owned it enjoyed talking as much as I do. He told us about how the town came into being and also the history of the winery. In addition, we were asked to taste eight wines he made. I figured if everyone tasted eight wines I would be the only sober one in the crowd.

Being a drinker is not one of my sins. I can still hear my grandfather at one of his revivals singing out, "All of you drunkards are destined for hell."

I don't think I agreed with him then. However, I grew up a sober man. The only time I ever got drunk was when I came back from overseas. A buddy and I consumed a fifth of Southern Comfort.

I didn't remember for two days what I had done and where I had been. That trip broke me from drinking.

My grandfather may have been right. I could have sworn he was when I finally got my head straight.

My parting thought — I heard about a public transportation vehicle: "When you exit the bus, please be sure you lower your head and watch your step. If you miss your stop and hit your head, please lower your voice and watch your language. Thank you."

## We Get Letters

### The other side

To the Editor:

Re: Deabear parents, February 18 edition.

Oh, Mr. Mercer (Director of Hoke County Department of Social Services), what a superb piece (about deabear parents) in the paper. It made me sick on my stomach!

I know all about the other side of the story. My son is what you call a deabear parent. I don't think he is. He would be a great father but he never gets the chance. I do know a deabear mother. My grandson has gone straight to pot and I have Hoke DSS to thank for it. It doesn't matter to you that my son has been out of work for most of the past year. He has been laid off from three jobs and lost his home during that time. It does matter to me. If there are no jobs out there, how can even a deabear find one?

My grandmother told me that you cannot get blood from a turnip and you, Mr. Mercer, still cannot either. I paid \$200 of my money to keep him out of jail. I am disabled and on a fixed income and could not afford it.

Mothers out there, I need some help. Write that letter.

I bet that person who owes \$80,000 will owe more that \$80,000 twenty years from now.

God bless you if you print this letter!

Sincerely,  
Carol Calloway

### A project for you

To the Editor:

Exciting things are about to happen on Main Street in Raeford! Power and telephone lines will disappear, brick sidewalks will be constructed, and trees planted.

The Downtown Reconstruction Commission has worked hard and continues their efforts to see this mammoth project completed.

First impressions of a city (or a home) are often the most lasting impressions. Currently the entrances to our city probably don't make a good first impression on our daily visitors. The signs need to be refurbished and the areas around those signs need to be landscaped and maintained.

It has occurred to me that perhaps there are individuals or groups willing to undertake this as a project. Signs will be the responsibility of the city and plants will be donated. Water is available at each site.

I invite you to look at the entrances on 211 East and West and on 401 North and South. Let's come up with a way to say, "This wonderful city truly welcomes you!"

Sarah C. Leach

## UNC professor urges us to rethink Islam

In one of the presidential debates earlier this year, ABC's Peter Jennings asked candidate John Edwards, "Many people, I think, believe that the greatest security threat to the United States in the 21st century is the possible confrontation between the West and Islam. Could you take a minute to tell us what you know about the practice of Islam that would reassure Muslims throughout the world who will be listening to you that President Edwards understands their religion and how you might use that knowledge to avoid a confrontation?"

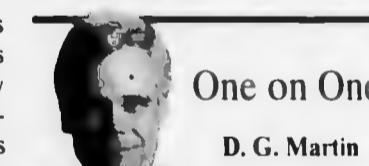
Edwards responded, in part, "I would never claim to be an expert on Islam. I am not!"

Edwards is not alone, at least according to UNC religion professor Carl Ernst, author of *Following Mohammad: Rethinking Islam in the Contemporary World*. Ernst believes that almost all Americans lack a clear understanding of the religion that claims more than a billion adherents. Indeed, Ernst writes, many Americans are bound to a false notion of Islam as a backward, women-oppressing, fanatical, and fundamentalist religion that is responsible for the Middle East-based terrorism with which our country is at war.

Ernst also attacks the premise of Jennings' question that there is a looming "confrontation between the West and Islam."

A true understanding of Islam, Ernst writes, would show its rich diversity, its solid ethical principles of peacefulness, tolerance, and respect for women, and its admirable commitment to submit to the will of God. Only with this broad understanding of Islam can we put into proper perspective its aberrations that we associate with Muslims whose conduct supports Jennings' premise of a confrontation between Islam and the West.

Leading us to a different view of Islam is not an easy task, as Ernst acknowledges in the introduction to *Following Mohammad*. "...The sub-



One on One  
D. G. Martin

ject of Islam has become so controversial that some people cannot confront it."

As an example Ernst cites the outrage that accompanied the UNC summer reading program's assignment of *Approaching the Qur'an*, a book that Ernst "enthusiastically recommended" to the program's organizers.

The opposition to this kind of "impartial and fair minded" discussion of Islam, says Ernst, makes it "painfully obvious that such a discussion is exactly what we need."

In *Following Mohammad*, Ernst attempts to offer "readers the tools to reach an independent understanding of the key themes and historical settings affecting Muslims — and non Muslims — around the world today."

To come to a more objective view, Ernst believes we must learn more about the religious underpinnings of Islam. But that is not enough. Islam does not exist in a vacuum and must be explored in its historical and cultural context.

Ernst insists that we come to terms with the great variety of Islam as it is practiced across the world.

Arabs represent only about 18 percent of the total Muslim population. More than half of all Muslims live in Pakistan, Indonesia, India, Bangladesh, and nearby areas. These peoples, their customs, their culture, their dress, their laws, and the Islam they practice vary from region to region.

In matters of government we think of the "Islamic state" as a clearly defined concept. But the method of government is different in almost every country with a Muslim major-

ity. For example, Saudi Arabia is a tribal monarchy operating in an uneasy alliance with the puritanical Wahhabi sect. Until the American-led intervention, Afghanistan was a Taliban-led theocracy. Turkey is, at least in theory, a secular nationalist state. Iran is an "Islamic Republic" with Western style democratic institutions that are subject to the supreme authority of Shiite Muslim religious leaders.

Although Ernst's positive explanation of Islam is generally persuasive, he sometimes leaves me unconvinced. For instance, Ernst dismisses Western views about modern Islamic scientific backwardness, saying they are "based on selective amnesia" and "must once again be placed in the context of European colonialism and its justification."

Ernst's assertions leave even sympathetic readers without a counter to the facts presented so persuasively by informed commentators who point out that there is virtually no scientific progress in much of the Islamic world. For instance, last month Thomas Friedman wrote that "between 1980 and 1999 the nine leading Arab economies registered 370 patents (in the U.S.) for new inventions. Patents are a good measure of a society's education quality, entrepreneurship, rule of law and innovation. During that same 20-year period, South Korea alone registered 16,328 patents for inventions. You don't run into a lot of South Koreans who want to be martyrs."

Although Ernst sometimes dismisses too quickly the ideas of those who disagree with him, *Following Mohammad* is a very important contribution to an informed understanding of Islam and its place in the modern world. As such, it should be required reading for Friedman, Jennings, Edwards, and everyone else who is trying to make sense of the challenges of the post-9-11 world.

D.G. Martin hosts North Carolina Bookwatch, which is taking a break during the special programming for UNC-TV's Festival. It will return to the air in the spring.

## The News-Journal

Published every Wednesday by  
Dickson Press, Inc., Paul Dickson President  
119 W. Elwood Avenue, Raeford, North Carolina 28376  
(910) 875-2121 (Call for fax number)



Home Page: www.thenews-journal.com

- Robert Dickson (robert@thenews-journal.com) ..... Publisher
- Ken MacDonald (ken@thenews-journal.com) ..... General Manager
- Pat Allen Wilson (pat@thenews-journal.com) ..... Editor
- Victoriana Summers (vicky@thenews-journal.com) ..... Reporter
- Hal Nunn (hal@thenews-journal.com) ..... Sports Writer
- Hal Nunn (hal@thenews-journal.com) ..... Sales Representative
- Teena Jones (teena@thenews-journal.com) ..... Office Manager
- Linda Watson (linda@thenews-journal.com) ..... Receptionist
- Sandra Wiggins (sandra@thenews-journal.com) ..... Computer Design
- Mantise Andrews ..... Press Foreman

email ads to: ads@thenews-journal.com  
email classifieds to: classifieds@thenews-journal.com  
email legals to: legals@thenews-journal.com

Periodical Class Postage at Raeford, N.C. (USPS 388-260)  
Postmaster: Send address changes to:  
P.O. Box 550 Raeford, N.C. 28376

The News-Journal is sold at these locations.

- |                              |                         |                              |                          |
|------------------------------|-------------------------|------------------------------|--------------------------|
| Bolton's .....               | Central Ave             | McNeil's Grocery .....       | Antioch                  |
| Barbee Pharmacy .....        | Harris Ave              | McPhatter's Grocery .....    | 401 Bus/Vass Rd.         |
| Bo's .....                   | S. Main St              | Miller's Cash & Carry .....  | Dundarrach               |
| CVS Pharmacy .....           | 401 Bypass              | O & J Conv. Mart .....       | Old Maxton Rd.           |
| Carthens Grocery .....       | Centre Grove Church Rd. | Papa's Pizza .....           | Harris Ave.              |
| Community Grocery .....      | Five Points             | Parks Grocery .....          | McCain                   |
| Daniels' Excon .....         | E. Central Ave.         | Poco .....                   | N. Main St.              |
| Daniels' Quick Stop .....    | Bus. 401 North          | R&R Grocery .....            | Hwy. 211 East            |
| David's #5 .....             | Hwy 20 & Central        | Robbins Hgts Grocery .....   | E. 7th Ave.              |
| Edinborough Restaurant ..... | S. Main St.             | Sandy's .....                | Rockfish Rd. at King Rd. |
| Fast Shop .....              | W. Prospect Ave         | Short Stop #14 .....         | 401 & Palmer             |
| Food Stop .....              | W. Prospect Ave.        | Short Stop #23 .....         | Rockfish Rd. & 401       |
| 401 Express Stop .....       | E. Central & 401 N.     | Short Stop #54 .....         | Hwy. 401 Bypass          |
| 401 Shop & Save #1 .....     | Harris and 401          | 401 Shop & Save #64 .....    | Hwy. 211 West            |
| 401 Shop & Save #2 .....     | E. Central Ave.         | Short Stop #68 .....         | N. Fulton St.            |
| Hardin's .....               | Rockfish Rd., Rockfish  | The News-Journal .....       | 119 W. Elwood            |
| Home Food Supermarket .....  | Main St.                | Tri-Star .....               | Fayetteville Rd.         |
| Howell Drug .....            | Teal Dr.                | Wagon Wheel Restaurant ..... | 509 Harris               |
| J&L Clover .....             | Scurlock School Rd.     | Warm Fuzzie Cafe .....       | 106 E. Central Ave.      |
| Lucky Stop .....             | 401 and Palmer          | Zip N Mart .....             | 401 N.                   |
| MP Mart .....                | Hwy. 211 South          | Zip N Mart #2 .....          | Arabia                   |

### Subscription Form

New subscription  
 Renewal  
 Newcomer (3 free months)  
 Gift (We'll notify recipient)

Clip, mail with payment to:  
The News-Journal  
P.O. Box 550  
Raeford, N.C. 28376  
(910)875-2121 for more information

Rates (including N.C. tax)	
<b>In Hoke:</b>	
One year .....	\$20
Senior Citizen .....	\$18
<b>Outside Hoke:</b>	
One year .....	\$30
<b>Outside N.C.:</b>	
One year .....	\$30

**Subscriber information:**

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Address \_\_\_\_\_  
City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_  
Phone \_\_\_\_\_

**Your name, address (if different from above)**

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Address \_\_\_\_\_  
City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_  
Phone \_\_\_\_\_