

# VIEWPOINTS

## Power and money like ham and eggs

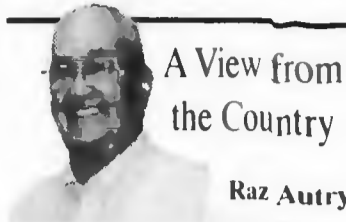
Much too soon the political season is upon us. It seems only a few days ago we put those in office who we felt could do the job. Now other are seeking it and saying, "We can do better." The next time around others will file and say, "We can do better."

Isn't it great we live in a democracy — even with the government monitoring our calls, agree or not, we still have freedom.

Anyone in America can run for President if he or she is a citizen and meets the age requirement. Candidates are not required to take IQ tests or swear to be kind to their mothers. They can lie their way into office and get rich when they get there. At the beginning they need lots of money, which the supporters are expected to supply. Attending meetings is a must and eating bar-b-que is a requirement. If one doesn't like bar-b-que, he or she will never get elected.

Being morally straight is not a requirement. Many have been elected like the 66-year-old man who worked as a car salesman. He got in trouble and told his boss, "I got a problematical situation, I got to go see a judge on account of this girl said I got her in a family way. She's hitting me with a paternity suit. I am gonna need the day off."

Naturally the boss let him go. A few days later, he came back from test driving a car with a customer and ran into his boss. Being concerned about his employee's day in court, the boss asked, "How



A View from the Country

Raz Autry

did your day in court go?"

"Not good, sir, not good."

"What happened?"

"Well sir, here she sat holding that baby in her arms. And I said to the judge, 'Your honor, you look at that baby and you look at me. That baby don't look nothing like me.'"

"What did the judge say?"

The judge said, "You keep feeding him 'til he does."

We have always had scandals in government. However, as times passes and as we become more of an "anything goes" society, the scandals seem to be getting worse. Power and money go together like ham and eggs — one doesn't taste good without the other.

Where will it stop, I am not wise enough to know.

Maybe we should change the constitution and require those running for office to attend church, but that wouldn't do any good if they don't listen. Most of them — if such a requirement existed — would run me off the back row and leave when the last song was being sung. Even in my time we had politicians who would say anything to get elected. Many of them went to Washington to get federal assistance.

I am sure the tobacco pro-

gram was started this way. Regardless two businessmen from Dunn, John and Jim, went to the capital. They worked for days frantically seeing agency officials, and assorted flunkies, clerks, and receptionists who really made them sweat.

At last their mission was crowned with success. They retired to their hotel for a night of relaxation and imbibing. Late that night, Jim was awakened from a snooze by a noise in the bathroom. He found John lying in the bathtub, his arms outflung with only his hat, shorts and shoes on, yelling, "There ain't no lions in here, there ain't no lions in here."

Jim looked around him and proceeded to try to rouse John from this condition. He met with no success, so he ran to the phone, leafed through a directory and called a doctor. "Doc," he pleaded when he at last made contact with a medico, "You've got to come over here fast. My partner and I have been knocked around in circles in this nutty town for days, and I'm afraid it's gone to his head. He's lying in the bathtub shoutin' that the room isn't full of lions. But I tell you Doc, he's crazy, The place is full of 'em."

My parting thought — My son is quite a wrestler. He wrestles with big shots. He writes me from college. He said the dean had him on the carpet the other day.

That is about the same intelligence some of our politicians show.



## Worth Repeating

"A safe learning environment and high student achievement go hand-in-hand." — State DPI Superintendent Dr. June St. Clair Atkinson on Sandy Grove Elementary School's designation as a "Super Safe School."

## We Get Letters

### Grateful for response

To the Editor: To Hubert Peterkin and the Hoke County Sheriff's Department:

The family of Mrs. Mable Hasty wishes to express their sincere gratitude for the professional manner in which the Hoke County Sheriff's Department rendered their service through escorting and coming to the aid of the family in

such a timely manner.

We would also like to extend a special thanks to Sheriff Hubert Peterkin's outstanding leadership and direction of the Hoke County Sheriff's Department.

Sincerely,  
Pastor Jerome Hasty  
Jernell Hasty Love  
Sandra Hasty McQueen  
Mae Ann Hasty Stephens

## Other stuff

(Continued from page 1A)

I said as I zipped this way and that into the parking lot, where I had to accept a space almost at 71st High School.

We day-hiked into a department store and I overheard someone say, "\$#! this looks like Christmas!" Ha! I wasn't the only one who didn't get the memo.

We nailed the first and potentially hardest errand — the purchase of a pair of female shoes — in record time, and I hoped it was a good sign. It wasn't.

The girls had to go across the mall to do a girl errand, so we caught the northbound current of people and inched our way to the store. Reaching the entrance, I said nobly, "I'll just wait for you here," and took my place in a line of males perched on a bench facing the store.

I've seen these benches before but never really became a member, first because I'm usually not allowed on shopping trips with females, and second, because if I were, I could probably contrive a schedule conflict that would be an improvement:

"Aw, I would love to go shopping for clothes with you, but I have to worm the cat."

The good seats were all taken so I leaned up against a cement column — feeling like a conditional member — and began waiting.

"I keep looking at my watch every \$#! five seconds," a man said disgustingly to another sitting beside him.

"There's that word again," I thought to myself.

"I know," the second man replied slowly for emphasis. "But at least sitting out here is better than being in there watching every" — and here he inserted a great dramatic pause — "\$#! thing she picks up and looks at."

For some reason my mind wandered at that moment and I pictured a t-shirt someone once told me about. Across the front it read, "She may be the most beautiful woman in the world but right at this moment she's on some man's last \$#! nerve."

I wondered if these guys' better halves had any idea they were being talked about so... impatiently.

My females were out only a few minutes later and I left the row of fuming males. Yes, I figured,

the ladies did know they were being discussed, and no, I imagined, they didn't care. And I also suspected the word \$#! would be uttered a few more times before the end of day.

Back in the fall we were sitting around one day and the following question was posed: "What would you think about getting a robot?"

To someone like me that's like asking if I would like hair.

"Sure!" I said. "What kind?"

I pictured George Jetson's bot serving up dinner and tossing out the cat.

I'll admit I was a little disappointed at the answer — a vacuum cleaner — but only a little. A robot is a robot.

I was directed to a website, and a few days later a round piece of plastic about the circumference of a medium pizza and the depth of a Big Mac arrived.

Charge it up, push a button on a remote, and stand back and be amazed was the gist of the instructions.

The den would be a suitable test, we thought, because it has a wooden floor and a large rug. It had, however, been recently cleaned, but my goal wasn't to test its cleaning capability — I just wanted to see it go.

After it had charged at its little dock for an hour or so, its indicator light gave us the go-ahead. I pressed "Clean."

Beep, beep, beep it said as it backed out of its dock like a delivery truck or ambulance. It stopped, turned around, fired up its motors and brushes and began zig-zagging and performing something like little pirouettes all over the room.

Other than the beep beep beep, which I thought was a cute touch, I was a little unimpressed. "I'm supposed to believe it's going to cover the entire room, doing that?" I thought.

It continued on, going this way and that, venturing under furniture, hitting this wall, turning and clunking into that wall. It sailed over the rug and stayed within the confines of the room, avoiding a couple of little transmitters whose beams set out its boundaries. As an added bonus it startled the cat. Then, after about 20 minutes, it made its way back to the dock, positioned itself just so, shut down

to charge, and played some sort of victory song to let us know it considered itself done.

"Well, it looks like it cleaned reasonably well," my wife said as she examined the rug.

Then she removed the tray that holds the vacuumed spoils.

"Whoa!" we said in unison. From a clean room it had removed as much dirt as shutting down a middle school-age classroom.

Since then, she has become a member of the family. ("How do we know it's a 'she'?" my wife asks? "Because it actually works." Ha ha ha ha ha. :-p)

Though Roomba lacks a circuit to hear, we often talk to it. "I'm going in the other room now. I want you to clean this room really good!"

That's how my wife talks to it.

I say, "Well! Who needs some maintenance?" the same language with which I talk to my truck, or "Get out of my way, stupid!" the same language with which I talk to the cat. Or the children. (Just kidding.)

Its personification is promoted by the mournful tune it plays when it gets hung on the fringe of a rug.

"Aw, I think she's stuck," I hear as aid is rushed to the other room.

"You wouldn't come running if I got stuck!" I said.

"But she actually does some work." ❖

I noticed there's an ad in the paper mocking Frank Inman... I mean celebrating his birthday.

Whatever he gets he deserves.

I got to know him on our last few trips to Mexico where he was a one-man entertainment committee — kissing a "hornytoad" lizard, wearing a woman's hat in public, and hammering it up with the preacher, whom he called "El Diablo."

On our last trip I was carrying around a video camera filming people at the jobsite and interviewing them about what the work meant to them personally. Frank was in a six-foot pit using a pick axe to whack through the dense clay to dig a septic tank hole. I handed him a microphone and asked him the intentionally vague, "Frank, what do you think of this work?"

He looked up at me and said, "You want to know the truth?"

On the tape you can hear people off camera begin to laugh.

"I'm not going to be on national TV, am I?" he continued.

"No," I replied.

"Okay, then, it's like convict work," he said.

I thought to myself I'd have to chuck that bit of film, but he continued.

"...and I wouldn't wish it on anybody. But since I volunteered for it... I'm loving it."

He proved to be one of the hardest workers but don't let the serious photo in the ad fool you. Below is the real Frank. ❖



## Local tax burden is heavier

By CHAD ADAMS  
Locke Foundation

North Carolinians are shouldering a heavier local-government tax burden, according to a new study by the Center for Local Innovation.

The average North Carolinian saw local taxes increase by 5.1 percent in Fiscal Year 2004 (July 2003 to June 2004). That is the latest year for which data is available. That growth rate is one of the many findings in CLI's "By the Numbers 2006: What Government Costs in North Carolina Cities and Counties," by CLI policy analyst Michael Lowrey.

This is the eighth "By the Numbers" report published by CLI, a special project of the John Locke Foundation. In preparing it, Lowrey used the most recent data available from the State Treasurer, the Census Bureau, and the Bureau of Economic Analysis to construct rankings of local government cost on a per-person basis.

For counties, Lowrey also constructed rankings on a share-of-income basis.

Local government costs rose in most North Carolina counties from FY 2003 to FY 2004, the CLI report found. The median county's local tax and fee burden equaled 4.6 percent of a typical North Carolinian's income. That figure was nearly 7 percent higher than the rate for FY 2003, Lowrey said.

"Fiscal Year 2004 saw a significant increase in the local tax burden on North Carolinians," Lowrey said. "And that increase came on the heels of the substantial increase of the previous year."

"Regardless of your perspective, this report does show that the cost of local government is continuing to outpace inflation and population growth," CLI director Chad Adams said. Noting that local spending is relative to services delivered, Adams said,

(See TAX BURDEN, page 3A)

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Home Page: [www.thenews-journal.com](http://www.thenews-journal.com)

- Ken MacDonald ([ken@thenews-journal.com](mailto:ken@thenews-journal.com)) ..... Publisher
- Pat Allen Wilson ([pat@thenews-journal.com](mailto:pat@thenews-journal.com)) ..... Editor
- Victoriana Summers ([vicki@thenews-journal.com](mailto:vicki@thenews-journal.com)) ..... Reporter
- Hal Nunn ([hal@thenews-journal.com](mailto:hal@thenews-journal.com)) ..... Sports Writer
- Hal Nunn ([hal@thenews-journal.com](mailto:hal@thenews-journal.com)) ..... Sales Representative
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- Linda Watson ([linda@thenews-journal.com](mailto:linda@thenews-journal.com)) ..... Receptionist
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