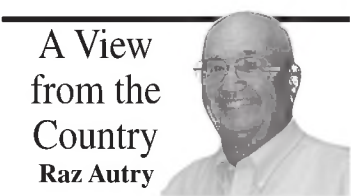


VIEWPOINTS

Children seen differently these days

The two most used sentences by southerners are, "How are you feeling?" and "You look good." One of my father's sayings was, "If someone asks you how you are feeling, tell them great because no one is really interested." My father had a lot of sayings. I didn't agree with all of them and I told him so; however, I was at least five miles from him when I disagreed with him. My father was a gentle man but at times was as tough as a nail, according to that saying. Not many fathers during my boyhood days were interested in hearing anything from you except "Yes sir" or "No sir." All the boys learned those two words quickly when they were dealing with fathers.

Most fathers were good fathers; however, while I say such, they were more interested in children being seen and not heard. Just because many of us elderly folks see our time differently than the present day rearing of children, it doesn't mean that society has gone to the dogs. The great majority of our children are fine young men and women. Most



A View from the Country
Raz Autry

of them will be successful in life. When I was growing up, we had one hundred and thirty million people in the U.S., and now we have over three hundred million. All of us have a different take on life. In many ways we are like Cub Scouts.

A troop of Cub Scouts was a half hour late for their den meeting. The den mother asked them severely, "Why are you so late?" "Oh," said one boy, "we were helping an old man cross the street."

"That is a nice thing for scouts to do," said the mother. She paused. "But it shouldn't make you a half hour late."

"Well, you see," said another boy, "he didn't want to go."

It is easier to get out of jail than to get out of the hospital. First, let me thank all the folks

who have been concerned about my health. I thank you for the prayers and the love. It is indeed a county which expresses concern for its citizens. They have fine nurses at the hospital. They will do anything for you, even shave you. Being in the hospital is no fun but neither is having a knife part of your stay. Staying in the hospital for any length of time can create some strange thoughts, sorta like the rather prime maiden lady who, after working at a city job for 30 years, decided to resign and take her savings, go to the country and start a poultry farm. She purchased a country cottage and enough land to build chicken coops. When they were done, she went into the village to place the order for the poultry. "I want sixty hens," she said to the salesperson, "and sixty roosters."

My parting thought: A woman was having a dream. A tall handsome man was approaching her bed. In terror she asked, "What are you going to do?"

The man smiled slightly, "That is up to you lady, it's your dream."

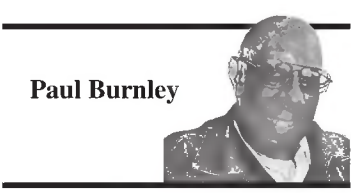


Plan now for military cutback

The public feels the economy is the major factor of the country's problems; however, the politicians spend the majority of their time and money sniping at each with personal attacks, as seen in the latest Republican debates. This is not only directed toward Republicans but it seems members of both parties spend more time attacking their opponents than the issues their constituents sent them to Washington for.

If more importance was placed on issues that need to be dealt with, instead of who is going to be the leader of the pack, more could be accomplished. Not only with the upcoming election, but in all aspects of politics now, more importance is placed on the welfare of the politician than the public—which special interests support him and how he connects with lobbyists. Many of us feel this is not important to us or those in my continuity. It is more important to you than you think.

The announcement that the Pentagon plans to cut \$450 billion from the military budget in the next 10 years will affect many there in Hoke and Cumberland counties. For years, much of these counties' economy has depended on the military being close by. When there are cuts in personnel in our area, there will be less revenue entering our businesses. Now is the time to light a fire



Paul Burnley

under politicians representing us to stop fighting among themselves and unite to bring jobs and new businesses to this area.

This area is grateful to Fort Bragg. For more than 50 years it has aided the economy of this community but we are moving into a different world. We, the U.S., cannot base our economy on military actions around the world. We must find ways to add jobs to our economy that are not associated with the military. Hoke and Cumberland counties have in many ways been solely dependent upon Fort Bragg for their existence. With a planned cutback, we must find other ways to maintain our economy.

It has been reported that North Carolina has had one of the largest growing populations in the last decade. More companies from the north are moving to our state. Hoke County has an advantage over many other areas of the state. With the congestion in the R.T.P. area and Charlotte areas, many businesses would see an advantage moving to this area. Land is less expensive, and compared to other areas, there

are vacant areas large enough for buildings. Also important is that we are on a major highway, U.S. 401 and close to I-95.

The cutback of military personnel is a 10-year plan. Now is the time for the citizens of this area to start planning a replacement for the military loss by looking to new projects to fill this void. This is why our representatives in Washington and Raleigh need to contact companies interested in relocating to North Carolina and explain the advantages of our area. This only can be accomplished by voters demanding action from their representatives.

We must also understand the companies that may be interested in moving to this area will be more technical. This means that our workers will need better education. Now is the time for workers to start thinking of returning to school. Many new technical skills are being taught at the community colleges. This would better prepare workers to qualify for jobs offered by companies. Also, this would be an incentive to a company knowing that an area has a workforce that is capable of fulfilling its needs.

The future is for those who prepare for it. The longer we wait to face this problem, the harder it will be to fill this void, when this military cutback is completed.

Face it, schools are hurt

BY CHRIS FITZSIMON
N.C. Policy Watch

Add Senator Thom Goolsby to the list of Republican legislators who either don't understand the damage their state budget is doing to public schools or simply don't want to face it.

Goolsby attended a legislative breakfast this week with teachers and local school officials in New Hanover County and received an earful according to a report in the Wilmington Star-News.

One teacher reported on the results of a survey of her colleagues about how budget cuts have affected their classrooms. Supply budgets have been cut in half and computers are outdated. Class sizes have increased and teacher morale has fallen.

The paper pointed out that 400 jobs in the local school system have been abolished in the last three years.

Goolsby didn't seem too concerned, saying to the group that he wants to hear from them more and asking, "How many of y'all have emailed me? Was it just to ask for more money?"

Good question Senator. Why would teachers and school officials think to email you asking for more funding? Maybe because they don't have the resources they need to do their job.

Goolsby told a reporter for another paper that he couldn't see the General Assembly raising taxes and that the state "can't tax its way to prosperity." Maybe not, but it certainly can't cut its way to prosperity either.

And besides, the General Assembly didn't simply keep taxes at current levels, they cut them in 2011, giving people a few extra pennies a day while cutting public school funding in New Hanover County and across North Carolina.

A student's take

If Goolsby doesn't believe his local teachers and school officials, he ought to read a recent column in the Mountain Express in Asheville by high school senior Autumn Kersten who attends Clyde A. Erwin High School in Leicester.

Kersten writes about teachers not even having enough paper or dry-erase markers in the classrooms. There are not enough textbooks to go around and some students in advanced classes have to buy their own.

Every student in one AP History class at the school had to buy their book in order to take the class. Fewer science classes offer labs this year because the school can't afford the materials needed to run them.

Larger classes, fewer textbooks, fewer labs, less supplies. Goolsby and his Republican colleagues must be so proud.

More transparency needed for lobbyists

BY SCOTT MOONEYHAM
Capitol Press Association

One-time uber-lobbyist Don Beason won't be paying a five- or six-figure fine after all.

Beason, once rated the most influential lobbyist in Raleigh, has been out of the lobbying game for several years now. He quit after it was revealed that he provided a \$500,000 loan to former House Speaker Jim Black.

But Secretary of State Elaine Marshall had been after Beason.

Marshall's office is responsible for regulating lobbyists. It alleged that a few months before Beason left the profession that he hid the source of some lobbying payments.

According to Marshall's office, a New Jersey pipe fitting company received money from a handful of other companies and a trade association, which was funneled to Beason to try to weaken or overturn a state law so that iron imported from India could be sold to the state Department of Transportation.

State lobbying laws require that lobbyists disclose their

clients, but only the New Jersey company showed up as registered here.

Beason claimed that he was unaware of the arrangement and that he didn't know the other companies had chipped in to pay him.

Marshall's office wasn't convinced and at one point fined him \$110,000. The fine was later reduced to \$30,000.

Earlier this month, a judge sided with Beason and threw out the fine.

The case raises an interesting point that has nothing to do with Beason or companies trying to sell imported iron to the state.

Marshall and her office, in their role overseeing lobbying in North Carolina, clearly have an obligation to try to sort through who is paying the lobbyists plying their trade in and around Raleigh's Jones Street.

The law that requires registration of lobbyists and those who employ them is there to ensure transparency in government. At the root of the law is a presumption that the public has a right to know who is spending money to try to influence their elected

representatives.

So, why doesn't the same apply to nonprofit organizations and trade associations? Why doesn't Marshall's shop also have an obligation to sort through who is funding nonprofits on the left and the right when they employ lobbyists?

Under current law, she has no obligation or ability to do so. So, we the public don't necessarily know who is behind the myriad of business-related associations, think tanks and do-gooder organizations that employ lobbyists in Raleigh.

Some of those groups do disclose their major donors; others don't.

Federal law requires that they disclose major donors to the IRS. When those same tax forms are released publicly, donors can be deleted.

So, how would the public ever know if a company with an interest in selling imported iron to the state gave a huge sum to one of these groups—rather than to a private firm—and one of these groups' lobbyists then spent an entire legislative session working the one issue?

The answer: It wouldn't.

Lawmakers could use civics lesson

BY CHRISTOPHER HILL

One of the bills that became law during the 2011 session of the North Carolina General Assembly is called the "Founding Principles Act." The new law changes, expands (and presumably, seeks to improve) how the state education system deals with "civic literacy."

It's too bad state lawmakers didn't somehow make themselves subject to this law.

When the leaders of the General Assembly held a hastily-convened midnight session to override Gov. Bev Perdue's veto of a bill that stopped members of the North Carolina Association of Educators from having dues taken out of their paychecks, they acted

completely against this nation's founding principles. Indeed, they acted with no principles at all.

If people learn everything they need to know in kindergarten, then surely North Carolina's House of Representatives could have learned from the preamble of the Founding Principles law. It states "the survival of the republic requires that our nation's children, the future guardians of its heritage and participants in its governance, have a clear understanding of the Founding Philosophy and the Founding Principles of government for a free people."

Unfortunately, it is awfully hard for even public officials to participate in a government they are elected to serve if they are in

the hospital or sick and exhausted from a long day in the legislative building as happened during the midnight session. They probably believed that the Founders wanted a government based on transparency, not votes that take place in the middle of the night.

In order to graduate high school, students are required to receive a passing grade in "American History I—The Founding Principles." Unfortunately, the General Assembly does not appear to recognize that passing legislation without notice in the middle of the night is not at all what the Founders had in mind.

American History I's curriculum must include information (See CIVICS, page 3A)

Days Since

The intent to build a hospital in Hoke County was announced.

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