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North Carolina Talk Radio Makes Itself Heard

Conservative hosts are attracting listeners with topical issues, interaction

By **ANDREW CLINE**
Managing Editor

When Barbara Howe, the Libertarian Party's candidate for N.C. governor in 1996 and 2000, drives anywhere between 3 p.m. and 6 p.m. on a weekday, she listens to Jerry Agar, afternoon talk show host on Raleigh's long-time news/talk station WPTF-AM.

"I listen to talk radio not so much to get ideas that I agree with but to hear what people are thinking," Howe said. "I think that's valuable. You don't get as good a cross-section of what everybody is thinking, but you do get some interesting feedback on the issues."

In the past few years, more and more North Carolinians have taken Howe's attitude toward talk radio. Tar Heels searching for an interactive, rather than a passive, listening experience are increasingly turning to the rejuvenated format.

"Their minds are being stimulated," said Al Bunch, general manager of WPTF-AM. "They're getting foreground, it's not background as some of the other stations are. Talk radio is very captivating; the hosts make you think. It's very engaging."

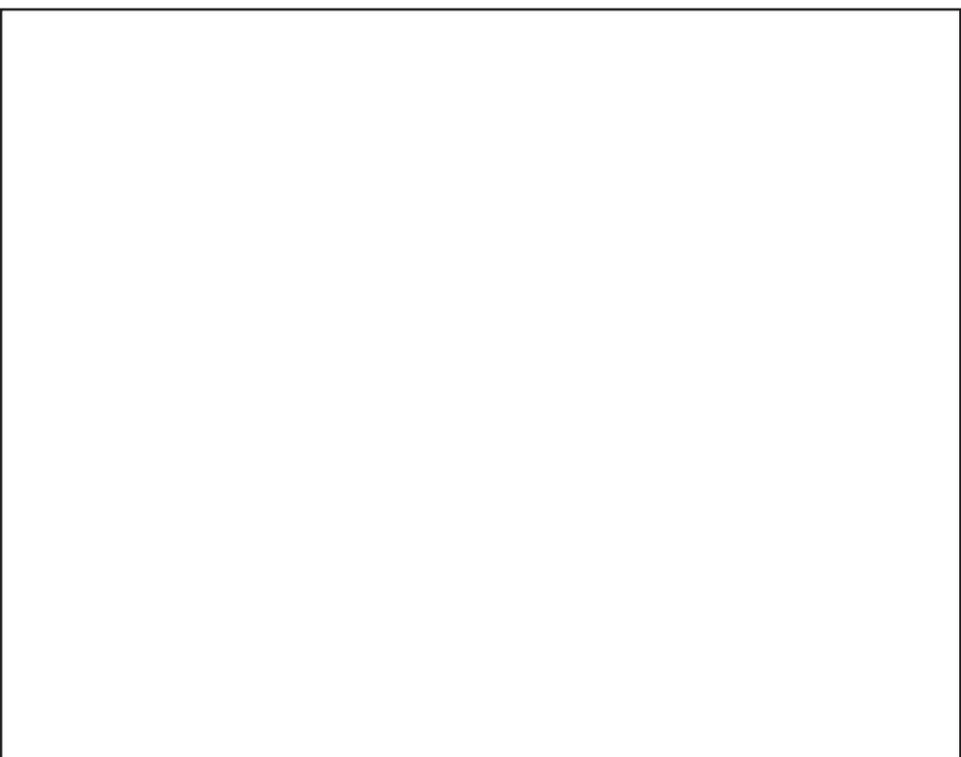
Naturally, the level of engagement depends on the content of the show, though all talk radio shows are designed to engage the audience in active listening.

Whether the content is gardening or sports or politics, the goal is the same, said Ben Ball, station manager at WTKF in New Bern, North Carolina's first FM talk station. Engagement extends beyond the conservative talk shows that get the most attention.

"We also have more moderate shows and non-political shows," Ball said. "Talk radio has long been strong and varied in its opinions."

But lately talk radio in North Carolina has been trending toward conservative talk shows, or more correctly, toward shows hosted by conservatives or libertarians who talk about politics.

In the late 1990s, local right-leaning talk shows have sprung up all across the state. Raleigh's WPTF-AM has long had a local



State radio hosts were instrumental in promoting a July 31 rally in Raleigh against tax hikes.

conservative talk show. But now there are local conservative hosts in Asheville, Boone, Winston-Salem, New Bern, Jacksonville, Wilmington, and even Charlotte (though that show is co-hosted by a liberal).

"Every big town now has at least a conservative talk radio station," Agar said. "Every town now has at least one media outlet who says, 'Maybe this is right.'"

Even a number of North Carolina's non-talk stations are adopting partial talk-formats with more or less conservative leanings. The syndicated John Boy and Billy Show, based in Charlotte, and Jerry Wayne's show on WNCT-FM in Greenville are examples of morning rock 'n' roll shows that also dedicate a portion of their programming to talk segments that often cover politics from a conservative point of view.

All Rush's Children

How is it that conservative talk radio has become so popular in North Carolina that even FM stations are adopting parts of the format?

First, there's the astonishing success of Rush Limbaugh, the nationally syndicated host who is on virtually every major AM news/talk station in the state. No one gets better ratings than Rush, and his ratings are

still improving after a decade on the air. Radio is a business, after all, and Rush's numbers have the attention of station managers and owners.

Limbaugh's ability to pull in gobs of advertising revenue has led managers to seek local conservative hosts in an effort to extend that revenue stream beyond Rush's allotted three hours.

"If Larry King were on daytime radio and were No. 1, you'd have more Larry King-type shows," Ball said.

But King isn't No. 1 — Limbaugh is. So some managers try to recreate Rush-style shows, Ball said. It's not the case that AM station managers are conservative, it's that conservative talk shows are the most popular and attract the most advertising dollars.

"I don't think it's nearly as much a reflection of the management than as the business climate," Ball said of the proliferation of conservative radio talk shows. "They're the most successful. There are fewer successful liberal shows than there are conservative ones."

Conservative radio shows are successful not only in money, but in influence as well. Last month Agar, along with fellow

The Tar Heel Tea Party against a tax increase attracted 1,000 taxpayers

By **ANDREW CLINE**
Managing Editor

About 1,000 North Carolina taxpayers rallied behind the state Legislative Building in July for a Tar Heel Tea Party in hopes of halting a nearly \$600 million tax increase proposed by legislative Democrats. That proposal came on top of a \$260 million increase in the state and local tax burden already approved this year. The prospect of more spurred many North Carolina citizens to come to Raleigh to tell legislators that they'd had enough.

The protest was the brainchild of Jerry Agar, afternoon talk show host on Raleigh's WPTF-AM radio station. Agar had read about an anti-tax protest in Tennessee earlier this summer and thought North Carolina could use one itself.

Agar got together with John Hood, president of the John Locke Foundation, and the two of them rounded up others who helped plan the event, which was staged just five days after Agar decided to promote it.

Agar and Hood lined up other talk radio hosts, including Mike Fenley of WSJS-AM in Winston-Salem and Richard Spires of WBT-AM in Charlotte, as well as grassroots organizations such as Citizens for a Sound Economy, the N.C. Libertarian Party, and the N.C. Republican Party.

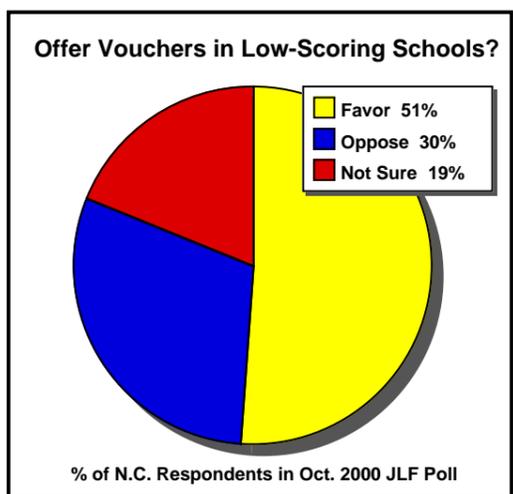
The result was the news event of the summer. It made the front page of every major N.C. paper and was the lead story on television and radio stations from the mountains to the coast. The event also attracted national attention, from *The Wall Street Journal* and Fox News Channel, among others.

The protest, designed to knock the wind out of the sails of the tax hike plan, came hours after a hastily assembled press conference called by Gov. Mike Easley for the purpose of pre-empting the taxpayer rally.

Easley used his budget officer, the state controller, and the current and past treasurers to argue that tax increases were the only

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Calendar

Locke President John Hood To Speak In September

The John Locke Foundation's Headliner speaker series is taking a hiatus for the month of August. But look for Foundation's events to start back up in September. That's when the staff will undertake its biannual regional meetings tour, during which we hold events in towns and cities across the state. This fall's topic, as always, will be public education.

• Also in September, John Locke Foundation chairman and president John Hood will speak in Raleigh about his new book, *Investor Politics: The New Force That Will Transform American Business, Government, & Politics in the Twenty-First Century*, being published this fall by the Templeton Foundation Press.

Hood will speak at a Locke Headliner luncheon at noon, Tuesday, Sept. 11 at the Brownstone Hotel in Raleigh.

Hood has worked at the Foundation since its opening in 1990 and now serves as president and chairman of the board. His previous book, *The Heroic Enterprise: Business and the Common Good* (The Free Press, 1996), was widely acclaimed in such publications as *The Wall Street Journal* and *National Review*.

• Following Hood's speech and the regional meetings tour in October will be the Pope Center for Higher Education Policy's annual Higher Education Conference. This year's conference will feature Dr. Eugene W. Hickock, the Under-Secretary-designate for the U.S. Department of Education.

Dr. Hickock is former education secretary for the state of Pennsylvania, a post he held during the mid- to late-1990s under Gov. Tom Ridge.

JLF President John Hood

For the 15 years before that he taught political science at Dickinson College in Carlisle, Penn.

The conference will be held Oct. 20 at the North Raleigh Hilton. For more information, call (919) 828-3876.

Shaftesbury Society

Each Monday at noon, the John Locke Foundation plays host to the Shaftesbury Society, a group of civic-minded individuals who meet over lunch to discuss the issues of the day.

The meetings are held at the Locke Foundation offices in downtown Raleigh at 200 W. Morgan Street, Suite 200. Plenty of parking is available in nearby lots and decks.

The Shaftesbury Society is taking a summer hiatus and will resume meetings this fall. If you'd like to suggest a speaker for Shaftesbury, or if you'd like to join us, call

Kory Swanson for details or email events@JohnLocke.org.

"Locke Lines"

The John Locke Foundation publishes a monthly audio magazine called "LockeLines" that features speeches made at Locke events that month.

"LockeLines" includes Headliner speeches as well as Shaftesbury Society speeches and commentary by Locke staff.

To subscribe, call Kory Swanson at (919) 828-3876.

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If your local public library does not carry Carolina Journal, ask them to subscribe. We provide the Journal for free as a public service.

Many libraries across the state now stock Carolina Journal, though they may not display it prominently in their periodicals section. If you don't see it, ask for it. If your library doesn't carry Carolina Journal, it can receive a subscription for free by calling us at (919) 828-3876 or emailing Kory Swanson at kswanson@johnlocke.org.

We also make Carolina Journal Weekly Report, the Locke Foundation's weekly newsletter on state and local politics and policy, as well as "LockeLines" available to any individual or organization, including libraries, at no charge. *cj*

Talk Radio Makes Itself Heard in North Carolina's Major Media Markets

Continued From Page 1

conservative radio hosts Mike Fenley of WSJS-AM in Winston-Salem and Richard Spires of WBT in Charlotte helped organize and promote the Tar Heel Tea Party, which brought about 1,000 citizens to Raleigh to protest a proposed tax increase plan.

The event showed the influence that talk radio hosts can have in informing and motivating listeners. But don't confuse that influence with power, say the hosts, who usually think of themselves as just regular guys talking about politics with other regular folks.

"People sometimes say to me, 'You should be careful because you have a lot of power,'" Agar said. "We don't have any power. The governor has power. He signs a piece of paper and someone gets executed. He signs a piece of paper and your taxes go up. That's power. We have influence.

"There are plenty of people listening who don't agree with what we say. It's a discussion, it's not a classroom. I'm not here to indoctrinate, the point is to get a discussion going."

That's something that a lot of left-wing critics of talk radio don't seem to understand, talk show hosts say. Their shows are public forums like London's Hyde Park Corner, where everyone is given the opportunity to speak his mind, not lectures in which only one viewpoint is preached.

"I believe very strongly in discourse," said Jason Forbis, conservative host of a talk show on WXIT-AM in Boone. "The best opinions are formed when you've had an opportunity to hear all points of view."

But aren't liberals supposed to be better than conservatives at that sort of thing?

"There are no overwhelmingly successful liberal talk shows," Forbis said. "There are some who claim to be liberal, but if you listen to them they are really middle-of-the-road. You can go down the list of every commercially successful talk show, and they are all conservative. That tells me that we are filling a need for America that cannot be filled anywhere else."

That need is having the news discussed and reported without a left-wing bias, the hosts say.

"I think the success of conservative talk radio shows is the extreme liberal slant of traditional media," Spires said. "People are frustrated when they pick up *The Charlotte Observer* and they don't report on the facts or they report on it, then they slam it on their editorial page. The only person who's going to give you a straight story a lot of times is the 'biased' conservative talk radio host."

"Too much inflection and spin is put on the news, and I feel that in 98 percent of the cases it's a liberal spin," Forbis said. "In what I do I try to remind people that there are two sides of each story."

Then there's the fact that the left already has its own radio shows, publicly subsidized, which not only draw left-wing listeners but also hire the left-wing hosts.

"An eloquent liberal who wanted to speak his peace on local issues would be welcome on our station, we'd try to find a spot," Ball said. "We haven't found many liberals who would step forward. They're all listening to NPR."

The left has attempted to compete with Rush Limbaugh, but without success. The only left-wing show that has managed to draw a nationwide audience during the coveted afternoon time slot is National Public Radio's "Talk of the Nation," which receives government subsidies and does not depend on advertising.

Left-wing talk show hosts do quite well in some markets, particularly in the Northeast, but not nationally.

"And that's probably not going to

change until somebody can come along and be the liberal Rush Limbaugh," Agar said.

There are varying theories for why this is so. "[Conservative talk show host] Neal Bortz has a theory (and I agree with him) that it's much easier to be a liberal television host or a writer because so many of their positions come from feelings and they can't stand up to the rigor of taking phone calls that disagree with them," Agar said.

Entertainment (as a) Value

It also could be that liberal hosts are too serious about their politics and forget that talk radio is just as much about entertaining as it is about informing, some say.

Al Bunch, general manager of WPTF-AM, said that he didn't set out to get a conservative host for the afternoon drive-time slot. "What we strive for is the maximum entertainment value for the audience," Bunch said. "Our goal was not to hire a conservative host. We considered over 100 different applicants. Jerry's audition tape just had, well, there was something about it that we didn't hear in all the others.

"He just displayed that passion and tempo that we felt would be very entertaining on WPTF. Entertainment value. That's really what it is."

That political talk radio is a combination of information and entertainment is inescapable and something that bothers its critics, hosts say.

"We also understand the purpose of it, which is entertainment," Agar said. "We still underneath it all understand that this is entertainment, whereas the kind of person that's going to go chain themselves to a tree gets to the point where they don't understand that."

The entertainment factor is certainly one reason conservative talk radio is so successful. It's not dour and dry and policy-wonkish.

"Did you ever listen to Mario Cuomo? Just awful," Spires said.

"We entertain and inform," he said. "That sounds so cliché, but it's true. We try to be the person sitting next to the person driving home in the car."

And it seems that it's conservatives, not liberals, that people want sitting next to them on the way home.

WBT-AM in Charlotte used to have several liberal shows, but not any more.

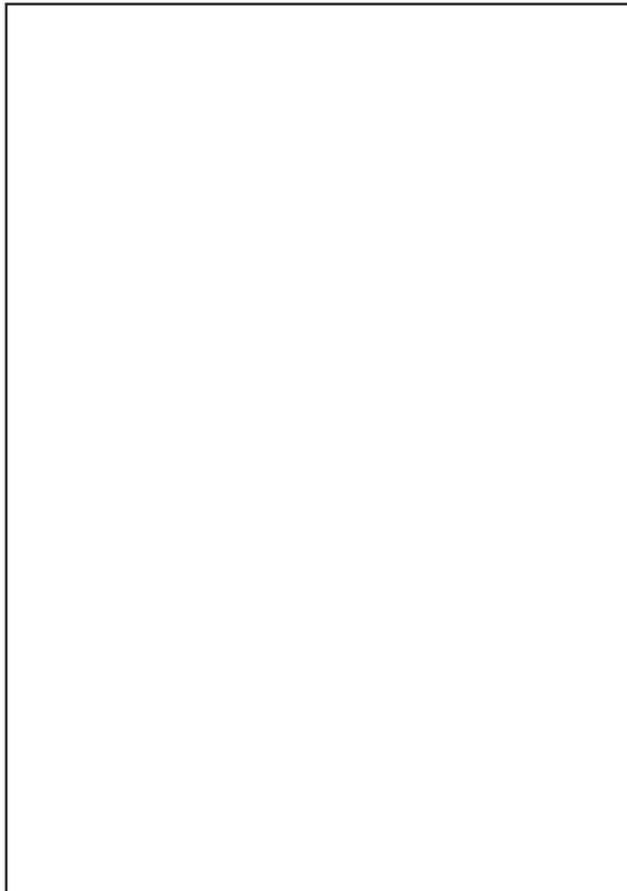
"There's never been a conservative host here locally," Spires said. "They have had liberals to moderates to man this seat for as far as I can remember. They had a very liberal nighttime host at one time and his ratings were good, but they couldn't sell it."

And selling it is the key. Radio shows are bait designed to draw viewers for the purpose of listening to advertisements, which is what the radio stations are really in the business of selling.

Left-wing shows have not been able to draw as many advertisers as conservative shows have.

That even goes for shows that aren't 100 percent conservative or political. In Charlotte, the "Spires and Krantz" show, with Libertarian host Richard Spires and Democrat host Brad Krantz, has an audience that is 70 percent Republican despite the fact that neither cohost is Republican and the show is not always about politics.

"Politics tend to polarize," Spires said. "That type of polarization in a genteel Southern town like Charlotte doesn't make us No. 1 in our demographic like we've



A spirited protester holds a sign at July's "Tar Heel Tea Party." Photo by Andrew Cline

gotten to."

Even being No. 1 doesn't guarantee a wide mix of listeners. All conservative talk show hosts interviewed for this story complained about not having enough left-wing listeners.

"I wish I had more [liberal callers]," Agar said.

"The theory is that maybe you'd have more if you were nicer to them," he joked.

"I did an open line for liberals, and I had a very tough time getting callers. All talk show hosts will go immediately to a caller who disagrees. The show is better."

Tea Party

Continued From Page 1

available option to fill the hole in the state budget.

Administration officials made the argument that the state had to increase taxes to save its AAA bond rating, without which the state would face about \$15 million a year in higher debt payments.

Hood countered that argument at the rally. "What kind of buffoon would raise taxes \$600 million to save \$15 million?," he asked. "Apparently the kind of buffoon that sometimes gets elected to the North Carolina legislature."

The governor's press conference was far from successful in muting the taxpayers' message. The next morning saw massive front-page coverage of the protest in every major newspaper in the state, while the press conference barely rated a mention in most of the stories.

The protest itself, while far tamer than its violent predecessor in Tennessee this summer, was a raucous, loud, and at-times confrontational event.

Media reports pegged the number of attendees at about 700, but total attendance throughout the four-hour event was closer to 1,000 (based on attendee signatures) which was large considering that the event had been put together in just five days.

Protesters listened to speeches from Hood, N.C. GOP Director **Bill Cobey**, Libertarian Party gubernatorial candidate **Barbara Howe**, and North Carolina CSE head

That applies even when the caller shares the host's basic political outlook.

"I can find myself often preaching to the choir, but with that understood, I make a point to broaden that horizon a little bit by shining a harsh light on some of the traditional conservative laziness," Forbis said. "I'm a big, big antagonist of those who vote a straight ticket. I'll jump in and stir up the norms a little bit to remind people who think, 'I'm a Republican because my daddy is,' that that's not a good reason."

That desire to shake people up and to serve as a foil to conventional news and opinion outlets is what drove many talk radio hosts into the business.

"This show is based on pointing out stupidity and challenging commonly held beliefs and not letting the people in Raleigh or Washington sell us a bill of goods," Forbis said. "I feel very lucky. I'm doing what I've always wanted to do."

Spires said the show he cohosts with Democratic partner Krantz succeeds precisely because it doesn't toe a conventional line.

"When you tune into Hannity and Colmes, you know that the party line is going to come out of each of their mouths. We don't want to do that.

"We're both not in the mainstream. I'm a doctrinaire Libertarian, and Brad is a moderate Democrat. Our audience is over 70 percent Republican," Spires said.

Still, there is a certain consistency to each successful show. Listeners know what to expect from the hosts, even if that means to expect the unexpected.

"Rush isn't going to talk about 'Dude, Where's My Car?' and you know that," Agar said. CJ

Jonathan Hill, among others, and repeatedly chanted "axe the tax" and "no new taxes" while waving pirate flags, "don't tread on me" flags, and signs of all sorts.

Some of the featured slogans included:

- "Tax my parents and I can't get a puppy."
- "Don't take new books from my children."
- "Extra cash the Easley way: Confiscate it!"
- "Taxes SUCK the life out of the economy."
- "Taxation with representation ain't so hot either."

Into the Legislative Building

As the protest wound down, several protesters made their way to the House's observation galleries, where they proceeded to shout anti-tax slogans at legislators.

A woman tossed tea bags onto the House floor, and several agitators got into arguments with Rep. **George Holmes**, R-Yadkin, who had come to the gallery to ask them to settle down.

Another protester was nearly arrested after getting into an argument with police over whether he could bring a sign into the building.

The protest wound up with no violence or arrests, and in the end protesters left saying that they had a good time and hoped legislators had heard their message and taken it to heart.

And because four radio stations broadcast live from the event, the total audience numbered in the tens of thousands across North Carolina. CJ

Around the State

- If you have Internet access you no longer have to wait in line to change your address on your driver's license or get a duplicate license. In early August the Division of Motor Vehicles allowed both of those services to be handled over the DMV web site. DMV estimates that about 300,000 people a year wait in line for those services.

- Members of the State Employees Association of North Carolina (SEANC) are considering changing the organization's bylaws to grant themselves the ability to strike and conduct work stoppages. SEANC Executive Director Dana Cope said in early August. Cope said that rank-and-file employees came up with the idea on their own out of frustration with the way they've been treated by legislators. The SEANC state convention is next month, and members would consider the issues then.

- "It will wind up costing us more to notify students of changes than the increase will collect."

— Gary Tilley, vice president for finance and operations at Surry Community College, telling the *Winston-Salem Journal* of the tight spot in which the state's delayed budget has put his institution. Legislators had failed to pass a budget by the beginning of the academic year. The two different budgets they were considering contained two different tuition increases for community colleges. Because the academic year has begun, public colleges and universities across the state have had to decide whether to charge students last year's tuition or one of the two tuition rates being considered by legislators. Tilley said that the cost of notifying students of a tuition increase later in the year would be more than the amount of the increase for Surry Community College, meaning the budget delay will cost the school money.

- Sen. David Hoyle, D-Gaston, has suggested that the state should more deeply cut Smart Start to make ends meet. As an example of wasteful spending, he cited the Onslow County Partnership for Children's expenditure of \$23,000 for billboard advertising. Onslow Partnership Executive Director Dawn Rochelle told *CJ* that billboards were "the best way to reach our population. It costs \$13 per billboard per day for us, which is cheaper than other methods of advertising. Phone referrals from parents increased from 274 within a six-month period to 678 within a two-month period."

- "Decisions regarding any additional revenues must spread the burden across all the income categories and not allow it to fall only on the working and middle-class citizens."

— Sen. Luther Jordan (D-New Hanover), chair of the Legislative Black Caucus, discussing Gov. Mike Easley's proposed 1-cent sales tax hike in the *Winston-Salem Journal*.

Who Should Pay for Animal Control?

Debate in Guilford County Focuses Attention on Growing Public Expenditure

By PAUL CHESSER

Associate Editor

GREENSBORO

Like hundreds of times before, Darren Mode, a Guilford County animal control officer, placed a trap containing a captured raccoon next to his truck.

"Very smart animals," he told a reporter who joined him in a morning ride-along.

As Mode went to fetch something from the front of the truck, the skittish animal climbed to the top of the trap and easily pushed open a door, leapt to the ground, and ran across the street and out of sight. The escape was a first-time occurrence for the five-year officer.

Very smart animals, indeed.

"I shouldn't have tried to stop him, should I?" asked the reporter.

"No, he would have bit you in a heartbeat," Mode said.

The incident was not the best example of Mode's job performance. In the past he has helped take down a charging 2,200-pound Brahma bull, and once evicted 77 black cats from an abandoned house. On August 4 he removed bats from three homes, and recently took a copperhead snake out of someone's living room, which he sarcastically characterized as "fun."

"I just don't like snakes," he said.

Debate Joined in Greensboro

Animal control officers, as do police, regularly put their lives in harm's way to protect humans, and their pets and property, from unpredictable creatures.

Recently, the cost of such protection was at issue between Guilford County and the City of Greensboro. After providing animal control services for the Gate City under a 1995 contract that required \$180,000 annually (adjusted each year by the consumer price index), the county proposed raising the city's portion to \$440,000. More than doubling the cost made city budget analysts nearly gag like a polecat.

"From a simple standpoint, we're a customer, and our vendor notified us of a huge jump in our bill," said Larry Davis, budget and evaluation director for the city.

While the conflict didn't resemble anything seen in the recent film "Cats & Dogs," officials for both the city and county had

sharply differing views of how the costs should be assessed.

County charges to municipalities for animal control date to the mid-1990s. That was when smaller Guilford communities incorporated in an effort to thwart Greensboro's zeal for annexation.

"The City of Greensboro was just gobbling up land like crazy," said Randy Friddle, a budget analyst for Guilford County. "Some of the smaller towns, wanting to preserve their land, incorporated."

As a result, the county found itself providing control service for the small towns. "We were enforcing their ordinances," Friddle said. "So we decided since we were enforcing a town ordinance, that they should pay for it."

Guilford determined the most equitable way to charge for animal control was on a per-capita basis, dividing the budget allotment by the size of the population. Such a calculation worked out to about \$1.62 per person.

However, the existing contract with Greensboro "threw a monkey wrench" into the equation, according to Friddle. As a result, the smaller towns as well as the county itself paid more than twice as much for animal control per capita as Greensboro.

The expiration of the contract presented an opportunity for renegotiation with the city and the ability to make cost distribution more fair. But when Guilford presented Greensboro with the significantly higher figures, the fur didn't exactly fly, but was decidedly ruffled.

The proposed county budget for 2001-2002 for animal control was \$688,422, of which Greensboro would have been responsible for almost two-thirds under Guilford's proposed calculations.

The city countered that per-capita calculations were not an appropriate basis for the cost of animal control. "We don't necessarily see [population] as having a one-to-one correlation for animal control services," Davis said.

Greensboro officials countered with the idea that because animal control bases operations in the center of the city, and because

of the density of the city's population, costs for responding to calls would be less there.

"We feel like it would be a cheaper per-call cost," Davis said. "The reasonableness of \$440,000...we weren't sure we could recommend that to our board."

Davis added that officials considered evaluating log books, travel time, dispatch time and performing time-motion studies, to determine how much time officers spent in each jurisdiction. County officials doubted such data would provide a fair measurement either.

After much debate, county and city leaders arrived at a compromise July 18 that would cost Greensboro about \$340,000 per

year, representing nearly half of Guilford's control budget. Greensboro residents account for 53 percent of the county's (human) population.

Before the 1995 contract, Greensboro managed its own animal control. Now Gibsonville, Archdale and High Point are the only Guilford municipalities that don't use county services.

Responsibilities for animal control vary from county to county and city to city across North Carolina. Raleigh maintains its own patrol in Wake County. Meanwhile, the city of Charlotte and Mecklenburg County share the burden in their areas.

Animal control can also fall under different government departments. In Guilford County, the health department oversees the service. In High Point, the police department manages animal control.

Most officials contacted for this story said that privatization of animal control was not a viable option for N.C. localities.

"I can't think of any community in this state that is privatized," said Joseph Bloomquist, animal control supervisor for the City of Raleigh. "I don't see any way you could do that because of (law) enforcement. There's a lot to it."

"It's a public safety issue," Mode said. "[Raccoons] are known to carry rabies. Once it gets captured, it has to be destroyed."

Pause.

"Unless it gets away." CJ

Funding responsibilities for animal control vary from county to county and city to city across North Carolina.

N.C. Emissions Often Blown Out to Sea

Benefits of Smokestacks Bill Exaggerated

By RICHARD WAGNER

Editor

RALEIGH

Proponents of the so-called "Clean Smokestacks" bill under consideration in the General Assembly touted a study "approved by the Harvard School of Public Health" in claiming that the bill would save 1,000 lives a year. This statement misrepresents both the study's origin and its findings, according to an analysis by Dr. Roy Cordato, vice president for research at the John Locke Foundation.

The study in question was done by a private consulting firm and was funded and published by a consortium of left-wing environmental groups called The Clean Air Task Force. The only apparent connection to Harvard is that the "Forward" to the "Executive Summary" was written by a Harvard School of Public Health professor.

The pollutant discussed in the report is "fine particulate matter," known as PM^{2.5}.

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) standards for the regulation of PM^{2.5} are very controversial. Though the Clinton EPA adopted these regulations in 1997, the EPA's own Clean Air Science Advisory Committee refused to endorse them.

PM^{2.5} is a by-product of sulfur dioxide (SO₂) which is emitted by coal-fueled electric power plants. The N.C. legislation in question, Senate Bill 1078, calls for a 75 percent reduction in SO₂ by 2013 and does not regulate PM^{2.5} directly.

Some studies have shown a statistical association between PM^{2.5} and higher death rates, but the Clean Air Task Force report selectively reported those findings, Cordato found. On its web site, the Task Force argues that a study by the Health Effects Institute has conclusively reaffirmed the link between PM^{2.5} and death rates. But an important finding of this study was that there was no significant association between PM^{2.5} and mortality among non-smokers.

The state-by-state analysis in the study is based on a nationwide reduction of SO₂ emissions — not on reductions that would occur as a result of S1078, Cordato found. The study concludes that if the entire country reduced SO₂ emissions by 75 percent, North Carolina would experience a reduction of about 1,000 deaths per year.

Cordato says there are two reasons why this is irrelevant in assessing S1078. First, much of the SO₂ in North Carolina comes from power plants located in the upper Midwest. Most SO₂ emissions from N.C. plants are blown out to sea. Second, the rate at which N.C. emissions of SO₂ are transformed into PM^{2.5} can only be known by assessing the levels of other compounds that help form PM^{2.5}, such as ammonia. The study makes no attempt to do this. SO₂ emissions in North Carolina have been declining continuously for the last 30 years and are consistently less than half the national standards, Cordato added. CJ

*Aviation Panel Takes No Action on Case***Forget the Audit, Council Says — We're Talking Oshkosh, By Gosh**By DON CARRINGTON
Associate Publisher

An independent audit has revealed several irregularities in a state grant that was awarded to the Town of Ocean Isle for airport improvements.

The report, issued July 1 by State Auditor Ralph Campbell's office, concluded that a company owned by W. J. McLamb, a Brunswick County paving contractor and a member of the North Carolina Aeronautics Council, was paid from a grant awarded by the division, creating the appearance of a conflict of interest. McLamb also owns an airplane, which he keeps at Ocean Isle Airport.

The apparent conflicts were uncovered by *Carolina Journal* in its March 2001 issue. But apparently the council members and the division director dismissed many of the issues raised in that story and decided to pay the town of Ocean Isle for unauthorized work performed by their fellow board member.

According to minutes of the meeting May 4, the council approved spending for projects, including a grant of \$190,656 to repave runway and to install a lighting system at the airport. Council member Dudley Humphrey asked that the minutes reflect that the recommendations for Ocean Isle had been reviewed by the state Attorney General's Office and that the appropriation had been permitted by appropriate law. The council approved the recommendations

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unanimously.

The auditor's review also addressed problems with a grant to the Sanford Lee County Airport.

In 1998 the airport received a \$4.38 million grant to construct a new airport. Upon completion of the airport, however, it was apparent that the runway had substantial surface water problems. The division, with the council's approval, awarded a \$430,000 grant to correct a construction defect before determining who was responsible for the problem.

In a response July 13, N.C. Department of Transportation Secretary Lyndo Tippettt agreed with all of the state auditor's recommendations to avoid similar problems in the future.

But despite Tippettt's concern, the auditor's review did not even make it on the agenda for the next meeting.

The August meeting

At its meeting Aug. 1 the Aeronautics Council did not discuss the auditor's report. Council members and Aviation Division Director Bill Williams spent most of the two-hour meeting discussing a potential aviation museum, a recent trip to a Wisconsin air show, and concerns about adequate festivities in North Carolina for the year 2003

— the 100th anniversary of the Wright brothers' flight at Kitty Hawk.

General Statute 143B-356 says the "Aeronautics Council shall advise the Secretary of the Department (of Transportation) in the issuance of loans and grants to the cities, counties, and public airport authorities of North Carolina for the purposes of planning, acquiring, constructing, or improving municipal, county, or public authority airport facilities and upon any matter relating to airports which the Secretary may refer to it. The Secretary shall report the activities of the Council to the Governor."

When one member left during a break, council members and the division staff realized attendance at the meeting, at six

council members, did not constitute a quorum. Council members could not vote to approve grants, but the meeting continued as "informational."

Current membership of the council is not clear. Terms of seven of the 14 members expired June 30. McLamb, who did not

attend the meeting in August, will not be reappointed. Also, DOT is waiting for Gov. Mike Easley to name the seven new or retained members, DOT Deputy Director David King said. General statutes contain no clear provisions for members to continue until they are replaced.

Off to Oshkosh

One of the items discussed Aug. 1 was the trip to Oshkosh, Wis. A state aircraft made three round trips involving 16 people from July 22 to July 30. The group included five DOT employees and two council members.

A state official said the Wisconsin trip was necessary to prepare for the 100th anniversary celebration of the Wright brothers' flight.

The purpose of the trip was for state officials to attend the Experimental Aircraft Association's "Air Venture 2001." Aviation Division Director Bill Williams said at the meeting that the trip was necessary for North Carolina to prepare for the 100th anniversary celebration in 2003.

"You can't put a price on what we did there or what we accomplished there," Williams said.

But Tippettt, who is Williams's boss, disagreed. "I am very disappointed that we chose this method to accomplish this mission," Tippettt told the *Raleigh News & Observer*.

The role of the division and council in 2003 events is not specified in legislation. The General Assembly established a First Flight Centennial Commission several years ago. The commission's responsibilities were to determine extent of any official state-sponsored celebrations in 2003.

The Official Response

The council has six regular meetings scheduled this year. When *CJ* asked Williams why the auditor's review was not discussed at the meeting in August, he said the review would be on the October agenda.

DOT Deputy Secretary David King said, "I think everyone has learned a lesson. It is clear the situation was mishandled by the Aviation Division staff, the Aeronautics Council, the council member and the Town of Ocean Isle. I think the decision to go ahead and pay the town was fair, based on the value added to the airport."

He said that after studying the situation, DOT officials decided the best resolution was to pay for the improvements at Ocean Isle.

The amount that would go to McLamb, however, would be for actual costs of \$104,039, instead of \$137,500 that he had billed the town last year. *CJ*

State Should Temper Enthusiasm over Math Scores, Skeptics SayBy PAUL CHESSER
Associate Editor

Congratulatory back-slapping and hand-shaking marked an Aug. 2 press conference held by the Department of Public Instruction, celebrating North Carolina's performance on the National Assessment of Educational Progress tests taken last year.

The NAEP math tests have been conducted quadrennially since 1992, and in 2000 measured the skills of public school students in 40 states. North Carolina students exceeded the national average by six points in each grade tested, scoring 232 for fourth-graders and 280 for eighth-graders.

"These scores are real and they're really good, and you should be proud," said Gov. Mike Easley at the press conference.

North Carolina performed better than many other states, making larger gains than any other state in the Southeast.

Additionally, 28 percent of N.C. fourth-graders and 30 percent of the state's eighth-graders rated at the proficient level, slightly surpassing the national average.

However, closer examination of the figures caused some skeptics to mute the state education establishment's enthusiasm.

"They can pat themselves on the back all they want to, but to have fewer than one in three capable to do math at grade level is unacceptable," said state Rep. Fern Shubert, R-Union. "How would you like it if your car ran one-third of the time? Or would you hire someone who could only make change one-third of the time correctly?"

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Further clouding the ability to validly compare results in 2000 to performances four and eight years ago was the fact that more North Carolina students were identified as having disabilities or limited proficiency in English. Such students are excluded from the NAEP assessment.

Since 1990, North Carolina had the largest increase in the country in the percentage of students excluded, because of disabilities, from the eighth-grade NAEP test. The state's increase in exclusions for fourth-graders was exceeded only by Iowa's.

For both fourth and eighth-graders, North Carolina's exclusion rate was almost double the national average rate. Since these students tend to perform poorly on such tests, excluding them improves the average score, thus making comparisons difficult.

Lou Fabrizio, director of Accountability at the Department of Public Instruction, attributed the state's higher rate to conflicting guidelines by the federal government.

He said rates rose because the state seeks compliance with the federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) by providing students with Individualized Education Programs (IEPs). In turn, IEPs place limitations on how children are tested.

"In our state, we had an increase in the number of students who were selected whose IEP required accommodations, that were not allowed for use with the NAEP," said Fabrizio. "It's a 'Fed' call as to what they allow, but it's an IEP call as to what the student needs," he said. "So you've got two parts of the government arguing with each other." *CJ*

Advertisement

School Reform Briefs

• Leaders of the Community Coalition for Educational Excellence in Greensboro have voiced their concerns over whether Guilford County is fully committed to education. The group rallied and planned to boycott the school system by asking black students and supporters to miss the first 10 days of school.

Coalition leaders said too many blacks were being shuffled through the school system or were dropping out. Members approved a boycott in early August, but later postponed it, saying community sentiment was too divided.

"Parents and community members in general have expressed different views and concerns since the Bethel meeting," said Rev. Nelson Johnson. "We have been listening to our community, and we desire to be responsive to what we are hearing."

One parent suggested an alternate boycott that would include massive parental involvement in the school for the first 10 days.

The coalition formed in June in response to several proposed changes at predominantly black schools, including the replacement of Dudley High School, teacher reassignments, and the district's plan to cut 94 teacher assistant jobs to hire extra teachers for poor neighborhood schools. Reported by the *News & Record*.

• A new choice-based student assignment plan in Charlotte-Mecklenburg is still under way after a federal district court ordered an end to desegregation policies in 1999.

The school system is being sued by white parents who want Charlotte-Mecklenburg's desegregation policies stopped and by black parents who want them continued.

Even though a ruling is still pending in the Appeals Court, Superintendent Eric Smith is pushing for a new plan because of the time needed to handle all the logistics.

The plan now under way will keep both options for the district, race-free and race-conscious, open until a ruling is received and a plan is launched in 2002.

"The courts might give us something else that we can't anticipate. But we think this outlines the two most likely possibilities," Smith said. "This plan gives us a way to proceed under both eventualities."

The plan, which includes new boundaries for the expected seven new schools, divides the county into four regions, called "choice zones." Each student would have a guaranteed seat in a "home school." Parents would also have the ability to apply for schools outside their choice zones.

The plan would relocate about 20 magnet programs, and students would be able to win admission to schools through a lottery. If the court decided the school system should be race-conscious, the lottery could include race as a factor.

School Board member Bob Simmons said the board should move ahead with the new proposal.

"We made that commitment to staff, we made that commitment to the community," he said. "(To now) back away seems to me to be betraying that commitment." Reported by *The Charlotte Observer*. CJ

Raising the Bar on Dropouts

Creative Approaches Are Working in Some North Carolina School Systems

By RHETA BURTON
Editorial Intern

RALEIGH
Why do students drop out? The main reason, according to a study by the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction, is because students did not attend classes on a regular basis. Other reasons cited in the study are students moving, students having academic problems, and students dropping out to enroll in a community college to get their GED certificate.

Many North Carolina counties, including Burke, Pender, and Rockingham, have taken an individualized look at preventing students from dropping out.

Now, after several years of implementation, districts are seeing an improvement. North Carolina dropout rates decreased from 4.6 percent, or 25,567 students, in 1998-99 to 4 percent, or 24,596 students, in 1999-00.

Longer-term comparisons can be misleading. Starting in 1998-99, students who transferred to a community college were considered dropouts, whereas before, they were considered transfer students and not included in the data.

Prevention Plans

No two schools are alike in implementing policies for dropouts or those at risk of dropping out. Most school districts provide a variety of options for schools to use.

Schools in Burke and Rockingham counties have seen a large decrease in dropout rates, from 10 percent in 1998-99 to 7 percent in 1999-00.

In Burke County, Superintendent David Burleson said educators looked at each student as an individual and not a statistic.

"We contacted each student who dropped out and gave them options as to why and how they should come back to school," Burleson said. "We also offered them chances to enroll in GED programs and to go to our career-ready program to give them incentives to go back and get their diploma."

Burke County implemented programs to target students in danger of dropping out, Burleson said. "We had a program called extended day school, which gave students an opportunity to go to school in the afternoons if they couldn't make school in the morning for whatever reason."

Burke County offers a program called Leap Academy in which students who repeated the seventh or eighth grade could enroll in the eighth grade and take ninth-grade courses at the same time so that they could catch up to their peers and graduate on time. "It's a centralized program in which they get first-class attention and are able to get back on track," Burleson said.

"The community has helped us out a lot," he added. "Here at Burke, we have an alternative to those students who are in suspension. Instead of students being suspended, they take part in community service, while still doing their schoolwork and not getting behind. It has proved to be a positive thing."

In Rockingham County, Tim Newsom, director of dropout prevention, said that one reason Rockingham's dropout rate decreased was the implementation of an alternative school called the SCORE center.

The SCORE center is a more central-

ized, more intensive school that helps students who need extra motivation. The dropout rate in Rockingham County fell from 5.5 percent in 1998-99, or 359 students, to 3.7 percent in 1999-00, or 240 students.

Kay Rodgers, director of secondary education at Rockingham County schools, underlined the importance of the SCORE center. She also said block scheduling helped because it allowed any student who did fail a class an opportunity to retake the class the next semester.

Solutions in Durham

Although many students drop out, North Carolina has seen an unsettling trend of large numbers of black males leaving school, especially in Durham County.

Durham high schools hit the national radar several years ago when they were shown to have a low graduation rate of 30 percent for black males.

In 1999 the Rev. Curtis Gatewood, president of the Durham chapter of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, called for any action to "save black boys and other students who are falling through the cracks."

Durham County has also experienced a decline in the number of dropouts. Funded by a two-year grant from the Governor's Crime Committee, two Durham high schools implemented a High School Academy, which targeted a group of at-risk ninth-graders. The program provided peer mentoring and extra activities for the group of children.

Even though the district has enjoyed all-around improvements with the academy, Heather Graham said all "too often these students who are targeted as at-risk are black males."

Despite the continued dominance of black males among dropouts, there has been some improvement in dropout rates in the Durham County schools (see below).

The Academy at Northern High School has made a difference in children's lives, and they enjoy it, Graham said.

Problems Persist in Some Areas

Regardless of North Carolina's overall improvement, some districts haven't succeeded. Dropout rates in Pender and Rutherford counties, for example, have increased.

During the 1999-00 school year, the dropout rate for Pender County rose from 5

percent to 7 percent. The cause, said Preston Wells, curriculum director for Pender County schools, is the failure by some students to achieve new, higher standards that have been instituted.

"Some students have trouble passing the algebra exam and the end-of-grade tests, which makes it difficult for them to graduate," Wells said.

Pender County is taking a more hands-on approach by implementing electrical and auto body repair classes, where students who are at risk of dropping out or have already dropped out can learn a trade.

"It gives students who might not otherwise have a future to train at something they are good at and go out into the workforce with a skill," Wells said. "We hope that those who participate in this program decide to go back to school to get their diploma."

Programs that do offer students the option of training in a technical skill, however, cannot substitute for students having the foundation of advanced courses taught in a high school setting.

Students who go through the program are not taught the usual high school curriculum that the state implements through the accountability and ABC's program.

In Rutherford County, the high school dropout rate almost doubled in 1999-00. Rosemary Smith, director of student services in Rutherford County, attributes part of the increase to the loss of more than 6,000 jobs last year in Rutherford County.

"Our students had to help their families out, and so they dropped out of school to find what little work they could to support their family," said Smith.

Time Pays Dividends

In short, schools that take the time to work with at-risk youths individually usually have greater success reducing the number of dropouts.

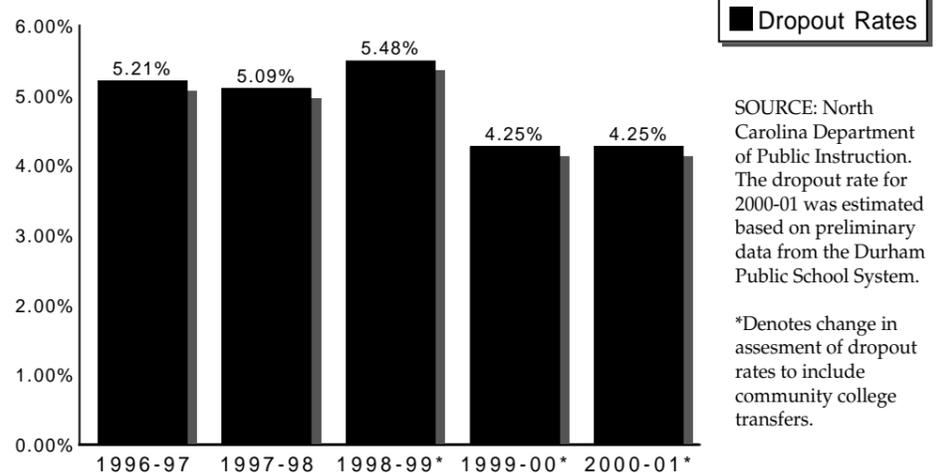
This could be a major factor explaining why many smaller schools also have a smaller percentage of dropouts.

According to a study conducted by Harvard Professor Gary Orfield and Achieve, Inc., located in Cambridge, Mass., the nation's dropout problem is most severe in the 200 to 300 schools located in the 35 largest cities across the nation.

The study also showed that most of the problems occurred in schools that had more than 900 students.

But Charlotte, North Carolina's largest city, managed to escape the criticism by being one of only four cities that had two or fewer schools with high dropout rates in both 1993 and 1996. CJ

Dropout Rates for Grades 7-12, Durham Public Schools



*Among Documents with Historical Significance***Character Education Bill Passes with the Ten Commandments**

By JORDAN CAPPS

Editorial Intern

The state legislature passed, and Gov. Mike Easley signed, a new law prescribing directives for character education in schools and paving the way for documents such as the Ten Commandments to be displayed based on their historical significance.

Controversy surrounding the legislation had stemmed from a Senate character education bill joined with a different House bill in committee.

The additional sections include a list of key character traits to be promoted in schools, a mandate for school dress codes, and permission to display documents that have influenced the legal code or governmental system in the United States.

Most intensely debated is the legality of permitting schools to display the Ten Commandments as a historically significant document. In contention are the first four commandments that require obedience to God.

"The [last] six commandments are certainly constitutional. The first four are not. It's the first four that get us into trouble," said Rep. Bob Hensley, D-Wake.

Permitting schools to display the Ten Commandments is merely "setting the state up for a lawsuit," said Rep. Mickey Michaux, D-Durham.

In support of the bill, Rep. Art Pope, R-Wake, cited constitutional freedom that allows the mentioning of God in schools and public documents while also highlighting the N.C. Constitution's profession of a belief in God.

So far, the track record for schools displaying the Ten Commandments is clear: All instances have been deemed unconstitutional by the courts.

Because of the legal precedents, legislators carefully phrased the provision to include the Ten Commandments only as an example of a historically meaningful document along with the Magna Carta and the Justinian Code. Additionally, the bill states clearly that no display of any document should "seek to establish or promote religion or to persuade any person to embrace a particular religion, denomination of a religion, or other philosophy."

Sen. Walter Dalton said he thinks the

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law "will withstand constitutional scrutiny" since it has been reviewed by the attorney general's office and officials there "believe it is constitutional on its face."

"How schools implement this is probably the more substantial question," Dalton said.

Likewise, John Bason, a spokesman for Attorney Gen. Roy Cooper, said that although the bill itself seemed constitutional, "the way local school boards apply the law is vulnerable to challenge, because we are not aware of any case involving posting of the Ten Commandments in public schools that has been held to be constitutional."

Michaux opposed the measure, saying the Ten Commandments were included "under the subterfuge of displaying [them] as a historical document."

The less-discussed character education section of the bill identifies eight desirable traits that should be included in curriculum designed with "input from the local community" for the 2002-2003 school year.

Courage, good judgment, integrity, kindness, perseverance, respect, responsibility, and self-discipline comprise the core traits for schools' character education.

Included in the definitions of the traits are the themes of resolving "to do the right thing even when others don't," "treating others as you would like to be treated," and "being in proper control of your words, actions, impulses, and desires ..."

Dalton, who originally introduced the character education portion of the bill, cited studies from California and South Carolina that show character education leads to schools with "more safety, better discipline, and better academic performance."

School faculty and parents alike "have embraced [character education] favorably and believe it makes a positive difference," Dalton said.

Originally introduced three months ago, House Bill 195 was a measure intended to add North Carolina history and geography to fourth- and eighth-grade curricula.

The final version states that two years of instruction, one in elementary school and one in middle school, should "include contributions to the history and geography of the State by the racial and ethnic groups that have contributed to the development and diversity of the State." CJ

Permitting schools to display the Ten Commandments is merely "setting the state up for a lawsuit," said Rep. Mickey Michaux.

Lawsuit Questions Political Activity of N.C. Association of Educators

By RICHARD WAGNER

Editor

The Virginia-based Landmark Legal Foundation has filed a complaint with the IRS claiming the National Education Association and five of its state affiliates — including the North Carolina Association of Educators — have illegally used millions of dollars of tax-exempt funds to coordinate political activities with the Democratic Party.

"The evidence Landmark is making public today demonstrates that the NEA has become an appendage of the Demo-

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cratic Party, complete with an ATM machine that dispenses tax-exempt membership dues to underwrite that party's political activities," a Landmark press stated. "The NEA has concealed these activities from America's teachers, the public, and the IRS."

In its complaint, Landmark asked the IRS to investigate the conduct and tax filings of the associations. Landmark also requested that the IRS assess income taxes on tax-exempt resources used for political purposes and impose fines and penalties, "including possible revocation of the tax-exempt status of these organizations."

Champion for Children

A good friend and I were once discussing our mutual hero, Linda Harrill, and he said, "Working with Linda is like trying to drink from a fire hydrant, and I mean that with the greatest esteem."

What a fitting and unique description of the kind of power and energy Linda brings to her fight for children . . . full blast and full steam ahead!

Linda Harrill has been my mentor for most of my career in the education arena. Her tireless dedication to the children of North Carolina sets a high standard to work toward. But her willingness to share her knowledge, contacts, and resources makes that goal more attainable.

Linda is a vigorous advocate for children, particularly those who are often left behind: the poor, the learning disabled, the forgotten. You only have to speak with her for a minute to discover her enthusiasm is equally matched by experience.

During her career, Linda has worked as a special education teacher, a Chapter 1 teacher, a school administrator, a university instructor, and a national education consultant. She has served on more committees and boards than is possible to list here.

But they include such organizations as the N.C. School Improvement Panel, the Legislative Study Commission on Alternative Education, the Council for Children with Behavior Disorders, and the Coalition of Healthy Adolescents.

While there are many people in the North Carolina education community who possess impressive resumes, there are only a handful who have truly affected children's lives - Linda is one of those few.

Working With CIS

As the president of Communities in Schools since 1989, Linda has worked with school districts across the state to develop appropriate educational programs for at-risk youths. CIS is not a program but a broker of resources. Working together, CIS shows communities how to coordinate their public, private, and nonprofit resources so children can get the help they need.

Schools and communities no longer have to depend on random, limited services for their students. Moreover, CIS responds to each school's unique needs

with a menu of assistance tailored to community and family concerns.

At CIS schools and home sites students receive integrated, coordinated assistance from a wide menu of options: mentors, tutors, health care, career counseling, job shadowing, and much more.

Traversing the state and country to visit effective programs and learning how to replicate existing successes, meeting with state and national leaders, heading committees and commissions, building coalitions in local communities, and conducting workshops are all part of a typical "Linda Harrill week" as she champions the message of CIS and the children they serve.

Knowing that today's children face a myriad of social and economic challenges that most of us would never have dreamed of, and knowing that educators cannot be expected to serve as social workers, counselors, and parents, Linda works to bring essential community resources to the table, so that children can focus on learn-

ing.

She challenges school leaders across the state and nation to look at creative ways to address the issues of the most needy children. With a can-do, no-excuses attitude, Linda fights hard for young people. And she never gives up.

In the past year alone, CIS of North Carolina provided services for more than 46,000 children and their families in 27 communities.

CIS tapped 920 agencies and organizations to provide essential services, while more than 6,000 volunteers contributed almost 300,000 hours to serve CIS children. The results are impressive. Collectively, the North Carolina CIS programs kept 95 percent of high-risk students in school and saw 90 percent of them promoted to the next level.

In a "what's in it for me?" day and age, Linda exemplifies the servant leadership mentality. She is completely dedicated to young people, she continually chooses community over self, and she never seeks the spotlight.

The children of North Carolina are blessed to have Linda Harrill carrying their torch. CJ

Holland is director of the North Carolina Education Alliance.

Paige Holland

Other NEA state affiliates targeted in Landmark's complaint are the Pennsylvania State Education Association, the Nebraska State Education Association, the Kansas National Education Association, and Education Minnesota.

Landmark's complaint, filed July 20 with the IRS, includes responses by the Democratic National Committee and the 1996 Clinton-Gore Campaign to Federal Elections Committee subpoenas. The FEC had released the information to the public May 2, but four days later placed the reports under seal, the press release says.

Landmark says its complaint provides "overwhelming evidence of the NEA's political activities, including its key role as a member of the so-called 'Coordinated Campaign Steering Committee,' which set national and statewide campaign strategy for the election of Democratic candidates.

"The extent to which the NEA and its

state affiliates have coordinated their political activities with the Democratic Party, and have used millions of dollars in tax-exempt general revenues to support these activities is truly breathtaking," it states.

Other members of the Steering Committee included in the complaint were the 1996 Clinton-Gore Campaign, the Democratic Senatorial Campaign Committee, the Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee, and the AFL-CIO.

Landmark's complaint is the latest phase of the Foundation's five-year investigation and legal research into alleged violations of federal tax and election laws by the NEA and its state affiliates. Landmark also filed complaints with the IRS last year about the union's political activities and expenditures in earlier election cycles.

A spokeswoman for the N.C. Association of Educators did not return phone calls seeking comment for this story. CJ

School Reform News From Across the Nation

Proofing Texts, Gay Resolution

Texas A&M University has signed a first-of-its-kind \$80,000 contract with the Texas Education Agency to proofread science textbooks.

The university review team will include 12 faculty members, 17 graduate students, and 11 College Station-area school teachers.

"We're pleased because we're committed to public education, and we think we have a lot to offer, but it's also a little ominous because we know we're the home of the Aggie joke, so we know it's important we do a good job," said Dr. Timothy Scorr, director of the A&M Biology Department.

In the past, TEA has used public school teachers or individuals to fast-check textbooks. This is the first time TEA has given the job to a university.

"We decided to take a different slant, knowing we could get a lot more done by using a university, which has a more expansive pool of possible reviewers," said Eugene Rios with the TEA.

There are a few requirements for every reviewer. Each reviewer must have a bachelor's degree with a concentration in a relevant subject area, and pass a TEA screening process. As reported by *dallasnews.com*.

NEA Drafts Controversial Bill

The National Education Association drafted and then withdrew Resolution New B, a proposal for "the development of curricula designed to meet the needs of gay youth." In place of the resolution, the NEA has opted for a task force to pursue the issue.

The resolution, released March 20, states: "The NEA recognizes that the complex and diverse needs of gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, and questioning students . . . and gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender families and their children require the development of programs that promote a safe and inclusive environment."

The NEA asserts that withdrawing the resolution and establishing a task force is not a gesture of acquiescence to critics.

The association intends to broaden its examination of the issue in order to ensure that their members and students "teach and learn in a safe, supportive environment."

Changes for Dept. of Education

Rod Paige, U.S. Secretary of Education and a former Houston educator and school board chairman, announced several changes would take place to curb wasteful spending of Department of Education funds and to encourage accountability.

The changes include reducing spending limits on all purchase cards and putting top officials on performance contracts. In total, the department must put in place about half of 661 recommendations made in the spring by the department's auditors.

"In the last 90 days, a lot has taken

place," Paige said. "We have dedicated ourselves to the proposition that the Department of Education can be a well-run, well-respected agency."

Paige also plans to hire a new assistant secretary to assist and oversee the progress of these remedies, a position that requires Senate confirmation. The position has been vacant for five years. As reported by *Education Week on the Web*.



Improve Schools, Parent Power

A new grassroots group, L.A. Metro Strategy, with longtime ties to Los Angeles' urban neighborhoods, is focusing on raising student achievement.

Supported by the city's top leaders, including Mayor James K. Hahn, School District Supt. Roy Romer, City Council President Alex Padilla, and school board member Caprice Young, the group is gathering the support of more than 700 parents and educators in an effort to empower parents.

"I really approve of what's happening here," Romer said. "We all share common values: All children can learn . . . and the way to get there is through expert teaching and parent involvement."

The group has a three-pronged strategy for success: 1.) Allow it to select 25 schools; 2.) Give it three years to create a new relationship between parents and educators; and 3.) Agree to success with an underlying theory that all kids can learn. As reported by the *Los Angeles Metro*.

Japan and School Violence

After a man knifed and killed eight children and injured 15 others at Ikedo Elementary School near Osaka on June 8, schools across Japan have been taking drastic measures to ensure safety.

School officials have locked gates, posted guards, organized parent controls, installed cameras and enrolled teachers in self-defense courses. But more shockingly, other schools are arming teachers with ear-splitting alarms, long Y-shaped poles (often used by the police to subdue suspects), and canisters of tear gas.

A town east of Tokyo, Urayasu, is planning to distribute tear-gas canisters to 42 schools.

"It might look dangerous for schools to have such devices, but what should not have happened did actually happen in Ikeda, and the city government should consider concrete measures to keep children safe."

Some are concerned that the safety measures are too much and that the realistic drills are frightening students.

In one class, a teacher wearing a mask and wielding an iron rod burst into a classroom and started screaming at the students _ all for the sake of provoking a conversation on safety.

While school shootings have become all too common in the United States, this was the first tragedy to strike Japanese schools. Reported by the *San Francisco Chronicle*. CJ

Cost to Taxpayers Climbs

Lawmakers Continue to Extend Age Requirements for Schools

By SHERRI JOYNER

Assistant Editor

RALEIGH

Most parents don't consider compulsory attendance when enrolling their children in school, but that may change as lawmakers continue to extend the age children must attend school.

Early-childhood initiatives were the first to make waves across the nation. Both the theory of "readiness to learn" and the concept of universal preschool have become national movements.

The National Education Association has already supported "early childhood programs in public schools for children from birth through age eight."

Last month, U.S. Secretary of Education Rod Paige and Mrs. Lynne Cheney hosted the White House Summit on Early Childhood Cognitive Development. Paige supported the idea of studying early-childhood initiatives to discover what works best.

"Together, the Department of Education and the Department of Health and Human Services will ensure that the Head Start and preschool programs we support are doing the right things and getting results," Paige said.

Other attendees supported universal preschool. Among them was Stephanie Fanjul, director of student achievement for the NEA, and former architect of the North Carolina Smart Start Program.

Given this context, it is no surprise that efforts in many states are shaping new compulsory laws.

State Action for Early Childhood

A law adopted last year in California makes kindergarten attendance mandatory by making it a prerequisite for first grade. The bill, AB 25, also calls for school officials to contact the parents of preschoolers about programs specific to their children.

Another action came earlier this summer in the District of Columbia as council member Kevin Chavous proposed to lower the compulsory age for public school from 5 to 3 years old in D.C. "It would force the school system to take charge and responsibility for every 3- and 4-year-old in the city to make sure they are prepared for kindergarten," Chavous told *The Washington Post*.

The trend has not bypassed North Carolina, which is seeing an overall movement to increase preschool participation.

Although most children start school in kindergarten, the current law in North Carolina says children must be enrolled beginning at age 7.

Former Gov. Jim Hunt's preschool initiative, Smart Start, and local initiatives like Mecklenburg County's Bright Beginnings have begun to offer preschool programs to children in North Carolina — at an ever-increasing cost to state taxpayers.

Last year, Judge Howard Manning, Jr. of the Wake County Superior Court added to the debate by demanding preschool programs for at-risk 4-year-olds. Manning stated on Oct. 26, 2000, in his second ruling in the case *Hoke County Board of Education v. State of North Carolina*, that the state will be expected to expand its prekindergarten program for those children identified as "at risk."

Although, Manning's final ruling is not expected for another year, districts may be required to spend millions of additional dollars on classes for 4-year-olds, and parents of at-risk students may be required to send their children to school years earlier than what the current law demands as a way to compensate for children who have "missed the boat."

The End of the Spectrum

Although students in North Carolina are allowed to quit school at age 16, legislation may keep them in the school, regardless.

General Statute 20-11 passed in 1997 attempts to compel students to attend school. The statute mandates that students who drop out of school before age 18 will have their driver licenses revoked.

The same statute also strips students of their driver licenses if they have been expelled or suspended for more than 10 consecutive days, if a student possesses or sells an alcoholic beverage, if a student brings a weapon to school, or if a student assaults a teacher or other school personnel on school property.

The Healthful Living Section of the Department of Public Instruction is in the initial stages of studying the effects of the law and whether it actually compelled teenagers to stay in school.

By law, DPI is required to report on "the effectiveness of this act on the dropout rates and progress toward graduation of students under the age of 18," by Nov. 15, 2002. CJ

*School Spotlight***PreEminent Charter School Set To Take on New Challenges**By **SHERRI JOYNER**
Assistant Editor

PreEminent Charter School, located on Wade Avenue in Raleigh, is open for its second year and is expecting some big changes. The school, which is operating in temporary trailers, will have a new school building in August 2002.

Rhonda Bridgers, principal of PreEminent and native of Randolph County, has spent more than 20 years in the education arena. She has worked as a teacher and a counselor in public schools many of those years.

CAROLINA JOURNAL: Your background is with traditional district schools. How did you become involved with PreEminent Charter?

Bridgers: I was asked if I would be interested in the job and was blessed enough to receive it. It has been a challenge and also a wonderful experience.

PreEminent is run by an outside management company — National Heritage Academies. Having National Heritage Academies manage the school has made things much easier on me. I really admire those charter schools who have to both manage and operate their schools.

CJ: In 1968 you graduated from college. This was a time in history when many districts were desegregating. Did this cause problems for you as a black educator?

Bridgers: I interviewed for a job with Raleigh schools, but they were really looking for teachers with experience. Although I had student teaching training, I didn't get a job in Durham or Raleigh. And sometimes I wonder and think that fate has a plan for us all. And I think it was fate that drew Grover (my husband) and myself to Halifax County, one of the poorest school systems in the state at that time.

Even though Halifax was integrated at the time, most of the schools were predominantly black, predominantly white, or Indian. There was a lot of gerrymandering at the time to keep the black children out of Roanoke city schools. But it wasn't difficult to get a job in that area because they needed teachers.

I was actually in high school when my school system, Trinity, in Randolph County was integrated. At the time I was being bussed to the black high school in Guilford County to go to school, but my senior year I had the option to stay in Guilford County and attend an integrated school. At the time, I didn't want to change schools my

senior year, so I continued at William Penn High School.

CJ: Are you excited about PreEminent's new facility?

Bridgers: When we have the new building it is going to make a huge difference in the number of students and families wanting to attend the school. This past year we had fewer than 40 students enrolled in grades K-2. This upcoming year we will have around 200. And we are already accepting enrollment for the fall of 2002. The new facility, which is expected to be 55,000 square feet, will be located on Rock Quarry Road, right next to the Alltel Amphitheater. At our highest capacity we will be able to accommodate 700 students.

This school year we will offer grades K-5, and then each year we will add an additional grade until the school includes K-8. We are really looking forward to creating a neighborhood school for that community.

CJ: Why do you think parents' will be interested in PreEminent?

Bridgers: One of the biggest factors would be to keep the children from being bused across town. But our school also has other attributes, including an excellent curriculum. We use the E.D. Hirsch Core Knowledge curriculum on steroids. I say that because the curriculum also includes Saxon Math, Collins Writing, and other exceptional curriculum.

Personally, I am just getting used to the curriculum. But it has had excellent results thus far. Our students took a pre-test and post-test last year using the Metropolitan Achievement Test. There was only a six-month time span between the two tests and our first-graders showed a nine-month gain in performance. Our second-graders did even better, showing a 12-month gain. If the curriculum is delivered correctly to the kids, it can really work.

CJ: This curriculum is known to be repetitive and many educators say that this element is its downfall. How would you respond?

Bridgers: Well, I think repetition is good. The more a child hears something, the more it will stick with them. I always tell the kids, especially when I was a counselor and they didn't want to study: It's just like when you listen to the radio and the first time you hear a song that you like, you don't know all the words to it. But the more you hear it, eventually you will know all the words. It is the same way with studying. The more you study, the more it will stick with you.



New facility for PreEminent Charter School, to be located on Rock Quarry Road in Wake County.

CJ: What makes this school special?

Bridgers: I was really lucky to get teachers that are dedicated to the students. That is one thing we assure the parents — that we will provide a nurturing environment for their children. I want to make sure that no child gets lost in the group. We really try to make sure each child is excelling in the class and is being challenged. If a parent is unsure about the school, we also have parent ambassadors that they can talk with.

CJ: Why did you decide to require uniforms this year?

Bridgers: We are looking forward to uniforms. We have parents who have said their children were often teased by some students if they didn't wear a certain name brand. Our uniforms will be grey and white and there will be a variety of options —

pants, shorts, skirts, and jumpers, with white or black shoes.

CJ: What is the biggest challenge you are facing with educating young children?

Bridgers: In Halifax, the kids were good to work with. Then you didn't have to worry about the arrogance or disrespect many children demonstrate today. That is one of the keys behind the education here at PreEminent.

When I was in high school my teachers took the time to make sure we were in a nurturing and encouraging environment. Our teachers taught us to make sure we take pride in everything we do, and if we do something to make sure we do it right. Our teachers took special interest in us. That is what we strive to achieve here at PreEminent. CJ

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Bats in the Belltower**No Net Ground Lost in the Latest Culture War Battles**

The latest skirmishes in the Culture War have resulted in a wash, according to experts reading the field journal of the decades-long battle, *Lingua Franca*.

In the latest issue, experts note, queer theorists made surprising inroads in recently abandoned territory with the publication of *Our Monica, Ourselves: The Clinton Affair and the National Interest* (New York University Press), following a path previously hewn by cultural warrior Toni Morrison, who argued that Bill Clinton was America's first black president, despite the rather obvious fact that the man is white, even pastily so. Morrison employed stereotype, usually a dangerous weapon, to argue for Clinton's blackness, because he was born into a single-parent household, liked junk food and saxophone music, and was hounded for his sexuality.

Queer theorist Tyler Curtain led Operation: Our Monica, writing that Clinton was also the nation's "first queer [president] as well," despite the rather obvious fact that the man is heterosexual, even lustily so. Noting Clinton's gift of Walt Whitman's *Leaves of Grass* to Monica Lewinsky and Monica's particular return favor to the President (which is not technically sexual intercourse, depending upon the meaning of "is"), Curtain wrote, "Any queerly enculturated gay man will recognize the acts and the objects."

Other Cultural Warriors quickly rushed into the breach. One had Clinton as the first female president; another, the first black female president; and one (obviously not a "team player"), the first white-trash president.

In another foray, pedophilia scholar James Kincaid (quoted in the July/August 2000 *Clarion* as saying that spanking gave parents "drooling erotic satisfaction") pronounced the Clinton/Lewinsky affair "unerotic" because "neither Monica nor Bill can be thought of as children," making it "hard for us to see them as enticing."

Meanwhile, one of the towering citadels of these Cultural Warriors fell under intense fire in a surprise attack. Several Catholic and Christian theorists successfully put forth the idea that Oscar Wilde was a closet Catholic and "latent Christian" who wrote religious allegory.

Opening rounds of this siege came from the Rev. Antonio Spadaro, S.J., in the November 2000 issue of the Jesuit journal *La Civiltà Cattolica*, Joseph Pearce in *The Unmasking of Oscar Wilde*, and Jeffrey Tucker in the Catholic magazine *Crisis*. Tucker even went so far as to claim that Jesus "was truly [Wilde's] lifelong lover" — a devastating blow.

Another biographer, Michael Coren, wrote in the *National Post* that "Wilde was not really homosexual at all, and only 'used' young men because he had venereal disease and feared infecting his wife." Coren did allow for the possibility that Wilde might have been bisexual, but it is uncertain at this time whether that clarification will be sufficient to regain the citadel. CJ

Getting A College Education for Free? Internet, Competition Make It Possible

Evolving technology triggers a revolution in how higher education will be delivered

By JON SANDERS

Assistant Editor

RALEIGH

The burgeoning opportunities created by Internet technologies are changing the face of higher education. The changes are coming so quickly, even the experts are unsure of how the structure of higher education will appear once the dust settles. And that uncertainty is also creating opportunity.

One thing that seems certain is that bricks-and-mortar portals (the hallowed campuses of old) to higher education will decrease in popularity — but the rub is, how much will they decrease? Their decline appears to be linked to the availability, effectiveness and relative cost savings of online providers of higher education, not to mention the desirability of higher education itself in the market for high-tech workers.

The amenities of an education from the bricks-and-mortar campus are well known ("campus life"), but they come at a high price. As the cost of online alternatives drops, and as more students opt for online education, those amenities will start to pale. How low will the cost of online education go? Some forecast it could be driven down by competition to virtually zero.

In his article in *The Chronicle of Higher Education* of May 19, 2000, Professor Van B. Weigel discusses how the World Wide Web would one day allow students to receive

higher education free.

Building on the research of Carl Shapiro and Hal R. Varian in *Information Rules: A Strategic Guide to the Network Economy*, Weigel writes of how "the Web has revolutionized the way we reproduce [information], lowering the cost of additional copies to nearly zero. The forces of competition will drive the price of information down to roughly the cost of its reproduction." With broadband access in the near future, multitasking already being "irrepressible," and with investors interested in providing online education, Weigel writes that free college degrees are "just a matter of time."

"It is not unthinkable that a student could take in a lecture while browsing through advertisements for the latest in video games, fashions, or automobiles," writes Weigel. "And although professors find it hard to swallow, students in an engaging and multitasked virtual classroom might well be more attentive to the lecture than are students who daydream or read material for other courses in a large lecture hall."

Another factor to consider is the changing nature of the demand for higher education by the high-tech market. A shortage of high-tech workers is creating opportunities right out of high school (even if they drop out) for technologically savvy teen-agers. Gov. Jim Geringer of Wyoming was quoted in the July 23 *Chronicle of Higher Education* online about how certification classes offered by Microsoft, Cisco and other high-

tech companies are luring high-school students out of school before graduation. "Their senior year doesn't matter when they could be making \$30,000 to \$40,000 easily working for these companies," Geringer told the *Chronicle*.

Along with a rapidly changing work environment, what is driving this phenomenon is opportunity cost. As Weigel writes, the 1999 average for a private, four-year institution's tuition was \$15,380. Compound that for four years and add fees and

bookstore expenses, and compare that with giving up four years' worth of earnings beginning, as Geringer suggested, at \$30,000. In just four years, that is an approximate cost of more than \$200,000.

It's no wonder that, as Shelley Donald Coolidge of *The Christian*

Science Monitor wrote in June 2000, an increasing number of students are opting out of college altogether to pursue high-tech careers, especially in Internet startup companies. "With all of that young, raw talent, many Internet start-ups are openly wondering why they should wait for students to get a diploma," Coolidge wrote.

Still, Coolidge did find some workers who originally went straight into high-tech work willing to return to school to pursue a four-year degree. Low-cost online education could help tremendously in this area; its low costs and ease of access could significantly lower technologically proficient students' opportunity costs in their pursuit higher education. CJ

A student could take in a lecture while browsing through advertisements for the latest in video games, fashions, or autos.

Flexibility and training offered by online courses appeal to a new breed of time-strapped students

By RHETA BURTON

Editorial Intern

RALEIGH

Many colleges today are taking advantage of Internet technology to offer online classes to people seeking degrees or wanting to take supplemental classes. Most of the schools offering online courses are public two-year and four-year colleges and universities.

There are two especially prevalent models for online classes. One is the consortium model, which appeals primarily to students who want to take only a few classes online. The model also appeals to local students, within the host university's home city or state.

The second model is that of an independent university, usually for-profit, that can reach students who are out of the state or even out of the country. Independent universities offer a quality online education, more options of online courses, and a greater marketing potential.

Virtual colleges market to a different group of people from the typical 18-to-22-year-old college student interested in earning a bachelor's degree in a discipline and entering the workforce in that field. Most state universities are in the business of educating people who are already educated, at the high school level at least. Continuing education has not been the main focus of most four-year colleges and universities. Virtual colleges, however, have pursued

that market among others. Many tailor their offerings to adults already in the workforce who need either a few pickup courses or training for a particular job skill.

Looking to Michigan, Phoenix

For example, Michigan Virtual University originated as Michigan Virtual Automotive College. The college's original intent was to train people via the Internet for work in the automotive industry. The university later expanded, and as Michigan Virtual University it offers training in other fields, including information technology, health care, and education.

University of Phoenix Online specializes in undergraduate and graduate programs dealing with business courses and information technology. According to some graduates of the online program, it gives them equal access to speak freely or discuss the subject at hand. Also, discussions can be saved onto a disk so students can access them at any time for reference. The University of Phoenix also offers a smooth transition in case one moves out of state or out of country. Students can enroll and begin taking courses at Phoenix at any time of the year. This feature is especially attractive because it provides working adults with families an opportunity to set their own pace and schedule in taking courses.

In North Carolina, UNC-Wilmington offers web-based classes called Web-U.

Web-U offers more than 1,000 courses in 17 areas of study. People who take these courses range from those who want to complete a university degree to those who want to take courses for the pure enjoyment of learning. Through Web-U, many people are able to earn their degrees while working and taking care of family obligations.

Online classrooms do pose some problems, however. Online students face more distraction than students do in a classroom, such as domestic duties (tending to crying infants) and other home distractions (such as prime-time TV). The unique capabilities of online viewing provide a way around the problem, in that students can review parts or even the entirety of the lecture, which is also an advantage over on-site attendance of lectures. Nevertheless, reviewing classes takes extra time, which is a rather scarce resource for many working adults who are attracted to the programs in part as a way to save time, such as when avoiding a drive to and from a campus and being able to "attend" a class virtually at times suitable to individual schedules.

Another problem is that many professors find it difficult to spur debate and discussions in online course. Synchronizing discussions is a general problem, because students also tend to lose interest when the other students are off-line and there is no one to talk with. This problem is a major one; it's one of the main reasons students drop out of online courses. CJ

UNC-Chapel Hill Still a Bargain Despite Any Increase in Tuition

By JON SANDERS
Assistant Editor

RALEIGH
Regardless of which tuition increase for UNC schools the General Assembly chooses, UNC tuition would still be a bargain compared with other state public university systems.

Earlier this year the Pope Center for Higher Education Policy released an *Inquiry* research paper ("North Carolina's 'Reverse Robin Hood Scheme,'" *Inquiry* No. 11, Jan. 12, 2001) that found that students' costs for enrollment in four-year public universities in North Carolina were the second-lowest in the nation. It also found that UNC students paid the second-smallest proportion in the nation of the costs to educate them.

According to *The News & Observer* of Raleigh, tuition and fees under the Senate proposal, the most expensive for students, would increase by 19 percent next fall for UNC-Chapel Hill, to \$3,219, and N.C. Central University, to \$2,350, and 18 percent for N.C. State University, to \$3,228.

Student leaders in the UNC system, naturally, are complaining, and at least one is threatening a lawsuit. The student body president of UNC-CH, Justin Young, is seeking higher taxes rather than the \$74-to-\$168 tuition increase faced by students. Andrew Payne, student representative on the UNC Board of Governors who once called the universities the state's "economic engine," told *The News & Observer* that students were considering a lawsuit to get the courts to interpret the state constitution, which they say guarantees them a nearly free university education. Article IX, Sec. 9, of the constitution states: "The General Assembly shall provide the benefits of The University of North Carolina and other public institutions of higher education, as far as practicable, be extended to the people of the State free of expense."

The *Inquiry* paper, however, says the

mandate's "wording is too vague to be cited as mandating the state's policy of compelling the taxpayers to subsidize the education of all students in the UNC system, rich and poor." It also asks whether North Carolina is in fact imposing an "impractical, costly burden" on the "people of the State" by the way we fund higher education.

The paper also examined who was paying the lion's share of the costs of their education, and found that "most of the people responsible for providing the tax revenues to the state that support public higher education in N.C. are neither wealthy nor highly educated."

Comparing Student Costs

If the tuition and fees at UNC-CH this fall grew to the projected \$3,219, they still would compare favorably to those of UNC-CH's 17 self-selected "peer" institutions, an analysis by the Pope Center found. In fact, UNC-CH would still be cheaper than all of its peers except the University of Florida. More tellingly, UNC-CH, at \$3,219 in tuition and fees for 2001-02, is cheaper than its peers (except Florida and the University of Texas at Austin) were *several years ago*.

Three years ago, in-state students at the University of Washington paid \$3,495, and their counterparts at the University of Wisconsin paid \$3,408. Ten years ago, in-state students at the University of Virginia paid \$3,354. Twenty-three years ago, students at Duke University paid \$3,830. (None of these numbers has been adjusted for inflation).

The table below shows how a cost of \$3,219 in tuition and fees at UNC-CH compares historically with the costs of its "peer" institutions (except Florida). It also gives how many years removed in cost each peer institution is from UNC-CH under that cost assumption (that is, for each peer institution, how many years it has been that student costs there have exceeded \$3,219). CJ

How UNC-CH compares historically to its "peer" institutions * in costs paid by students

Institution	Cost (tuition, fees)	Year	Years removed from UNC-CH in cost**
UNC-CH	\$3,219	2001-02	--
U. of Texas Austin	3,252	2000-01	1
U. of Washington	3,495	1998-99	3
U. of Wisconsin	3,408	1998-99	3
Ohio State U.	3,507	1995-96	6
U. of Calif. Los Angeles	3,549	1993-94	8
U. of Illinois-Urbana	3,348	1992-93	9
U. of Calif. Berkeley	3,249	1992-93	9
U. of Virginia	3,354	1991-92	10
U. of Michigan	3,493	1990-91	11
U. of Chicago	3,922	1978-79	23
Duke U.	3,830	1978-79	23
Vanderbilt U.	3,650	1978-79	23
Emory U.	3,450	1978-79	23
U. of Pennsylvania	3,450	1974-75	27
Stanford U.	3,375	1974-75	27

* The University of Florida is omitted because it is the only peer institution of UNC-CH with lower tuition and fees.

** Not adjusted for inflation

(Sources: For data from 1974-1978, Barron's Profiles of American Colleges, respective years; from 1990-1993, The Insider's Guide to Colleges, respective years; from 1993 onward, The Chronicle of Higher Education online, Facts & Figures, www.chronicle.com/stats/tuition.)

Preserve or Transform?

Universities, with the exception of a benighted few, are facing serious challenges to their existence as we know it. Responses to these challenges are usually preservationist rather than transformational, and almost all call for more money to meet them. The minimalist maxim of "less is more" may serve universities better to aid their transformation to a new era of service to higher learning.

Here are the issues before us:

- Those in the business community are dismayed at the diminished fundamental literacy qualifications of students who have attained a baccalaureate.

- Faculties are dismayed at the education students bring with them from K-12.

- Students are annoyed at the brushoff they receive from instructors whose careers hinge on research productivity rather than on teaching effectiveness.

- University administrators are miffed by penurious legislatures threatening cuts.

Unfortunately, the electorate continues to demand extended child care for their teen-somethings, remedial education for everything their kids didn't learn in high school, entertainment in the form of winning athletic teams, and a host of other non-education services. These demands are preservationist rather than transformational and it is the responsibility of enlightened academic and political leadership to point this out.

Looming over this situation is the clear and present potential for technological advances in distance-learning and computer-based home schooling that will rapidly render antiquated the residential-based instructional role of all but the more prestigious private universities and public Ivies. More "prestigious" certification can be earned from brand-name universities offering electronic courses and, arguably, these are a better educational value.

Of the nearly 4000 institutions of higher education in the United States only a few escape the reality of these issues in whole or in part. How we stand in the Carolinas is open to a discussion more extensive than this space permits.

Time for Transformation

Intellectual leadership from the highest levels of the university systems and from the campuses is needed to address these issues forthrightly and publicly because the citizenry has become accustomed to an anachronism. Rethinking and resolute action is required to transform universities from "good old boola boola" (the preservationist augmentative agenda) into centers where higher learning is central. Those who cherish higher learning, as distinct from those who only cherish the management

of higher education, must dare to argue for change. But, what kind of change? Here are some modest proposals to consider in North Carolina.

- **Less Child Care and Remedial Education** — Identify clearly the role of different institutions in the system and admit students accordingly, but in all cases admit only students who are prepared to participate in higher learning. Perpetuation of the roles of child-care facility and remedial education center diminishes the opportunities for serious students to achieve, wastes resources on watered-down "introductory" courses, and encourages mean-

ingless majors that contribute little to the society that supports them.

This means much tougher standards and the forthright acceptance of distinct classes of institutions instead of maintaining a charade that they are all equally excellent. Also, it implies a very serious examination of the meaning of

teacher education programs (the part of a failed system over which universities have some control) and the introduction of correctives where necessary.

- **Less Regional Entertainment** — Forsake the regional-entertainment role of big-time intercollegiate sports in favor of enhanced intramural programs. Unimaginable? Let's agree that sport is important in the development of the individual, but participation (particularly in lifelong sports) and personal health and fitness are far more important than the spectatorism that is promoted as "bread and circuses" for students, alums, legislators and administrators who hope big-time sports will help big-time augmentation of the institutional budget. Where this transformation seems too much, the least the leadership can do is explore, with other universities and professional teams, the conversion of major college sports into professional "feeder" teams and thus eschew the student-athlete ruse.

For those who would argue that the higher learning that does occur at our universities can be sustained only by agreeing to be a place where "young persons find themselves," where their educational and social deficiencies are corrected, where they can be entertained by big-time sports, and where they can be certified "for having been there" whether or not they have pursued higher learning — I say move along. Courageous, transforming leadership is needed to make higher education institutions perform higher learning as their most important function. Less can mean more. CJ

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With colleges and universities enrolling a record number of students and spending unprecedented public and private dollars, the mission of the Pope Center for Higher Education Policy couldn't be more important: to report on, analyze, and research issues in higher education such as cost-effectiveness, tenure, curriculum, and the quality of undergraduate education. The Pope Center publishes *Inquiry* papers on these issues, holds an annual conference for academics and policy analysts, and distributes a weekly e-newsletter on higher education. For more information, please call Jon Sanders at 919-828-3876 or visit www.popecenter.org.

Course of the Month

The difference between knowing differences and knowing differences

Ah, differences. To some they aren't important. To others they are, such as the French parliament member who famously exclaimed, when someone remarked that men and women aren't that different, "Vive la difference!" Then there are those curious souls — often found at colleges — who proclaim that differences aren't important but dedicate their life's work to cultivating old and mining new differences between people that, they rush to enjoy, aren't important.

Meanwhile, you, gentle readers, may receive three hours of important university credit by sitting in a class where you may learn about all these exciting, new, non-important differences. Once you have been thoroughly indoctrinated in all these differences, you may then expound upon what a great world it would be if people didn't make such a big deal about differences, especially these differences (be able to recite the most important differences upon which people should be careful to place no importance).

It's all part of what colleges hail as diversity. Diversity is important because we should be aware that there are many differences among people. But we should know that differences among people aren't important, so it's important to learn how to look past differences, especially these differences. This view of diversity is the collegiate version of what elementary school teachers, using the feelings-based model of instruction, confuse our children with: "You are a unique individual, just like everybody else."

One such class was held this summer at UNC-Chapel Hill, and not only could students earn important university credit for it, they also could satisfy an important university "perspectives" requirement in taking the class:

Communications 80: Social Theory & Cultural Diversity

This course explores the contested terrain of social and cultural theory and practice, specifically in terms of power, knowledge and identity. You will be introduced to basic paradigms of thinking about cultural difference (race, gender, nationality, class, religion, generation, etc.). You will be encouraged to examine the ways in which those paradigms shape what we do, think, say and imagine in our everyday lives as members of a diverse array of cultures and subcultures. In other words, we will consider how social and cultural theories enable us to critically engage and problematize categories of difference as they are constituted in and through our day-to-day lives.

What does this mean? As we head toward the end of the twentieth century (sic), it seems clear that we are increasingly finding ourselves in a contradictory position: we are simultaneously closer, yet further away from others. The rise of global media and the mobility of an ever-increasing portion of the world's population have challenged the discreet borders of various countries, regions and cultures. As cultures collide and intersect, the result is an ever-intensifying degree of hybridity and entanglement. Yet this "smaller world" phenomenon doesn't seem necessarily to bring us closer together, as the rising tide of hatred (sic) and conservative entrenchment attest.

The question "What difference does difference make?" seems a particularly important one to begin to answer in the contemporary context. To begin to answer it, we need to open with a related set of questions: What makes some differences significant and others not? How have we come to define various differences? How is difference constituted? What alternative conceptions of difference can we come up with? As we begin to answer these questions, we can start to question the utility of difference and diversity in our lives, especially with regard to contemporary debates and crises centering around such issues as AIDS/HIV, family values, multiculturalism, the coherence of notions like "American culture" and affirmative action. Ultimately, I hope we can bring questions of difference and questions of citizenship together: What might it mean to practice citizenship in a multicultural world?

Following are some of the most critical, crucial non-important differences students could learn about:

- Social Theory, Representation and Non-Complacency (including readings on "Social Theory: It's (sic) Uses and Pleasures" and "White Silence, White Solidarity.")

- Culture, Identity, Difference
- Theoretical Jargon?? (sic)
- Margin and Center
- Oppression (including the "Five Faces of Oppression")

- Resistance
- An Alternative Conception of Power (including "Power/Knowledge," "Racisms," "New Ethnicities," the video "Color Adjustment," and "Age, Race, Class & Sex: Women Redefining Difference")

- Race & Ethnicity
- Beyond Race & Ethnicity? (including "One Drop of Blood" and "What is Whiteness?")

- The Performance of Race and Ethnicity (including "Complexion," "Goin' Gangsta, Choosin' Cholita," and "Being and Nothingness: What Makes Someone African American?")

- Constructing Genders (including "One is Not Born a Woman" and "How to Build a Man")

- Performing Genders? (including "My Masculinity," the video "Paris is Burning," "Is Paris Burning?" and "The Body You Want")

- Sexuality (including "Axiomatic" and "The Straight Mind")

- Desire (including "Bodies and Pleasures")

- Questions of Class (including the movie "Roger and Me" and "Unpopular Culture: The Case of White Trash")

- Citizenship and Political Action (including "Interrupting the Cycle of Oppression" and "White Squall: Resistance and the Pedagogy of Whiteness")

- Application: HIV/AIDS
- Mourning and Militancy

- Departure, or An Impossible Homecoming

Well, it seems one difference is worth ostracizing after all. Watch out for "hatred" and "conservative entrenchment." Learn that lesson and you'll be ready for graduate-level studies in "Tolerance Through Intolerance: The Herbert Marcuse Model." CJ

Personal Digital Assistants Gain Popularity on Campuses

By RHETA BURTON

Editorial Intern

RALEIGH

Rapid technological change has led many schools to require students to have computers or laptops. Some colleges and universities are suggesting to their students that they use hand-held computers.

Personal digital assistants — small, computer-like notepads that store data such as phone numbers, addresses, lists and calendars — are becoming as popular as cell phones among students. The digital assistants are also helpful in checking e-mail, finding information on the Internet, and performing other tasks.

At the University of Minnesota at Duluth, half of the students enrolled for the fall semester are required to have personal digital assistants. Some North Carolina schools also are considering academic uses of personal digital assistants.

Some academics foresee a purpose for the assistants in the classroom, while some think personal digital assistants do not benefit every class.

PDA's at Triad Campuses

This fall, UNC-Greensboro is testing a pilot program using digital assistants in some classrooms. "We want to test how responsive they are in helping students and faculty. The student will walk into a classroom and take a PDA that is already charged," said John Eatman, an associate professor of information systems at the Bryan School of Business.

"Next, the professor will send questions (or load the questions into the palm if there is no wireless network) to the students' PDA's for them to answer, and the students will answer them and return the answers to the professor. Then, the professor will look at the results and analyze how the class is doing in a particular area," Eatman said.

"The goal of PDA's is to give the professors an immediate response to see how his/her class is doing and to give immediate feedback to the students," Eatman said. Digital assistants will be used only where classrooms are adapted for new technology, or with a wireless network. The assistants will stay in the classroom and not with the student. UNCG doesn't require students to have a computer or laptop on campus.

At Winston-Salem State University, students are already using small comput-

ers called iPaqs in the classroom. Currently, WSSU doesn't have a requirement for students to have computers or laptops on campus.

The iPaqs, made by Compaq, are already used in two classes — a business/human resources class and a nursing class. "The business class uses the iPaq's to look up websites that the instructor tells them to look up and it helps the students keep up with their appointments," said Carolyn Anderson, curriculum designer at WSSU. "The nursing classes use the iPaqs just mainly for taking notes while out on the field, but they also use them to keep data on different types of prescription drugs and medicines."

Some classes that would use digital assistants are in professional schools such as computer, business, and medical schools. Such technology may not be useful, and may even be distracting, in other classrooms such as English and history.

Frank Prochaska, associate vice chancellor for academic affairs at Western Carolina University, said that after completing the department's first pilot program using the palm pilots and iPaqs, students and instructors had mixed responses.

"When we used them in our general English composition class, the instructor and students didn't quite like it as much as instructors and students in our introduction to law and health studies classes did," Prochaska said. "We are no way near to requiring our students to have hand-held computers until they are fully tested and free of computer glitches. The use of hand-held computers may not be equally useful in all classes, like the English class, but they do have their benefits in classes such as business classes and classes where students need the Internet on a regular basis."

Wake Forest Medical School began to provide second- through fourth-year medical students with palm pilots while on their rounds in order to look up patient information and care. Students and doctors store information, such as prescription drug dosing, procedures on advanced medical care, and other doctors' names and telephone numbers.

Palm Inc. has initiated a program for colleges and universities in which palm pilots can be incorporated in classrooms at reduced cost. The program is available to schools offering students a Palm OS as a part of their computer science curriculum. Students will pay \$1,000 a year for the use of a palm pilot in class. CJ

Guide Gives Mixed Reviews of North Carolina Universities

Intercollegiate Studies Institute Tells 'The Whole Truth' about School Life, Studies

By JON SANDERS
Assistant Editor

The Intercollegiate Studies Institute has just published a revised and expanded edition of its guide for parents and students looking for a college. The guide, *Choosing the Right College: The Whole Truth About America's Top Schools* (William B. Eerdmans Publishing), includes assessments of four North Carolina institutions, Davidson College, Duke University, the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, and Wake Forest University.

"Important and impressive academic departments, professors, and universities still exist; it is simply a matter of finding them," writes William J. Bennett in the guide's introduction, giving the reason for the publication.

Editor-in-Chief Winfield J. C. Myers explains the philosophy governing the guide as "students are best served by a rigorous, diverse, and broad curriculum founded on the traditional disciplines of the liberal arts and sciences."

The guide offers essays covering more than 100 colleges and universities across the country. Each essay contains four elements: a look at the college in general, a discussion of the university's academic life, a report on the institution's political atmosphere, and an assessment of life on campus.

Choosing the Right College reports very favorably of Davidson, with its "refreshing emphasis on the liberal arts" and "beauti-

ful campus." With its humanities program, a paucity of classes "unfortunately influenced by political trends in academia," and an emphasis on teaching over research, Davidson earns the guide's praise as a "depoliticized place where the focus remains on teaching."

The guide notes, however, that the future of Davidson's traditional humanities program "depends upon the quality of hiring decisions" made there. "Some people will come in and say it looks like a kind of Great Books program and roll their eyes," one Davidson professor quoted in the guide said.

The guide also discusses Davidson's being No. 2 in the country among the top 10 "male-friendly" colleges, as ranked in the September 2000 *Men's Health* magazine, and is somewhat affirming of the gist of that ranking while dismissing its sensation. Being "'male-friendly,' whatever that is," is apparently just the result of Davidson's lack of politicization in favor of academics.

'Ivy-Like Duke'

Next alphabetically in the guide is its essay on Duke, and the two essays provide bookends to approaches to the question of the university. The guide remarks on Duke's "Ivy-like obsession with multiculturalism, its penchant for offering bizarre courses and strange focuses of study, and its obvious bias against traditional ideals," where "the study of race, class, and gender is paramount." The guide takes time to exorcise the notion that a university in the home state of Jesse Helms is de facto con-

servative, providing several examples of a "liberal" campus climate at Duke. It gives Duke's "Curriculum 2000" the faint praise of being better than the previous curriculum, which had a loophole that allowed students to avoid classes in science, mathematics, or a foreign language. The guide notes, however, that Duke features several outstanding teachers and departments, and that most students eschew the "small and zealous sect of agitating [left-wing] students."

The guide also talks about the cost to the campus climate at Duke imposed by its emphasis on "diversity." A racially divided

student body has seen several racial incidents recently. Those include anonymous death threats made against a student who wrote a letter to the campus newspaper opposing a proposed major in Hindi and the falsified "hate crime" of a mock lynching of a black baby doll perpetrated by two

black students to "make a political statement."

UNC-CH receives mixed reviews from the guide. It is critical of UNC-CH's "Perspectives" curriculum, which gives students a wide range of courses to choose from, because it gives students few clues as to putting together a comprehensive education. "With the right guidance, students can carve out for themselves a quality liberal-arts education," the guide says.

The guide found a great amount of political activism on campus, ranging from liberal student groups to conservative ones. There have been political crusades, including the "anti-sweatshop" campaign and the

occasional protests against the monument to honor Confederate soldiers, but conservatives on campus have been able to get their political message out as well, even bringing in big-name speakers.

Gender Gap

The guide also notes that "women undergraduates outnumber men 2-to-1" and that "many women undergraduates say [UNC-CH] could use a little more diversity between the sexes." That criticism is fairly answered by the men, who suggest "too many women are discouraged by the on-campus prospects and that too many look off campus when the man of their dreams might be right under their nose (sic)."

Finally, the guide found a "paradox" at Wake Forest — a school with "religious roots [that] has eschewed religious values." It lauds the excellent programs and professors at the university, but it excoriates the bizarre and political topics entering Wake Forest's classrooms.

It also laments that "Wake Forest, since dropping its association with the Baptist church, has been bent on catching up with the multiculturalism promoted by neighboring Duke and the University of North Carolina."

Examples of Wake Forest's "catching up" include politicized courses, its "aggressive" pursuit of racial and gender diversity, and freshman orientation sessions that are "little more than political propaganda recommending that students suspend their critical faculties when it comes to racial issues." Those sessions are mandatory, where most university orientation activities are voluntary. Worse, Wake Forest segregates freshman orientation, holding separate sessions for minority students. *cj*

Study: College Women Want Marriage and Less of 'Hookup' Dating Scene

By JON SANDERS
Assistant Editor

A national study released recently found that most college women aspire to marriage but are dissatisfied with the campus dating scene. The study was commissioned and funded by the Independent Women's Forum and conducted by the Courtship Research Team, an arm of the Institute for American Values.

Entitled "Hooking Up, Hanging Out, and Hoping for Mr. Right — College Women on Dating and Mating Today," the 18 month-long national study (found at www.iwf.org) examined the opinions and values of college women in the areas of sexuality, dating, courtship, and marriage. The study included in-depth interviews with 62 undergraduate women on 11 college and university campuses and telephone interviews of 1,000 unmarried heterosexual undergraduate women at four-year colleges across the nation.

Among the study's findings:

- The vast majority of college women aspire to marriage as a life goal. More than 83 percent of the respondents to the telephone interviews agreed with the statement "Being married is a very important goal to me," and 91 percent of the in-depth interviewees agreed with that statement.

- Dating relationships between college men and women "are too often character-

ized by either too little commitment or too much," and "hooking up" was filling the interaction gap left behind by the demise of traditional courtship. Hooking up is defined as a "physical encounter" — ranging from kissing to sex — between a man and a woman when neither expects anything further in the relationship. Forty percent of the women in the national survey admitted to experiencing a hookup, and 10 percent had done so at least six times.

- It is rare for college men to ask college women out on dates, and it is also rare for a college man in dating relationships to acknowledge that he and the woman are a couple unless prompted by the woman. Only half of seniors in the survey had been asked out on six or more dates, and a third had been asked out on two dates or fewer.

- The majority of college women seek long-term commitments, not a series of hookups or dating relationships where commitment is uncertain.

The survey cites several factors behind women's dissatisfaction with campus dating life, including women outnumbering men on campus (the statistic cited in the study is that in 1997 there were 79 men for every 100 women), the erosion of "the culture of courtship, a set of social norms and expectations that once helped young people find the pathway to marriage," and the loss of the *in loco parentis* standard at colleges and the growth of coed dormitories. *cj*

Advertisement

Town and Country

• Occasionally, human beings err. Such was the case in the Local Government pages of *Carolina Journal* in our June 2001 issue. We like to own up to our mistakes. Concerning the Charlotte Hornets, we claimed that the existing Charlotte Coliseum was "built specifically to house the Hornets." However, the coliseum was not. In fact, nobody had any expectation that Charlotte would land an NBA franchise in 1984 when voters approved bonds to build the coliseum. Construction began in 1985. Not until 1987 did the NBA award George Shinn a franchise. The coliseum was designed to attract the Atlantic Coast Conference and National Collegiate Athletic Association's Final Four basketball tournaments and other big events, not to be home court for a pro basketball team. *CJ* would like to thank Ed Williams of *The Charlotte Observer* for helping us correct the mistake we made.

Nevertheless, the point still remains that those franchises that build their own venues have less incentive to move their teams than those teams that insist on public support. Hence, Shinn's constant threats to move the Hornets if the public refused to pay the tab for a new arena. Several public officials have noticed the difference between the National Football League's Panthers — who built their own stadium almost entirely without public assistance — and the Hornets, who did not.

• In Wrightsville Beach, *Carolina Journal* has learned there is a controversy brewing over the surf zone laws, which have been in effect since 1979. The zone has come under question as more and more tourists come to Wrightsville Beach to enjoy the sand and surf.

The surf zone law, in effect between 11 a.m. and 4 p.m., requires all surfers to move to certain zones so they will avoid swimming tourists. The zone moves up or down the coastline, depending on the day. Therefore, it is not in the same place two days in a row.

Area taxpayers are upset because they believe that, since they are the ones who are taxed for the upkeep and maintenance of the beach and shoreline, they ought to be able to enjoy the water when they want, wherever they want.

However, the city considers it a safety issue: Surfers could injure swimmers, who are nearly always getting in their way. According to Wrightsville Police Lt. Hank Narramore: 1) Swim zones would be difficult to institute. It is very difficult to educate tourists because they do not know the area. 2) Swimmers outnumber surfers. It is easier to move a small number of surfers than to move a large group of swimmers.

Instituting a swim zone would be difficult for the police to enforce as well. It would take more city resources to enforce a swim zone for tourists than to have beach regulars go to a surf zone. However, the city has neglected to keep swimmers out of the surf zone, which has left some to wonder whether there is a double-standard.

Playing with the Taxpayers' Money

Major League Baseball Spurs Stadium Building in the Minor Leagues, Debate Over Costs

By ERIK ROOT

Assistant Editor

RALEIGH

The state of North Carolina has the second-most minor league baseball teams in the Southeast. Like most major league baseball teams, the minor leagues have been either building new stadiums or renovating existing ballparks. These projects have consumed millions of taxpayer dollars.

For some ballclubs, such as the Carolina Mudcats in Zebulon, it has become not only a million-dollar project, but also a legal headache, as public involvement has led to the town's lust for more money from the team.

North Carolina has 11 minor league teams. Presently all but one of them have some sort of public involvement in the stadium in which they play.

The Wilmington Waves ushered in their inaugural year this year and, as of yet, they receive no government support. Even though the Waves play on the UNC-Wilmington campus, they have financed improvements to the stadium themselves. The Waves represent the side of the spectrum that receives no government support, but that could be changing. According to Lauren Knaus, media relations director for the team, the Waves are looking at options for building a stadium.

"Government involvement in building us a ballpark is an option that is being considered," Knaus said. However, when queried about the benefits of a 100 percent privately built park, Knaus concluded that "private construction is an option and has been talked about. Personally, I think that the private option would be best." Knaus agreed that privately owned stadiums give the team ownership more flexibility as well as increased profits. Private stadiums also avoid potential problems that come with government involvement.

If any team is in a position to forego government involvement, it is the Waves. "We have about 27 people in our ownership group," Knaus said. That gives the team more monetary support and backing than others. Still, if the city determines it wants to give the team money, it will be difficult to resist such corporate welfare.

Carolina Mudcats

The Carolina Mudcats came to the area in 1992 when Steve Bryant, the team owner, built a small stadium to house the team. Zebulon eventually bought the stadium from Bryant and agreed to upgrade the facility. Zebulon and the Mudcats are in district court over the legality of the lease.

The Mudcats moved to Zebulon when the Durham Bulls's ownership invoked a rule that prohibits any team from moving within a 35-mile radius of an existing team. According to Clyde Holt, a lawyer representing Zebulon, the problem began when the Bulls sought to protect their monopoly over the area. This forced the Mudcats, who wanted to play in Raleigh, to move to Zebulon.

The ensuing agreement after the town bought the stadium is complicated. Lawyers for both the Mudcats and Zebulon agree the multiple parties involved have done nothing but complicate the matter.

Now Zebulon is eager to get out of its agreement, lease, or memorandum of un-

derstanding with the team. Zebulon even has gone so far as to say it broke the law in the past. Holt claims the city took Mudcat lawyers at their word when they said the city did not need to comply with state laws requiring a public process in bidding and contracting.

He also asserts that "there really is no formal lease agreement despite a good-faith effort on both sides." However, when asked why Zebulon did not seek other counsel in the beginning, especially from its own city attorney, Holt said the press must contact the city. In turn, the city refers the press to Holt. Nevertheless, it is clear the city is responsible for its actions. And now it may

be stuck with an empty stadium because "the Mudcats won't have permission to play if we don't reach an agreement," Holt said.

Rob Tiller, lawyer for the Mudcats, claims that the laws concerning public notices and competitive bidding "do not apply because the actual lease is between Zebulon and the Triangle Sports

Authority."

Nevertheless, despite the lack of what Zebulon calls a "legal lease agreement," the city took out a loan of \$10 million to renovate and upgrade Five County Stadium, where the Mudcats play. It is only since the city freely engaged in that "investment" that it now claims it cannot afford it.

Holt is not defending Zebulon, either, and seems to agree that the city acted irresponsibly: "Towns are just so tickled to have a professional team it's intoxicating."

Why Cities in Sports?

As the word "intoxicating" suggests, there is little logic at work when these decisions are made. As *Carolina Journal* pointed out last month, no economic benefits result from cities getting involved in sports. There is no hard evidence that businesses will move to an area just because there's a minor league team that plays in a town nearby.

The City of Durham built the Durham Bulls a \$20 million park in 1995 in part to increase downtown development and to spur economic growth. However, despite the claim that the endeavor is working, Mayor Nick Tennyson, who supports government involvement in sports, admits that

the endeavor "has not brought as much money into the area as we thought it would."

Pete Fisch, general manager of the Winston-Salem Warthogs (which benefitted from a \$1.5 million taxpayer-funded renovation in 1993), argues that there is another reason cities should own stadiums.

"Having the government involved with a facility gives the region control over its future," Fisch said. "If an owner privately owned a ballpark and the team left, the city would have no authority to fill that stadium with another team. With government ownership, the city could fill that facility more readily. If a private entity owned the stadium, they could effectively shut the place down and no team would move in."

But the argument against private ownership does not take into account the fact that teams will have greater incentive to remain in a city when they build their own facility. Teams have a greater incentive to move when they have no stake in the stadium because they will have nothing to lose.

Fisch does not believe that government can provide everything. The Warthogs are one of the few teams that pay for their own groundskeeper. "We would rather pay for our own groundskeeper than pay a city worker who doesn't have the experience and who takes a two-hour lunch break," Fisch said.

Dealing for Dollars

Nevertheless, according to a new report from the Cascade Policy Institute in Portland, Ore., any entertainment spending on sporting events is a substitute for other types of entertainment. Not only do these endeavors compete with other unsubsidized businesses, but they also divert funds from other government investment, such as schools.

North Johnson, general manager for the Kinston Indians, agrees. "There should be no question between building schools or ballparks, but cities want the dollars" they believe come with a sport team, he said.

Johnson further admits that such benefits to cities are "unmeasurable."

At least, according to Tiller, cities claim they get "a direct monetary benefit" from teams playing in stadiums. It seems that should account for something. Zebulon cannot have it both ways. Either it is losing

Story continued on next page

Story continued from previous page

money on the project it willfully undertook, or it is receiving some sort of monetary benefit simply because the Mudcats play in the stadium the government built.

The question remains: Why do owners accept money from local governments?

According to Holt, it is financially smart to accept government involvement in building arenas and stadiums because "local governments can borrow money cheaper than local entrepreneurs. For the businessman then, it makes sense to accept government involvement and relieve yourself of a huge debt obligation."

Furthermore, "most minor league teams cannot afford the debt obligation anyway," Holt said.

Pressure from MLB

However, much of the ballpark construction was spurred not by cities and team owners, but by Major League Baseball itself.

Jim Ferguson, director of media relations for MLB, said the facility requirements in the 1991 contract is about 40 pages long and is very specific on what is expected of minor league teams. While the agreement "did not dictate teams build new stadiums, it did mean they have to spend money to comply," Ferguson said.

MLB also agreed to pick up the salaries of minor league players in the 1991 contract. This was a relief for owners as well.

Johnson said the 1991 contract agreement that was signed between MLB and the minor leagues forced improvements to

all minor league stadiums — down to the number of shower heads a locker room is supposed to have.

The result of the 1991 contract "snowballed," said Mike Burling, assistant general manager for the Durham Bulls, "as teams began to build or renovate their ballparks." Some teams were successful in their projects, and other teams wanted to get in on the action, Burling said.

Standards for the required facilities improvements arose because MLB "wanted to make sure that there was a set standard to make sure any major league player was well taken care of at the minor league level" should the player have to be sent down, Burling said.

Even though minor league owners are not responsible for players' salaries, Burling said the agreement has made it difficult for team owners to cope with the facility requirements, which has led to more government involvement.

Multiuse facilities

It is also an easier sell to taxpayers to build a public facility that would do more than just house a professional sports team. Most cities use their stadiums for more than just baseball.

Some, such as Hickory, use their stadiums for concerts, graduations, and high-school sporting events. The City of Burlington uses its stadium for Special Olympics events. However, occasions other than baseball are few and far between. The main reason for building a ballpark is to land or keep a professional team.

Part of the intoxication, from the standpoint of community, comes from the chance townsfolk will see the next big star in their hometown. "People want to see the next Ken Griffey, Jr.," Burling said.

If one is looking for baseball without government entanglements, The Coastal

Plain League provides the closest thing to old-time baseball. The league sports eight teams in North Carolina — the most teams in the league. Coastal Plain is a collegiate baseball league that gives players the opportunity to demonstrate and develop skill using wooden bats. Colleges use aluminum bats, while professional leagues use wooden bats, which are more difficult to swing.

Cheers for Coastal Plain League

The Coastal Plain League has been less affected by the big-money deals and stadium renovations that have afflicted professional sports. While some cities, like Wilson, have used public dollars to renovate stadiums, most cities have not. Even though Wilson spent \$300,000 fixing its stadium built by the Works Project Administration, the team that plays there does not pay the city for use of the facility.

Most towns operate like Edenton. The town restored another WPA wooden grandstand in the style of the 1940s to provide a place for its collegiate team to play.

Eventually, some townsfolk formed a nonprofit organization called the Edenton-Chowan Foundation, which bought the baseball team. "Edenton is the Green Bay Packers of baseball," said Mark Cryan, vice president of operations for the Coastal Plain League.

Indeed, most of the teams, while owned by either local residents or by the league itself, do not pay their ballplayers a salary because NCAA rules prohibit it. Townsfolk not only open their homes to players, but they also find part-time jobs for them.

The league finds players "host families," who voluntarily help the

players find employment. Players are, in a real sense, working their way through the league and getting to know people in the community.

Because the league has more private involvement, its overhead is low. "We don't have to worry about facilities like professional minor league clubs. We don't put a gun to the head of a city" and demand that it build a state-of-the art stadium, Cryan said.

Teams Forced to Move

Cryan argues that the 1991 contract between the major and minor leagues placed many teams in a bind and forced them to move.

For example, a minor league team known as the Fayetteville Generals had to leave town because it could not get the funding it needed from the government to renovate its stadium according to the 1991 contract. The ownership sold the Generals, and the team moved to New Jersey.

Losing the Generals was an eventual opportunity for the Coastal Plain League. Though the city agreed to do some renovations to J. P. Riddle Stadium, it did them without using any more taxpayer dollars.

Fayetteville used the money it received from the Generals for breaking the lease with the city to make improvements to Riddle Stadium. Other than that, the city is not involved with the team in any other way.

Given the more privately community-based aspect of the Coastal Plain League, and considering its historical appeal, Cryan asserts that the league is cheaper and easier to justify.

Though there is some government involvement in the league, the league rejects all the entrapments and the extravagance of professional sports. And that is its greatest selling point. CJ

City Rules Inhibit Enterprise

Picture yourself as an ambitious but cash-strapped student at the University of Wisconsin. You have a job to help make ends meet, but you also have an entrepreneurial bent. You like taking on projects and are goal-oriented. Always on the lookout for an opportunity, you stumble across a novel idea while talking to the owner of a local bar. The barkeep is worried about students and other customers who have had a little too much to drink, particularly on the weekends. He wishes he could provide a cheap, safe, and reliable transportation service for these patrons. As a budding entrepreneur, you recognize an opportunity.

So, you strike up a deal. You will provide a taxi service for the less-responsible drinkers. You estimate, using your car and a cell phone, you can charge \$5 per trip in the neighborhood and \$10 per trip outside the neighborhood. Trips outside the city would cost more, but you want to handle those on a case-by-case basis.



Sam Staley

Regulations Stifle Business

The only problem with this scenario is that it would be impossible to start the business in the city of Madison (and many other similar cities across the country). Among other things, regulations would stifle your business because:

- * A 24-hour service requirement means your business has to run all day, seven days a week. Part-time operators need not apply.
- * The graduated flat fee could violate the city's code that all fares must be set by a trip meter or zone.
- * The city's public-hearing requirement subjects your business to a political approval process through the Transit and Parking Commission.
- * Existing operators can object to the new cab company, and even argue against issuing a license based on its potential impact on their bottom line.
- * As a new operator, you need to prove that your fledgling enterprise will exist for "public convenience and necessity." The business is required by law to serve the entire city — not just the market niche you have identified.

These are just a few of the elements of the city code that make it difficult to start a taxicab company in Madison. Not surprisingly, the taxicab industry has been dominated by three large compa-

nies with little threat of new competition.

While these restrictions may make it easier to regulate taxis — a smaller number of taxicab companies facilitates monitoring — the rules discourage entrepreneurship and job creation, particularly for low-income and minority residents. In fact, when local taxi markets have been reformed to allow more competition, new companies have sprouted.

Stimulating the Economy

Opening the local taxicab market can generate jobs and stimulate neighborhood-based economic development. Madison and other cities with tight regula-

tion on taxicabs can promote economic opportunity, by: repealing the 24-hour and citywide service requirements; licensing operators and companies through an administrative rather than political process; and eliminating economic impact on current operators as a justification for denying a license to a new operator.

These changes would not remove a city from the regulatory process. Rather, they would shift direction away from micromanaging the taxi market to a direction based on performance. In one case a few years ago, an applicant for taxi service was denied a license in part because he had been fired by the existing companies. Entrepreneurs, however, are unlikely candidates for employee of the week. They typically are driven by a desire to provide a service or product that the current market does not provide, creating an inherently tense relationship between employer and employee.

The quality of the service provided to consumers should be the primary focus of local regulations, not the internal personnel policies or financial health of existing taxicab companies.

A more effective way to regulate taxicabs while encouraging entrepreneurship would be for cities to focus on health, safety, and fraud in the taxi market. Local regulations tend to restrict entry and reduce competition while providing little benefit to consumers. A performance-based system, in contrast, maximizes the potential for innovation and job creation while ensuring consumers receive a quality product. CJ

Sam Staley directs the Urban Futures Program for Reason Public Policy Institute.

Local Innovation Bulletin Board

Competitive Contracting

A new study published by the Heritage Foundation, "Improving Government Performance through Competitive Contracting," focuses attention on management issues facing government at all levels. Ronald Utt, author of the report, argues that President Bush has made good on his competitive contracting commitment by requiring each of the federal departments to fulfill ambitious competitive contracting goals. As has been demonstrated throughout the world, and at all levels of government in America, competitive contracting allows the public sector to lower costs and improve services.

In competitive contracting, government solicits bids from qualified private-sector businesses to perform a specific service being performed by the employees of a government department. If any of the bids received are lower in cost than what the government is paying, money can be saved by shifting the performance of the particular service from public employees to private business operating under contract to government.

To implement the program, Office of Management and Budget Director Mitchell Daniels informed all agency and department heads that the Bush administration's new performance goals and management initiatives would include competitive contracting under OMB's A-76 guidelines and a renewed effort to provide more accurate FAIR Act inventories.

"A-76" refers to the long-standing OMB circular that establishes guidelines for federal competitive contracting, while "FAIR Act inventories" refers to the Federal Activities Inventory Reform Act of 1998.

Under the provisions of the FAIR Act, federal agencies are required to provide OMB with an inventory of all of the commercial positions within their departments. In early 2001, federal agencies estimated that as many as 850,000 of their employees were performing commercial-like functions commonly available from the private sector.

In March 2001, OMB announced that agencies will be required to develop a more accurate list of all commercial activities and, next year, subject no less than 5 percent of the commercial positions on the list to competitive contracting, using the A-76 process as appropriate.

Possible Savings Are Significant

If the Bush administration succeeds in implementing the program and getting agencies to cooperate, the potential savings could be quite significant. The DOD has used competitive contracting aggressively over several decades, and its long record of activity provides an extensive measure of performance. In March 1996, the DOD reported to Congress that competitive contracting resulted in an annual saving of \$1.5 billion and that more than 600,000 civilian and uniformed positions could be subject to competitive contracting soon to free additional resources and bolster defense capabilities.

In a detailed review of DOD's contracting history, the CNA Corp., a private, nonprofit research organization,

conducted a study of 2,138 A-76 contracts completed by the DOD between 1978 and 1994. The CNA found that the contracts, covering 98,348 jobs, provided savings that averaged 31 percent over costs incurred before the A-76 review. Significantly, nearly half, or 48 percent, of the competitions were won by the in-house staff, which submitted the winning bid in competition with private companies. Contracts won by restructured in-house operations averaged

savings of 20 percent, while contracts won by private firms averaged savings of 38 percent.

Based upon savings estimates derived from DOD's performance, if OMB can get all the agencies combined to raise their FAIR Act inventories to one million employees from the fiscal year 2000 estimate of 850,000, and apply the A-76 process or equivalent to the 5 percent target, the federal government could achieve annual savings of \$1 billion to \$1.4 billion for every 5 percent of the list subject to competition. The savings would accumulate annually. If 50 percent of FAIR Act list positions are offered in a competitive process, within five years, as some recommend, annual savings would amount to \$10 billion to \$14 billion.

No other spending restraint option under consideration offers Congress or the Bush administration budgetary savings of this magnitude with no reduction in the level or availability of government services.

State, Local Contracts Pay Off

The favorable contracting experience at the federal level has been matched by similar activities in many state and local governments. Over the past several decades, communities around the country have achieved cost savings and service improvements by contracting out such functions as wastewater treatment, school bus operations, trash collection, recycling, janitorial services, highway maintenance, operation of prisons and jails, welfare caseload oversight, school maintenance and food service, data processing and information technology, airport management, special education instruction, nursing home operations, public school building, groundskeeping and park maintenance, management of public housing, and operation of public transit programs. Most savings appear to match those achieved at the federal level: between 25 percent and 30 percent.

Although opportunities for using competitive contracting for significant savings and service improvements abound, opposition to the effort will be intense as entrenched interests — largely the existing workforce and managers — defend the status quo and the benefits it provides them. But by making a positive case for reform to the public, and by ensuring that existing workers and managers will be treated fairly and encouraged to participate in the competition, the effort will succeed.

To view the entire report, point your browsers to www.heritage.org. Ronald D. Utt, Ph.D., is also a senior Research fellow at the Thomas A. Roe Institute.

An Interview with Kenn Gardner, Wake County Commissioner

By ERIK ROOT

Assistant Editor

RALEIGH

CAROLINA JOURNAL: Tell us about your background.

Kenn Gardner: My father was in the military and I was born in California. I have been all over the place. I went to college at Georgia Tech. My wife and I moved to North Carolina so that she could pursue a Ph.D. at N.C. State, and we decided to stay once she received that degree. Our worst fear was that we were going to like it here and that is exactly what happened.

I am an architect and I worked for a firm here in Raleigh for about 14 years. I resigned to spend some time with my father, who was battling cancer. As things turned out, you don't want to look back on life and wish you had tried something, so I committed to start my own firm. It was easy to leave a firm, but scary to start one on your own. But it has worked out well.

I have lived in Wake County for 18 years and I have been active in the community in one way or another.

CJ: You served on the Water and Sewer Task Force a few years back. What is the benefit of merging systems?

Gardner: The benefit is, first, you build fewer plants. Rather than each municipality going out and building its own plant, you build one plant and locate it so that treatment can be maximized around the county. If you merge systems, you can better utilize services and dramatically cut the dollar expenditures. That was the major argument for merger in Wake County. If you go to a single system, you can save a half-million dollars in infrastructure.

CJ: State unfunded mandates have been a problem for many counties. Has this also been a problem for Wake County?

Gardner: Wake County's management team is really top-notch. Being close to the legislature, they also have the advantage to monitor state politics better. They have been able to react and plan for problems.

I have been a county commissioner for only a short time now, and in the six to seven months I have been there, I have made a real effort to meet with the county employees to educate myself on these issues.

CJ: Let's talk about the recent school budget process. How did that debate unfold?

Gardner: I was not prepared for the tactics the school system reaped upon my family. I was hoping to have a discussion on the issues and talk about why they needed the additional funds, but that did not really materialize. My children were verbally assaulted in the classroom by teachers. That is something you just aren't prepared for.

The one problem we had this year was that the school wanted more money, but they lost public confidence and public trust — partly because of the [June 1999] \$650 million bond that failed.

One of my big pushes this year is to form a citizens advisory council to look at their operations, and that is one of those things that they fought. They are very protective over their money.

Right now, we are at a point where the

commission is trying to form the task of this committee. The commissioners would like it to be broad and allow them to go where they think they need to go as they approach the problem. The Board of Education would like a very narrow scope, however. At this point we are still hashing out where this committee will end up. For it to be most beneficial they need to have a more broad charge in order to be able to solve the problem. The broader [the charge], the more public trust and confidence will be gained.

My focus as an architect has been school construction. I have asked for basic project tracking information. The thing that I cannot understand is that the school system's numbers do not make sense. They give me two documents on the same job and there's not a single number on each document that match, not a single one. And that is including the budget allocation, which is the number the school system bases the job on and is approved by the county commissioners.

You would think that one number would match. But, in some cases, there is a quarter-million-dollar difference.

Before I can be comfortable with what they are doing I have to know they are tracking and understanding what they are doing.

The other thing I am seeing is that when a project is completed and closed out, they do not close out that account. They keep some money in it. From the little information I have received, they have been complete for eight months and yet there's still some money there. I do not know how widespread that is. I have asked for information on any account that is active, and they want to narrow that scope.

My position is that there are many educational needs that the schools have, and they claim there's no money. For example, they are renovating the relatively new central office, yet we have old classrooms that need maintenance. I have asked for a list of priorities, and if there's money left over, we should use every dime of it. There is not a list, to my knowledge. If there is enough money in the school budget, we should use it to maintain our classrooms.

CJ: Are there any problems in construction itself? Is there any unnecessary spending that is occurring?

Gardner: I visited a school and walked into its 2,000-seat gymnasium with state-of-the-art electronics. I did not have any objections to that. But then I walked next door and there was another gym just like it, minus the seats. At that point I asked the question why there were two gyms. And the architect said that sometimes there's a conflict between the basketball and wrestling programs. And I said that's a scheduling problem. The gym cost \$750,000, and I think there's a lot of classrooms that can be built for that amount of money. Why are we spending our money on these kind of projects and not on solving the issue? I constantly hear that kids need more places to learn.

CJ: Do you see the recent dipping into savings to balance the budget as putting off a tax increase?

Gardner: I just could not support a tax increase this year. I do not see us putting off an increase, but since the schools [lacked public] confidence, there was no way we could vote to raise taxes. So the decision was easy this year.

CJ



Commissioner Kenn Gardner

*From Cherokee to Currituck***Beach Renourishment=Rip Tides;
Public Dollars Fund Pricey Trips**

By ERIK ROOT
Assistant Editor

RALEIGH

It is the time of year when many people flock to North Carolina beaches to take in the sun and the surf. Recently, two publications have printed stories on the dangers of swimming in the ocean. The *News & Observer* of Raleigh and *Wrightsville Beach Magazine* published articles to heighten public awareness of rip currents.

Rip currents are strong and deadly undertows that rush away from the shore. They can be as wide as 100 feet and carry people up to 1,000 feet offshore. The current may travel at a speed of 6 mph.

The June 29 front-page article of the *News & Observer* noted something that ought to concern anyone interested in public policy. Jim Lushine, a meteorologist with the National Weather Service, "theorizes that beach renourishment, another North Carolina staple, also leads to rip currents by creating large sandbars."

The dredging of sand creates a huge dropoff and a large sandbar that traps water between the shore and ocean. A powerful rip current forms when the water breaks through the sandbar carrying anything, especially sand, in its path out to sea.

People have died as a result of rip currents at Carolina and Kure beaches, and Pleasure Island.

Meanwhile, Carteret County's room occupancy tax may be increased from 3 percent to 6 percent to pay for beach renourishment, the *News-Times* of Carteret County reported.

Another coastal community, Pine Knoll Shores, plans to carry out a renourishment project this fall.

Budget Woes Don't Nix Trips

The *Winston-Salem Journal* reported that Mayor Jack Cavanagh, who has just announced plans to seek reelection this November, "jetted off on his second international trip in the past month and a half — this time to Venice, Italy." Of course, the mayor was traveling at taxpayer expense. He was attending the 30th International Conference on Making Cities Liveable. The city does not yet know the full extent of the cost of the trip.

The mayor's office has spent more money for travel than it was allocated, according to Rodney Mestas, an analyst with the city's budget office. The mayor's office was allocated \$10,120 for travel. As of June 30, the office had spent \$13,621 of the public's money.

Cavanagh attended a previous conference in Charleston held by the same group. The difference in the Venice conference, however, is that it is attended by European architects.

In May, Cavanagh traveled to Ghana in West Africa to set up an "international partnership."

Durham Cleanup

The *Herald Sun* of Durham has reported that the city is saving money and becoming more efficient by buying automated garbage trucks that employ video monitors.

Sensors on the back of the trucks detect movement and prevent the trucks from backing up. The city expects to save \$3 million over the next six years by moving to the automated-collections system.

The drivers will remain in their trucks, rather than lifting cans manually. This will mean cutting 25 jobs over the next six years. The new trucks will make it somewhat more inconvenient for residents, because the trucks can pick up trash on only one side of the street.

Unfortunately, it appears the city will not return the savings to taxpayers. "We want tax dollars to go to other things that can be of benefit," said David McCary, the city's director of solid waste management.

Speaking of Extravagance

Four members of the Guilford County Board of Education spent \$3,577 in hotel accommodations recently during a trip to San Diego, Calif., reported the *Rhinoceros Times*. Despite their cries for more money and that the school system would be imperiled if it did not get the funds, the board members found enough money for themselves and their \$300-a-night hotel rooms.

School board members have a higher travel allowance than do county commissioners. One board member who went on the trip said the members reported to the entire board about what they had "learned."

However, Anita Sharpe, a board member who did not go to San Diego, said such a presentation never occurred. Sharpe could have gone on the trip but backed out when she learned what it would cost the school system.

Annexation in Charlotte...Again

Charlotte intends to use the lax annexation laws to annex 10,700 acres and add 22,300 people to its population, *The Charlotte Observer* has reported. Charlotte has expanded its land area by 800 percent since 1950.

The new residents of Charlotte will see their tax bills increase by 66 percent as a result. They are supposed to receive city services for the increase.

Outsourcing in Sampson County

The Sampson County School Board is looking at outsourcing its janitorial services according to *The Sampson Independent*.

However, some board members are wary about giving up their control over the services.

Others would like to take bids from other companies to see whether they could find someone who would provide the service for a lower price. The board has postponed any action until a later board meeting.

More on Travel

The Wilmington Housing Authority has sent more than a dozen employees on trips to attend conferences around the country, the *Morning Star* of Wilmington reported.

They went on the trips even though the operating budget had a \$75,000 deficit. The

authority said the trips were necessary because its employees needed to be trained for new U.S. Housing and Urban Development programs.

Even though the department sent employees to the training sessions, Lee Weedle, housing authority chairman, said the authority does not approve staff travel. Department heads are responsible for management of their department's travel expense, Weedle said.

It appears there are no plans to hold any of the managers responsible nor are there any plans to revise the budget process to avoid future mismanagement.

Oversight in Scotland County

The Scotland County Board of Commissioners has asked the school board for detailed information about how it plans to spend county funds, *The Laurinburg Exchange* has reported.

At least one commissioner, Clint Willis, wants the school board to identify cuts and to return any unused money to the county coffers.

The county's budget woes have not gone unnoticed to county residents. One taxpayer addressed the county commissioners and claimed school budgets are draining too much from the public treasury in the county.

Part of the problem has been linked to the state requirement — known as the school floor — that forces counties to fund schools at least at the state average in per-pupil spending.

"I know we're caught in a trap, [the school floor] is draining us," one taxpayer said. CJ

Meteorologist Jim Lushine of the National Weather Service "theorizes that beach renourishment, another North Carolina staple, also leads to rip currents by creating large sandbars."

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From the Liberty Library

• Yale University historian Jon Butler has produced a new work on the American Colonial period called *Becoming America: The Revolution Before 1776*. In *Becoming America*, Butler tries to illuminate the century preceding the Revolution and show how the ideas and attitudes that exploded into revolt were molded. *Becoming America* won the 2000 John G. Cawelti Book Award of the American Culture Association. It is published by Harvard University Press, located online at <http://www.hup.harvard.edu>.

• R. Kent Newmyer, professor of law and history at the University of Connecticut School of Law, has written a biography of John Marshall that is garnering critical acclaim. *John Marshall and the Heroic Age of the Supreme Court*, to be published in November by the Louisiana State University Press, traces Marshall's life from his childhood being "Americanized" in Virginia through his service in the Revolutionary War and his experiences as a lawyer and politician to his precedent-setting work on the U.S. Supreme Court. Information on the new title is available online at <http://www.lsu.edu/>.

• American lawyer and China specialist Gordon Chang has written a new book in which he argues that China is on the road to implosion, not world domination as so many world leaders believe. In *The Coming Collapse of China*, Chang argues that China's corrupt, authoritarian form of government dooms it to self-destruction. Despite its natural and human resources, China will crumble under the weight of its burdensome government, Chang argues. James A. Dorn of the Cato Institute called *The Coming Collapse of China* "a compelling account of the rot in China's institutions and the forces at work to end the Communist Party's monopoly on power." The book was published last month by Random House, located online at www.randomhouse.com.

• Education historian Diane Ravitch has a new book on the history of American education reform efforts in the 20th century. *Left Back: A Century of Battles Over School Reform* begins with the state of education in the late 19th century. It then chronicles the various reform efforts of the 20th century and tries to explain why, despite these efforts, American children have been "left back." The book is being published this month by Touchstone, an imprint of Simon and Schuster, located online at www.simonsays.com.

• Simon Winchester's new book, *The Map That Changed The World: William Smith and the Birth of Modern Geology*, tells the tale of the blue-collar genius who invented the science of geology by studying fossils encased in different levels of the rock he cut as a canal digger. It is available this month from HarperCollins, located online at www.harpercollins.com.

Book Review

How America Has Stopped Making Patriots

By CHARLES DAVENPORT JR.

Contributing Editor

GREENSBORO

• Walter Berns: *Making Patriots*; Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 146 pp., \$20.

Is there any extreme at which the alleged virtues of multiculturalism become a vice? In recent years, "tolerance" has swollen to the status of a deity, and its disciples insist that, for the sake of "diversity," we not only accept but also celebrate even the most egregious affronts.

Enter the wayward Walter Berns, who, in arguing that the multiculturalist is indeed prone to excess, quickens the pulse of patriots. He assails, among other initiatives, a Florida statute requiring public schools to teach that "no culture is intrinsically superior or inferior to another."

Never mind that the Florida dogma is demonstrably false, or that it springs from a breathtaking ignorance of human history; it achieves what has become the public schools' loftiest purpose: to nurture the self-esteem of a diverse student body.

While the education establishment congratulates itself for its sensitivity, *Making Patriots* serves as a timely reminder that those students are, first and foremost, Americans, and that they should be taught accordingly.

But ours is an era in which condescending to the hypersensitive is a fashionable enterprise. In such an environment, does tolerance also apply to those who unabashedly revere the nation's history and traditions? Thomas Jefferson would argue that it must; he famously swore "upon the altar of God eternal hostility against every form of tyranny over the mind of man." With that reassurance in mind, and in language beau-

tiful and forlorn, Berns calls for a reawakening of patriotism:

"Memories, even memories stretching from the graves of patriots, grow cold as they grow old, and will in time fade altogether — unless, by means of a rhetoric so powerful, or words so compelling and memorable, they could be made an imperishable part of the nation."

A Boastful Love of Country

Despite the Founders' endorsement of intellectual variety — or diversity, in modern terms — conspicuous patriotism is not well-received in many quarters.

Berns acknowledges his detractors, if only to robustly wave the red, white, and blue in their faces: "Like it or not — and it is something of a burden, certainly a responsibility — America is to modern history as Rome was to ancient..." Because of the unfortunate near-extinction of like-minded sentiment, this passage and many others virtually leap from the page. To kindred spirits, reading an author who is not only unapologetic, but downright boastful, about his love of country is immensely satisfying.

Berns' allegiance stems, in part, from a thorough knowledge of history. He reminds us, for example, of Jefferson's insistence "that children be taught to love their country, and he further believed that this country deserved to be loved ... This assumes — and in 1776 we held it to be a fact — that there are standards by which countries are to be judged, but this is denied today."

Making Patriots is physically small, but philosophically massive. Although some readers may devour the 146 pages in one sitting, the old adage about the nature of things that come in small packages cer-

tainly applies. The beauty of Berns' argument is less a matter of depth than sheer audacity and crotchety defiance of the opinion elite. Like Rousseau, he is annoyed by the domination of economic concerns: "Ancient political writers spoke constantly about morals and virtue; ours speak only about commerce and money."

Patriots often are criticized as being oblivious to, or worse, accepting of, the sporadic evils of American history. Regrettably, there have been dark periods in which we trampled upon our founding principles of individual liberty and equal opportunity, but does that somehow diminish the value of those ideals? Certainly not.

Rather than dwelling on our occasional failures, Berns urges us to acknowledge the men who pledged to defend those principles with their lives, fortunes, and sacred honor. The Founding Fathers' stories, he writes, "are the nation's story, and telling it should be the nation's business; in fact, it should be an important part of the civics curriculum in our schools. It is a way of inculcating in children a reverence for the past and its heroes, with the view of causing them to love their country."

Berns concedes that it "seems almost naive to speak of these things at a time when Americans are told in their schools that all 'cultures' are equal, that there is nothing special about their country and, therefore, no good reason to admire the men who founded it." Still, some of us maintain that ours is the greatest nation on the planet, and that our culture is "intrinsically superior" to others. Readers of *Making Patriots* are likely to agree. CJ

Davenport is an op-ed columnist for the News & Record of Greensboro.

Book Review

John Adams: Writer, Philosopher, Patriot

By ERIK ROOT

Assistant Editor

RALEIGH

• C. Bradley Thompson, editor: *The Revolutionary Writings of John Adams*; Indianapolis; Liberty Fund, 2001, 349 pp., \$19.

The *Revolutionary Writings of John Adams* ought to find its way onto every bookshelf. In this new compilation, editor C. Bradley Thompson seeks to present Adams in his own image without editorial comments and coloring.

Thompson does very little by way of introducing the content of each section other than the minimal historical backdrop: "In order to recapture the distant past we must first appreciate its strangeness and differentness from the present. My intention is to permit Adams to speak for himself and to challenge the modern reader to further study the philosophic and political contexts in which Adams wrote."

In his foreword, Thompson does editorialize in an attempt to account for the importance of Adams's revolutionary work. Adams had an enormous influence on the outcome of the revolution. He dedicated his life to the cause of liberty and the construction of republican government in America.

The book includes Adams' "Dissertation on the Canon and Feudal Law," various letters, his argument for an independent judiciary, the Novanglus letters, the

ever-important "Thoughts on Government," and his report to Massachusetts on its constitution and form of government.

At the beginning of the book, Adams addresses personal matters. He delivers a thoughtful probe into the reasons we ought to reject the temptation of "personal revenge," and he addresses the destructive ends of self-love, which lead to self-delusion and self-deceit. He argues that inflamed passions may lead to our own destruction and that only reason directs us toward virtue and thus to true happiness.

The Novanglus letters take up a majority of the volume and are a response to a pro-Parliament writer whose letters were circulated in newspapers. Adams does not leave his readers hanging in the understanding of "the principles of nature and eternal reason," nor does he fail to mention the sources of our understanding from which the ideas emanate: Aristotle, Plato, Livy, Cicero, Sidney, Locke, and Harrington.

These authors fashioned the grounds for the consent based in nature upon which Sidney proclaims that the "subjects [of monarchies are not] bound to stay till the prince has entirely finished the chains which he is preparing for them, and put it out of their power to oppose."

Adams's "Thoughts on Government" provides the reader with an excellent synopsis of what constitutes good government. The essay was published near the time when

the Continental Congress recommended to the states that they establish new governments. Always concerned about the ends of government, it is no surprise that the revolutionaries sought to define governments that "would best conduce the happiness and safety of their constituents in particular and America in general."

"We ought to consider what is the end of government," he said, "before we determine which is the best form. Upon this point all speculative politicians will agree, that the happiness of society is the end of government, as all divines and moral philosophers will agree that happiness of the individual is the end of man."

Not included in this volume, which focuses solely on Adams' revolutionary writings, are the many letters between Adams and his future wife, Abigail, who, besides the Union, was his other great love.

In his final public utterance, Adams pithily offered the toast "Independence Forever." It is quite remarkable that so near his death, and near the 50th anniversary of the Declaration of Independence, Adams' writing would harken back to that idea upon which our nation was founded. Thompson's book is a perfect beginning to any reader's intellectual journey in finding out why. CJ

Root is a policy analyst with the Center for Local Innovation.

Book Review

Better Than Walden: North Carolina Writer Gets Naturalism Right

By JANE S. SHAW

Guest Contributor

BOZEMAN, MONT.

• Wallace Kaufman, *Coming Out of the Woods: The Solitary Life of a Maverick Naturalist*, Cambridge, Mass.: Perseus Publishing, 2000, 384 pp., \$26.

Any reader will enjoy Wallace Kaufman's *Coming out of the Woods* and will receive an education as well. The book falls into the genre of environmental writing, which is sometimes light on realism and heavy on romanticism. Yet, *Coming Out of the Woods* is different. Like Henry David Thoreau's *Walden*, it is a chronicle of personal experience and, unlike *Walden*, it is written by someone who is as savvy about human beings as he is about the animals of the forest.

It is the late 1960s. The author, an environmentalist living on an old farm in suburban Chapel Hill while teaching English at the University of North Carolina, wants to be closer to nature. He buys 330 acres of land in the deep woods, builds a road on it, and offers parcels for sale to others who also want a respite from modern civilization.

From the first chapter, we learn that this foray into the woods is not a vacation in a suburban park. One visitor, for example, was so terrified of forest creatures that he and his son holed up in the cramped loft, keeping a hatchet at the bedside just in case.

From start to finish, this narrative is good reading. We see Kaufman's academic colleagues toying with the idea of living in wilderness but rejecting the opportunity when it arrives. We watch as a canny salesman outwits Kaufman and his remaining partner. And we observe the special bond that discovering the natural world, from ants' nests to foxes to crayfish, creates be-

tween Kaufman and his daughter, Sylvan.

Echoes of *Walden* abound. Like Thoreau, Kaufman designs and builds his own house: Each window would be "in a place and in a size that would create a frame for a special view of the forest." Kaufman also tends a garden and earns money doing something useful for others. In Kaufman's case, he appraised land; in Thoreau's, he surveyed. But the differences are enormous — and not in the way you might expect.

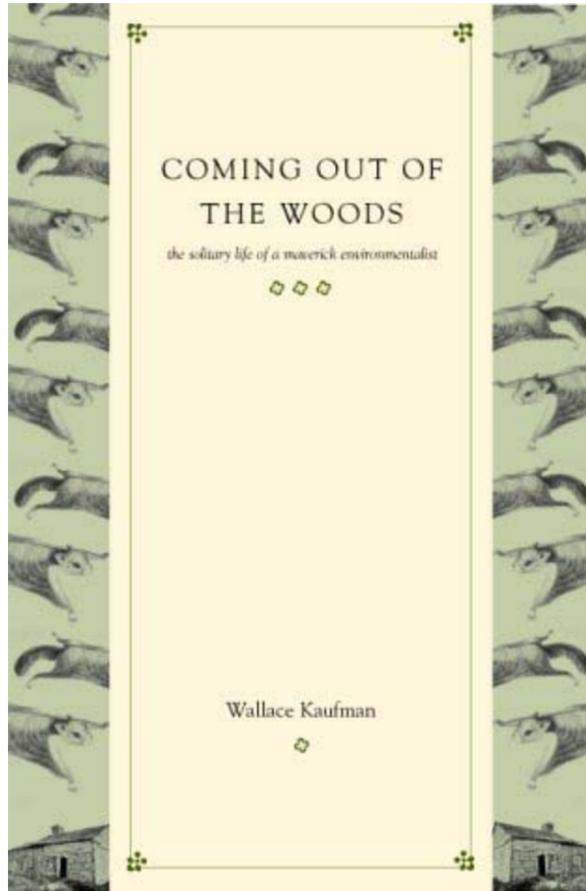
Thoreau lived closer to town on borrowed property, while Kaufman's ownership of land remote from the city is a key element of his story; Thoreau stayed a little over two years, Kaufman more than 20; and Thoreau's chronicle often sounds misanthropic, while Kaufman's is gently forgiving of others' foibles.

Down-Home Humor

Kaufman's self-effacing descriptions of his life as a naturalist and developer give the book humor and wisdom. For example, he intends to create a winding, tree-lined road at the entrance of his property. To do so, he must cut some trees. Painful though it is, he will do it with a little chainsaw. Hiring a bulldozer would be like "gobbling a church dinner without saying grace," he explains.

Unfortunately, the rented chain saw doesn't work; it is like "bludgeoning an elephant with chopsticks." So he obtains a Stihl 041 and painstakingly cuts out a half-mile of road. At the edge, like the "tuft of flowers" in Robert Frost's poem, he keeps trees that he envisions someday arching gracefully over the road.

Then he learns that the state requires that roads be 50 to 60 feet wide. The trees at the edge, and others, too, must go by means



of a bulldozer. Sadly watching the results, he observes that North Carolina's "iron-rich soil" adds to the pain. "Clearing the forest and cutting a road in the South's red clay is like peeling skin off a muscle live with blood."

Helping assuage Kaufman's regret over trampling on nature is a certain equanimity that comes from realizing that many human interlopers preceded him. He finds arrowheads and pot shards left by American Indians, as well as the pit of a sawmill and an

abandoned home where a family used to raise chickens.

Indeed, history drenches this book, beginning with the geological formation of "Taconia," the ancient volcanic island continent that underlies North Carolina.

Over time, Kaufman's woods change. The city grows closer; people become more protective of their boundaries; a few neighbors clear-cut their tracts.

Kaufman himself logs his land selectively. The tone of the book changes. It becomes a little like the ending of Tennyson's *Idylls of the King*. His sojourn is ending, although at the book's conclusion the author has not yet left the woods.

Some of the statements in the book, I've been told, discomfit environmentalists who are sentimental about nature. Yet no reader can ignore the veracity of Kaufman's experience.

Coming Out of the Woods has the potential to be a cross-over hit — a work that transcends usual marketing categories.

Kaufman has naturalist credentials that far exceed those of most environmentalists, and his insights can't be dismissed. Holding a mirror up to nature, he teaches us about human nature as well. CJ

Shaw is a senior associate of the Political Economy Research Center and coauthor with Michael Sanera of *Facts, Not Fear: Teaching Children About the Environment*, published by Regnery.

Book Review

How the Microsoft Case Exposes the Flaws in Antitrust Law

By STEPHEN MARGOLIS

Guest Contributor

RALEIGH

• David Kopel: *Antitrust after Microsoft: The Obsolescence of Antitrust in the Digital Era*; Chicago, The Heartland Institute, 2001, 175 pp., \$8.95.

With all that has been written about the Microsoft antitrust trial, is there room for still another book-length treatment of the subject? The answer is yes, provided the book offers a significant, new perspective.

David Kopel's new book clearly does that. While the writing on the Microsoft case has generally been about what the courts should do, given antitrust legal doctrines and economic reasoning, Kopel reverses that. He considers what antitrust doctrine should become, given what the current practice of antitrust law has brought us in the Microsoft case.

Kopel brings skills as an experienced lawyer and public policy analyst to the task. He also brings a good deal of information about the computer industry, technology, law, and the history of antitrust. His thesis, in brief, is that the Microsoft case provides new and clear evidence of fundamental problems in antitrust law. The Microsoft case, like some others before it, reveals fundamental conflicts and ambiguities in the

law, a consequent tendency for politicization, and, in turn, its failure to promote consumer interests.

Kopel's view is that in the Microsoft case antitrust once again becomes an instrument for an activist government industrial policy. The government's action in the case amounts to an attempt to pick winners and losers in technology competition.

In a market in which there are advantages of standards and other sources of network effects, consumers' independent decisions may bestow very large market shares on a single company. Then the choice becomes, not monopoly or something else, but which monopoly? In the Microsoft case, the government seeks to determine which of the competitors will prevail.

Central to Kopel's argument is the observation that antitrust makes many ordinary business behaviors illegal. In industries where small numbers of companies compete for consumers' patronage, anything that a company does to improve its position in the market is likely to make some rival worse off. A company that does a lot of things to secure consumers' patronage, and does them well, may well end up with a very large share of the available

patronage. Under antitrust law, such a company is a monopolist. It's not necessarily a lawbreaker, but a monopolist nevertheless.

Actions that make rivals worse off, coupled with large market shares, are all too readily categorized as predatory. If a firm becomes large by cutting prices, implementing new technologies or standards, devel-

oping distribution channels, planning ahead, or improving a product, it can prompt antitrust scrutiny.

This introduces two dimensions of uncertainty into antitrust: When does a competitive action cross the line to become predatory, and when does a successful

firm cross the line to become a monopolist?

Microsoft, entering a market that was dominated by Netscape, became one of many companies that offered a web browser. By almost all accounts, including those of Judge Jackson, Microsoft's entry into the browser market improved the breed. In this market, is Microsoft the incumbent monopolist or the scrappy entrant? Are its efforts to enter the market legal competition or illegal predation?

I should note that after Kopel's book came out, the appellate court threw out the government's charge that Microsoft had

Central to Kopel's argument is the observation that antitrust makes many ordinary business behaviors illegal.

monopolized the browser market. That development only strengthens Kopel's demonstration of how treacherous the antitrust world can be.

Throughout the book, Kopel comes back to the theme that antitrust makes illegal ordinary business activities that can benefit consumers. To economists, this is a problem of economic efficiency. But the more serious problem that is highlighted in *Antitrust After Microsoft* is the threat to the rule of law.

We can have a rule of men by having no law. We also can have laws that put us all in violation of the law by discretion being given to those responsible for enforcement. This too gives us a rule of men, not law.

Kopel devotes a chapter to documenting the politicization of the Microsoft case and antitrust in general. He reports the roles played by politicians doing the bidding of companies in their districts and the massive and expensive lobbying effort by Microsoft's competitors to bring the case to court. He also documents Microsoft's conversion from a company that once eschewed politics to one that pays proper tribute to the D.C. politics industry.

Antitrust after Microsoft is a compelling critique of the Microsoft case and an important challenge to antitrust law. CJ

Margolis is chairman of the economics department at N.C. State University.

Editorials

IDEAS THAT WORK

Welfare reform recognizes human nature

Ever since President Lyndon Johnson launched a perhaps well-intentioned "War on Poverty," building upon the foundation laid in Franklin Roosevelt's New Deal, its results have been both negative and nefarious. Poverty stubbornly refused to decline significantly while out-of-wedlock births and broken families rose. The failure of the War on Poverty left many policymakers confused, though not too much to preclude asking for more money to expand their failed programs.

The correct solution, however, was neither expensive nor hard to understand. It reflected common sense about human frailties and how best not to play to them.

As economists never cease in pointing out, the more one subsidizes something, the more he gets of it. The less an activity is subsidized, the less one gets of it. So it is with the triumph of welfare reform. No matter who may claim credit for the progress we have made in this regard, it is clear that more conservative, responsible, and accountable policies have been put in place which require that welfare recipients take more responsibility for their own lives. As a result, our national and state economies and our collective culture all gain immeasurably from the increased productivity and responsibility of a previously unproductive group of our citizens.

On both national and state levels there is clear evidence that the welfare reforms that statisticians claimed would lead to increased hardship and despair among the nation's poor have actually achieved the opposite in dramatic fashion. The evidence also suggests our direction should remain constant.

In 1996, national welfare reform was signed into law by Bill Clinton — who had previously opposed it tooth and nail and had already vetoed several previous, but similar, bills. As always with Clinton, though, the political calculus trumped any semblance of principled steadfastness.

And thus we have witnessed a revolution in the way America offers assistance to its most needy. As noted in *The Wall Street Journal* by former Congressional Budget office Director June O'Neill, who coauthored a study on welfare reform for the Manhattan Institute, "the number of families on welfare declined by 50 percent."

With an up-front mandatory requirement for employment and a five-year limit on benefits, the 1996 reform has led to several vital and positive changes in the well-being of America's poor. As noted by the Manhattan study, fully 83 percent of the employment increase for single, black mothers through September 2000 (the latest date for which reliable data are available) is a direct result of these reforms. As O'Neill also says, "welfare reform ... accounts for more than half of the decline in welfare participation, and for more than 60 percent of the rise in employment among single mothers."

But what about North Carolina? Through June 1999, the welfare caseload in the Old North State declined by 56 percent. While any progress of such proportions is valu-

able, it is also the least progress of all but two other Southern states. Even Mississippi has seen a drop of 75 percent. Given the record of other Southern states, we observe that North Carolina still has much to learn about how best to combat dependency and promote personal responsibility. Furthermore, the state's rate of out-of-wedlock births continued to rise — reaching 33 percent in 1999 — while rates in other states fell.

It is clear that both our nation and our state had to change gears to assist truly and measureably those afflicted with economic distress and personal failure. Indeed, as O'Neill observed, those who benefit most from welfare reform are those most in need — "high-school dropouts, black and Hispanic single mothers, mothers of young children, and women who were never married." This is one instance where doing something "for the children" is more than a tawdry and facile political slogan and represents a reality which we can measure and a humanitarian gesture of which we can be proud.

North Carolina first established a statewide public welfare system in 1917 through a county-oriented delivery system that was supervised by the State Board of Public Charities and Public Welfare. Each county was required to establish a juvenile court and to install a superintendent of public welfare and a public welfare board to administer the program and report to the state. While this was a rudimentary system, it spawned, under the crude hand of Washington, the failures and broken families of the late 20th century. Recent reforms — based on accountability, responsibility, and positive incentives for transition into successful and independent lives — prove that, sometimes, when government is responsive to both voter concerns and common sense, we can indeed work together to achieve good things for those in need.

PAY AS YOU GO

North Carolina should embrace tollways

When someone hops in a car and takes a trip to the store or a trip to the beach, how much does it, or should it, cost? To what degree should such a trip be subsidized by others? Should we pay a direct "user fee" by dropping a few dimes in a toll bin — or, to use today's standard technology, by driving through an automated system that "swipes" a windshield debit card? Should we pay an indirect user fee through per-gallon gas taxes devoted to the highways we drive? Or should highway services be financed by general government revenue derived from the collective taxes of North Carolinians as well as those who live elsewhere in the country?

To understand these questions, we must first understand the history of our highway system. Before the 1920s, North Carolina and other states rarely invested much money in roads. Horse-drawn commerce was far less economically viable than transportation via waterway or rail. It was also too easy for teamsters and foot traffic to evade toll booths, thus preventing private or public highways from generating revenues for their maintenance and expansion.

But the birth of the automobile changed all that. It cre-

ated a truly competitive technology to ships and trains while allowing states to charge their surging populations of drivers a rough user fee through taxes on motor fuels. Spending on highways exploded, as did their economic benefits. When practical, indirect tolls were used on limited-access highways, while others were financed indirectly. While a state monopoly, these systems were usually not subsidized and often employed market-friendly mechanisms to link highway usage with revenue.

The federal government got directly involved with the passage of the Interstate Highway Act of 1956. Supporters, including President Dwight Eisenhower, justified federal support for the construction of a national interstate highway system by citing the need to move troops and materiel in case of war. Of course, such a system also created political winners and losers — states that had already invested significant sums in highway systems were made to subsidize others.

As the N.C. General Assembly contemplates the creation of new tollways in other states, it is useful to keep in mind that new technology makes the old "coin-pitch" toll booths a thing of the past. When practical, such funding mechanisms are clearly better than the indirect approach of using fuel taxes. The tollway sector is clearly growing. As of 2000, 10 percent of major U.S. highways operated as toll roads. In North Carolina, the percentage was zero.

The John Locke Foundation has long argued that toll roads should be utilized to introduce greater market incentives into transportation and to relieve traffic congestion. Related options include the use of "peak-pricing" on limited-access highways, which are allowed to charge variable tolls based on the time of day. Our state should also consider public-private partnerships to build highways using electronic toll collection.

Tolls introduce fairness into the market by making only direct users pay. Because of the toll-revenue stream, they can provide large sums for capital markets for the construction of large-scale projects within a short period of time. They can weaken the appeal of "pork-barrel" spending because privately financed projects can prove their viability in the bond market. With respect to safety, as observed by the Reason Public Policy Institute, "the accident rate on toll roads is one-third less than on comparable free roads."

Finally, private tollways are a favorable option because they also lead to better maintenance and traffic management. Better maintenance is encouraged because of legally enforceable standards to secure the liability interests of bond holders. Traffic management and safety are increased through "time-variable" tolls to even out traffic flows based on volume.

Dr. David Hartgen wrote in an October 2000 report for the Locke Foundation that the tollway option could be utilized in various ways, such as for high-occupancy lanes "in which single-occupant vehicles pay to use a toll lane."

While North Carolina once touted its moniker of "the good roads state," longtime residents — frustrated at traffic congestion, potholes, and rising taxes for road repairs and expansions that always seemed elusive or interminable — laughably dismissed the label many years ago. Even prosperous towns such as Cary have become renowned for their ubiquitous potholes.

As with so many aspects of government activity, citizens protest inefficiency and inconvenience. Private toll roads can help to both alleviate indirect subsidies for lower-priority roads and increase the quality of our transportation system by bringing direct accountability to the delivery of surface transportation services.

Many North Carolina communities continue to experience explosive growth. The rest of North Carolina's citizens should not be required to subsidize the growth of already prosperous communities in other parts of the state. If the concept of "economic development" means anything, why should the citizens in Eastern North Carolina be required to assist in the subsidization of transportation for North Carolina's already prosperous urban and tourist-oriented counties? The short and simple answer is that they shouldn't.

Those who use particular business services currently operated by government should, as much as possible, pay for that use. Thus the justification for authorizing communities to use toll roads for the regulation of traffic flow and facility maintenance. If people use a road, they should pay for it. If they do not wish to pay for it, they don't really need to use the road and make the particular road trip upon which they have embarked. The point is that the decision about whether to finance a particular transportation corridor is left to the potential consumers of that convenience.

Rather than continuing the current practice of centralizing control, squandering money on little-used roads, and raising our already high gasoline taxes, North Carolina should embark on a new course of making growth — and highway usage — pay for itself. Tollways, using new technologies and public-private partnerships, are the wave of the future in transportation. North Carolina should surf it.

ON GROWING UP

Helmet law represents another intrusion

Growing up is hard. No amount of pampering by the nanny state in either Raleigh or Washington is going to change that. Learning the lessons of caution and personal responsibility, and the consequences for not adhering to them, is part of growing up and adapting to the vicissitudes of life.

On June 27 the General Assembly passed an odiously paternalistic law stipulating that parents will be penalized, to the horrendous tune of \$10, if their children of 16 or under are cited for not wearing a helmet while riding a bicycle. The bicycle was invented in 1790, meaning that it has taken us 211 years to recognize this impending crisis.

In all seriousness, any death of a child is tragic. But this new law is an overreaction. First of all, it reflects a poor assessment of risk. According to the National Centers for Disease Control, 1,010 American children 14 years old or younger died from drowning in 1997. In the same year, there were 2,608 child fatalities from automobile accidents. Pedestrian childhood deaths were 675 (no walking allowed?) while gun-related deaths, if proper numbers are used, amounted to 488.

The number of those who perished from bicycle accident-related injuries was 201. We have to wonder why the helmet law attracted so much time and effort, when the inconvenience and government intrusion associated with the law will save few lives, if any.

Imposing such a regulation is not costless, as many supporters claimed. It weakens personal and parental responsibility. And, as research on similar regulations has demonstrated, it will likely increase bicycle-accident rates as children grow bolder in the mistaken belief that their helmets will protect them from any harm.

Childhood is a learning experience — not just in an academic sense but also in the area of managing risk. It is through childhood experiences that we gain an appreciation for the dangers and the thrills of everyday, and not so everyday, life. If a child wipes out on a curve or bounces too quickly down a hill and gets a scraped knee or a bump on his head, he will learn that life is filled with bumped knees and scraped heads.

Parents should take the proper steps to protect their children from harm — and to balance such protection with common sense. Government should let them do their jobs, and intervene only when parents recklessly or maliciously put their children in danger.

HISTORICAL TRUTH

Common sense on the commandments

When it comes to the intersection of religion and the state, sensitivity can be justifiable. But just as we should have no state-designated religion, our Founding Fathers also recognized the right of citizens to learn about and to adhere to their heritage. Now we face a ruckus because Gov. Mike Easley and the state legislature have just approved legislation to allow the posting of the Ten Commandments in public schools so long as they are part of a collection of historical documents.

At the time the U.S. Constitution and the Bill of Rights were written, at least two states, Massachusetts and Connecticut, had state-designated religions, while many others barred those of some religions from voting or holding office. In his masterful *A History of the American People*, Paul Johnson observed that "what the guarantee [in the First Amendment] means is that Congress may not set up a state religion on the lines of the Church of England, 'as established by law.' It was an anti-establishment clause."

There was also the recognition that the Declaration of Independence, the Constitution, and, therefore, the foundations of our Republic, rested in the sometimes judgmental but often forgiving stipulations of a Judeo-Christian heritage. Whether they classified themselves as deists or Christians, almost to a man the Founders believed that the Declaration and the American Revolution were appropriations of divine Providence.

While we are not inclined to engage in speculation as to the spiritual considerations of a free people other than a needed adherence to common principles of right and wrong, to make this observation of our religious moorings in no way "establishes" a religion dictated by government. It simply affirms the ethical principles underlying our culture.

The Bill of Rights is not a tool for enabling the power of government to enslave or restrict citizens. The Bill of Rights was intended to protect individuals and the sovereign states from the tyrannical impulses of a national federation.

Which brings us down home to North Carolina where the state legislature enacted, and Easley signed, a bill that among other things allowed the posting of the Ten Commandments in public schools in tandem with a collection of historical documents such as the Declaration, the Constitution, and the Magna Carta — and with the First Amendment prominently displayed. Some civil libertarians warned that a theocracy was just around the corner. Most everyone else laughed this warning off.

To what degree should America retain a unifying cultural credo based on its founding principles? Should we deny these principles, which have been and remain critical to the success of a free and responsible society? At what point do we draw the line between affirming our historic values and trampling on the rights of others?

We cannot deny our history or our roots. When we have newspaper editors comparing the Ten Commandments to Adolf Hitler's *Mein Kampf*, as we now do, it is

clear the moral bearings for both responsible law and simple logic have been loosed from their moorings.

The *Winston-Salem-Journal* recently commented that "posting a historic document is saying, in effect, that the school's administration agrees with the ideas contained therein." Should we not post the Declaration of Independence in our public schools because it might indicate school officials believe in God?

Should we be so sensitive that we must calibrate the promotion of American history to the lowest common denominator? Are we to deny that history to the extent that we engage in Orwellian memory disposal to accommodate those who have no real interest in learning about and sustaining our culture but want all the benefits they can derive therefrom?

Given the Judeo-Christian underpinnings of American culture and government, no sensible person could object to posting these truths in the public square. To post the Ten Commandments in public, whether in a school or in a courtroom, is simply to reaffirm our philosophical moorings. It neither compels devotion to a particular conception of God nor excludes non-Christians, agnostics, or atheists from all the rights of American citizenship. *CJ*

Hot Air on Auto Emissions Testing

Two years ago, the North Carolina General Assembly committed a major blunder by expanding mandatory testing of auto emissions from nine urban counties in the state to 48, comprising the vast majority of the state's motorists.

Now lawmakers are on the verge of compounding their error by approving a price increase for the test that would allow garages and service centers to charge as much as \$34 a pop.

Back when the legislature expanded the program, the purported rationale was to promote clean air. But as a recent report by the National Research Council detailed, testing tailpipe emissions of every car every year is a blunderbuss approach that wastes a lot of time and money achieving far less of a reduction in pollution than most people realize.

The correct policy would be more akin to sniping with a high-powered rifle.

With regard to emissions, all cars are certainly not created equally. Most of the emissions that lead to harmful pollution are caused by only 10 percent of the automobile fleet — older and malfunctioning vehicles that can be identified either through property-tax records or with remote-sensing devices placed on exit ramps and other roadways.

The remote-sensing approach is particularly attractive. After all, what matters in forming air pollution is not how an automobile performs in theory or in a test in a garage. What's important is how the automobile behaves in real-world driving conditions — the type and magnitude of its harmful emissions.

The National Research Council report found that the Environmental Protection Agency and state agencies tend to overstate the benefits from emissions-testing programs by 100 percent because they assume pollution gains from newer cars that actually contribute little if anything to the problem.

"Inspection and maintenance programs should focus on repairing the worst-polluting vehicles and verifying repairs," said Ralph Cicerone, chancellor of the University of California at Irvine and chairman of the NRC panel that wrote the report.

Driven By Politics, Not Science

Expanding North Carolina's program two years ago, while questionable on policy grounds, made a lot of sense politically.

Garage owners looked forward to the additional business. Power companies and other so-called "point-source" emitters welcomed the shift of legislative attention to automobiles. State lawmakers interested in currying favor with these groups and with environmental lobbies in Raleigh could expand the program — in effect levying a new tax on every motorist in the 39 additional counties — without having to placate a countervailing lobby with power in Raleigh, since there wasn't one.

What's particularly galling about the 1999 expansion is that it was a reaction to an apparent worsening

in North Carolina's air quality that has turned out to be ephemeral.

Ozone-alert days did spike in 1998 and 1999, largely because of higher-than-normal temperatures that stemmed from an El Niño weather event. But the longer-term trend shows little or no change in ground-level ozone, or smog, during the 1990s, even as our state has experienced rapid growth in population, development, electricity generation, and automobile travel.

On most measurements of air quality, we have seen steady improvement since the 1970s. These would include levels of carbon monoxide, particulates (soot), sulfur dioxide, and lead.

Even this year, breathless media reports are treating our air quality as worsening when it is actually improving. So far in 2001, there have been 17 ozone-alert days in North Carolina. If the rest of the year follows the usual pattern, we can expect 25 such days for 2001.

That's a dramatic 64 percent drop from 1998 levels and one that has occurred without the auto-emissions expansion (which has yet to phase in) and without the "Clean Smokestacks Bill" also being debated this year by the General Assembly, which would raise electricity prices by about \$200 million a year.

Regulatory Costs and Benefits

Are auto emissions a legitimate concern for state lawmakers? Absolutely. As North Carolinians, we do have the right to breathe clean air. Because no one can stake ownership rights to a personal airshed, we do need government to intervene.

But government must do so wisely. The costs of regulation, both in time and in foregone consumption, must be exceeded by air-quality benefits. Otherwise, we can make families worse off by reducing their ability to afford other valuable things, such as health care, education, and better and safer consumer products.

The current price hike for emissions testing doesn't meet that standard. Indeed, lawmakers should roll back the planned expansion of the program and redesign it to target those few cars generating most of the problem. A more carefully crafted approach would generate as least as much if not more pollution reduction but do so without excessive cost and inconvenience.

Bad legislation is, actually, a lot like air pollution. Some people benefit. Most others, usually innocent bystanders, are harmed.

Right now, we are all choking from the legislative smog gushing from the North Carolina General Assembly. *CJ*

Hood is publisher of *Carolina Journal* and president of the *John Locke Foundation*.



John Hood

Editorial Briefs

Perpetuating Tax Equity Myths

As legislative Democrats and Gov. Mike Easley debated various state tax increase proposals last month, they bandied around estimates of how higher alcohol taxes, a proposed half-penny to penny sales tax hike, and a new 8.75 percent income tax bracket for individuals earning more than \$120,000 would impact various classes of taxpayers.

In doing so, they perpetrated a common error about taxes — the notion that the impact of taxes can easily be assigned by income or location. The reality is more complicated.

Taxation changes behavior. As the tax rate on some forms of consumption rises, many taxpayers will see their dollars spent more effectively on other goods or services that don't carry the same tax rate. Similarly, as tax rates on income rise, many workers (particularly at the higher end of the income distribution where the combined state and federal rate approaches 50 percent) will reduce the number of hours they would have worked in favor of leisure activities that, at the higher marginal tax rate, are more valuable to them than the added after-tax income.

This "dynamic" effect of taxation isn't really controversial among economists (they just disagree about its magnitude) nor is it a new idea. Ancient and medieval scholars in cultures across the world observed the tendency for high taxes to have unforeseen, and often counterproductive, effects.

In the current debate in North Carolina, advocates of tax increases are not paying enough attention to the potential impact of higher taxes on employment, profitability, and the state's competitiveness. It is quite possible that higher taxes on "the wealthy" or "sin" could result in lots of middle- and lower-income people losing wages or jobs.

Celebrate the Stock Market Slide?

Speaking of equity, some on the political left argue that inequality of income *per se* is harmful to many people's health and self-esteem. If that's true, then perhaps there is cause to celebrate the recent economic turmoil that has roiled financial markets and crimped corporate profits.

These leftists believe the psychological pain of being relatively worse off is so severe that policies making some better off without harming others should be opposed if they increase inequality.

Thus, when the stock market was rising, left-wingers attacked the increase in inequality. They said it was painful for many Americans to see others getting wealthy, even if they themselves were no worse off.

So we wonder why more folks who "care about the downtrodden" aren't applauding the massive reduction in inequality that has resulted from collapse of the stock market since early last year.

As observed by Bruce Bartlett of the National Center for Policy Analysis:

- According to the Federal Reserve, the value of corporate equities (including mutual funds) fell more than \$4 trillion between the 1st quarter of 2000 and the 1st quarter of 2001.

- Census data indicate that about 60 percent of all stock is owned by the top 20 percent of households, while those in the bottom quintile own just 5 percent.

- Therefore, about \$2.5 trillion was, in effect, taxed away from the wealthy.

Bartlett concluded that the fall in stock prices caused wealth to become more equally distributed. *Relatively speaking*, the poor are much better off than they were a year ago.

"Of course, the collapse of the stock market has not benefited anyone except the very few who sold short at the peak," he wrote. "On the other hand, it harmed people who aren't shareholders, due to falling sales, companies closing their doors, and people losing their jobs.

"Whatever benefits people may feel from increased equality, it is far more than offset by the pain and suffering of those who are now absolutely worse off." CJ

Legislators Should Take Econ. 201

By ANDREW CLINE

Managing Editor

Sometimes, a little government regulatin' is the only answer to a social problem. And the state budget is a major social problem. Hence, I propose a new law requiring the governor and all state legislators to complete N.C. State University's introductory economics course, Econ. 201.

The recent state budget debacle, caused in no small measure by the legislative leadership's steadfast adherence to economic mumbo jumbo, has revealed the necessity for such a drastic measure.

For example, after a recent meeting at which House and Senate leaders pitched their idea for fixing the state budget — a nearly \$600 million tax increase — a reporter asked the chief budget writer in the House why the state couldn't free up some cash by eliminating corporate subsidies such as tax breaks to major corporations and state-funded foreign trade offices.

The budget guru, Brunswick County Democratic Rep. David Redwine, said that the state could eliminate those things, but the consequences would be a damaged economy in which fewer jobs would be created and more people would be out of work.

That's a mighty fine defense of the state's corporate giveaway programs, except that it's completely untrue. Over the years, a host of academic studies has shown that corporate subsidies have little or no effect on job creation. There also is a wealth of data to show that tax reductions and government spending reductions stimulate economic growth.

But just to be sure that I wasn't relying on outdated information, I called Dr. Steve Margolis, head of the Economics Department at N.C. State (see page 19 for a book review by Margolis). I asked him which approach to job creation and economic stimulation would be more beneficial: the House leadership's use of state subsidies targeted to specific large corporations, or the proposal, put forth by some Republicans in the House, to cut these subsidies and lower the overall tax rate.

"What's a better recruiting tool, special deals for some, or lower taxes for all?" Margolis asked. "I think the question answers itself."

Mmm, OK, I thought, but remember, we're talking about legislators here. (When conveying a message to legislators, it's often best to talk as if you're speaking to a small child.) So, I asked Dr. Margolis to elaborate.

"You probably have your best chance of recruiting by having relatively simple, predictable, lower taxes," Margolis explained. "I'm not arguing for lower taxes *per se*, I'm suggesting that with a given budget you can lower taxes for some or lower taxes for all. My notion is that it is certainly not clear that by lowering taxes for some you do better than when you

lower taxes for all."

That's a politically cautious state employee's way of saying, "lowering taxes for everyone is more economically beneficial than lowering taxes for a select few."

One reason is that the economy is driven by small businesses, not large corporations.

Yet small-time entrepreneurs are not the people who qualify for the state's major corporate tax breaks.

This is because ribbon-cutting ceremonies at new plants are wonderful photo opportunities for politicians who can claim to have created all those jobs. But the numerous small shop openings that occur each day don't provide politicians with the same media opportunities.

And given the economic reality that targeted corporate tax breaks benefit the few at the expense of the many, the conclusion is inescapable that politicians who support such policies are either economically ignorant or interested more in their own electability than the public good.

For, to quote Dr. Margolis, "Giving a special tax break to one new entrant means that you're going to have to impose higher taxes on everybody that's already here or even on new recruits that are not offered special breaks."

Yes, but what about the notion that our economy would tank if we gutted the Department of Commerce's corporate welfare functions?

"If they actually said we'd see the economy plummet, that's not a reasonable forecast," Margolis said. "It's not like the international companies that are already here would leave if we stopped offering incentives."

So, the N.C. economy will not crash if the state slashes its corporate subsidies, and having a low tax rate for everyone is more beneficial than having higher rates for most and very low rates for some.

That's the word from the chairman of the N.C. State Econ. Department. Unfortunately, that's exactly the opposite of the message coming from the state's political leadership. So, in case anyone down on Jones Street is listening, Econ 201 meets Monday and Wednesday evenings from 6 to 7:15, and spaces are still available. CJ

Economic Outlook

The Minimum Wage Brings Minimum Economic Benefits

By MICHAEL WALDEN
Contributing Editor

Just as regularly as the seasons change, there are calls for increases in the minimum wage. The latest comes from some members of the General Assembly. The calls for a higher minimum wage certainly strike a compassionate cord. Few of us can imagine raising a family on the earnings from working full-time at the minimum wage — an amount just shy of \$11,000 a year.

Yet there are many misconceptions about who earns the minimum wage, what the impacts are of increasing the minimum wage, and whether people earning the minimum wage must survive only on those earnings.

Who Earns the Minimum Wage?

The minimum wage rate began in 1938 at 25 cents per hour. Some historians say it resulted from a regional conflict between the North and South. Northern industrialists were upset by the movement of the textile industry from New England to Southern states, where wages were lower. To eliminate the South's cost advantage, the North wanted to impose a minimum wage on employers.

The minimum wage affects about 10 percent of the workforce and is overwhelmingly earned by very young and very old workers. Only 17 percent of men and 28 percent of women earning the minimum wage are aged 20 to 64. Approximately half of minimum-wage earners are teenagers. It makes sense that teenagers earn low wages because they are inexperienced and temporary workers. The remainder of minimum-wage workers are over age 65, many of whom are working part-time to supplement Social Security and pension income. So it's a myth that the typical minimum wage earner is in the prime working years.

With respect to the impacts of the minimum wage, there is vast agreement among economists. Increasing the minimum wage reduces total employment for minimum-wage workers, but for those who do keep their jobs, a higher minimum wage increases their income.

Why does this happen? A worker is paid a wage rate

based on what she is evaluated to contribute to the company employing her. A worker paid \$15 per hour is evaluated to contribute at least \$15 worth of product for the company per hour of work. A worker paid only \$5.15 per hour is evaluated to contribute only \$5.15 worth of product to the company per hour of work.

Thus, when the minimum wage is increased to above \$5.15 per hour to, say, \$6.65 an hour, workers who aren't evaluated to be producing \$6.65 of output per hour for the company will be let go. However, not all minimum-wage workers will be pink-slipped. As the number of minimum-wage workers drops, the value of the remaining minimum-wage workers goes up because their work will now be focused on more profitable tasks (this is a principle learned long ago by labor unions who realized that wage rates rise when the supply of workers is reduced).

The ironic result is that increasing the minimum wage puts more money in some workers' pockets but at the expense of other workers.

Living On the Minimum Wage

But this still begs the question of how we can expect anyone to live off minimum wage earnings? How could anyone working full time and earning the minimum wage live off slightly less than \$11,000 (\$5.15/hour x 40 hrs/week x 52 weeks) a year?

The first answer is, most minimum wage workers don't have to live on \$11,000 a year and support a family. This is because, as noted above, no more than a quarter of minimum wage workers are aged 20 to 64.

The second answer is, for the 25 percent of minimum-wage adult households in their prime working years, there is substantial government assistance to supplement their earnings. An adult with children working full-time at the minimum wage is eligible for the earned income tax credit, food stamps, Medicaid, housing assistance, and, if the

children are in daycare, assistance paying child care costs.

The often overlooked earned income tax credit (EITC) is cash assistance that can be received monthly. A worker earning minimum-wage income of \$11,000 with two children can receive \$3,900 in cash from the EITC, effectively increasing his hourly earnings to \$7 an hour. Adding the effective financial value of the other assistance programs gives this minimum wage household a total purchasing power of more than \$17,000. This translates to an implicit wage rate of more than \$8 per hour.

In other words, a minimum-wage household with two children has its effective wage rate and purchasing power increased by 55 percent from all forms of public assistance.

But why, you might still ask, don't we save the government and taxpayers all this money spent on programs helping minimum wage workers and simply

require companies to pay workers a minimum of \$8 per hour?

One reason I've already given. Increasing the minimum wage clearly and demonstratively reduces employment among minimum wage workers. Public assistance would still be needed for those households without work.

Another reason is that low wage rates signal to the worker that his skills are not highly valued in the economy compared to the skills of other workers. This serves as motivation to seek training and education that will make him more valuable in the economy.

Business will only do what's in its self-interest, and this includes hiring workers. And workers will take steps to improve their financial condition if there are strong monetary incentives to do so. The tricky task for public policy is to strike the right balance between the gift of compassion and the practicality of incentives. CJ

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So-Called "Living Wage" Laws Violate Economic Laws

By MICHAEL LOWREY
Contributing Editor

One contributing factor to Charlotte's recent defeat of a plan to spend public money on a new arena for the Charlotte Hornets was the city's defeat of a proposed "living wage" for city employees. Proponents of the living wage ordinance organized opposition to the arena referendum in retaliation for the city council's defeat of the ordinance. But the city is better off without a living wage ordinance just as it's better off without a tax-funded coliseum.

Like many other movements, groups campaigning for higher mandatory wages make use of a term that seems simple to understand and difficult to be against. The reality is rather different. Certainly the issue is more complex than the simple catch phrase, "living wage," suggests.

Feel-Good Theory vs. Economic Law

The concept of a "living wage" is similar to that of the minimum wage. Its proponents contend that an employer, especially a governmental employer, should be required to pay a wage high enough so that the wage earner can support himself or herself and a family. Helping Empower Local People (HELP), Charlotte's main advocacy group for the living wage, contends that the appropriate living wage in Charlotte is \$9.00 per hour.

Economic theory, meanwhile, tells us that the price of an item — be it eggs, cars, or wage labor — is determined by supply and demand. The wage (price) that unskilled or

semiskilled labor commands is not exempt from the law of supply and demand. A so-called living wage, much like the federal minimum wage, is an example of a price floor, a government-set minimum price for an item. Such legislated minimums matter only if they are above the actual market price (wage). In North Carolina's urban areas, market forces have long since pushed the pay that even the most stereotypical "burger flippers" of the labor force earn well above the federal minimum wage of \$5.15 per hour.

The situation in Charlotte highlights this. Only 218 of the city's more than 5,000 employees actually earned less than \$9 per hour at the time of the debate this past May.

Of those, 93 were full-time employees with the remaining 125 being temporary workers. A regularly scheduled pay increase has since reduced these numbers further. The cost of bringing all city workers to \$9 per hour was estimated at \$144,000 per year plus an additional \$335,000 to adjust other positions to keep them in proportion.

If the actual impact of local governments paying a "living wage" may be trivial, "living wage" ordinances can be anything but that to city contractors. Of the more than 50 "living wage" laws passed in the United States, more than 90 percent apply to city or county contractors and/or those companies receiving government tax breaks. Indeed, the majority apply only to contracted service providers. Durham's ordinance, for example, requires that city contractors pay at least an hourly wage equivalent to the city's.

The focus on city contractors is hardly surprising given strong union support for the "living wage" movement. While the AFL-CIO and other unions may truly have the

plight of the working poor at heart, their support for "living wage" regulations are also very much in their own economic self interest.

An Excuse to Raise Union Wages

The "living wage" movement began in the Northeast and Midwest in the early 1990s in response to local governments contracting out to private companies. City and county governments realized that significant savings could be had by having private businesses perform, under contract, certain services that local governments had traditionally done for themselves.

It also meant that unionized local government employees could face layoffs or pay cuts. Requiring local government contractors to pay the same wages that governments themselves paid (or pay a "living wage" or a "prevailing wage rate"), effectively reduces the possibilities for outsourcing and preserves union jobs.

In the alternative, unions typically represent unskilled or semiskilled labor, which can be replaced fairly easily. By putting artificial upward pressure on the cost of labor generally, unions can negotiate for higher wages for their members.

Though the living wage proposal was (at least for now) defeated in Charlotte, it is likely to come up in various forms in other parts of North Carolina in the future.

Orange County and the City of Durham have already adopted living wage ordinances, while the Greensboro City Council rejected the idea last summer. Wherever the concept next appears, keep in mind that there is more to the "living wage" than initially meets the eye. CJ

Lowrey is an economist at Davidson College and an adjunct fellow at the John Locke Foundation.

The wage (price) that unskilled or semi-skilled labor demands is not exempt from the law of supply and demand.

Tea Party Terror

Missiles Rain Down on Terrified Lawmakers

By FRANK LEE BUNK
State Government Protest Editor

RALEIGH, August 1, 2001

An unruly mob of anti-government protesters, many carrying subversive signs and wearing polyester shorts, descended on the state capital yesterday to demand drastic cuts in services to disabled children and homeless veterans.

The event turned violent after the anti-tax radicals stormed the gallery overlooking the House chamber, interrupted a critical four-hour debate on acupuncture regulation in Mitchell County, and let loose with what some called a "fusillade" of stringed projectiles on the overworked legislators.

Several of the missiles hit the chamber floor with an ominous plop, as a suspicious powdery substance threatened to erupt from its thin paper casing and fly into eyes, noses, mouths, and other open orifices.

"I was afraid," said one lawmaker cowering underneath his desk and clutching a Moon Pie in his quivering hand. "I spent some time in a Wake Forest frat house, so I know how dangerous these things can get."

Added Security Averted Disaster

The so-called Tar Heel Tea Party Against Taxes — reportedly organized by front groups for tobacco companies, HMOs, and California power suppliers — threatened to overwhelm state government's under-funded water and sewer facilities.

According to the scuttlebutt in the leg-

islative press room, where some reporters retired from the heat after at least 15 minutes of observation, the rowdy ruffians numbered about three dozen (far short of the 10,000 predicted by rally organizers)

Legislative leaders were at least relieved that they had added extra security for the event from the State Capitol Police, which some lawmakers stressed had been "accidentally" targeted for privatization or elimination in next year's state budget.

Challenged by some participants' observation that the crowd largely consisted of mothers with preschool children, balding men in business suits, and elderly retirees with wide-brimmed hats, horrified lawmakers pointed out that had they not arranged for the extra security, there is no telling what could have happened.

"You'd be surprised at how hard my grandmother can throw," said one House Appropriations Committee leader.

Clothes Viewed as Threatening

What appalled some lawmakers watching the rally from behind safety glass in the Legislative Office Building was the grotesque imagery of the protesters.

One participant dressed like the villain from "Scary Movie" with the slogan "Taxes Kill" prominently displayed. Representatives from the North Carolina Department of Revenue, on hand to identify any possible tax dodgers at the rally, mentioned that they were considering filing hate-crime



Right-wing mob speaks out against essential state services, readies attack on House chamber.

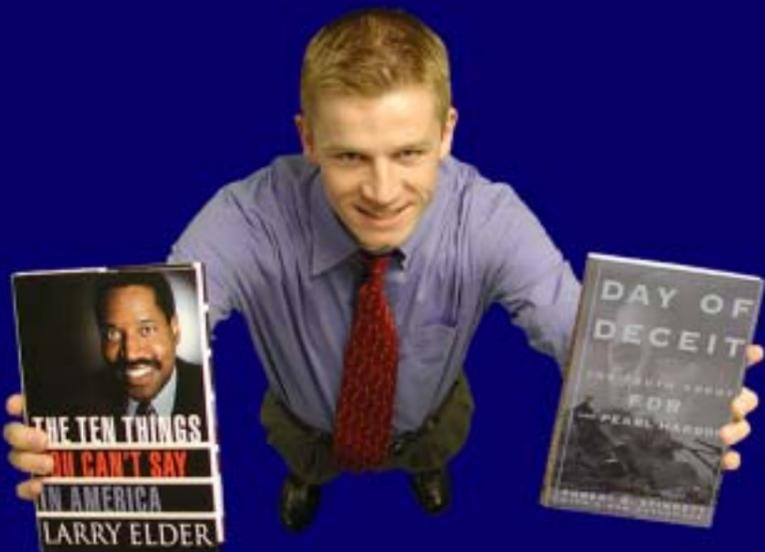
charges against the demonstrators.

Another protester wore a Revolutionary War uniform and tricornered hat.

"He was obviously a member of the 'patriot movement,' the National Rifle Association, and possibly even the North

Carolina Libertarian Party," sniffed one disgusted lawmaker who has been active in the gun-control movement for many years. "Someone should have checked the clip on his fully automatic musket to make sure it didn't contain cop-killer bullets." CJ

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