Opinion

Some questions

The new Nicholas County Hospital is almost completed, which comes as good news after the difficulties the facility has undergone during construction.

That is about the only good news that we can offer on the subject this week. During last week's meeting of the hospital board the income statements for the past year showed that the hospital and nursing home combined to spend $63,000 more than they took in.

This is not just a problem for the hospital board, whose members are dedicated, respected members of the community who have taken on an often unpleasant task in agreeing to serve. Neither is it just the concern of the fiscal court, which is ultimately responsible for the complex. No, it is the problem of each and every one of us.

In the last year the Mercury has printed several stories about the problems the hospital has faced during construction. Most of our readers have been complimentary of the coverage, although some have not. Some have accused us of being unfair in our accounts as well as taking sides in internal disputes and dwelling on unhappy aspects of the construction process.

In the record

That is to be expected; a newspaper that makes everyone happy is not doing its job. Our defense is that what we have printed can be verified through public records. Our "Letters" column on this page has been empty of comment on this coverage, pro or con.

When the new hospital was being proposed supporters of the project gave the impression that revenues would pay for the facility with no additional taxation. The construction bonds would be retired with revenues. The income statements released last week have shot down any notion that this will happen in the near future without any further income from tax sources. The $.25 per $100 hospital tax levied on the 1978 assessments was just one in a series of disappointments.

The construction of the new building itself has been fraught with mistakes that we can only term useless. How can a contractor mis-estimate by almost half the number of bricks needed to cover the building? Who would fix a budget construction for such a facility as a hospital and neglect to include such important items as a telephone system and safety lights?

Just carelessness?

There are two explanations to these circumstances. One is that the person in charge forgot. The other is that the construction budget was deliberately under-estimated in order to provide a more acceptable figure. The relatively inexpensive cost of the items omitted lead us to believe the former explanation is the more plausible but such carelessness is not comforting.

The question never was, does Nicholas County need a new hospital? The question was, what kind do we need? Now the question is, have we bitten off more than we can chew? Will the revenues from the hospital and nursing home continue to require tax monies to stay solvent? Do the present and projected population figures justify the building we have?

Some may feel it would be "fairer" if these questions were not asked. Some feel that in the case of the hospital, no news is good news. Forget the troubles and they will go away. That is wishful thinking in this case. Both buildings in the health care complex have been saddled with long-term debts that our children will be paying.

Not a private matter

It is not our intention to sling the fault for these woes at any individual's feet. Our obligation is to keep our readers informed and we must remember that this is not a private concern but a publicly-supported facility we are speaking of and as such it deserves the same scrutiny that all such tax-funded institutions must undergo.

The cash budget projections for this year predict a total cash balance of around $9,000 when 1979 ends. We sincerely hope that this projection becomes fact. No one wants to see the health care complex on a sound footing any more than we do but we can not ignore what has happened in the past two years. Whether the bargain we have struck for a new hospital is a good one or a bad one remains to be seen. What is seen now is that the past year has been disastrous for the complex, both financially and in terms of public image. Hopefully, the future months will redeem these results.

Agree or Not

Legislature's independence may not surface until '80

by S. C. Van Curon

FRANKFORT — One of the most important gains for the taxpayers that could come out of this special session is more legislative independence. But this won't be greatly evident until the 1980 regular session.

Legislators have exercised a great amount of independence in this special session in examining the budget for possible tax cuts. Their examination has drawn criticism of how the capital construction money has been handled in the past. One of the biggest faults in this area is that capital construction funds, allotted to a specific project, have not lapsed into the general fund at the end of the biennium if no work had started on the project. The money was left to float around.

Another factor is that State Auditor George Atkins said no in-depth audit had been made of the fund in the last 25 years. The result is a jungle that defies explanation. At least, that's the assessment of the legislators.

Gov. Carroll told the legislators that more projects are approved than there is money appropriated for. The decision is then left up to the governor and the Capital Building Commission.

There was a time in state budget making, before Gov. Wendell Ford, that construction projects were line items in the executive budget and appropriations were designated for these specific projects.

But it changed under Ford during the crucial early 70's and Capital Construction money was put in the budget as a big lump sum. This created a slush fund for the governor's pet projects.

Under the old system, if a construction project were not completed during the biennium, the next legislature voted for its continuance and sometimes appropriated supplementary funds, plus that first allocated.

Under the present system, the project just goes on and on, or it isn't lapsed at the end of the biennium if the project is hadn't been started.

The 1980 legislature, if legislators live up to the promises they are making now, is going to demand line-item budgeting for capital construction.

The governor's contingency fund (used to be called emergency fund) is likely to be reduced from what it is now.

This supposedly is for emergencies, such as floods and other disasters, or special emergencies for which no money had been allocated in the budget. The contingency fund has grown through the years and governors have used it for pet projects, many of them for political purposes. Since when is it an emergency to send a softball team to a district meet or to send a musical group to Washington or some foreign country? Money has been used for these purposes.

The Appropriations and Revenue Committee has been growing stronger since Gov. Louie B. Nunn gave the legislative Research Commission a larger appropriation, sufficient to set up the interim committee system.

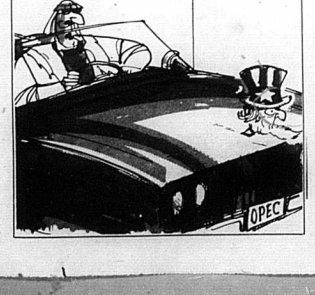
There has been a tendency for legislative oversight of state spending, and taxpayers can expect a strengthening trend in this direction.

The one big stumbling block in the way of legislative independence in Kentucky is that the legislature has little opportunity to override a governor's veto if the legislature is out of session when this occurs.

The tendency always has been to delay final passage of bills up until the last two weeks of the regular 60-day sessions. By this I mean important bills that could come in for a veto.

Another thing, after the legislature approves the budget and adjourns, the legislature has no control over spending. All legislators can do is some oversight work and complain about how the money is spent. But there has been little of that in past years, because there has been no tendency to exercise critical oversight.

This could happen, beginning in 1980.



Crackers

Graham crackers were developed by Sylvester Graham, a vegetarian who lectured on dietary reform across the United States in the first half of the 19th century.

The Carlisle Mercury

(USPS 090-820)

Established 1867

Phone (606) 289-2464

Published every Thursday at 234 Locust Street, Carlisle, Nicholas County, KY 40311

Postage Paid at Carlisle, Ky.

Warren R. Fisher, Publisher; Jeff G. Kerr, Editor; (Mrs.) Katherine T. Fisher, Managing Editor; (Mrs.) Jane Duncan, Assistant-to-the-Publisher; (Mrs.) Brenda K. Phillips, Composition Operator.

Subscription Rate: One year in Nicholas County $6.30 sales tax included; in other Kentucky counties, one year $7.35, sales tax included; out-of-state, one year, $9.00.

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Memory Lane

Lowe looks like Truman; Myers Station depot closes

Thursday, February 5, 1959

Sputnik has brought about a great movement of putting much emphasis on math and science in this country, and Carlisle High School is certainly in line with this movement. The math department is under the leadership of Gayle Bowen. Teachers in the science department are Tebay Rose and Mrs. Bill Ed Leedy.

Chester Ockerman has accepted a position with Buntin's Garage as their International Farm equipment representative.

Mr. and Mrs. Will G. Snapp of Lexington have leased their property on Locust Street to Dr. W. R. Kingsolver for his offices. He plans to move from his present site as soon as remodeling is completed.

Warner Lowe appeared last Wednesday on the Ruth Lyons 50-50 Club TV show, and was introduced as looking like Harry Truman.

Mrs. T. C. Johnson, Carlisle parliamentarian and by-law chairman of the Seventh District of Kentucky PTA, will be the guest speaker at a meeting tonight at Bourbon County High School.

Mr. and Mrs. Nick Smoot observed their golden wedding anniversary at their home on Jan. 28.

BORN — To Mr. and Mrs. Clarence Earlywine, a son, Clarence Jr., Jan. 30.

MARRIED — Miss Joyce Smart, Carlisle, to Ralph Mahler, Montgomery County, Saturday. — Miss Anne Tilton Crutcher, Frankfort, to Don Murray Young, Lexington, Friday in Tennessee.

DIED — John L. Durrum, 72, Frankfort, Ind., Sunday. — Mrs. Fairy Terrell Alexander, 74, Tuesday in Lexington. — Arthur Craig, 67, Friday in Lexington. — Mrs. Jemima Ellisabeth Bradford, 91, Thursday at the home of her son, Elmer Bradford in Cynthiana. — Mrs. Nannie Wagoner Ham, 70, at her home in Millersburg on Thursday.

Thursday, February 9, 1939

At the regular monthly meeting of the city council Monday night, Roger C. Womack was elected city attorney to fill the vacancy caused by the death of Judge Samuel Holmes.

Sam K. Veach, re-elected secretary of the Nicholas County Building and Saving Association for the 57th year.

Licking River is at flood stage at Myers Station and Pleasant Valley.

Sterling Blake, bookkeeper at the Deposit Bank, suffered a fractured rib Friday when he slipped on the ice covered street and struck the bumper of his automobile.

The recent closing of the L & [illegible] Sation at Myers leaves but five stations in operation between Paris and Maysville: Millersburg, Carlisle, Flemingsburg Junction, Ewing and Marshall. A. A. Dale has been agent at Myers for almost 40 years.

Charles F. McCann sold last week to Miss Lucy Norvell his farm of 38 acres on the Walnut Grove Pike at a private price.

BORN — To Mr. and Mrs. James R. Crouch of Moorefield, a son, Feb. 3.

MARRIED — Miss Nancy Layson and Thomas Hickman, both of Millersburg, Saturday at the home of the Rev. Jesse Herrmann, pastor of the First Presbyterian Church in Lexington.

DIED — Mrs. Maude Dorcas Crawford, 53, at her home near Carlisle last Friday. — Miss Anna Ray Fisher, 45, Sunday morning at the home of her parents near Sharpsburg. — Charlie Jackson, a native of Nicholas County, Monday at his home in Norwood, Ohio. — Charles Boggess, 39, Sunday. — Miss Anna Catherine Prather, 22, student nurse at Massie Memorial Hospital in Paris. — W. C. Damon, 86, at his home at Elkton, Todd County, last Thursday.

Mercury vapors

by Warren R. Fisher

Standing heads lead a hard life!

And sometimes cause a lot of extra opaquing which we found not at all pleasing last week. So it was suggested that all standing heads be PMT'ed so we could start the following week with a clean slate.

Last April it was suggested at a seminar that I attended that the "Mercury vapours" head should be re-done. I think my peers thought that the outline around the word "vapours" was supposed to be shaped like the state of Kentucky, and although there was some semblance that was not my original idea.

In the beginning, that is, of the column the head line was set in Bodoni caps, then not being able to draw, we did find two wisps of smoke rising from an art work called a hamburger which struck our fancy and these were placed so that they seemed to rise out of the word "vapours". Over the years the head got dirty, so we tried a tint screen but weren't able to simulate the two wisps of smoke and then in disgust left the art work looking something like Kentucky's outline.

With this issue though we can now state that the outline is that of the state of Kentucky and if we can place a little star above the "s" it will be in Nicholas County. What we should have done this time was to place the star before we made two 50 percent reductions, then it wouldn't be so hard to locate our county of Nicholas.

I believe the saying is, live and learn. I wonder if I ever will.

—MV—

While changin things

We decided to change our cutline dress from 9 point bold face to 12 pt. Souvenir with a bold 18 pt. **Souvenir** kicker, hopefully our readers will find the larger cutlines easier to read. But in making the change, well therein hangs a tale.

The machine which carries all these different faces and sizes will do many things if one can only remember which key to strike and in what sequence.

My editor wished the bold kiker to be flush left with the cutline to the kicker's right and justified.

The machine has ten tab positions each with variable line measures, all of which can be stored in its memory. I could use any of the ten as long as I didn't exceed the width of the photographic paper in use.

The function I desired was to escape the width of the first tab without setting any copy in that measure, the book says, instructions if you will, tab keys are insert space. Multiust

Quoting the Compographic people, "Since the flexibility of the tab program relies on operator comprehension of each tab key, it is recommended that these functions be carefully reviewed before commencing with typesetting exercises."

Carriage Reset restores one small measure for full justified lines. I don't believe I entered an overall measure.

And if I didn't set the overall measure I wonder what it all will look like, really it shouldn't have happened to a dog.

—MV—

Did I do it right?

Tab 2 says 13 picas, the overall width is 27 picas and tab 1 is supposed to be 14 picas. If I am sequencing the keys in the proper order I should be setting copy in tab 2 to the right and justified. If one can remember all this run-arounds will be easy or maybe neater would be the better choice of words. Having just struck carriage reset the machine should now be photographing copy on the 27 pica width, or two columns full.

*Please turn to page 2

Stamler Corporation honors employees

The W. R. Stamler Corporation honored employees for long service, attendance, and safety at their twelfth annual dinner and dance.

Thirteen employees missed no scheduled work time during the preceding 12 months. William R. Stamler, president, presented each with a $100 check: Glenn Buckler, Dock Carter, Michael Feeback, Robert Graves, Jimmy Hunt, Billy Mann, Wyatt McKinney, Rudy Miller, Harrison Rankin, Harry Stanfield, Harry Stanfield, Jr., Louis Thompson and Monte Wells. Second placed winner, Donald R. Rankin, received a $50 check and Richard Wagner, third place, received a $25 check.

Charles M. Anderson, executive vice president, presented two "Feeder-Breaker" pins for 25 years' service to Catesby Bramel and Harry Wells, vice president-production. M. Jackson Merideth, sales engineer, received a pin for 20 years with the company.

Anderson also presented pins for 10 years' service to Donald G. Crump, Donald W. Fryman, Harold S. Fryman, Barbara Gillispie, Ray F. Ham, Leonard E. Morris, Kay Pittman, Donald R. Rankin, Edward H. Ratcliff, Jr., Homer Withrow. Five year pins were presented to David A. Bramel, Michael Feeback, Barry L. Fryman, Alan F. Harris, Charles E. Tucker and Matthew Wells.

Census workers wanted in Nicholas

The U. S. Census Bureau has issued another call for Nicholas County residents to apply for temporary jobs which are now open.

The work involves compiling lists of addresses in the county for use during the 1980 census.

Temporary census workers usually work three to four weeks each and will be paid on a per-address collected basis. For an eight-hour day, the average worker will earn $27 to $30 per day plus 17 cents-per-mile for any driving done in a private vehicle. Applicants for the jobs must be 18 years old or over, a U. S. citizen, and pass a written test.

The work involves driving or walking to compile lists of addresses of each dwelling unit in designated areas of the county. These address lists will play a vital role in taking the 1980 census. They will be used to produce mailing labels for the census questionnaires to be sent to each household in America on March 28, 1980. Then, a few weeks following the April 1 Census Day, census officials will use the address lists to determine which households have not returned their completed questionnaires. Census takers must then make personal visits to each non-responding household to collect the information required on the census form.

The 1979 address collection activity in the county is part of a Census Bureau program involving 35,000 temporary workers nationwide to compile lists containing approximately 30 million addresses. Another 80 million addresses have been purchased from commercial mailing list companies.

The Census Bureau is an equal opportunity employer.

County residents interested in applying for the temporary census jobs should contact the local state employment agency at the Department for Human Resources.

Ford's Footnotes

by Senator Ed Ford

Both the House and Senate closed out this third legislative week by passing utility tax bills. The House's version (House Bill 43) would remove sales tax from sewer, water and heating fuel sold to Kentuckians for use in their homes.

The Senate passed Senate Bill 2, which was considered by the Senate acting as a Committee of the Whole. The bill contains an amendment that would make it effective June 1.

Property tax legislation occupied the bulk of our time this week. The House, considering the subject through the Appropriations and Revenue Committee, held two days of public hearings in the House chamber to get the input of citizens and groups interested in the proposed property tax limitation.

The Senate, again acting as a Committee of the Whole, spent a full day listening to testimony from the state revenue commissioner and other state officials about the anticipated revenue for the coming year and the effect of placing a limit on property tax revenues which could be collected by local governments, school boards, and other taxing authorities.

While we consider tax relief on property and utilities to be the major reasons for this special session, we have also used this week to make progress in other areas that are contained within our call.

The Senate is expected to send its welfare fraud bill to the House. Senate Bill 11 goes to the floor for a vote as a committee substitute and is expected to receive some amending. The bill essentially increases the penalties for welfare cheating, making it a felony.

As we reached the mid-point of this third week, Governor Carroll added seven more topics to the call, including the state's capital construction fund. Testimony collected by the Senate's Committee of the Whole indicated a need for the General Assembly to have more control over that fund. The Governor added that item to the call at the Senate's request and the Senate Bill 44, introduced this week, has been approved by the Senate's Appropriations and Revenue Committee.

The House, this week, approved a measure which will relieve fiscal courts of providing office space for probation, parole and conditional release officers. That bill (House Bill 7) is now in the Senate's Judiciary-Courts Committee.

Another area of major importance for this session is reducing traffic fines and certain court costs. The House is considering two bills, one relating to court costs and one relating to bail deposits.

The Senate Committee on Judiciary-Courts has favorably reported Senate Bill 1, which would reduce traffic fines. The House is also considering a bill to reduce traffic fines, but they are seriously considering recommendations of law enforcement agencies which think the fines provide some deterrent to traffic violations.

The proclamation which called this special session of the General Assembly has grown from six items to 28. All the items listed are matters that must eventually have the attention of the Legislature.

It is important that we make our decisions with an understanding of their impact on the future of this state, and we are in a position of trying to make these important decisions without the advantage of interim committee work or study.

Your opinion on these efforts to reduce taxes and balance the state's budget, as the Constitution requires us to do, is essential. Let me urge you again to take advantage of our toll-free telephone line here in Frankfort. If you will call, 1-800-372-7196, and leave a message, I will be pleased to return your call at the earliest possible time.

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- Leaking natural gas can be heard — a small leak will sound like a hiss; larger leaks are much louder, a shrill noise something like the "roar" of a jet engine.
- Leaks may blow dust, dirt and rock into the air; cause bubbles, or cause water to be blown into the air where pipelines run under lakes or rivers. In some cases you may be able to see a vapor stream blowing into the air.
- Fire "coming from the ground," or burning in the air on a pipeline right-of-way.
- Discoloration of vegetation is another clue.
- Detection of a peculiar or unfamiliar odor may indicate a line leak.

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