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DAILY DIGEST

Friday, February 27, 2004 6:18PM EST

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Final Word (Part 3)

The people are ignored

Property owners normally have not elected the officials who are voting to bring them into annexation. This is one part that is unfair. Also, many people have made significant investment in well and septic systems that would not have been made if they had known they would be annexed. I also have a problem with the "penalty fee" typically charged by towns that annex to make sure you pay several hundred or thousands of dollars for connection to water and sewer. If you do not pay now, you will pay a lot more if you decide to hook up later.

I moved to an area that was in the county and did not want to be in a densely populated area. Cities, by nature, are more densely populated, which brings other problems — for our area, one of which is protecting the Middle Creek watershed area and the water supply to Lake Wheeler. The property owners of the Middle Creek area did vote to move toward incorporation to protect the area from several problems as well as annexation. But the politicians ignored the voice of the people on that one, too.

Paul Carey

Wake County

Annexing, with a twist

As a resident of North Carolina, I can't vote in Virginia elections because the final results don't affect me. In North Carolina and Wake County, I can vote on items that directly affect me, but I can't vote on anything in Cumberland County. So it becomes clear: If a proposal affects you, you get to vote on it. If a city wishes to take you in, well, that's different. No vote!

How about this: If a city takes you over, without your request or vote, then the city itself will provide all of the hook-ups and amenities to bring the area up to city standards, and after the

Local retailers raided

Law enforcement officers this morning announced a crackdown on stores that sell pipes and other products the government considers drug paraphernalia.

Stocks jump in early trading

A spike in consumer spending motivated buyers on Wall Street today and sent stocks higher.

The 'King' reigns

Final film in the "Lord of the Rings" trilogy wins a record-tying 11 awards, including best picture.

Top contenders spar over experience

Sen. John Edwards on Sunday sharply criticized Sen. John Kerry as too wedded to Washington.

Phipps awaits penalty

Former Agriculture Commissioner Meg Scott Phipps will receive her federal prison sentence on Tuesday.

Licensing dogs a hairy task for local agencies

A dog census in the Triangle's main cities reveals that a vast majority of the animals are outlaws.

Tourney draws eyes to Triangle

Location has been an advantage for the area CIAA schools in the five years Raleigh has hosted the tournament.

No denying Tar Heels

Playing with a sense of urgency, Rashad McCants lifts UNC past N.C. State.

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Tuesday, March 23



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Duke ends jinx at FSU

Devils close in on regular-season title.

Brightleaf to shine again

Last month, the owners of Durham's Brightleaf Square began the project's largest ever renovation.

Steve Cannon: Doing better elsewhere

Sluggish job growth in the Triangle will probably mean more time working elsewhere for developer Andy Andrews.

city has completed 100 percent of the work or improvements, then the property owner would begin paying city taxes.

Barry Cooper

Raleigh

A double whammy

Until all city services can be fully available to the proposed annexed property owners, cities should be denied the full tax. Forcing property owners to pay for services that they cannot use is wrong. We, the overtaken, are not allowed to vote on any of the proposals; we are just expected to pay for them.

I have lived in this area for over 10 years, and I bought my property because it was away from the city. I used to pass tobacco fields and cow pastures to get to my neighborhood. Cary has already taken that away. I did not move closer to Cary; Cary has moved closer to me. I am building a house closer to my child's school, and due to my rotten luck the new house is just in the annexation boundary and also in Wake County's proposed reassignment area. The only thing we utilize from Cary is Middle Creek Elementary, which is being taken away to send us to a Raleigh school.

The sad thing is, I am paying for this treatment from the school system with my tax dollars, and now Cary wants me to pay for services that it cannot provide. I am just asking for the right to vote on issues that directly affect me and my family.

Had I known Cary's intentions in 2003 when I signed the contract on our house, we would have never done so! Let those who want to be in Cary do so and leave the rest of us alone!

Christine Hurley

Apex

A conscious choice

Annexation supporters can't understand that some homeowners choose an area to live where their kids have room to play in their own yards; where they can be responsible for their own sewer, water and trash; where they can live without hearing family discussions next door; where they are not subject to a bloated bureaucracy monitoring their lifestyles; where they are not paying for pools and tennis courts they don't need.

Some towns (Cary) seem to enjoy using raw power to inflict their way of life on others, while others (Holly Springs) are quite content to annex only neighborhoods that have asked for municipal services. Cary especially loves to show off its muscle by ending its announcements with "this action is legal under the laws of the state of North Carolina." Well, so is bulldozing homes to build a road to nowhere.

Curiously, two candidates for Cary Town Council publicly stated their opposition to forced annexations, yet within a month of being elected, one reversed himself, and the other



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appears on the verge, if he hasn't already been seduced by whatever it is newly electeds are made privy to after their swearing in.

What do these "servants" find offensive about lifestyle choice? Let their "targets" vote on being annexed. I'd be willing to pay an additional reasonable tax to the county for the privilege of living in an unincorporated area, as I did when I lived in an unincorporated area of Los Angeles County.

Bill Savage

Apex

No need for a town

Involuntary annexation is not only wrong but a direct violation of our constitutional rights. Do we as homeowners have something to say about something that will impact our lives? I moved to Hallmark because it was outside of Cary. I did that for several reasons. One was high taxes, and two was zoning restrictions. I don't need a town to tell me how my house, pets, cars or whatever need to be regulated. I will fight this involuntary annexation all the way.

Frank Finnegan

Apex

Out of control

Last week, we visited some friends who live near downtown Cary. It had been a while since we had ventured to the heart of Cary. As we passed the Town of Cary municipal complex, we were astonished to see a new, multistory parking garage towering over the trees and dwarfing everything else around it. This appears to be a town out of control.

Cary is now planning to push its boundaries out toward our neighborhood in a quest for more revenue. Unless property owners have the power to push back, towns like Cary will be free to grow without restraint. It is time the state changes the law to give property owners some power in this matter.

We moved out of Cary three years ago. We enjoy lower taxes and greater freedom. We do not want to be assimilated without any power to resist. No doubt, if it comes to that, we will move away.

Sam and Carol Thomsen

Apex

Land of the free

Yes, I think property owners should get a say or be allowed to vote for or against annexation, especially in light of the fact that I did not get a chance to vote for or against those council members who are wanting to annex my property. After all this is America, isn't it? Land of the free.

Dave Dick

Raleigh

Siding with developers

Should property owners get a vote on annexation?
Absolutely. It all comes down to the core reason this country was founded and the revolution occurred in the first place. "Taxation without representation." Remember the Boston Tea Party?

Cary, as always, wants to increase its tax base and historically has almost always sided with developers. The Swift Creek watershed needs to remain a watershed for Lake Wheeler. If Cary or Raleigh were to annex this area, high-density housing would move in and environmentally destroy the watershed. I moved out of Cary 11 years ago to enjoy more open spaces and not have neighbors right on top of me looking into each other's bathroom windows! Surely people who have bought and built their homes, by choice, in an area designated for more open spaces should have the right to determine what happens to their property.

Skip Vail

Raleigh

Cary, make your case

Cary has no right to force us Dutchman Downs residents to accept annexation. If Cary wants us to join, Cary has to list why it is to our advantage to join, and we will decide. This is a democratic country, not a dictatorship.

Po C. Chan

Raleigh

Limiting annexation

A municipality should annex only property that is part of its planning area (extra-territorial jurisdiction). The Board of County Commissioners must approve the designation of property into a municipality's ETJ. By restricting annexation only to property in the ETJ, some citizens would have at least some elected voice. As it stands now, citizens have no say.

Sally Kost

Apex

Not a persuasive case

The state law allows cities to annex; it doesn't direct them to annex. The residents of the area being considered for annexation should be allowed to vote. Annexation should be voluntary.

Strong urban development is in the city's interest, not the

general public's interest. The argument that people other than a city's residents use roads, stores etc. is true even if I am in another state or city. If the concerns are that the parks are being used by nonresidents, then issue permits to residents. No permit, no use. Many other cities in many other states issue permits to residents and charge a fee for nonresidents.

Be serious. The arguments for forced annexation are not persuasive.

Edward Caruolo

A legal explanation

I agree with Jim Eldridge 100 percent that property owners should be given a vote in annexation cases. I also agree with him that forced annexation violates the constitutional rights of North Carolina citizens under both equal protection provisions of our federal and state constitutions. I would like to see our legislature explain to citizens being involuntarily annexed how they receive equal protection of the law.

Richard Carter

Raleigh

Payback at the polls

We will not stand for the annexation on District 20 and 21. This is forced annexation. It is illegal, as so with the six other states you mentioned. We will not let you involuntary annex these areas. If you want to proceed with this, remember election time. If you approve of the annexation, you will be voted out of office, and we will elect a legislature that will represent the people and not yourselves.

Stop robbing Peter to pay Paul. If you can't balance your budget and blow the taxpayers' money, then you don't belong in office.

Dave Thomas

Apex

Bush twisted info

The question was "What went wrong?" The answer is nothing. George Bush wanted to go to war.

Consider there was no formal declaration of war against Iraq. Nor as far as I know does Iraq have one against us. Saddam Hussein was a secular leader and had no dealings with Muslim extremists who could turn on him. He had no missiles to reach the United States. His biological and chemical weapons were will-o-the-wisps that either had been destroyed or weren't there to begin with in the late '90s. Thus the "War on Terror" involving Iraq has no declaration of war, no basis in fact, but is based on U.N. resolutions. (Isn't that ironic?) Furthermore, it conveniently appears to have no end point.

The only real question left is whether he ignored evidence of

an imminent air attack on America. It occurred and provided a cover for an attack on Iraq after Afghanistan. Similar suspicions of contrivance surface from time to time after Pearl Harbor. It is sad to contemplate anyone who died on 9/11 might be a martyr to Bush II's desire to attack Iraq. But as the above shows, Bush has a tendency to twist information to his needs, so one wonders.

The conclusion is we already had reduced Iraq to a state of destitution with blockade and fly-over zones. Our ill-advised killing action could well be judged illegal and actionable in the court of world opinion and the World Court.

Shame on the administration and its supporters for showing America to be the next chief global bully.

C. Burt

Apex

Debatable use of intel

The capability of U.S. intelligence services becomes irrelevant when the administration accepts only information that justifies its predetermined actions. Our intelligence services provided enough caveats and qualifiers to make any objective observer question whether Iraq posed a serious threat to the United States.

Paul O'Neill, former secretary of the treasury, has revealed that George Tenet, the CIA director, continually represented to the Bush administration that it was only speculation whether Saddam Hussein had weapons of mass destruction.

The Bush administration repeatedly claimed that Iraq attempted to obtain aluminum tubes for gas centrifuges to enrich uranium, even though the Department of Energy and the International Atomic Energy Agency had declared the tubes to be unsuitable for gas centrifuges. The administration made similar dire claims about mobile bioweapons labs, even though analysts determined that the labs were probably used to generate hydrogen for weather balloons.

The ideological brain is apparently impermeable to any intelligence information that does not confirm pre-existing beliefs. Hence, I have much more confidence in the intelligence provided than in the intelligence with which it is used.

John Paul Crane

Raleigh

'Misinformation'

A comment in an article by Kurt Ruesch made the point that "David Kay recently said that George Bush should apologize to the American public." My very clear recognition of that "exchange" was gleaned from an article which appeared in a local paper (I think it was The N&O). That article reported that during a radio interview with David Kay, the host asked him whether the president should apologize to the American

public for the Iraq situation. David Kay's reply was, "I think the intelligence community should apologize to President Bush."

The next several months will find our newspapers filled with much "misinformation" from both major parties. That's disgraceful! Loyalty to the party seems to outweigh loyalty to their very own country. And as for charges of "special interest," both sides of the aisle in the Capitol are more than happy to take great big pieces of that very tempting pie. We need shorter campaigns, in the style of Great Britain and equal access to campaign funds for all legitimate candidates. Equating campaign contributions with "free speech" is an absolute farce!

Roy Fougere

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