

Carolina Review: Rumors Dominate Political Scene

1984 ... For some unexplainable reason, rumors and hints and semi-serious discussions about future gubernatorial races seem to occur in "spurts". Even more mysterious, the proximity to the next election doesn't really make much difference when these dream-laden excursions take place. Spurts concerning the 1984 governor's race were witnessed a number of times during the 1980 campaign.

A couple of weeks ago, a particularly strong spurt occurred for this early in the gestation period. The talk was probably activated by a "Dome" article in the Raleigh News and Observer.

The Dome suggested that N. C. Commerce Secretary Lauch Faircloth, a longtime mover in state Democratic politics, was privately testing the waters for 1984. The article allowed that Faircloth might be thinking of teaming with former governor Bob Scott. Scott would run for lieutenant governor on a "voluntary" Faircloth - Scott ticket.

With that, the sky filled with test balloons.

Even two weeks later, it's hard to tell which balloons were able to clear the trees. Of course, those that did get off the ground and stay probably won't be there for long - the election is still three years away.

Still, there are some sure bets for the 1984 race - politicians who now will suggest that "if things look right in another year" or "if the people see fit to promote my candidacy" or any number of other "for the people" utterances. Disregard such utterances - those people are spending money for 1984.

Attorney General Rufus Edmisten has been readying for 1984 since way before his last campaign for the AG's office. His news conferences have always been oriented in that direction, but in the last year his public statements have achieved a certain "chief executive" tone. "I just am not going to tolerate North Carolina taxpayers being cheated out of their hard-earned money," Edmisten said in a recent news release on bid rigging by electrical contractors.

Edmisten has also proved

in the last few years that he can bring out the political activists in a political show of force at just about any given moment. Whether it's his birthday or a fundraiser, the attorney general always has plenty of company - and their cars are paid for. In other words, those people can give money.

He has an image problem however. A lot of people think of him as just Rufus, the good old boy. But then, he has promoted that idea in various ways - his bumper stickers just say "Rufus." But then, a NY image-maker will probably change that - soon, the bumper stickers might read "Edmisten - Experience" or something similar.

Then there is Lt. Gov. Jimmy Green - an almost opponent of Gov. Hunt in 1980.

Green, as an incumbent, had a too-close call with defeat in 1980 against Carl Stewart, who apparently had a bunch of closet skeletons. Since then, Green has admitted accepting a \$4,700 cash gift from a convicted bid rigger. One potential gubernatorial candidate said Green, after the gift revelation, was as "dead as a hammer. He just doesn't know it yet."

Maybe. But Green is spending more money on his candidacy than anyone else so far. He still has Weldon Denny, on private payroll, out in the counties organizing. And in Raleigh, on the taxpayer payroll, is the first director of minority affairs that the lieutenant governor's chief duty is to preside over the state Senate - when it is in session.

Charlotte mayor, attorney Edward Knox is also running. A reliable source says

that a couple of people already have jobs lined up in the campaign. One Chapel Hill law student is supposedly taking a semester off to help line things up. But Knox has an identity problem.

John Ingram doesn't have an identity problem. He is organizing too but some say he may change his mind if he can't raise any money. Ingram may change his mind - but can't not over money. He might go for

president, and win.

Edmisten, Green, Knox, and Ingram - don't believe them if they say "maybe" those four are running for governor in 1984. Now.

VA To Initiate Legal Action

The Veterans Administration has announced that the State of North Carolina has approximately 2,869 cases of delinquent debts by veterans under immediate review in which legal action will be taken unless the debts are paid.

VA Administrator Robert P. Nimmo, in announcing the agency's accelerated program of debt collection, said: "Our plans are to substantially reduce the number of outstanding debts owed to the government by veterans, and I am instructing our various state district counsels to pursue an aggressive program of debt collection."

Robert E. Lee, the VA's District Counsel for the state, said that new cases of uncollected debts are being referred to his office on an average of 300 cases each month.

His office will bring suit against approximately 150 North Carolina veterans this month. Lee said that the VA is "more serious than ever" in seeking to recover debts owed by veterans. He added that his collection activities "are part of a nationwide effort to recover all debts owed by veterans and non-veterans alike."

Debts as a result of VA programs are detected by the VA's Central Accounts Receivable Section in St.

Paul, Minn. That office sends notification to the indebted veterans. If the veteran fails to resolve the indebtedness, his case is then sent to the appropriate VA District Counsel for legal action. Due to increased authority to proceed directly with a lawsuit and expanded technical capability, legal action for even small amounts has become cost-effective.

"A veteran owing debts to the Veterans Ad-

ministration must realize the seriousness of the matter", Lee said. "The filing of a law suit, if deemed necessary, is a part of the collection effort. It is important for veterans receiving letters from this office to answer and arrange repayment.

Otherwise, legal action is almost a certainty." He said that most cases will be settled through repayment plans and default proceedings.

State Farmers To Convene

Farmers from throughout North Carolina will meet in Raleigh, December 6-9, for the 46th annual convention of the N. C. Farm Bureau Federation.

The drafting of official policies for the state's largest general farm organization will be the main activity on the agenda.

According to Farm Bureau President John Sledge, over 1,100 Farm Bureau members are expected to attend this year's meeting at the Royal Villa Motor Hotel.

Speakers will include: Gov. James B. Hunt, Jr.; Sen. Jesse Helms; U. S. Rep. Charles G. Rose; Dr. William Friday, president, University of North Carolina; and N. C. Agriculture Commissioner

James A. Graham. Sledge will give his annual report to the membership on Tuesday morning, December 8.

Delegates, representing all 100 counties, will consider hundreds of policy recommendations submitted by the county Farm Bureau units. The slate of policies they adopt will set the direction for the N. C. Farm Bureau in the year ahead. Delegates will also make final decisions on recommendations concerning national issues that will be submitted to the American Farm Bureau Federation convention, which is set for early January in San Diego, California.

The election of officers

Sponsors Scholarship

WASHINGTON, D.C. - Sen. John East, R-N.C., has announced he is sponsoring a scholarship award for an outstanding North Carolina high school junior to visit Japan next summer.

Under a special Japan - U.S. Senate Scholarship Program administered by Youth For Understanding, a non-profit international student exchange program with headquarters in Washington, D. C., each U.S. senator will help select one student from the home state to live with a selected family in Japan for the summer of 1982. The program is funded by the government of Japan.

"Each high school in North Carolina is being asked to submit the name of an outstanding high school junior for consideration by a committee of educators from North Carolina under direction of the YFU. Interested students should

notify their school principal," said East.

The 100 scholarship recipients will attend a four-day orientation program in Washington before departure to Japan. While in Japan, students will visit the Japanese Parliament, attend cultural exchange workshops and language seminars.

Youth For Understanding has provided foreign trips for over 84,000 students in the last thirty years. This year, YFU will exchange over 650 students between Japan and the U.S. under this, and other programs.

"This scholarship program is an excellent opportunity for learning, and for understanding people in other countries," East said.

The deadline for submitting nominations is November 27.

Karl Brandspigel, M.D.
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