

EDITORIAL AND OPINION PAGE

"We cannot know where we are going if we do not know where we have been."



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by Bruce Barton

County board of education's "new" district plan for board members as wrong as two left shoes

Consider this: we fought the evil political device of double voting in the federal courts because it diluted the Indian's vote, and did not assure us equal protection under the law. Now, the powers that be, following that victory, have turned around and attempted to satisfy every politician and special interest group in the county by assuring Proctorville, Parkton, and points east and west seats on the board of education by juggling figures and devising, seemingly, endless district plans. Tuesday night they aired the "new" plan that, as they see it, will assure Clyburn Pines, County Club a seat too. Enough of this madness, I say.

We broke double voting to assure anyone who wanted to run a fair chance at winning, doing away with racial discrimination and political devices that stacked the deck against fair and open elections.

Tuesday night's "new" district plan was formulated by lame ducks, appointees, and the chairman, David Green, who was elected by a very narrow margin in his own election to the board of education. The committee was chaired by Laymon Poe Locklear who was soundly defeated in his bid for reelection. Another lame duck, Lillian Faye Locklear, also served on the committee, along with appointees Pete Clark and E.B. Morton, Jr., neither of whom have faced an electorate. Morton is, of all places, from Proctorville; Green is from Parkton. And the plan has been foisted on us before the new board members take their seats next month. Why?

We did not break double voting to assure every community and water hole in Robeson County a seat on the Robeson County Board of Education. No, we fought double voting bitterly in the federal courts (and won) against the wishes of some of those presently serving on the board, and some of the present administrators of the system, to assure that anyone who wanted to run for the board of education could do so. Let the voters decide, I say.

It's o.k. with me if all the members of the board of education are from Pembroke, or, God forbid, Proctorville. Let the voters decide. Do not dilute my vote in a legal, paternalistic way and make it pretty and palatable. I can't eat it. It makes me sick.

Indians are the majority constituency within the jurisdiction of the Robeson County Board of Education. The "new" plan puts us back in the minority camp. The "new" plan, if voting patterns prevail, will assure 3 Blacks, 3 whites and 5 Indians on future boards of education. In the most elementary fashion

on that means that 5 Indians will be jousting with 6 non-Indians for control and the destiny of our children.

Indians are magnanimous, no doubt about it. By breaking double voting we were reasonably assured that Indians would control the board of education. If we accept this "new" district plan, devised mostly by Indians, we will give back what we earned in federal court-control.

No one in the world wanted an Indian superintendent more than I did. I publicly called for the former superintendent's resignation countless times. And that dream became a reality when Purnell Swett became county schools superintendent.

Well, I have a new dream, a burning anger. Let's abandon this district plan, all of it. And return the board of education to the voters who rightfully should decide the makeup. Let the voters choose whom ever they wish, only demanding that they live within the jurisdiction of the county board of education.

We broke double voting, giving Indians a strong voice on the board of education and we have been diluting our selves ever since. We are, most times, magnanimous for the wrong reasons. We assumed power and, immediately thereafter, handed the mantle of responsibility back to those we took it momentarily from. I call it social madness, a poor self image, an inability to handle our own affairs.

As noted, the "new" plan will assure the election of six non-Indians and, maybe, five Indians. As you know, Indians hardly ever agree on anything of note. And those five are not assured by any stretch of the imagination.

But, mostly, do not deny the right to vote to anyone. Remove all restrictions, including this bogus "district" plan. We did not break double voting to assure Clyburn Pines & Country Club area a guaranteed seat on the board of education. Ditto for Proctorville, Parkton and other areas in the county. We broke double voting to give any man or woman the right to get elected if they can convince the electorate, nothing more. And, of course, we should never dilute the vote of another.

The Indians have given away Manhattan, most of America, and now, the Robeson County Board of Education. We should not now give away something that was once taken away from us, regained and, now, at this late date in our history, given back, may be, unknowingly to those who took it from us in the first place. That is, as I see it, pure folly and madness of the worst societal kind.

Robeson County mentality, Politics, Provincialism. Backyard foolishness. Won't we ever learn? The Robeson County Board of Education's "new" district plan for board members is as wrong as two left shoes.

PSYCHOLOGY

SUCCESSFUL ENTERTAINING, MANY HOSTS AND HOSTESSES HAVE FOUND INCLUDES HAVING ENOUGH SOFT DRINKS ON HAND. ONE THING MANY GUESTS APPRECIATE IS A BIG PITCHER OF REFRESHING ICEB TEA. IT HAS NO CARBOHYDRATE AND ITS LOW IN CALORIES!



AGGIE DEESE IS PROSPECT'S 'TEACHER OF THE YEAR'

Aggie D. Deese has been selected as "Teacher of the Year" by her co-workers at Prospect School. She was recently honored at a tea mark the occasion hosted by the Teacher of the Year Committee at Prospect School, Pandora Strickland, Chairman.

Ms. Deese has a B.S. Degree from Pembroke State University and an M.S. degree from North Carolina A & T State University.

She is a member of the North Carolina Personnel and Guidance Association; the Robeson County Counselors Association; the NEA; and the NCAE.

Her civic contributions include serving as vice president of the Maxton Housing Authority. She attends Baker Chapel Church.

Ms. Deese owns and operates Deese Realty and Insurance, along with her husband, Harold. They reside in Maxton along with their daughter, Rosalee Deese. They also have one godchild, Lendi Nakell Barton.



Mrs. Aggie G. Deese is shown receiving her plaque designating her as "Teacher of the Year" at Prospect School from the Principal, James A. Jones. (Cameo Brayboy photo)

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