

FROM THE DESK OF THE SUPERINTENDENT
by Dr. Barry Harding
Public Schools of Robeson County



There's no doubt about it - summer's on the way. At least, summertime temperatures are a lot closer than they have been. If you'll recall, it was just a couple of weeks ago that it was still cool enough to be running furnaces in our schools. Then, in no time at all, temperatures shot upwards bringing about the need to crank up our air conditioners. When they were, lo and behold, a fairly large number of them weren't working or, at least, were not working at full capacity. That required the people in our maintenance department qualified to work with air conditioners to get to work getting the units in operating condition just as quickly as possible. In the meantime, Mother Nature was not cooperating as unseasonably hot weather moved in. At its high point, the number of schools that was having air conditioning problems topped 20 and we have only 3 people who can work on heating and air conditioning systems. Before you wonder why we only have 3, please know that

we've been looking for additional personnel unsuccessfully. Obviously, if we had more people to devote to the necessary work, we could alleviate an unfortunate situation more quickly. I might add that there is also the need to order parts for malfunctioning units which also takes time. Allow me to say that I, along with all of our people, are concerned about overly warm classrooms. Many of us have children in those classrooms and are not happy about any discomfort they are being exposed to. Thus our people are working long hours to remedy the situation. What concerns me is not the number of calls we receive at the central office from parents who are concerned about the lack of air conditioning. I can certainly understand that concern. Being a parent myself, I certainly want the best conditions for my children. What concerns me, though, is the number of people who call the central office threatening to call the me-

dia and complain about the situation unless it's cleared up immediately. What they need to understand is that calling the media, ostensibly to put "pressure" on us to act more quickly, really doesn't accomplish anything. It doesn't deliver necessary parts more expeditiously and it can't make our people work any harder than they already are. Our maintenance staff takes great pride in their work and makes every effort to keep our children comfortable. We want all the air conditioners operating at full capacity as quickly as possible. Calling the media may make you feel better but you should understand that our people are already working as diligently as they can. Please understand that and be as patient as you can.

A Call for Spiritual Poems From Pembroke Poets

A \$1000.00 grand prize is being offered in a special religious poetry contest sponsored by the New Jersey Rainbow Poets, free to anyone who has ever written a poem. There are 28 prizes in all totaling over \$2000.00. The deadline for entering is May 17, 2001.

To enter, send one poem only of 21 lines or less: Free Poetry Contest, 103 N. Wood Ave., PMB 70, Linden, NJ 07036. Or enter on-line at www.freecontest.com.

"We think great religious poems can inspire achievement," says Frederick Young, the organization's Contest Director. "Our desire is to inspire amateur poets and we think this competition will accomplish that. North Carolina has produced many wonderful poets over the years and we'd like to discover new ones from the Pembroke-area."

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Former SATW cast member concerned over conditions at NC Cultural Center

To the Editor,
Has a Native American and a former member of the cast of Strike at the Wind, I am very interested in the North Carolina Indian Cultural Center. I am looking forward to the creation of the SATW Memorial Garden, because I have several friends in that garden that are going to be remembered.

I was amazed when I drove to the Cultural Center the other day to see just how shabby and trashy the place looks. It is clear that no one had even been taking care of that expensive herb garden that is located at the amphitheater. It appears that "the face lift has fallen."

Management people who are sitting in their office all day talking on the telephone, should hang up the phone and be in there writing grants and out in the public generating funds to keep the center in the shape that it was in last summer.

Other than the grass being cut, which is now once again seeping through the cracks of the parking lots, I don't see anything positive that has been done to the center or

to promote the center. However, I saw several things that were on the verge of falling apart. Other than a breakfast for the Senior Citizens, I do not know of any programs that they have for the Indian People. And it is clear that the amphitheater could use a couple cans of varnish on to make it look better. If people don't fix the place it is going to crumble and die. Does this not make us wonder what kind of management is out there and what training they have that makes them the "rulers of the NCICC?"

I know that those that want to build the SATW Memorial Garden mean well. But, I would not want a stone with my name on it in that place. I only went out there to donate some flowers to the garden. And no one wonders "why" all of the activities are going to the Farmer's Market?

Maybe the state can take better care of it than those that are in charge at this time.

Ben Oxendine
Rowland, NC

Armed Forces

Elijah N. Locklear has joined the United States Army under the Delayed Entry Program. The program gives young men and women the opportunity to delay entering active duty for up to one year.

The recruit qualifies for a \$1,000.00 enlistment bonus. Locklear, a 2000 graduate of Red Springs High School, N.C., will report to Fort Jackson, Columbia, S.C., for basic training. He is the son of Herbert N. and Lillie J. Locklear of 10224 Highway 72, Pembroke, N.C.

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