

From the Desk of the Superintendent

by Dr. Barry Harding, Public Schools of Robeson County

A fire set in a trash basket in a rest room or anywhere else in a school building is not something to take lightly. The amount of damage that it actually causes is only the beginning of the problem. Forget about the fact that the person setting the fire has no way of knowing how serious the results may be. It begins with the threat of the fire causing the school building to be evacuated for the safety of the students. That, of course, results in the learning process being adversely affected. If you're not in the classroom, there can be no teaching or learning. The interruption can result in about an hour's worth of time being lost.

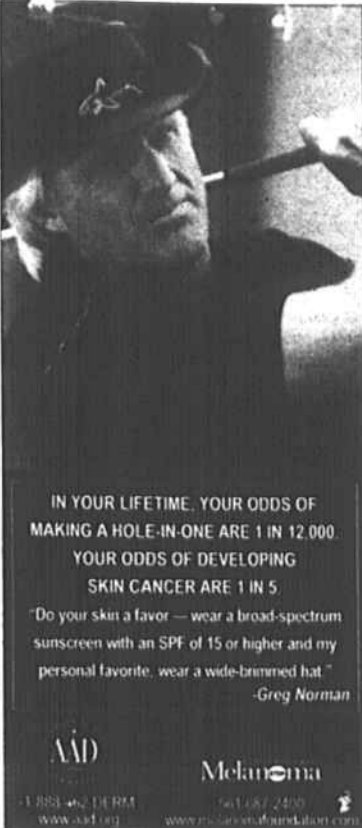
Moving a large number of students out of the building and then back in can also result in accidental injuries to the students being moved in such an emergency situation. Then, there is the matter of smoke from the fire ending up in the vents through which heating and air conditioning normally flows. There are, unfortunately, some students who may have respiratory problems for whom the presence of smoke in the air is a problem.

To this point, I've not even mentioned the damage that can be caused by the fire itself. What if a fire set in what the student setting it considers a relatively safe place insofar as a full-blown fire is concerned, gets out of hand? It's impossible to know the number of injuries or the amount of damage that might result. Even a relatively minor fire costs us money in both actual damage and the time spent by maintenance employees in cleaning up often before the students can be allowed back into class. A recent fire in one of our schools which did no structural damage to the building still wound up costing about \$8,000. The number of fires we have had set by students during the current school year is starting to get out of hand.

On the surface, the answer appears to be rather simple. Find the student responsible and expel him or her. Our Policy Manual calls for that. I really don't know how anyone—even the parents of the guilty student—could find fault with that. The argument that the student was just fooling around—that the act wasn't intended to cause damage or hurt anyone really is hard to accept. It's an extremely dangerous act and the student certainly should've been taught that by his or her parents. That's true even if the parents were required to reimburse the school system for the damage caused by the fire. Loss of life or injuries caused in something else again.

There's something else that the prankster—if that's what the student is labeled—hasn't considered and should. That is the effect that his expulsion has on his record—especially if further education is being considered. And, of course, there is the effect of missing a year of school—assuming that the student returns after being expelled.

I don't think it's too late for parents to sit down with their children and discuss their behavior. A frank discussion may result in their realization of how such a "prank" can effect their lives and the lives of others.



IN YOUR LIFETIME, YOUR ODDS OF MAKING A HOLE-IN-ONE ARE 1 IN 12,000. YOUR ODDS OF DEVELOPING SKIN CANCER ARE 1 IN 5. Do your skin a favor—wear a broad-spectrum sunscreen with an SPF of 15 or higher and my personal favorite, wear a wide-brimmed hat.
—Greg Norman

Blood Drive For Special Cause

Matthew Blue, of Mt. Airy Boy Scout Troop 326, will be sponsoring a blood drive to earn his Eagle Scout badge. The blood drive will be held at Bear Swamp Baptist Church in Pembroke, N. C. on Saturday, December 22, 2001 from 9:00 a.m.- 1:30 p.m.

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The hottest of all spices is believed to be habanero, belonging to the genus capsicum. A single dried gram will produce detectable "heat" in 440 lbs of bland sauce.

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Along the Robeson Trail

By Dr. Stan Knick, Director-UNCP Native American Resource Center

When we think of Indian settlements or "villages" before Columbus, most often we envision relatively small groups of people living together. For much of prehistory, this was true. When Native Americans were nomadic, they probably lived in groups of 25 or 30. When they became semi-sedentary (seasonal occupations) in the Archaic period, groups grew to 50 or 75 people. And when they became sedentary farmers in the Woodland period, villages usually were home for less than 300 people. But there are some examples of Native American settlements which are huge by comparison.

One such example is the settlement at Cahokia, Illinois, just east of St. Louis. This "settlement" was really a city. At its height of influence, it was an expansive trading and ceremonial complex covering about six square miles. Population estimates for Cahokia run from 20,000 to 40,000 people!

Cahokia was possibly the largest Native American city in North America, inhabited during the period from 700 A.D. to 1500 A.D.. It represents the peak of what archaeologists call Mississippian culture, the very complex way of life which apparently spread from the south into what is now the United States. Cahokia had many similarities to the Town Creek site, near Mt. Gilead, North Carolina, except on a much larger scale.

The central focus of Cahokia today is a gigantic earthen mound. It is called Monks Mound, and is the

largest mound built by Native Americans north of Mexico. Like the mound at Town Creek, it is a flat-topped mound which had a temple structure built on top. It has been estimated that the people of Cahokia had to move 22 million cubic feet of earth to construct Monks Mound! It stands over ten stories tall, and is over 1,000 feet long!

But this is not the only mound at Cahokia. Within the immediate area there were over 100 smaller mounds, 68 of which have been preserved within the State Historic Site maintained by the Illinois Historic Preservation Agency.

There are actually three different types of mounds at Cahokia. Most common are the flat-topped or "platform" mounds like Monks Mound. But there are also cone-shaped and "ridgetop" mounds, which were used for burials of high-status people, and to mark significant places within the city. However, most of the people of Cahokia were not buried in mounds; most were laid to rest in cemeteries on level ground.

Some of the most fascinating aspects of Cahokia are called "Woodhenges," so-named because they are similar to Stonehenge in England. These are at least four locations within the city at which large circles of log posts, each surrounding a central post, form giant calendars. By standing at the center post and looking outward, focusing on certain posts in the circle, one can find the place on the horizon at which the sun rises and sets at the spring and fall equinoxes

and the summer and winter solstices.

These massive calendars, like the layout of the mounds at Cahokia, Town Creek and many other places, allowed Native Americans of the Mississippian culture to keep precise track of important annual ritual cycles. Probably most significant among these ritual cycles were the changing seasons, and their connection to planting and harvesting. Thus, at a great many far-removed places in the Midwest and Southeast, Native Americans conducted similar ceremonies on the same days!

All of this tells us that these prehistoric Native Americans were quite advanced in their understanding of astronomy as well as engineering. The evidence at Cahokia also gives us a glimpse of the complex social, economic and political lives of these people. Development and maintenance of a society such as this required an elaborate system of cooperation, values and beliefs, most of which we can only imagine. By the time the first French explorers of the Mississippi Valley got to Cahokia, all they found visible on the surface were mounds; long overgrown by vegetation. Exactly what happened to the original people of Cahokia will probably never be known.

For more information about mounds and Mississippians, visit the Native American Resource Center in historic Old Main Building, on the campus of The University of North Carolina at Pembroke (our Internet address is www.uncp.edu/nativemuseum).

Church at the Forks

On Saturday, November 3, 2001 a group from West Robeson United Methodist Church attended the Christian Youth Day at the North Carolina Motor Speedway in Rockingham, NC.

The day's scheduled events included a testimonial session with some of the Bush drivers, lunch, entertainment and the Sam's Club 200 Bush Race.

While waiting for the race to begin the group watched 2 practice sessions for the Winston cars, browsed the shops for souvenirs of their favorite drivers and checked out some of the exhibits.

Chris Locklear took on the pit crew challenge at the Rubbermaid and Sharpie Pen booth. Chris came in first

place in his tire changing challenge and received an opportunity to try for a larger prize.

The Rockingham First United Methodist Church sponsors the Christian Youth Day Event each year. The event gives the youth an opportunity to enjoy fun and fellowship with each other and encourages them to do as Philippians 3:14 states, "Press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus."

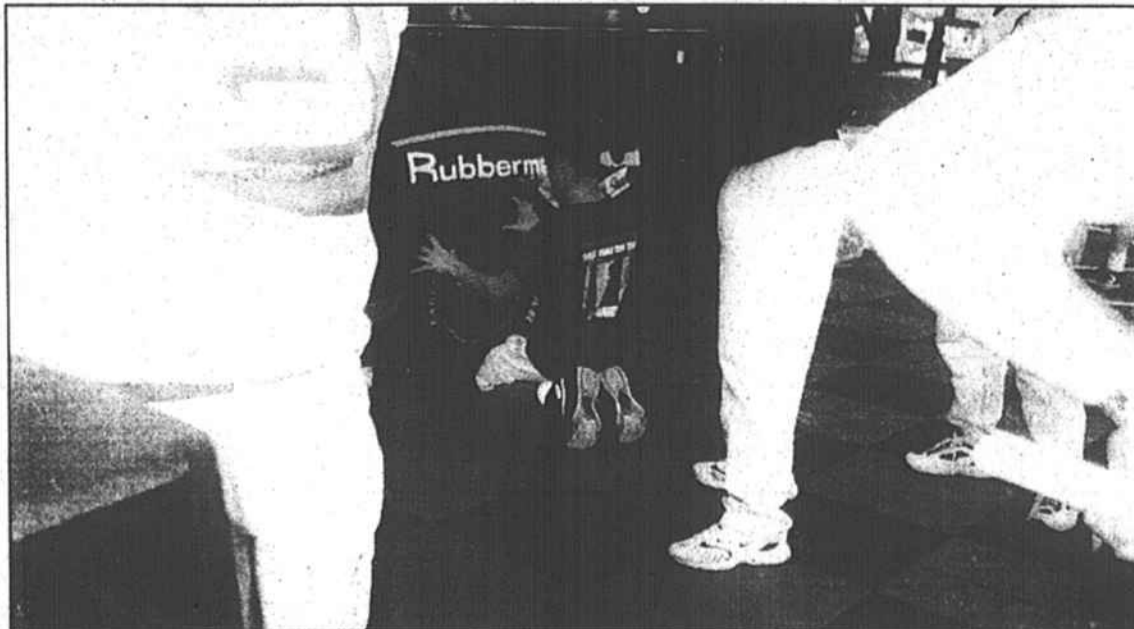
We held revival services November 25-27, and would like to thank Reverends Dwayne Lowry, Chip Bass and David Malcolm for bringing us spiritual messages, which left us with a great sense of renewal and revival.

We like to invite everyone to join us for the Christmas Ball of Friday, December 7, 2001 and to our Christmas Play on Sunday, December 16, 2001. The Christmas Ball Fund-raiser is sponsored by the United Methodist Women and the proceeds will go to support mission work. For more information on the Christmas Ball, contact Mrs. Lucille Locklear at 521-0544 or Mrs. Elizabeth Marshall at 844-5738.

West Robeson UMC has Sunday School at 9:00 a.m. and worship Service at 10:00 a.m. We like to have you visit us and if you have any questions about West Robeson UMC or any of scheduled events please call Rev. Marshall Locklear at 521-0544.



Three members of the group from West Robeson UMC who attended the Christian Youth Day at "Rock" are, front to back, Ryan Lowry, Tyler Marshall and Blake Strickland.



Chris Locklear from West Robeson UMC is shown here taking the pit crew tire changing competition at the "Rock" on Christian Youth Day.



Two days before the War of 1812 was declared, the British government stated it would repeal the laws which were the chief excuse for fighting, but the message did not arrive in time.