

From the Desk of the Superintendent

by Dr. Barry Harding, Public Schools of Robeson County

It was my pleasure last week to once again recognize a large number of employees of the Public Schools of Robeson County for long service to the school system with a pinning ceremony. For the third year in a row, I presented pins mounted with various semiprecious stones to employees who had reached certain milestones in their careers- five years, ten years, fifteen years, twenty years, twenty five years, thirty years and above thirty years.

While there are, among our some 3,000 employees, many who didn't fit the various categories recognized, it was felt that they will be recognized at a future time as they reach one of the milestones I mentioned. We used, as a cutoff date for inclusion in one of them, July 1st. Thus anyone who had not reached one of the categories recognized by that date, would be recognized when they did reach it.

Even with the limitations, we still recognized almost 400 employees during the two pinning ceremonies which took place Wednesday and Thursday of last week at a local restaurant. Among them were 18 who have been with us for 30 years and 31 who have been with us over 30 years. The total number of years served by school employees recognized was 5,716 years doesn't cover all the years of service devoted to our schools and their students by employees because of the number of years served by those who didn't fit a recognized category.

The important thing, as far as I'm concerned, is that we make it a point to give special recognition to those people who keep our schools running- to show them, in a special way, how much we appreciate them. I believe that ceremonies such as the Pinning Ceremonies show them that.

At the same time that we recognize these people, you can't help but have a kind of sobering thought. With many employees thinking about retirement after having served for thirty years, I look at the 49 who have reached thirty years and beyond and worry lest they decide that they are ready to go to a more leisurely life style. You're looking at about 1500 years of experience- certainly not an easy thing to replace. I hope, though, that the dedication that these employees have demonstrated during their tenure will encourage them to continue with us. Our students, along with the school system itself, depend on them and I have to believe that realization on the part of these employees will cause them to continue to contribute their efforts and know-how as they have for so long.

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Reflections

by Alta Nye Oxendine

JOHN WALKER LINDH

Last week I decided to take the "Lindh" off, since most references called him simply John Walker. This is surely one young man who will need our prayers for months, perhaps years, to come, even if he is not executed for treason or a somewhat lesser crime. Not only is there a question in my mind as to whether or not HE was brainwashed, I wonder about some of the hijackers killed on the four airplane flights on our "notorious" birth date. Now it sounds as though some of the "suicide bombers" may have thought this would just be a routine hijacking, with no idea that they were going to their deaths.

What appears to be some kind of secret tape that was discovered by persons on "our side" of this war against terrorism apparently shows Osama bin Laden CELEBRATING the success of the "attack on America" and indicating that his terrorist group WAS behind that attack. (I myself have come to believe they must have been responsible.)

But I STILL have a question: "Does the fact that Chinese president Ziang Zemin has (reportedly) ALSO been rejoicing, playing videos of the Twin Towers collapsing, OVER and OVER, indicate the ZIANG WAS ALSO somehow INVOLVED?"

I don't believe his government was in on the planning. NEITHER do I believe his government is really our FRIEND, just because American companies are allowed to set up plants in China. Communism is not just an ECONOMIC SYSTEM!

I was surprised to read in the 1999 edition of the World Book Encyclopedia that "Jiang Zemin" replaced Zhao Ziyang as general secretary of the Chinese Communist Party in 1989. Zhao was dismissed "for supporting a prodemocracy movement." (Over a decade ago Ziang also became chairman of the Communist Party's Military Commission and the Chinese GOVERNMENT'S Central military Commission, according to this biography.)

It looks to me as though DUPLICITY is involved if Ziang has promised to support George W. in the U. S. fight against terrorism.

It's hard to understand why our president congratulated Ziang on entry into WTO. IF he had heard that this was going on.

I see these three possibilities. (There may be others.)

(1) Either he must not have heard about Ziang's obsessive watching of reruns of our tragedy---(He's only human. And, particularly these last three months he has had even LESS TIME to learn the very latest about everything that's going on. He stays busy making decisions, taking actions.)

(2) Or is he still trying to use a "positive feedback" kind of psychology to encourage Ziang to change his course of action and do what our president WANTS him to do.

(3) What concerns me most (with both Ziang and Putin) is the probability that we have ONE MORE president who knows little or nothing about the way communism has been working for over 80 years. "THEY" are not "just like us". The fact is that members of that "cult" have been brainwashed to use EVERY possible form of deception to get what they want for their own government. What that system has done in country after country (using terrorism and a multitude of other methods) all around the world is almost unbelievable to any person who has grown up believing in the Bible and the Ten Commandments.

DECEMBER 7

Now I think I can appreciate what "DECEMBER 7" babies must have been going through over the past 60 years. (At least they have not had to deal almost nonstop TV, radio, and newspaper references to their birth date all these years.) For the past three months that's what we "SEPTEMBER 11" babies have been doing. But now I've begun to think of my birth date as an important and hopeful "TURNING POINT" for our country.

CHRISTMAS GIFTS

I agree with Fayetteville Observer columnist Kim Hasty. Parents don't have to spend a ton of money to make their kids happy. She points out that her four children played with the boxes their playthings came in long after they get bored with those expensive toys. Reminds me of Byron, my own children, and my brothers and me. (Back then WE never had expensive toys, but neither did we feel sorry for ourselves because of that. Today on the "Turning Point" program, Mr. Jeremiah pointed out the fact that what children need most is their parents' focused attention, yea round.

I still feel like it's almost a crime to borrow money to "give Christmas" to our children. THAT'S NOT WHAT THE FIRST CHRISTMAS WAS ALL ABOUT !!

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I love my daughter. If she's happy, I'm happy."

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