

# The Franklin Times

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## LOCAL EDITORIAL COMMENT

### Education, The Important Thing

Parents of children attending the Franklinton City school system this fall will be facing the same period of adjustment as parents of children who attended the County system last year. Needless to say, a period of greater adjustment will be faced by the children themselves.

The announcement that HEW has approved and the Franklinton Board has adopted a plan of total integration came today. There is, as expected, a great deal of dissatisfaction among parents of school-age children. Many have already or will soon enroll their offsprings in private schools. Parents of some first graders have expressed intentions of holding their children out of school at least for this year. This is the way of things in this county today.

The County system has been plagued for years by the courts. The Franklinton system has had its problems with HEW. Although the two systems took different routes, both have now arrived at the same destination. Both have reached this point because of outside pressures. HEW bureaucrats have been as relentless in their pursuit of the Franklinton School Board as the Justice Department has been in its efforts against the County Board. The end was inevitable for both.

It is unnecessary to point out that total integration is the interpretation of the law. This has been widely publicized. And now in the Franklinton system—as in the past in the

County unit—it is not so much that the people would defy the law. It is the fact that the laws seems to mean different things to different sections of the country. While Franklinton parents ponder the future of their children's education, parents in neighboring counties continue with freedom of choice and small tokenism.

Just why freedom of choice is legal in some areas but not acceptable in Franklin remains one of the deep mysteries of life. Just why Franklin has come to the end of the integration wars well ahead of sister school systems in other areas few, if any, understand.

However, when schools open this fall, Franklin County will be one of the few counties in the country with all schools totally integrated. They say others will follow. Last year this was to happen this year. This year, they say, it is to happen by next year.

Regardless of what other systems might do, Franklin must face up to the realities. Neither School Board would have planned the transition from a dual system to a unitary one exactly as the courts and HEW have done. However, once done, the quicker Franklin parents accept it as a way of life; the sooner they show determination to make the best of it; and the sooner they and their children reach an adjustment to the new ways, the sooner education in the county will start the long trip back. And after all, education of the children is the important thing to parents here.

There They Are — The Poor Man's Only Loophole'



## WHAT OTHERS ARE SAYING

### Impeach President Nixon

The (Southern Pines) Pilot

That movement up around Statesville to petition for the impeachment of President Richard M. Nixon is one of those exercises in futility that deserves notice only because it is a sign of a certain Southern frustration.

Leaders of the movement are angry because the President has not halted desegregation of the schools as they were led to believe he would. These are people who voted for him in the belief that he would reverse the Supreme Court decision of 1954.

Of course, President Nixon cannot do that. We don't think he would if he could. But recalling some of his Southern campaign statements in 1968, especially those in Charlotte, and the ardent support he got from Strom Thurmond of South Carolina, one can perhaps understand how some people may have been led to believe that he would take that course.

It is interesting that the story of the Statesville impeachment petition came the same day that the opinion pollsters reported a low ebb in the Nixon popularity. The disillusionment was sharpest in the South and East, clearly, however, for different reasons. The unpopular war in Vietnam, which Nixon obviously does not know how to bring to a satisfactory close, is a big reason for the waning popularity which always follows a presidential honeymoon period.

In the South, however, the racial issue is surely the prevailing one. There are diehards who cannot as yet accept the fact that the Supreme Court said that separate schools are inherently unequal, and cannot have the sanction of law.

It may well be that some of the Nixon administrators are more concerned with sociological factors than with the entire educational picture and have taken some very shortsighted positions in regard to local school situations. Nevertheless, neither they, nor Nixon, nor anyone else can return to the status quo of a quarter-century ago.

The "Impeach Dick Nixon" movement may be well grounded in frustration and disillusionment, but it's not likely to get far beyond the borders of Iredell or to generate much more than a raised ax handle salute from Lester Maddox.



I'd been knocking on the blame door for seemed like a hour. I felt like folks passing by thought I was trying to break in. I won't. There wasn't nothing in Melvin Smudgen's house I wanted. Except that is maybe, to talk to old Mel awhile to while away some time. I hadn't seen him in nearly two weeks.

I banged away again after a car passed and slowed and the tail lights lit up. I thought for a time that the driver was gonna stop. I was glad when he didn't. It was a police car.

I kept thinking I was hearing a voice from inside the house but I couldn't be sure. I started to yell. "Cussit", I yelled. That's his nickname. I ain't gonna tell you how he got it. "Cussit, you in there", I yelled again.

I could a swore I heard a voice from inside. I banged again. Finally I tried the door knob. Don't know why I hadn't thought of that sooner. It worked. It opened the door. How about that. A door-knob that opens the door. What won't they think of next?

I poked my head inside. "Cussit, you in here", I asked. I could still hear that wee voice coming from somewhere. I started to look around. I went in the living room, the dining room, the kitchen—all them was the same room, actually. I took a real chance. I peeped in the bathroom. No Cussit. I could still hear the voice.

Finally I tapped on the bedroom door. I heard a noise. This time I didn't mess around. I turned the knob right away. Won't no sense wasting time. "Cussit, you in here in the dark", I asked.

That wee small voice said, "Yeah, Frank, I'm over here". Over where I was wondering. "Where's the light cord, Cussit", I asked. "Ain't got one", said the wee small voice, "You got to turn the bulb. It's hanging in the middle of the room. Bam. I found it. That is, my head found it. I screwed it in. It worked. But I still couldn't see no sign of Cussit.

"Give me a clue, Cussit. Yell out. So's I can find you. Am I getting hot?"

"No, Frank. I'm under here. Over this way. The bed, Frank". I looked under the bed. No Cussit. I was getting mighty peeved when I saw his big toe hanging from in between the covers.

"Cussit, what in tar-nation are you doing hiding between them feather beds? Ain't nobody but me here. I ain't gonna hurt you. What're you scared of, Cussit. Git out of there".

"I can't, Frank. Ain't you heard the news? There's a storm, Frank. And I'm scared of storms. Don't stand in front of that door, Frank. Lightning might hit you". Lightning might hit me inside the house cause I'm standing in front of a door?

"Cussit, don't be silly. There ain't no storm. The stars are shining and it's a beautiful night. It don't even look like rain. Now come out from between them feather beds and take that silly wet rag off your head".

He stuck just his head out. "Frank, I heard on the radio just awhile ago that a storm was expected to hit someplace and I



was gonna be ready. I close all the doors and windows and cut off the ice box and unplugged all the light cords and got between the feather beds. And if you're smart, you'll get in here with me". Smart, yes. Get between two feather beds with Cussit, I'm not.

"Cussit, if you don't come out, I'm leaving. I'll be hanged if I'm gonna stand here talking to a feather bed. Now git out of there."

"Frank, I hope you won't think I'm unneighborly but I can't come out right now. I ain't coming out until the storm is over. And I wish you'd either get in here with me or go home. It ain't a fit night out for nobody."

"Cussit, I keep telling you, there ain't no storm here. Where did you hear such a report?"

"The river, Frank. The radio said the winds would blow and the storm would come up the river". Just then a car whizzed by and Cussit ducked back between the feather beds. "What river?", I asked him as if I was interested.

"I don't know, Frank. It just said the river and we got a river and now go on home and let me weather the storm alone."

I thought the least I could do was leave him to enjoy his misery in peace.

## Try This One For A Few Laughs

In The Charlotte Observer "Don't try it," 15-year-old Nora Ruffcorn of La Jolla, Calif., told a newsman. "Tell them what it's like and tell them not to try anything." Nora and three other teenagers tried something just for kicks. After rolling up the windows of their car, they opened a container of nitrous oxide, better known as the dentist's pain killer, laughing gas.

Two of Nora's companions are dead. She was in a coma for three weeks, and doctors say she could be an invalid for life. Eight weeks after the incident, Nora is trying to learn again how to eat and how to walk by herself. It began just — as a lark,

Nora said. The four teen-agers didn't know that pure nitrous oxide is lethal if inhaled for more than 10 minutes. But none bothered to find out, just as many other youngsters aren't bothering to find out what will happen to their brain and nervous system when they sniff glue or the contents of aerosol cans.

Laughing gas. But nobody's laughing. Not the families of the two who are dead. Not the invalided Nora. Not Nora's boy friend, who was made violently ill and who pleaded guilty to two counts of manslaughter.

Some kicks.



## A DAY IN ARKANSAS

JOHN J. SYNON

As my friend pushed himself under the steering wheel, his right heel brushed the big, black .45 strapped against the seat's upright.

My eye caught the movement as his eye caught the startled expression on my face.

"We don't go out any more without a gun," my friend said, by way of explanation. "Not in this part of Arkansas. There have been several incidents."

The journey was to be a short one, a mile, from the Marvel fair grounds where a barbecue was in progress to the new school house I had asked to see.

"Things are really getting tight," my companion told me as we arrived. "Between the federal courts and the NASCP, they mean to crush us and we don't really know what to do exactly — except resist."

The school was no great shakes, not if one were to compare it to tax-bought, public schools. But the pride and love so evident in the timbre of my friend's voice changed the one-story, 12-room brick building into a veritable palace. This was their very own, they had built it for their children, independent of the public schools and (they hoped) independent of the federal government. And (they hoped) nobody could tell them how to operate it.

"We built it for a hundred-thousand dollars, all of it; land, equipment, everything."

"How much do you still owe?"

My friend seemed to savor his reply: "Twenty-seven hundred more and she's clear."

believe in God, and they believe in good and in evil, in the United States of America, and in the boll weevil. And they believe in social segregation of the races; blacks as well as whites believe in that.

"Ninety per cent of the people of this country, black and white, don't want the races mixed up in the schools — but that doesn't matter. They are going to do it any way — they say."

I rather doubt they will, or if they do, not for long. And, I gather, the federal judge who rules the area is developing doubts, too. One suspects he has come to question the insistent counsel he has been getting from the NAACP.

"Over in the next town", my friend went on, "they had a man — a white man, think of that — go around to all the white parents, asking them please, wouldn't they send their children to integrated school, this fall."

"And they got some to say they would. It costs \$400, you know, to send a child here."

"They told them not to worry, that the white children would be brought in se-

parate busses and would be taught in a separate building. They told'em the whites and the coloreds would have separate recess times and that they would begin school and end school at different times of day. Not to worry.

"That's what they are going to do in September, so they say. But you watch. The NAACP ain't going to put up with that. Once they get those white kids on the lot, they will lock the door on that whites-only building and lump 'em all together."

"And then what?"

"You ever put six cats in the sack?"

I said I had not but I thought I knew what he meant.

"And that will spread."

"How far?", I wanted to know.

"Got me; it will be like six-thousand cats in a sack. That's the best I can tell you. They can crush us, and we expect they will. And then the trouble will quiet down."

"You think then, if they bring troops to Arkansas again, you will quit?"

"No, sir. They will bring the troops, all right, but we won't quit. They will just crush us."

"But isn't that the same thing?"

"No, sir. Quitting and being tied up are two different things. They are just going to have to hold us. They can do that but that's all they can do. Maybe, one day, they will get tired and turn us loose. But we will never quit."

And they never will.

### Anti-submarine Planes

The Navy has awarded the Lockheed Aircraft Corporation a potential \$3.2-billion program to build a fleet of advanced anti-submarine warfare planes capable of dealing with a growing Soviet submarine threat. It's the first new major aircraft program the Nixon Administration has pushed toward production.

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Marvell, Arkansas, is located about 75 miles south and a bit west of Memphis. It is cotton country; no rain, no cotton; no cotton, no life worth the living. It is an elementary land. Its people