

OP/ED

ERNEST H. PITT
Publisher/Co-Founder

ELAINE PITT
Business Manager

T. KEVIN WALKER
Managing Editor

Governor's Delusion

Pat McCrory is coming to town. The Forsyth County Republican Women have announced that our first-term governor will speak at their annual holiday event on Dec. 10. His appearance will surely pack them into the Forsyth Country Club and flood nearby sidewalks with protestors.

The McCrory Administration was supposed to be free of scandal, a unifying force, but it has been anything but. The exorbitant salaries being paid to political hires may be just the tip of the iceberg. A bigger issue for the governor is his seeming difficulty in simply telling the truth; he can't just tell it like it is.

During a nationally-televised interview on MSNBC last week, McCrory demurred when political reporter Chuck Todd asked him about the decision he and his Republican cohorts made to curtail voting rights. He insisted that the bill to reduce the early voting period to 10 days from 17 days was not a shortening of the voting calendar, just merely a more "compacted" voting calendar. Really, Governor?

McCrory and the GOP had the temerity to efface early voting, so the governor should have the courage to admit as much. Not only has the early voting span been nearly slashed in half, same-day registration was kicked to the curb, as was early registration for teens who will turn 18 before Election Day.

With a straight face, McCrory told the nation that these changes weren't political. He somehow reasons that the changes will make the voting process better for election workers and residents. (Shockingly, a bolt of lightning didn't descend from the sky, nor did the governor's nose grow longer after he made these claims.)

More than half of the North Carolinians who voted in 2012 did so early. The governor probably owes his victory to a great deal of folks who went to the polls before Election Day. But early voting statistics don't favor Republicans. Women and minorities – groups not usually receptive to conservatives – tend to vote early more often. The GOP knows this and has made destroying early voting a key priority.

McCrory has been busy during his first year in the Governor's Mansion. In between the massive remodeling project (using tens-of-thousands in taxpayer money), the governor is mastering the art of the spin. His circumfluence was on full display on MSNBC. He is determined to convince the victims of the bad laws he and his lot have passed that the voting changes, education budget-slashing, etc. were really done for their benefit.

McCrory vowed to be a straight-forward and straight-talking leader, but he is the very epitome of a politician.



Immigration reform stalling

Chris Liu-Beers
Guest Columnist



U.S. House Speaker John Boehner recently stated that there will not be any conference committee in order to find a compromise on the bipartisan Senate immigration reform bill. The American people are hearing one excuse after another about how immigration reform is too complicated and how there isn't enough time for a vote. After months of dithering, it's clear that House leaders are hoping to run out the clock on immigration.

If it holds true that the House doesn't vote on any other immigration bills, then an amendment to deport young people eligible for the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals program – which passed with overwhelming GOP support in June – will be the only immigration measure to have received a vote on the floor of the House in 2013.

That track record stands in stark contrast to the U.S. Senate, which passed bipartisan comprehensive immigration reform in late June. Since then, more than 150,000 people have been deported. The human cost of inaction on immigration reform by the House of Representatives is extremely damaging to communities here in North Carolina and across the country.

That's why immigrant rights, faith and labor leaders announced the launch of "Fast for Families: A Call for Immigration Reform and Citizenship" (www.fast4families.org) taking place on the National Mall, steps away from the Capitol. Leaders and immigrant members of the community are fasting every day and night,

abstaining from all food – except water – to move the hearts and compassion of members of Congress to pass immigration reform with a path to citizenship.

The fast in Washington, DC is being held in conjunction with dozens of local and solidarity fasts, events, and actions already underway in key congressional districts across the country. Fasters are joined nationwide by groups and activists who are prepared to make sacrifices for the passage of immigration reform with a path to citizenship.

The truth is that passing immigration reform isn't a matter of the calendar; it's a matter of will. In fact, there are enough votes to pass immigration reform with a path to citizenship today. The House has forty days – the rest of November and December to find time to schedule it. Despite the grave urgency of the situation, however, there are only eight days left on the legislative calendar to cast votes, and many pundits agree that the House leadership is content to run out the clock without any real progress. Even with the holidays approaching and the never-ending cycle of political fundraisers, the leadership could easily clear the calendar and make it happen if it were truly a priority.

In a letter addressed to Speaker Boehner, a group of fasters said: "While we understand and appreciate

your wish to work part-time for the rest of the year while receiving the benefits of full-time employment, immigrants and working people don't have that luxury. We have to show up and do our jobs every day, lest our pay get docked or be fired for dereliction of duty. Like us, working people, we need the House to show up and do its job. Again, as you [Speaker Boehner] have eloquently said [about immigration reform], 'inaction is not an option.'

After visiting with activists in DC, Salt Lake City Catholic Bishop John Wester said: "I'm very grateful because I'm hoping that it will communicate to our people in the United States the need for immigration reform – that it's not just politics. This is a human issue that calls for courageous action on the parts of our elected officials. And for every day that they dally and dither and don't do anything, people are suffering."

This fight is personal to us. Every day the House fails to act on immigration reform is another day when 1,100 families are ripped apart by senseless deportation. This holiday season, when we hold our families close; let's pray that our elected officials will finally do their jobs.

Chris Liu-Beers is a program associate at the North Carolina Council of Churches.

Ghana

from page A1

Shelog said Daniel convinced him to take part after the 12-year-old heard a presentation at school about another service trip to Ghana students took to aid a different school – Fayef International in Kokobrite. The younger Shelog became preoccupied with helping Ghanaian kids, so much so that he asked his dad and mom (Wake Forest Baptist Health's Dr. Jamehl Demons Shelog) to donate to the cause in lieu of giving him Christmas gifts.

Daniel said he was moved by the Ghanaian students' unwavering dedication to learning and their lack of technology, electricity and running water. He is ecstatic that he and his dad are taking an active role in helping to make a difference in their lives.

"I wanted to see the kids," said the sixth-grader. "I've heard so much about them, I wanted to see them for myself."

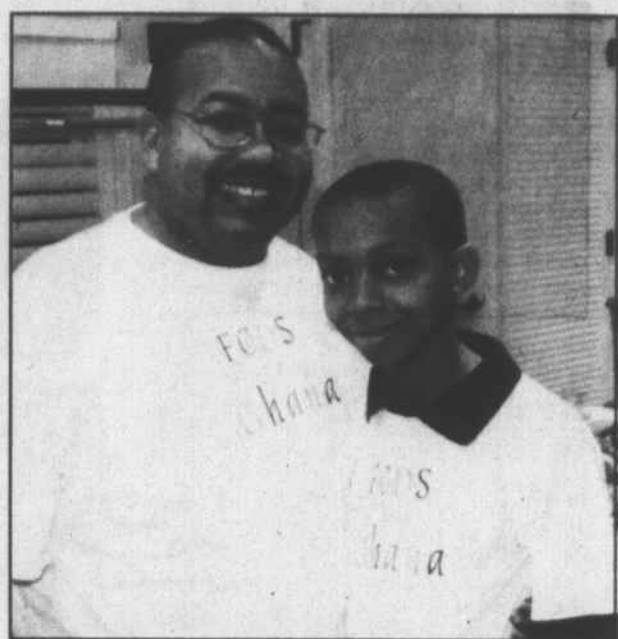
The Bridge Project evolved out of the work of Dr. Medge Owen, an obstetrician professor at Wake Forest Medical School, who, through her nonprofit Kybele, recruits other obstetricians to train doctors and other medical professionals in impoverished nations around the world. Owen's efforts have greatly reduced the number of mothers and babies who die during childbirth.

During one of her Kybele-related trips to Ghana, Owen saw that the schools were sorely lacking essentials. She raised money to have a computer lab and outhouse built at Fayef International School, and last year, she took her daughter, Jozy Unal, and a group of Forsyth Country Day students to the school to install the lab's computers, which FCD, an acclaimed Lewisville-based pre-K through 12 private school, donated.

It was Owen who gave the presentation at FCD that so enamored Daniel. After her talk, she often saw Daniel making a beeline to her when she'd pick Jozy up from school. He'd always want to talk about Ghana.

Owen said she knew Daniel had to come on this trip.

"I cannot let that passion I saw in that little boy go undone," she said. It's



Don Shelog and his son, Daniel.

going to change his life." Shelog, a former FCD computer teacher, served as an advisor for the first trip, helping student Chris Hawley select the computer equipment the school donated.

His knack for computers will come in handy as the group sets up the lab at Odoi Atsem.

"It feels good, its gratifying to know my skills can be used more than just where they were," he said. "...The fact that I can go someplace else and help someone else is definitely gratifying."

Owen said she expected the trip to go smoothly. Ghana is politically stable, and English is the primary language. She said the students she took last year took to the Ghanaian students immediately.

"The kids were like magnets to each other. There was no barrier of color, no barrier of poverty or wealth; it was just kid on kid," she said.

The group will stay at Ghana Health Services, which will also provide them with transportation and food. Owen, whose Kybele work acquainted her with the organization, worked out the arrangements.

Locals have already donated several hundred pounds of books to Odoi Atsem. They, like the computer lab, will occupy the school's new library, which was constructed with Bridge Project funds. The group has also funded efforts to bring running water and electricity to the school and purchased laptops for the computer lab. The team of volunteers who departed last week, stuffed their luggage with clothing, Beanie Babies,

school supplies and books for Odoi Atsem students.

In addition to individual donations, the Bridge Project held a yard sale to raise funds and turned to fundraising site Indeogogo. Local nonprofits have also chipped in. They included Hopscotch Adoptions and Lovell's Little Bits, the non-profit wing of Cash Lovell Stables, whose owner, Parker Lovell, is returning to Ghana with daughter Cashlyn after taking part in last year's effort.

FCD students were expected to use the live video chatting service Skype Monday to communicate with their classmates and Odoi Atsem students. FCD music teacher Beth Frack, who is among the group of volunteers, was also slated to conduct a song performed simultaneously by Odoi Atsem and FCD students in Lewisville.

Aside from their work at Odoi Atsem, the group of volunteers are scheduled to visit Fayef International, a local chieftain, and the slave castles along the Ghanaian coast.

The Shelogs say they will miss their family and the traditions of Thanksgiving; however, they believe this opportunity is well worth the sacrifice.

"I'm looking forward to it because it's a completely different way of giving thanks and honoring all that I've been given and giving back to others," Shelog said.

For more information, visit www.thebridgeproject.us.

SHIP EARLY AND AVOID THE RUSH.

Let the experts pack and ship your gifts.

The UPS Store

WE ♥ LOGISTICS

15% OFF

PACKING SERVICE

Authorized Return Center

The UPS Store

380-H KNOLLWOOD ST
WINSTON-SALEM, NC 27103
336.703.0035
(across from Thruway Plaza and Fox & Hound)

Holiday Hours Nov 17 - Dec 23
Mon-Fri: 8am - 7:30pm
Sat: 9am - 5pm
Sun: Noon - 5pm

Limit one coupon per customer. Not valid with other offers. Restrictions apply. Valid and redeemable only where presented at a participating location. The UPS Store centers are independently owned and operated. © 2012 The UPS Store, Inc. Offer expires 12/31/13.

Mail Boxes Etc., Inc. is a UPS® company. The UPS Store® locations are independently owned and operated by franchisees of Mail Boxes Etc., Inc. in the USA and by its master licensees and its franchisees in Canada. Services, pricing and hours of operation may vary by location. Copyright © 2012 Mail Boxes Etc., Inc. 23014