

under the sun

It's Business As Usual Since Jane Causey Entered Politics

BY TERRY POPE

It was a matter of timing. That's how Jane Causey describes the major events in her life—entering the restaurant business, helping her church establish a missionary in Costa Rica and being elected to the Brunswick County Board of Education.

It was a matter of timing that the Republican candidate was even lured into the world of politics. A chance telephone call one night from Republican party leaders opened the door, but it was her religion that showed her the way.

"Members of the Republican party called one night to ask me if I would run, but I wasn't home," Ms. Causey now recalls. "I said, 'Well, if they don't call back, I won't run.' They called back three days later and I said, 'Yes.'"

The campaign trail was treaded lightly, with a soft, motherly voice pleading for a change on the board that she believed had "turned into a political arena." She never promised political favors, just "caring for the kids" was her main concern. And somewhere deep inside, she felt certain of her destiny, of the final vote count, for she also felt a "christian responsibility to become involved."

Somewhere between the restaurants (she and her husband Bobby own and operate two) and busy church schedule, Ms. Causey found room for the politics. It was a competitive arena, but she survived the struggle. Her small frame is used to struggles—from tobacco fields, cheerleading tryouts, hamburger stands, restaurants and through a tough election year.

Part of her struggles were spent on a farm near her childhood home in Longwood. At the age of five, Ms. Causey's father, a mechanic, died and her mother began working in restaurants. At the age of 14, Ms. Causey also began working in a restaurant, at a hamburger stand in

Shallotte. The tobacco farmers hated to see her go.

"I was a good worker," Ms. Causey said. "In fact, every year people would start calling my mother to make sure I was going to work in the tobacco fields for them. I've always been used to being busy."

As a student at the old Waccamaw High School, she was a popular cheerleader for six years and was named co-captain of the varsity squad in the tenth grade. As a senior, she and Bobby were married and she later finished school at Southeastern Community College in Whiteville.

"As I look back today, my life looked pretty smooth," she said. "I was very active in sports, and the people involved in sports were health conscientious. The crowd I hung around was pretty much sports oriented."

It was a bit of bad timing, a death in her husband's family, that allowed the couple to obtain their first restaurant, Jane's Seafood Restaurant on Holden Beach Road. The couple later added Jane's Kountry Cafeteria just south of Shallotte to the family holdings and would like to own a third, one for each of their three daughters when they are old enough to manage one on their own.

The Causey family is a close family. They go to church together, play the piano and sing together and work together. Ms. Causey's mother still works in the restaurant business, along with the family.

"For the first seven years, we worked seven days a week," Ms. Causey said. "We never left that place. That's our life. That's what we know how to do—that and our church work."

However, for four months out of the year the restaurant business does slow a bit in Brunswick County due to the decline in the tourist season, allowing the Causeys and their three daughters to occasionally get away for the weekend. The highlight to such relaxation may be touring the historic district at Charleston, S.C.,

for a day, then dining out and spending the night before returning to work the following day.

Their work with the Brunswick Christian Center at Thomasboro, an interdenominational church with more than 300 members, has led the couple to help establish a missionary in Costa Rica, a small country bordering Nicaragua in Central America. Called the "Rivers of Living Waters," the mission now has 2,500 members who go to church seven days a week to hear pastor Miguel Cortez, who walks four miles each day to hold services.

"The way it got started was a missionary came to speak at our church once trying to get support for the mission," Ms. Causey said. As it turned out, several members of the Brunswick Christian Center are also former residents of Costa Rica, with relatives among those natives who were wishing to establish the missionary.

When the Causeys traveled to view the missionary with others in the church, they met those relatives and also had an opportunity to explore the country. Bobby became co-owner of a travel agency at the San Jose Airport, helping to finance the business that is now operated by the relatives of his fellow church members.

The business has since begun to flourish, giving the family a hope of one day maybe returning to the country to retire, an idea Ms. Causey pondered with her eyes turned toward the ceiling, as though she could almost see the answer. Either way, it is another business and another church activity—the two ingredients that seem to follow the couple everywhere they turn.

"The people are poor, but the country's different," Ms. Causey said. "It's not the kind of thing where everybody is starving. There are fruit trees growing everywhere, people have plenty to eat. They don't have much money, but it's the only way of life they know."

There was a time when Ms. Causey had ideas that even stretched beyond the restaurant business. As a ninth-grader, she and some friends would leave their Longwood homes every Saturday morning and travel to Shallotte to sing at the local radio station. They shared air time with an early rock and roll band of which Bobby was a member. That is how the couple first met.

Slim Mims was coming to town searching for local talent to appear on his television show, and someone in Bobby's band suggested that the girls join the gentlemen for one number. The hit won the talent show and everyone became excited.

Prizes and an opportunity to appear on television were also awarded, but the girls' mothers became alarmed at the whole idea and would not allow them to join the band.

Although Ms. Causey never got to sing on television, it was another matter of timing in her life that allowed



STAFF PHOTOS BY TERRY POPE

DINERS often find Jane Causey busy at one of the family's two restaurants. She and her husband, Bobby, divide their time between work and church activities.

her to meet Bobby.

"We work good together," she said. "If I have an idea, he can make it come together."

They work together in the restaurant business to satisfy the customers' tastes.

"It's a psychological thing with folks," Ms. Causey explained. "They think that if the people who own the restaurant are not there, then the food doesn't taste the same."

Ms. Causey is devoted to her role as a school board member to satisfy the students' needs.

"The important thing is the family unit," she said. "I'm for the kids to have a happy and normal life. We work with kids in the restaurant business and have never had a problem with them being disrespectful."

"We know the kinds of things they go through today. Kids have a lot of different needs. They just need someone to give them an opportunity," she added.

Both business and religion has provided Jane Causey with valuable lessons, and an uncanny sense of timing.



AN INTEREST in children led Jane Causey to run for the school board on the Republican ticket. Shown here, Ms. Causey inspects science kits as demonstrated at a

recent school board meeting with Assistant Superintendent Stephanna Tewey, center, and Diane Van Nortwick, left, K-5 supervisor.



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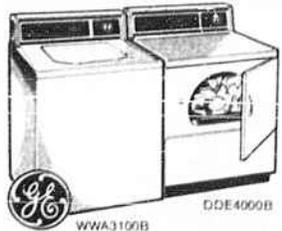
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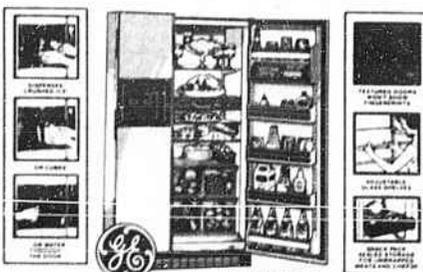
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