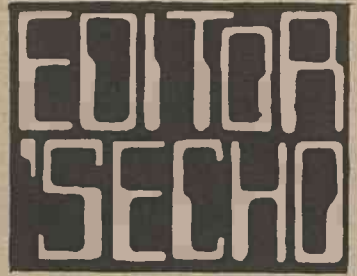


# EDITORIALS



## An Open Letter

To whom it may concern:

There is something going on in this school which disturbs us greatly. And where it may not bother you now, if it continues, it affects you directly and possibly severely. This is the consumption of alcoholic beverages before, during, and after school. It has been going on for a long time, but during the last week before Christmas vacation, it got really bad.

Whatever your reasons, it doesn't matter. What matters is that because of your ignorance, every student in the school may suffer. There have been many instances of drinking at lunch. Some of you have been caught; others are suspected. If this continues, authoritative action may occur. We may all be restricted to the school cafeteria. Then it will be too late.

We are not asking that you stop drinking; only that you keep your liquor away from school. It is for your own and everyone else's sake.



## Litter Problem Re-evaluated

There is a big problem on this campus which should be solved immediately. There are too many trash cans. With so many trash cans, some students are going to get the idea that trash should be put into them.

Most students have the right idea. They know that trash belongs on the front steps, in the Commons, or in the lobby. The students have been dutifully placing their papers, Jungle Juice cartons, and cigarette butts in the ground and under the benches where trash

belongs. These students leave their trash in the desks all over the school. They leave paper towels and cigarette packages on the floors and in the sinks of the bathrooms.

These students are setting the example for new students, underclassmen, and visitors to this school, but the constant presence of trash cans will serve only to confuse these newcomers; therefore, trash cans should be abolished.

On February 16 the local chapter of the NCAE-ACT approached the City School Board to ask for an increase in the local supplement pay for classroom teachers. Phil Gordon, president of the chapter, was supported by a large group of teachers when he presented state-wide supplement statistics in support of their proposal. The teachers are seeking an increase from the present average of \$352 per year to \$782.40 minimum for all teachers.

The request for such a large increase may seem out of line, but the present supplement is out of line in comparison to others. For example, band-music directors, coaches, and principals all receive supplements consistently above the state average. The superintendent's supplement is twice that of the state average. But the classroom teachers receive only little more than half the state average.

The present supplement system allows for an increase with experience, with a regular yearly increase of \$7. The proposed plan calls for the elimination of the \$7 increase which is ludicrous if not insulting to a teacher who has indeed gained in experience.

The teachers' request deserves careful consideration by the School Board. Other members of the faculty and administration are important, but good teachers are essentials for which the citizens of Rocky Mount should be willing to pay.

## The Soapbox

On Wednesday, Feb. 4 an earthquake registering 7.5 on the Richter scale struck most of Central America, doing its greatest damage in the tourist center of Guatemala. The destruction and death was immeasurable, but the poor were the hardest hit. Two Rocky Mount men were in Guatemala when the quake struck. A. P. Thorpe III president of a tobacco firm, and Bruce Gurganus survived the same threat, but their experiences were vastly different.

Thorpe was in Guatemala on a business trip, staying in the Camino Real Hotel. The major new buildings were only damaged, but the older parts of Guatemala City were flattened. For Thorpe the utter destruction was only a sight; for Gurganus it was a personal experience.

Gurganus was staying with a family in Antigua, Guatemala when the quake struck. In a letter to his parents he describes the Guatemalans' efforts to rebuild their lives. Here are some excerpts:

Dear Mom and Dad,

I hope the kind Doctor from Wisconsin called you as he said he would, upon his return to the USA and told you that I was here, alive, and well. Following the first big earthquake here early Wednesday morning all lines of communication and

transportation were closed. Slowly they are being reopened. Luckily at that time I was, and still am, staying with a family here in Antigua. I was studying Spanish too, but the school has closed as has nearly everything else in town, stores, restaurants, etc. Our house was badly damaged, but fortunately didn't collapse on us. Unsafe to stay there now. The man I was renting my room from, his across the street neighbor, and I built a lean-to shack from tin roofing material, and we moved into a field on the edge of town. There are 7 children in the 2 families. There have been 2 large quakes in the last 4 days and numerous smaller tremors rumbling the ground every few hours. It's especially noticeable when you are sleeping on the ground and it starts to shake. A lot of people have been killed and injured. I have no idea if this was a big news story in USA or if it was 5th page news. But here it's everything. I spent one day working to move the hospital to a soccer field after the old one nearly collapsed. I've never seen so many dead, dying, and

injured people. Buzzards flew over our heads. Most of the hurt were young kids and old people, mostly Indians from small towns and farms around Antigua . . . . The Guatemalans have been unbelievable, making the best of a crummy situation. Their houses destroyed and food prices skyrocketing . . . A flock of squawking parrots just flew overhead.

That was Guatemala the day of the quake.




## Policy Re-stated

The Gryphon staff is a bit discouraged with the students, faculty, and administration. There seems to be a crying lack of concern over anything that goes on at our school. That is the way the situation appears

when the number of Letters to the Editor in the Gryphon is taken into consideration. One poem submitted by a sophomore drew comments from upperclassmen, but no letters. That's all the mail we've gotten besides bills. Maybe our readers really can't read or write. Maybe they just look at the pictures. If you are, in fact, literate, read the following policy (which you may have seen before), and then write us and tell us about it. We'd appreciate it.

"The purpose of the Gryphon is to examine events in the school, the community, and the world which affect the lives of the students at RMSH. It is the Gryphon's aim to stimulate awareness of issues, to promote a better understanding of others, and to bring about positive action where change is needed. Student, faculty, and community response is welcomed and may be sent to the Gryphon, room 110; however, the editor reserves the right to withhold libelous or profane letters."

**THE GRYPHON**  
Rocky Mount Senior High School  
318 South Tillery Street Rocky Mount, N. C. 27801  
Member of Columbia Press Association  
Member of Quill and Scroll

PUBLISHED  MONTHLY

Editor-in-Chief Managing Editor Advertising Manager Business and Circulation Manager Senior Staff Writers Junior Staff Writers Photography Staff Advisor Principal Assistant Principals	Terri Gardner Teresa Mosley Biff White Boon McGee Virginia Culpepper Corbi Bulluck, Thomasina Pollard Margaret Beck, Trey Bulluck Wimberly Burton, Billy Carroll, Debbie Denson Arlene Harper, Allen Hayes, Jackie Fulcher Cathy Kilpatrick, Debbie Mosley, Donna Odom Jackie Wilde, Sandy Wilgus, Fleet Woodley Andy Bryant, Kevin Maurer Corbi Bulluck, Sandy Wilgus Fleet Woodley, Billy Carroll Mrs. Henrietta Barbour Mr. Elton Newbern Mr. Robert Miller Mr. Charles Davis
-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------