

# GAIL WINDS

by: Gail L. Roberson

This is the most important column I've ever written. This month, "Eastern Echoes" celebrated its fifth anniversary ... five years of sharing between you, the reader, and me, the writer. My world has become wider, because of you. And better. I sit at this old manual typewriter and think I'm giving, when in reality, it is I who receive. Because of you.

I wonder if you realize what it's like to live back here on a dirt road in the heart of farm country in eastern North Carolina, and receive letters, telephone calls and gestures of friendship from as far away as Alaska and Switzerland. It's a little like Christmas all year long. Because of you.

You read this column, and thus, you know all about me. You know that I cut a vein and write with my blood. You know I can't do it any other way. And you realize that's how it should be. So you keep coming back. Through the years, I've learned about you, too. And life. We've shared our tragedies and joys, and learned that our problems, priorities and pleasures are the same, no matter where we live. I now know that what interests people anywhere, interests people everywhere. Because of you.

It hasn't always been easy ... writing this column. Sometimes I shake my head and the words just line up on the page in perfect formation. Other times, they trip and fall over each other, creating chaos unbelievable. When I think I can give no more, I retreat to a quiet corner of my world to feed the chickens and lick my wounds. Before I know it, there's a clean sheet in the typewriter and an assortment of letters lining up again across it to strut in full salute. Because of you.

Five years ago, I chose the logo, "Eastern Echoes," to accompany this column through its difficult birth. And then, something wonderful began to happen. It moved ... awkwardly at first, tottering like a one-year old just learning to walk. Then, on wobbly legs, it took its first step on unfamiliar soil. And the second. And then, the third. Before I knew it, I was romping weekly with newfound readers and friends from the foamy beaches to the misty Blue Ridge mountains, as editor after editor gave the column a chance. And now, five years later and in full adulthood, my little stories and pieces of life reach out towards a new horizon. So, with great pride and satisfaction, last week I gently laid "Eastern Echoes" to rest amid other memorabilia from my life, and without hesitation, took up the new logo now stretched across the top of this column, unfurled a fresh scroll, and set my sails to catch the winds of change ... towards South Carolina. Because of you.

To "Miss Emily" up on the Blue Ridge ... I thank you for your lovely teapot. I use it often for my herbal brews. To "Mr. Clyde" down on the coast, who sends me a bucket of fresh shrimp now and then ... I thank you. To the man in the heart of the Piedmont, who wrote of the pain he experienced when his old mule died, and then sent me a wheel from his wagon ... I thank you. To the fourth-grade students of a nearby school ... yes, I love the cat mug you sent, and use it on my desk every day. To whoever left the bushel of apples on my porch, the bouquet of peonies on my table, the book in the mailbox, the sweet potatoes on the lawn ... I thank you, each and every one. And, to the young man who telephoned to say, "I'm dying, but I read your column faithfully, no matter how much pain I'm in," ... you, my dear friend, will live on forever in my heart.

I thank you one and all for everything you've done to make this column the most rewarding part of my career. Your outpouring of love and devotion has given me the courage to hoist my sail even higher into a gently breeze ... in new direction. Somehow, I've a feeling that, when "Gail Winds" start to blow, as long as you're still with me, there's no telling where we'll go. Together. On the winds of change.

## ASCS Notes

By CLIFF MOORE

April 14, 1989 will be the final date that eligible producers will be able to enroll in the 1989 wheat and feed grain programs.

Producers can participate in the regular program which requires a 10 percent ACR set-aside or the 0/92 program in which they can leave out their entire base per crop and be eligible for a guaranteed payment, based on the projected payments under the 0/92.

Producers may plant corn also under the 0/92 program; however, guaranteed payments only apply to the land left idle for "conservation uses" or what is referred to as C.U. acreage.

The amount of corn or wheat planted under the programs will be eligible for a projected payment, meaning that no guarantee will apply to the actual payments received based on planted corn or wheat.

Producers are eligible to receive 40 percent of the projected payment for corn and wheat as an advance payment. The advance payments are 35.6 cents per bushel for corn and 20 cents per bushel for wheat.

The total projected payment is 89 cents per bushel for corn and 50 cents per bushel for wheat.

The producer or other who applies to participate in the 1989 program must complete several forms as well as certify the participating crop after it is planted and before the certification deadline for that crop.

The following forms need to be completed:

—Form AD-1026-Highly erodible and wetland conservation form must be certified for 1989.

—Form CCC-502 must be completed and approved by the county committee.

All required signatures must be obtained and all contracts

must be approved before an advance payment can be made to the producer or applicant.

Persons who are enrolling in the program should

—Make sure to plant and leave out land as enrolled in the program and certify the acreage correctly so as not to lose any program benefits.

—Remember that set-aside land may not be planted in any crop for the purpose of harvest in 1989.

—Remember that wildlife food plots are allowed on ACR land as a mixture of three seeds.

—Remember that permission may be requested to lightly disk ACR acreage.

—Remember that grazing of ACR land is not permitted during the nongrazing period.

—Remember to control weeds on set-aside land and establish a cover to protect the land from wind and water erosion. Mowing of the land is allowed.

ACR land must have received planted or considered planted credit, two of the past three years.

ACR land certified as such is considered planted every year it is used as ACR if it meets the following size requirements — the land must be either in whole fields or either 5 acres and one chain wide in size.

One partial field is eligible in order to complete the ACR requirement.

Cross compliance is a requirement again in 1989 except for oats. This means that all program crops with the exception of oats must be planted within their base if participating in the program.

However, each farm stands alone and what is done on one farm does not have an effect on another farm tended by the same person.

## Our Opinion Hunt Told Not To Take On Helms Again In 1990

We read with more than passing interest that many friends and former close political allies of Jim Hunt are advising him not to run again in 1990 against Senator Jesse Helms.

Now as we look back to the 1984 race between these two men, we remember that it was a \$26 million contest — the most ever spent in a race for the United States Senate.

And it was a mean race with all the stops pulled out. When the votes were counted in November of 1984, Mr. Helms received 1,156,768 while Mr. Hunt polled 1,070,488, a difference of 86,280 votes. Thus Mr. Helms polled about 52 percent to 48 percent for Mr. Hunt. And in a race of this magnitude, a margin of 86,000 votes means that it was relatively close.

But in 1984 Jim Hunt was governor. He had a ready made forum, and he was on the front pages regularly in that position. He toured the state as the official representative of North Carolina. He cut ribbons, opened industrial plants, dedicated state roads, parks, and bridges.

Now in private life, he has no daily public forum. He managed to raise many millions of dollars for that race. He had close connections all over the country as did Mr. Helms.

Mr. Hunt had the most effective Democratic party machine ever seen in North Carolina. In fact, it has been said that the state did not have a Democratic party as such but rather it was a "Jim Hunt party."

So Jim Hunt waged a most active and a most intense campaign. He did all he knew to do, and he lost.

Now to take a good look at the present advice he is getting. We have several questions in mind. If Mr. Hunt does not run, does that mean that Democrats are conceding the office to Mr. Helms?

If Mr. Hunt does not run, just who is there to run for the U.S. Senate? If Mr. Helms is to win by default or with only a "rinky-dink" Democrat as opponent, will not the Democratic party as such be weakened even more? Can any Democratic candidate raise sufficient funds in 1990 to be a viable candidate for the U.S. Senate?

Now as to Mr. Hunt, we know of no Democrat at the moment who can offer the strength and appeal over the state who could give Mr. Helms a close race. Mr. Hunt is far in the lead of any potential Democrats who might be persuaded to run. So if Mr. Hunt does not run, the Democratic party is worse off than most of us realize.

Now we are not trying to convince Jim Hunt to run. We've tried here to give the pros and cons. Several names have been mentioned as possibilities, but most of them cannot make it a close race.

To do the job necessary, we must get the "Reagan Democrats" or the ones we label as conservative to vote Democratic again. That is exactly what the new N.C. Democratic Party chairman, Lawrence Davis, is proposing. And he is being attacked for speaking the truth, and there is even talk of throwing him out.

It is past time the party talked about getting together. It cannot win this way.

Winning is the name of the game.

## Bassin' with the pros

Statistics show that fishing with dull hooks is one of the major causes for losing bass. Anglers simply don't take the time to put a sharp point on their spinnerbaits, crankbaits and jigs.

"Hook sharpening is one of the easiest things to do, too," says Freda Lee, a professional bass angler and member of the Johnson Outboards Pro Staff. "It's something you can do in an evening while you're talking with friends about all the big bass you're going to catch in the coming season."

Freda recommends putting a three-point edge on hooks. This produces both a penetrating point as well as cutting edges that help keep the point penetrating as the hook is set.

"You'll notice that many hook points are flat on the back side and slightly rounded on the others," she explains. "What you should try to do is file these rounded edges flat, too, so the three edges form a type of triangle."

"Make certain you don't file the very end of the point too thin, because if you do it will be weakened and will actually bend

before it penetrates."

Lee thinks many of the hand files available on the market now are suitable for hook sharpening, but the electric models can be used much faster. They can be set up on a desk or table, and can sharpen a hook in about 10 seconds.

The Johnson Outboards pro also recommends carrying a pair of split ring pliers and a small box of treble hooks along in your tackle box, in case you have to replace hooks on your favorite lure while you're fishing.

"If you snag a lure on a rock or log and pull it free, you often bend the hooks," says Lee. "These hooks should be re-

placed, rather than bent back into the proper shape, because they've been weakened and may break.

"It's a good idea to replace single hooks, too, if you snag and bend them," she adds. "It's just like re-tying your lure after the line becomes frayed. Before you re-tie, just slip on a new hook."

Many hooks will rust says Lee, especially after they've been sharpened and their protective coating removed. She suggests melting some old plastic worms and dipping the hooks into the melted plastic. As the plastic cools and hardens, it will put a protective coating over the point.

## Miss McCarter Seeks Scholarship

Stacy Nicole McCarter, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Aaron McCarter of Vanceboro, a student at West Craven High School, is one of 220 semifinalists in the North Carolina State University 1988-89 Merit Awards Program scholarship competition.

She has been invited to take part in a scholarship interview. From the 220 semifinalists, 80

finalists will be chosen to receive scholarships for the 1989-90 freshman year at NCSU. More than 1,250 seniors from 23 states applied for the awards.

The finalists will compete for awards between \$1,000 and \$5,000. Finalists will be eligible for several other scholarships awarded by individual colleges and schools at NCSU.

## Teachers Demonstrate — But Did They Help The Cause?

North Carolina school teachers went to Raleigh and they cheered, jeered, and demonstrated some 5,000 strong. But the big question remains to be answered.

Did they help their cause? Their cause is money, and they are asking for a salary increase. The average school teacher salary today in North Carolina, as we read it, stands at \$24,663. Some stories are putting the figure as high as \$24,900 per year. So we are apparently safe in saying the average salary is somewhere between \$24,500 and \$25,000 per year.

Two of the powers that be are the objects of attention and the holders of power. They are the governor, Jim Martin, and the North Carolina Legislature where we have 50 senators and 120 House members. They will tell the ultimate story.

If we ask a dozen members of the legislature the big question, some will say, "Yes, they have focused attention on a serious problem and it will help." But others will say, "No, it has served to harden the opposition and coming up here to Raleigh merely publicizes a lost cause."

Frankly and tragically, there are legislators who talk one way and feel another way. They are the ones who ride the tide and do anything to pick up a few votes. They will tell the teachers what a friend he or she is and how sympathetic he or she is to the call for a salary raise while never raising a hand to help when the chips are down. In fact, they might even be opposed deep down to any salary raise.

In a purely political sense right now our school teachers are being made pawns in a vicious political power struggle. Most members of the General Assembly know the picture. They know that the Democrats are determined to force Governor Martin to call for a tax increase in order to give the teachers a salary raise.

On the other hand Governor Martin seems equally determined not to call for any tax increase, but to give them a 4.5 percent raise by taking the money from some other program. Now both forces exhibit a sense of stubbornness, but something must give somewhere along the line. If the legislature grants a salary increase and increases taxes without gubernatorial approval, the Republicans will have a ready-made issue in the next election. By the same token, if the governor calls for a tax increase, Democrats will be off the hook and they can point to the fact that it is a Republican governor seeking to increase taxes. The very picture is fraught with political dynamite.

But the big question needs a big answer. Did the teachers help or hurt their cause by going to Raleigh and demonstrating 5,000 strong?

Our answer is, "Yes, their cause has been helped." While there are some negatives involved, the weight of the evidence is on the positive side. While some feel the present teacher salary scale is fair and that a raise is not practical, the strong teacher voice is bound to be heard. Those who say that teachers are only concerned with salary and not teaching ability will be drowned out in the final shuffle.

Yes, the teachers did help themselves. They will get a salary raise but not what they are asking.

They never do.

## Precinct Plans Meeting March 9

Chairman Scott Thomas said that the Vanceboro Democratic Precinct will meet March 9 at 8 p.m. in the Vanceboro Town Hall.

All registered Democrats in the Vanceboro precinct are urged to attend.

Thomas said the purpose of the meeting is to elect precinct officers and delegates to attend the Craven County Democratic Convention to be held April 22.

"Grassroots organization is vital to the future success of the North Carolina Democratic Party. Precinct meetings provide a meaningful forum for local input and involvement," said Thomas.

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