

EDITOR'S NOTEBOOK: ODDS AND ENDS

By Jeff Cherry

Welcome to the 1984-85 version of Stentorian. With so many publications floating around you might be wondering what role we fill. Stentorian is the school's monthly newsmagazine, devoted to exploring and explaining in depth anything of interest to the NCSSM community. We are also committed to bringing issues the staff feels are appropriate and necessary to the attention of the community. Because Stentorian serves the entire school organization, we accept and encourage any suggestions, complaints, or contributions you may have. The quality of a newspaper depends on the concern and involvement of its readers.

It seems the biggest gripe we have this fall is the new schedule, rather than the weather, the homework, or the teachers. We all grumble about never knowing which classes meet when, or having to carry

our schedule sheets everywhere we go. However, we forget about all the work the Schedule Committee put in last year; they certainly did not make a hasty decision. Many hours of consideration were put in and many alternatives were evaluated. We wouldn't have this schedule now if it had not been judged the most efficient for our situation (or the least of many evils). If you stop and look at the schedule, it is evident that scheduling 32 class periods and eight labs into an 8:00 to 3:00 time slot is virtually impossible if an attempt is made to keep times and order of periods uniform. In addition, the four classes per week and shortened lab makes the time distribution among the academic disciplines much fairer. We should at least swallow our complaints until the time comes to plan next year's schedule.

The first changes I noticed upon returning to school this fall were the beautiful flower beds. Then I noticed the neatly-trimmed shrubbery and the newly mown grass. The entire grounds staff should be commended for the fine job done in the past few months without the aid of work service students. The entire campus has improved in appearance. Now, visitors to campus are impressed before they enter the buildings.

Before I go, I think I'll tell a little story. Once upon a time there was a small town that was a nice place to live in all respects but one. You see, the people in that town were always complaining. Complaining about their health, or their finances, or their job. In fact, you would think that they were the most troubled folks in the world. They always had too much work, or not enough time, or unfriendly

neighbors, or overbearing relatives. Well, their complaints must have stacked up awfully high, because one day an angel appeared before all the citizens of the town and gave each of them a

wonderous bag. You see, all you had to do was take all your troubles and put them in the bag. The townspeople thought that was just fantastic. They each took a bag and filled it just as full as they could (you never saw such full bags). The angel collected all the bags and, to the dismay of the townspeople, hung them all on a fence nearby. He said, "Now everyone can go pick out the bag that

suits them best, and never see their bag of troubles again." A terrible ruckus began, like nothing that town had ever seen before. People were fighting tooth and claw--to get their own bag back. Never again were complaints heard in the streets of that town.

LAISSEZ-FAIRE, SPEAKER RAMSEY

An open letter to Speaker of the N.C. House of Representatives, Liston B. Ramsey (D-Madison):

There's an old saying (probably a cliché) that goes, "If it ain't broken, then don't fix it."

Well, in my personal opinion, Speaker Ramsey, The NCSSM admissions policy that you tried to fix by state law last month was not broken, in fact, it was working very well.

You, Speaker Ramsey, said of the geographic distribution of those selected, "It wasn't spread out enough." So, in this summer's session of the General Assembly you escorted a bill (as an rider to the state highway budget) into law which will require NCSSM to select students evenly from each of the state's 11 U.S. Congressional districts, beginning with the class to be accepted in 1985.

The school already had a policy that was effective and not as stiflingly restrictive as the one you implemented.

Students were selected within 20% of the proportion of population of the state's eight educational districts, which have nearly equal numbers of school-age children. Congressional districts may have equal numbers of people, but they are gerrymandered and may have populations that may be more or less heavily populated by retirees than by parents of school age children.

You noted that a high proportion (32.4%) of the school's students are sons or daughters of state employees and questioned whether "a buddy system" was in effect. Isn't it possible that we may have selected as our instructors in the UNC system and as state employees some intelligent people who would have children who are somewhat more willing to accept the NCSSM challenge. Also, remember, Speaker Ramsey, that a survey of students had to be taken especially for you because the school does not consider it in the admissions process,

nor in any other.

And even if my other arguments fail, is a pure quota system the best thing for the school? A district may have a greater number of qualified students in one year than another, and it may not be fair to penalize on year's students at the expense of another's.

Fortunately, there is one potential escape in the bill, which says that the enforcement of the quotas is to be enforced "insofar as possible without jeopardizing admission standards...". I hope that the spirit of that clause may be used to its fullest extent, and not be bogged down in red tape.

Speaker Ramsey, I sincerely hope that in the future you would at least bother to check with the officials whose programs the bills you champion would affect (in this case the school's admissions office and the statewide committee that oversees them) before you waltz them past the assembly.

And please in the future always consider the option of "Laissez-faire" (translation: "Leave it be") before you pass a law. In this situation, I believe that it would have been the best solution.

Sincerely,
J. Keith Privett
Student, NCSSM

NOTE: The opinions above are those of the writer and not necessarily those of the school nor of any of its employees.

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