

Carolina Review: Students Score Higher On Competency Tests

SCORES ... North Carolina's high school competency test scores were released last week - the third year of testing since the Competency Test Law was enacted (amid great controversy) by the 1977 N. C. General Assembly.

Halls Decked At NCSU

By Bob Calton

They're decking the halls with poinsettia plants at N.C. State University this Christmas.

A Christmas tree made from more than 100 of the NCSU plants is making a splash of holiday reds and whites in the lobby of the University's D. H. Hill Library.

"The poinsettias in mass make a gorgeous sight and are having an overwhelming effect on visitors who have seen them," says Dr. I.T. Littleton, the library's director.

The spectacular flowers used to make the eight-foot-high tree are the result of 19 years of poinsettia-improvement research conducted by Dr. Roy A. Larson and his colleagues in the NCSU Department of Horticultural Science.

The poinsettias were placed in the library for several reasons, Larson said.

"Beautiful flowers can have a therapeutic effect, and with exam week and Christmas the library makes an ideal location," he noted.

The plants used for the tree range from 15 inches to 18 inches high, with the vast majority products of Larson's flower production course.

He explained that his poinsettia research at NCSU involves studies of height control, efficiency in plant production and watering and nutritional investigations.

"The uniformity of the height of the plants used in our display was insured by growth regulators," Larson said. In order to achieve the best size, the NCSU scientists spray the plants or drench the soil with a chemical.

The structure for the tree is made of a series of large metal hoops with six inch metal rings attached to hold the pots.

The potted plants are placed side-by-side in the rings and when the full flowering plants are in place the result is a red and white Christmas tree, (which incidentally, are NCSU colors).

First Assembly Sets Cantata

The First Assembly of God Church choir will present "King of Love," a Christmas cantata by Roger Strader on Sunday evening, December 23rd at 7 P.M.

"King of Love" is a celebration of the Saviour's birth. A slide presentation will accompany the cantata, depicting scenes from the Christmas story.

A candlelighting service will follow the cantata. Light refreshments will be served in the fellowship hall at the conclusion of the service.

The public is most cordially invited to attend.

Task Force Meets Tuesday

RALEIGH - The Governor's Task Force on Waste Management will meet at 10 A.M. Tuesday, December 16 in conference room 52 at Dorothea Dix Hospital.

Among items on the agenda for discussion will be:

- Recommendations to the Task Force from the Management Roles work group;
- Don Huisinigh will report to the Task Force on what approaches other states are taking in handling waste management problems.

Like last year, the scores were slightly higher.

Unlike past years, the results were welcomed without protest or discord. During debate on the law in 1977 and after the first scores were released, some minority groups protested that the test was culturally biased. That argument seems to have been stilled with certain revisions in the test and with steadily improving minority scores.

By law, all high school students must now pass the test before receiving their high school diploma. The two-sectioned test, a reading portion and a math portion, is given first to all juniors (eleventh grade).

Those juniors who fail the test are given accelerated remedial instruction and are allowed to take the test as seniors - a number of times if necessary.

Those who can not pass the test are given a "certificate of graduation."

While the scores have improved each of the last two years, the increased scores for 1980 don't seem terribly significant. The increases amounted to a half percentage point or less in both the math and reading portions.

However, minority group improvement - at 2.1 per cent - was substantially better.

The relatively large

minority strides were selected for particular praise by Gov. Hunt at his weekly news conference.

"There could be no better evidence that our testing program is working," Hunt said.

Of the juniors taking the test this fall, 92.5 per cent passed the reading section and 89.4 per cent passed the math. Almost 80,000 juniors took the test.

HOWARD LEE ... With growing speculation that he would not be back in Gov. Hunt's cabinet for a second term, Natural Resources and Community Development Secretary Howard Lee spent time before a federal grand jury last Thursday.

The grand jury is investigating alleged misuse of funds from federal job training contracts that were channeled through Lee's department.

The CETA contracts involve State AFL-CIO President Wilbur Hobby and a firm Hobby set up specifically for the job training contracts, Precision Graphics, Inc., of Raleigh.

There are absolutely no indications that Lee is guilty of any criminal misconduct, but the bad taste of CETA and widespread accusations that Lee has been administratively weak in his department activities will make it difficult for him

to stay on in his current position.

Still, Lee is a highly regarded political force, especially with minorities (he is black) and will probably find comfort somewhere in the governor's administration.

Should Lee leave the Hunt administration altogether, it might be under the auspices of running for a Congressional seat in 1982 - depending upon district reapportionment upcoming in the 1981 N. C. legislative session.

OTHERS ... Non-administration sources contend that State Corrections Secretary Amos Reed will also leave the

Hunt cabinet. According to some reports, Hunt and Reed have been on the outs since Reed allowed state corrections employees to attend a California convention last spring.

Transportation Secretary Tom Bradshaw might leave the Hunt administration as well. Bradshaw, with his own department troubles concerning contract bidding, would probably leave of his own choice to prepare for a statewide race in 1984.

A week ago, however, a Transportation Department spokesman was quoting Bradshaw on "goals" and objectives for a second term.



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