

WHAT NEXT???

The debate over funding for the Public Schools of Robeson County continues. And as compromises are offered here and there, the taxpayer might wish to sit up and take a closer look at what is going on in our system. In our opinion, the Robeson County system is top heavy and some individuals are overpaid for the work they do. We are not speaking of teachers or principals. Our focus is on the "big bosses" in the central office.

According to the March 1991 issue of *Education Report*, Robeson County, with 1,564 teaching positions, has the second largest number of assistant/ associate superintendents in the state with 13. Only Forsyth County, with 14, has more assistant/ associate superintendents and they have 2,467 teaching positions.

We find this interesting in that Mecklenburg County, the state's largest system with 4,820 teaching positions (almost three times Robeson's) has only 10 assistant/ associate superintendents and Wake County with 4,107 teaching positions has only 11.

If we examine school systems more in line with Robeson's in terms of teaching positions, we find the following:

Cumberland County with 2,850 teaching positions has 6 assistant/ associate superintendents; Durham County with 1,263 teaching positions, has 3 assistant/ associate superintendents; Gaston County with 1,884 teaching positions has 4 assistant/ associate superintendents as does New Hanover County with 1,232 teaching positions as well as Onslow County with 1,146 teaching positions, and Guilford County has 1,472 teaching positions with 6 assistant/ associate superintendents; and Greensboro City Schools has 1,410 teaching positions and 4 assistant/ associate superintendents.

From this list the obvious question is, "What do these systems know that we don't?" How can they run their systems with 1/2 to 1/4 fewer assistant/ associate superintendents than we are able to run ours? With the average local supplement for Robeson County's assistant/ associate superintendents costing \$9,416 each, how can we afford the luxury of maintaining such a top heavy system in one of the state's poorest counties? These assistants and associates are obviously not helping us lower the drop out rate. What do they actually do that is worth an extra 19,416 per year (and that's only the local supplement--wages are not included). By eliminating at least 7 of these positions we can easily free up \$65,912 of local money without sacrificing any educational benefit, and in our opinion, that is exactly what we should do.

It is time for Robesonians to begin looking carefully at how their money is spent. And along this line, perhaps we should also look at the local supplement paid to the superintendent of the Public Schools of Robeson County. He currently receives \$32,356 as a supplement to the salary! Only eight superintendents in the entire state receive more (i.e. Durham, Forsyth, Gaston, Guilford, Mecklenburg, Wake Counties; Greensboro City and High Point City). While the state average for local supplement for superintendents is \$15,554, Robeson County's superintendent receives almost twice as much. Why? Some might suggest we must pay a large supplement in order to attract quality people to the position. This flies in the face of common sense. Look at what we got for \$32,356. If money is all that will attract an individual to our system, then we have a problem because that individual is obviously not what we need to lead us. And we believe everyone has now learned that money does not necessarily guarantee quality in terms of recruiting the right person for the job.

While Robeson County's superintendent and assistant/ associate superintendents receive over the state average in local supplements, our teachers, principals, assistant principals, and supervisors all receive less than the state average. So while some compromise and offer counter proposals about how our schools should be funded, let's take a closer look at how we currently use the resources we have allocated to the educational process. We feel more money must be put in the hands of those who are daily involved in the education of our children and by this we mean teachers and principals. We do not have the resources to waste local monies on maintaining our current top-heavy, inefficient, and ineffective system.

We hope and encourage the county commissioners, as directed by their constituents, to become more actively involved in redistricting taxpayer's dollars to insure education is the byproduct of our expenditures and to do this, they must also take a close, hard look at the

administration of the Robeson County school system.

You have heard a great deal of talk about Democrats scrounging around to find someone to run for office since the Persian Gulf War was so superbly handled by President Bush. And while that is true, likewise the Republicans are having a hard time, at least in our state, in finding any competent, interesting candidate to challenge Sen. Terry Sanford.

First we heard Lt. Gov. Jim Gardner express an interest in running for the Senate. We could not get too excited by the former hamburger salesman/ owner. He barely could find his way into the newspapers even though he has been Lt. Governor for the past three years and what time he was in the news, for all he accomplished, he would have been better off playing croquet in the nude in front of the nearest local Hardee's restaurant.

Next we heard from Bill Colby, who currently heads up human services in North Carolina. Judging from his past failures, we wonder why he feels we would be interested in seeing him continue his lackluster record as our representative in the U.S. Senate. He's a bland excuse for a leader and we feel he has adequately demonstrated he just misses the basic qualification for his current position: head of human services.

And now we hear from the latest and newest Republican, Lauch Faircloth. He stands very little chance of convincing the Republican Party to support such a "johnny-come-lately" especially when even the Democrats rejected his candidacy for governor. Even though Republicans like to see Democrats change their party affiliation, in the final, in the final analysis, they too dislike a turncoat. Lauch is the Democrat's Trojan Horse. He will be a handicap and an embarrassment to the Republican Party.

The only viable candidate for the Republicans is the East Carolina University professor whom no one remembers. But even he comes up short because he is basically a second-hand, recapped Jesse Helms and no one wants recaps now days especially when the original is getting such good mileage.

So while Republicans bask in the glory of the outcome of the Persian Gulf War, they too have problem in our state. Voters quickly forget military defeats and victories and turn to the men and women who can insure social and economic progress. Consequently, the Republicans can kiss their 1992 chances of taking Sen. Sanford's seat goodbye!

As we recently mentioned, Robeson County's 10 percent drop out rate was one of the state's highest, but sadly, we heard very little from our educational "leaders" about this problem. This was somehow dismissed and attributed to other factors and excused as being beyond the school's control, but when the state decided to cut educational budgets, then we hear from Richard Monroe, president of the Robeson Association of Educators. He was quoted as saying, "I am angry... I am speaking for the 1,200 members of the RAE when I say they (the legislature) should have left the personnel and the programs in place and let Senate Bill 2 (another school improvement plan) go first."

While we commiserate with Mr. Monroe over budget cuts which negatively impact education, we hide him for not similarly responding to the dismal job done by some "educators" which resulted in a dramatic increase in Robeson's drop out rate.

We too are angry. But we are angry at the failure of our educational system to educate our children. When children have problems it appears they are either labeled or ignored in the hope that they will simply go away. To our children's credit, if this is an adequate portrayal of the system at work, they do leave such a system because the system fails them.

True educators should not be silent when our children drop out of school at such alarming rates and become vocal only when their jobs might be at stake. Somehow people might get the idea that some educators have their priorities mixed up! We know for a fact that our rewards system for competent educators is defective! But, we suggest Mr. Monroe try marching on into the classroom and performing his duties as an educator and if educators are competent, then parents/ taxpayers will handle the legislature and the governor! But first, one must be convinced of competence and the record remains unclear in Robeson County!

Along The Robeson Trail

By Dr. Stan Knick, Director of the PSU Native American Resource Center

There is no good English word for "Indian." There is even disagreement about why we use the word "Indian." One argument has it that when Columbus got lost in 1492 he thought he had found India, and thus the people of the lands he "found" came to be known mistakenly as "Indians." The other argument has it that when Spanish conquistadors arrived they met people who were extremely spiritual in their everyday lives, and thus the people of this land came to be known as *in dios* (literally "in God"). In Spanish-speaking countries, the word *indios* is still used. And although the former explanation sounds logical, and the latter one sounds desirable, there is still no good English word for what we mean when we say "Indian."

Several alternatives have been offered. Perhaps the most common is the term "Native American." But there is a debate about that one, too. Some people think the word "America" came from Amerigo Vespucci, the Italian navigator and explorer whose name was written on early maps in Latin as Americus Vesputius. Other people think "America" came to us through Spanish explorers, whose word *amerrique* was used to describe a mountain range in Nicaragua, and that the Spanish word came from a Carib "Indian" word for those mountains, *americ*. Either way, "Native American" wouldn't be exactly correct for describing all the people of both North and South "America." And some native traditionalists don't want to be called either "Indian" or "Native American."

These traditionalists prefer the individual names by which each group is known, like Lumbee, or Cherokee. But there's a problem there, too. Many of the tribal or national names we use are incorrect, and often are words used by some other group to describe a particular tribe or nation. For example, the people commonly known as "Navajo" are, traditionally-speaking, Diné; the "Sioux" are more properly called Lakota or Dakota; the "Chippewa" call themselves Anishinabe; and most "Eskimos" prefer more authentic names such as Inuit or Inupiak or Netsilik. This kind of "name game" can be

pretty confusing if one is looking for a single word to describe all these people.

Alternatives which have found favor in some circles include: "indigenous" (which means naturally occurring in an area); "aboriginal" (which means first inhabitants); "native" (which means born in a certain place); and phrases such as "first citizens of the continent" or "original inhabitants of the land." But objections have been raised to all of these. And there is no good English word.

Maybe this tells us that the subject is too complex for a single word. We use the word "bird" for the flightless ostrich, the soaring eagle, the ground-dwelling quail, and the tiny speeding hummingbird; but when we do we are using a word with very limited meaning. What if the hundreds of nations of people who were living on these two continents before Europeans came were entirely too diverse to fit within one term? Would that be so bad?

Maybe it also tells us that we should stop trying to think in English. When we learn a foreign language, we are encouraged to "think" in Spanish (or whatever it is) instead of slowly translating everything into English so we can understand it. And after a while it becomes easier; we actually hear and understand in the "foreign" language. What if thinking in English just naturally prohibits us from understanding the rich diversity we mean when we say "Indian?"

And just maybe all of this also tells us that it's human nature to put names on things, to label people and places so we can begin to comprehend them, or at least be able to talk about them. After all, the "Indians" too gave names to the Europeans; and some of those labels were not exactly complimentary either. Maybe if we all spent less time putting labels on people, and worrying about which label is the most fashionable or acceptable to use, and spent more time on the people themselves, it wouldn't matter that there is no good English word for Indian.

For more information, call or visit the Native American Resource Center in Old Main Building, on the campus of Pembroke State University.



Jennifer Anne Revels

Engagement Announced

Mr. and Mrs. William Lonnie Revels, Sr. of Greensboro announce the engagement of their daughter, Jennifer Anne Revels, to Reid Scott Baxter.

Miss Revels is the granddaughter of Mr. Lonnie Gaston Revels and the late Rosa Dimple Revels and Mr. and Mrs. Willard Locklear, all of Pembroke.

Miss Revels graduated from Ben L. Smith High School in 1980 and attended Appalachian State University. She is employed by Revels Printing Company of Greensboro.

Her fiancé is the son of Mr. and Mrs. Harley Francis Baxter of Greensboro, and the grandson of Mrs. Janet Tyman of Fayetteville and the late Roy Tyman and Mrs. Winnie Brogden.

Mr. Baxter graduated from Walter Hines Page High School in 1982, and from James Madison University in 1987. He is employed by H.F. Baxter Corporation in Greensboro.

The wedding is planned for Saturday, May 11, 1991 in Greensboro at West Market Street United Methodist Church, and the reception will be held immediately following the wedding at Sedgfield Country Club in Greensboro.

READERS' FORUM

Enjoys reading satirical truths

To the Editor:
The new column appearing in the Carolina Indian Voice entitled "Joe Frybread" is beginning to get me hooked. I look forward to each issue of the paper to see what satirical truth is contained therein. The most recent one on the Academy Awards was filled with deep meaning

from a fresh viewpoint.
I hope that Joe reads this letter because I hope that he will keep sharing his observations with us.

SAM KERNS
Pembroke, NC

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