

Editorial and Opinion Page

Purnell Swett High News

The National Honor Society induction for new members was held Wednesday, May 28 at 3:30 P.M. in the school library. A candle lighting service conducted by Marcus A. Hunt was held in honor of the new members to be installed Barry Graham and Wesley Revels gave a special presentation to the senior class honor students.

Steve Lowery, a sophomore, has been selected to attend the N.C. School of Science and Math.

North Carolina Scholars for the 1997 school year were honored at a luncheon held at UNCP on May 30th.

The following students participated in the Special Olympics at NC State on May 30: Shawn Austin, Lee Blue, Lee Braddy, Jeremy Chavis, Clark G. Clark, Mike Deese, Robert Galbreath, Billy Locklear, Chris M. Locklear, Donna Jo Locklear, Fred Locklear, Sandy Sampson, Keitha Terry, Ashley Brewer, Bay Locklear, and Franklin Cummings.

The Purnell Swett High School Music Department held a spring concert on May 22, 1997. The concert consisted of eleven different groups that were directed by Ellen Jackson, Jamie Palo, and Crystal McDaniel.

The athlete's awards banquet was held May 29. Athletes of the year were senior Shawn Clark and junior, Jessica Collins.

The awards program was held May 30 in the cafeteria.

The first annual academic excellence award dinner was held on June 2 at 6:30 P.M. To start off Mr. Wesley Revels welcomed everyone and introduced the speaker for each grade level.

The speakers were ninth grade, Carmen Deese, tenth grade, Marri E. Brooks, eleventh grade, William L. Harris, twelfth grade, Delois McRae.

Mr. Revels presented a special award to Carmen Deese, because Mr. Revels forgot to put her name on the superintendent's honor roll. Mr. Revels presented the awards to the students. Then Mr. Purnell Swett gave a special speech. The closing comments were given by Mr. Revels.

Reflections

by Alta Nye Oxendine

Celebrating Memorial Day
I "celebrated" Memorial Day by getting an annual check-up at the doctor's office.

Twenty Years ago (in the 70's) I was working on the Church and Community Center van in Lumberton as a driver's helper and information counselor to the senior citizens of all three races who used the van to go to the doctor, etc.

I remember how Mr. Herman Maynor, the regular doctor, and I were looking forward to the day off from the busy schedule---Memorial Day. I've been thinking about how

glad the '90s Americans are each time a holiday gives us a break from our stressful routine.

But, when it comes to Memorial Day let's not forget WHY it was set aside---to remember the soldiers, and others service personnel, who have given their lives, in one war or another hoping to preserve the values in our still-free country.

On Memorial Day at the cemetery in Montana where my parents are buried, family members placed flowers on the graves, not just those of the soldiers like my great-grand father, Wallace Robert Hager, a civil war veteran.

PEDIATRIC POINTERS

by Dr. Joseph T. Bell
Pediatrician with Robeson Health Care



It seems like we all have had to deal with ear infections, either as parents or as patients ourselves. When I was young I remember having lots of earaches, many times I recall my mother putting sweet oil in my ears so I could get some relief. And wouldn't you know it, now my daughter has a history of recurrent ear infections.

Why is it that children have ear infections and why do some children get them more frequently than other kids? Remember that all of us, kids and adults, have a space behind our eardrums called the middle ear cavity. This cavity collects a type of fluid that is good for germs to grow in. Fortunately we all have a tube (the eustachian tube) that drains this fluid to our throat. Because this tube is very small in young children, this fluid doesn't drain very well and therefore makes these kids more prone to ear infections. As we get older, this tube gets bigger and we become less prone to ear problems. Now, it would be just dandy if age was the only factor that affects our risk for ear infection. The truth is there are several other common factors that play into this dilemma. First, we know that allergies can cause a person to produce mucous in the eustachian tube (just like in our nose and sinuses) that will lead to infection. Cigarette smoke, like allergies can cause this same collection of mucous; therefore, children exposed to smoke are more likely to have ear problems. Second, large adenoids can block the exit of the eustachian tube

in the back of the throat, again leading to infection. Third, medical studies have shown that Native American children may have a slower draining tube that predisposes them to ear infections. This last reason is probably why I saw so many ear problems while working in Robeson County and among the different tribes in Oklahoma. Fourth, allowing a baby to suck a bottle while lying flat (sending the baby to bed with a bottle) allows milk and germs to flow back up the eustachian tube to the middle ear and can lead to infection. Other less common factors that can increase the likelihood of ear problems include cleft palates, cystic fibrosis and low immune systems.

From the above information it's easy to see that the function of the eustachian tube plays a big part in the health of our ears and thus the overall health of our children. So do the obvious things that may make your child less prone to ear problems. Try not to expose your small child to cigarette smoke; if you smoke, try not to smoke in the house or in the car with a child. I know it can be hard, but try not to send your child to bed with a bottle. I've been guilty of this myself, but remember, if a bottle in the bed helps the baby sleep, they may be waking you up later with an ear infection! We will talk about allergies and its treatment in a future article, but for now remember that dust, pollen, and mold are common causes of allergies that may affect your child.

ALONG the ROBESON TRAIL

by Dr. Stan Knick, Director,
UNCP Native American Resource Center

In the past two weeks we have been looking into storytelling (centering on Abenaki storyteller Joseph Bruchac's book *Tell Me A Tale: A Book About Storytelling*). We have seen that storytelling begins with listening, and that we all have storytelling roots — sources of stories from our ancestors, our families, our homes and our own lives. This week we continue along Bruchac's steps to good storytelling.

If listening is the first step, then observing is the second. Even though most of us look around all the time, do we really see what is there? Do we become so accustomed to the things in our environment — the bluebird in the yard, the glorious sunset, the smile on an old friend's face — that we begin to take them for granted, not to see them for what they really are? To help us learn truly to see, Bruchac suggests another exercise.

This one he calls "Close Your Eyes and See." With a friend, sit in a room or some other familiar place. Close your eyes and try to call up the image of the room or other place. While your eyes are still closed, let your friend ask you about what you have "seen." They shouldn't be hard questions, just simple things you could have seen with your eyes open if you had been truly observant. How many windows are there? What clothing is your friend wearing? What's hanging on the wall? Doing this exercise repeatedly makes one a better observer.

Bruchac points out that "seeing" is not just about what is in the room or the universe around you. It is sometimes necessary to see into things:

"Those who cannot see beyond the surface are often fooled. One of the oldest stories about being fooled by not seeing deeply is the Aesop's fable of the fox and the grapes. Aesop was a storyteller in ancient Greece. His name meant 'the Ethiopian,' for Aesop had been brought as a slave from Africa, and the stories he told appear to have their roots in African traditions.... In [one] version of the story, a hungry fox sees what it thinks are grapes that have fallen into a pond. It can see them just below the surface of the water. The fox jumps in to get them but cannot find them.... The fox keeps trying, but it only gets wetter. The grapes are actually hanging from a vine in a tree over the water. All that the fox saw was the reflection of the grapes on the pond's still surface (p. 37)."

Bruchac argues that we must observe "with understanding" in order to gain a vision of what is important. Sometimes this means seeing ourselves as other see us (to paraphrase the great Scot poet, Robert Burns). Sometimes it means seeing into other people, and not only seeing a reflection of ourselves. Trying to see things from someone else's point of view can often help us see what is important in a situation. Every time we do this, we gain new understanding. Such understanding is a vital ingredient in good stories.

A crucial part of observing can happen when we take special notice of changes in our lives. This is particularly true of what have been called "rites of passage." These are times in our lives when we pass from one stage to another, for example from boyhood to manhood, or girlhood to

womanhood. Observing these "passages" or changes, as was common in all the traditional cultures of the world, helps us to understand our lives and Life in general:

"In the Native American community, it was common for a young man or a young woman to go on a vision quest when they were ready to become an adult. Adolescents would be taken out alone into the woods or onto the plain or up on a mountain, far from other people. They would be told by their elders what to do and how to act. Then they would sit in one place for several days without eating. They were supposed to listen and watch. Their job was to pray for a vision that would help them for the rest of their lives."

"Seeking a vision is not just something done by Native Americans; it is a practice found throughout the world in many cultures, including the Judeo-Christian tradition. In the New Testament, Jesus Christ goes out into the wilderness for forty days. When he returns, after hearing the word of God, he is ready to take on the work of spreading his message of peace (p. 43-44)."

Observation, whether it is simply of the things around us or of the changes in our lives, can make better people and better storytellers. Whatever we observe can reveal stories to us.

Next week we will examine more of Bruchac's ideas about stories, and move to the third step on the path to good storytelling. For more information, visit the Native American Resource Center in historic Old Main Building, on the campus of The University of North Carolina at Pembroke.

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Grand entry Friday morning Closing Sunday evening.

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