

A report on the 1997 long session of the General Assembly from Rep. Ron Sutton, District 85

Another issue that is of importance especially in Southeastern North Carolina is that of dealing with the swine or hog industry. For several years the growth in the hog industry has been significant in our region. On several occasions I have stressed to groups representing the industry and their opponents, that a compromise should be worked out by the groups rather than waiting for state of federal restrictive legislation. I understand as do most people that all the water problems in eastern North Carolina and its rivers are not caused by hog farmers, however, they are the most visible.

After much lobbying, debate and discussions compromise legislation was passed with a moratorium on new or expanding large units and establishing local county zoning authorization. Distances set back restrictions were also included.

In addition research is ongoing to try and reduce or alleviate the odor and water waste products. Also the issue of water pollution state wide is part of an ongoing study. It is interesting to note that the so called hog bill regulates more than the hog industry and places limits of how much nitrogen and phosphorous can be dis-

charged into our rivers and streams by waste water treatment plants.

On a related note, a \$1 billion Clean Water Bond Referendum stalled in the closing days of the session but is still alive for consideration in the 1998 short session.

In the area of laws affecting our youth, we passed several bills. One in particular makes it easier to prosecute store clerks who sell tobacco products to minors. It also allows the minor buyer to be charged. However, it does reduce the penalty to both the buyer and seller and even allows the district attorney to use deferred prosecution in first offense cases. These procedures were worked out as a compromise between the House Senate but in my opinion weakened the law to the point that I could no longer support it.

One area that will have a major impact on our youth is that of the Graduated Drivers License. It is in response to the high rate of auto accidents by drivers under the age of 18. Without going into every detail of the new law that goes into effect on December 1st, 1997, it is my view that, our streets should be made safer by this new law. Clearly, it will be a tremendous inconvenience to out young people as they learn to drive. Basically, it requires

a permit with stringent supervision for one year after initial application beginning at age 15 or upon initial application at any age under 18. Then there is a six month up-graded period with more relaxed procedures. Finally a third level allows young drivers under age 18 to drive without accompaniment in the vehicle. Two important things young drivers should remember are that while driving between the age of 15 and 18, all passengers must be in car seats or seat belts and any violation forces the young driver to go back to square one, the limited driving permit available to 15 year olds. Obviously the purpose of the bill is to reduce the number of accidents and deaths on our highways not as a punishment against our youth.

We enacted significant changes in the day care program for young children to raise the quality of centers and make them safer. Also judges now have more leeway in handling abused children. No longer will judges be required to reunite troubled families but can now use more flexibility in dealing with these critical circumstances involving abused youth.

In this world what matters is not to know mankind, but to be smarter on the spot than he who stands before us.
—Goethe

Human passions are quite as strongly agitated by small interests as by great ones.
—Honore de Balzac



A camel needs little water because it sweats very little and keeps most of the water that is in its body.

The most beautiful thing we can experience is the mysterious. It is the source of all true art and science.
—Albert Einstein

Life is a great bundle of little things.
—Oliver Wendell Holmes, Jr.



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Close Up seeks Native American instructors to work with high school students in Washington, DC

Washington, D.C.—The Close Up Foundation of Washington, D.C. is actively seeking a variety of individuals, including Native Americans and minorities, to work with high school students in the nation's capital for a series of week long government studies programs.

Successful candidates for the position must possess leadership skills and a college degree in political science, American history, international relations, education, or other related field. They also need a knowledge of the political process, a desire to work with high school students and the ability to work long hours. Several dozen individuals will be hired for the positions which run from January through June 1998.

The paid instructors will be responsible for leading groups of 18-22 students through a curriculum that includes daily discussions, current events seminars, study visits to historical sites in the Washington area, and workshops on Capitol Hill. Instructors will be with the students for the majority of the students week long stay in the nation's capital.

"We offer the students the opportunity to see Washington as a living city by taking them into the buildings they often see only on

television and providing them an opportunity to question law and policy-makers they may only read about. Through the experience we have found that the students return home with an interest in both national and community affairs. They want to become involved," said Tom Mangelsdorf of the human resources department at the Close Up Foundation.

Mangelsdorf said that one of the main goals of the program is to show students that each person can have an impact in the community. Native students from public and private high schools, including approximately 40 Bureau of Indian Affairs Schools, have again been invited to participate this year.

The Close Up Foundation is a non profit, non partisan organization that provides first hand opportunities to learn about the democratic process and the role of the individual. Since 1970 nearly 470,000 (including an estimated 8,000 Native American Alaska Native) students, teachers and others have taken part in Close Up Washington programs.

For additional information contact Thomas Mangelsdorf, % Close Up Foundation, 44 Canal Center Plaza, Alexandria, Virginia. Resumes may be faxed to 703-706-0000.



Carson Lowry practices at his home in front of a portrait of Bill Monroe.

Press photo by Glenn Fawcett

Bluegrass musician owes credit to Acuff and \$1.20 to Boy Scouts

By Sandra Knipe
Entertainment reporter

Roy Acuff is the reason Carson Lowry was kicked out of the Boy Scouts in Robeson County, N.C.

"My Scout dues were 10 cents a month, and I was a year behind and my Scout master said I needed to pay up. My mother gave me \$1.20 to pay my dues, but before I went to the Scout meeting, I went to town where my friend's dad ran what I guess you'd call a cabaret. I put all the money in the jukebox and played 'Wabash Cannonball' over and over. Then I was afraid to go back to the Scout meeting."

"I told that story to Roy Acuff and he got the biggest kick out of that," said Lowry, who has a million such stories born of 50 years of "Country Bluegrass Pickin' and Singin'."

He'll celebrate the anniversary with a concert/fund-raiser from 2 to 5 p.m. Sunday at the Weather Rock Corral near Warrenton, Ind.

He usually plays for free, but proceeds from the 50th anniversary concert will go to the International Bluegrass Museum in Owensboro, Ky., where he is frequent volunteer at Fan Fests and other events. The museum "needs the money," he says, so he's charging \$5 for adults (with children still admitted free).

Besides Acuff, Lowry has met a number of country and bluegrass musicians who were his boyhood idols — including the late Bill Monroe, whom he first met as a boy in North Carolina before Acuff got him kicked out of the Boy Scouts.

"I parked his car for him before a concert and asked if he'd sing 'I Traced Her Little Footprints in the Snow.' Fifty-two years later, he sang it for me again (at the International Bluegrass Music Association Awards in Owensboro)."

Lowry also has done some pickin' with Charlie Pride and "Mr.

"This Italian fellow gave me three (guitar) lessons and told me I didn't need to know any more. Of course, I've picked up a lot on my own since then. I guess you could say I have a degree in hard knocks."

Carson Lowry
bluegrass musician

Banjo" Buck Trent. Grandpa Jones was "one of the nicest fellows" he ever met, but, if he had to pick a favorite, he said it would be Doc Watson.

"He's been blind all his life, and he's one of the best flat-top guitar pickers there ever was," said Lowry, who plays the guitar, fiddle, mandolin and harmonica.

Lowry, 67, was 17 when he took his first guitar lesson in Chicago, where he went to find work.

"I had fooled around a little with the guitar before, but I didn't know the chords. I was walking down the street and saw this sign that said 'Guitar Lessons.' This Italian fellow gave me three lessons and told me I didn't need to know any more. Of course, I've picked up a lot on my own since then. I guess you could say I have a degree in hard knocks," said Lowry with a laugh.

Today, Lowry is a church-going husband, father and grandfather with a pacemaker who plays nursing homes, day care centers and vacation Bible school classes. He has a regular admission-free first-Sun-

day-of-the-month "singin' and pickin'" at either the C.K. Newsome Community Center or the Weather Rock Corral, where he often is joined by other country, bluegrass and gospel performers. He also plays for the Evansville State Hospital's annual fish fry, the Salvation Army and Red Cross blood drives.

In his wild and woolly younger days, he played in less wholesome places in Chicago and Calumet City, Ill., which he says was "a wild, mean place back in the '50s."

As for Chicago, he says he couldn't walk down the street carrying his guitar without someone yelling "Hey, hillbilly. Do you still think you're steppin' in cow patties?"

"This was before Elvis and it took a lot of nerve to carry a guitar on the streets of Chicago," he said.

"Anybody who came from outside Chicago was a hillbilly. A bunch of us lived in this rooming house and there was this one boy from Oklahoma who was homesick, so, after work, he'd go to this tavern and play Eddie Arnold's 'Cattle Call' over and over, which annoyed the locals who couldn't play their music. So they beat him up and sent word to the rooming house that we'd better not come over to that tavern."

Of course, the "hillbillies" — who hailed from Mississippi, Arkansas, Virginia, Georgia, Kentucky and the Carolinas as well as Oklahoma — went to the tavern in force and were met by an even larger show of force. As Lowry tells the story, the "hillbillies" won.

"My wife, Rosemary, was the best thing that ever happened to me. I was a tumbler, I tumbled till then. I went through so many jobs," said Lowry, a now-retired railroad worker who followed another girl to Evansville. Rosemary came into his life after his original girlfriend saw him at the Camel Bar with another girl and hit him over the head with a Coca-Cola bottle, he said.

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