

Reflections

by Alta Nye Oxendine

The Columbine Tragedy

We see an increasingly long list of terrible things that happened at Columbine High in Littleton, Colorado. Each deserves our empathic (but objective) attention.

However, at this point, I've come to believe that it must be the two families (in particular the parents) of the TWO BOYS, who killed a teacher and a number of other students (as well as injuring many more) who will have to suffer the most.

We tend to forget that EACH of these families ALSO lost a loved one! But what makes THEIR situation even WORSE THAN THE OTHERS is the nightmare they will have to live with for the rest of their lives: the knowledge that a young man who was their OWN flesh and blood was responsible for helping to cause ALL THAT CARNAGE. Also, each of these young men is now being referred to as a villain, and will be called by similar names for the rest of their family's lives! Just think of the guilt!

I can relate to this a little. After "our" accident, the highway patrolmen who had just investigated told me they thought that my son (Donny) had been driving the van. And that the van had caused the accident (Others later questioned those conclusions.)

At the point I did not even realize that anyone had been killed. In fact, I was the only person in that whole event fortunate enough to be able to handle ONE part of the tragedy at a

time instead of being told the traumatic news that they were all DEAD! This made it much easier for me to accept what had happened intellectually without going to pieces emotionally.

But I could not even STAND the thought that my OWN son could have caused one or more people to be seriously injured. When I asked about the truck driver, I was told that he would likely have to have one or both arms amputated. I could not stand that thought!

(After the accident was settled and I was allowed to call the truck driver to assure him that I did not hold anything against him, he told me that only his left arm was critically injured. And that he did not have to have it amputated. After all that time, I was relieved to know that he still had both arms!)

AT this point the parents of those teen-age bombers may not have come across as really caring about all those injured students and bereaved families. But, I'm sure that (sooner or later) they will find those multiple burdens too hard to bear. Unless they can get direct intensive grief counseling.

So I ask that each person reading this column start praying for those two families, as well as for each of the other families involved.

Next week will be national prayer week. Folk's please pray for all those who were affected by the current events over the last few weeks.

Senator Edwards Honors Families of Organ Donors

Sen. Edwards Speaks at Carolina Organ Procurement Agency's Memorial Service
 Raleigh -- Senator Edwards will deliver the keynote address to the Carolina Organ Procurement Agency's Donor Memorial Service tomorrow, April 24 at 3:00 p.m. At the North Carolina Museum of History in Raleigh. The Memorial Service is being held to honor the families and their loved ones who have given the gift of organ donation.

Carolina Indian Voice is published every Thursday by First American Publications
 304 Normal St. - College Plaza
 Post Office Box 1075
 Pembroke, North Carolina 28372
 Phone (910) 521-2826
 Fax (910) 521-1975
 Connie Brayboy, Editor
 Subscriptions
 One year in NC, \$20.00
 Out of State, \$25.00
 Second Class Postage Paid at Pembroke, NC



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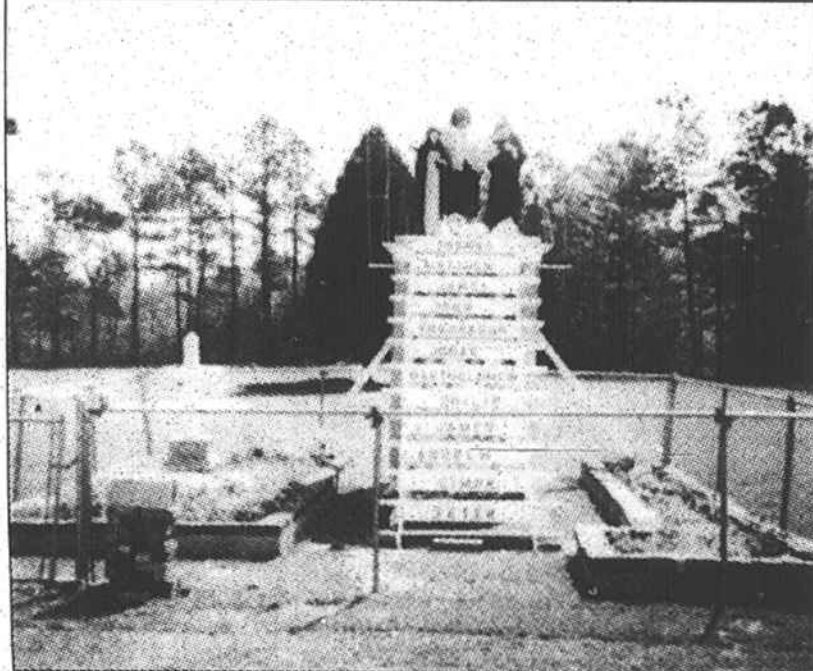
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Rev. Tessie Blue, Pastor of Back Swamp Full Gospel Tabernacle is shown atop a monument that she had erected at the Back Swamp Full Gospel Tabernacle on Highway 301, Rayham.
 Rev. Blue said that God gave her a vision of this monument to be erected at the cemetery and she worked diligently to accomplish the vision. The steps leading up to a platform where Rev. Blue is shown standing beside the seven-foot statues of Jesus and his mother, Mary, are inscribed individually with the names of the twelve disciples.

Sen. Weinstein backs crackdown on guns at school Students, school employees would face felony charges for weapons

Raleigh -- Sen. David Weinstein called on state senators Tuesday tighten North Carolina's prohibition of guns and weapons at school.
 "We should send a strong message that weapons at schools - and school functions - will not be tolerated," said Weinstein, D-Robeson.
 On Tuesday, the Senate Judiciary II committee approved Senate Bill 1096 - sponsored by state Sen. Linda Garrou, D-Forsyth - and recommend it to the full Senate for consideration. The Senate is expected to consider the bill later this week.
 Under current law, a student who brings a weapon on school grounds faces a felony charge. However, if student takes the same weapon to another public school or school event - such as an "away" football game or senior prom - the student could face only misdemeanor charges.
 Senate Bill 1096 closes this loophole.
 "Many times, school violence does not erupt in the classroom," Weinstein said. "It takes place at a school dance or after a ball game. We need to pass this bill so that students know that school and weapons do not mix."
 The bill also makes it a felony for school employees to carry firearms on school property or at school-sponsored events. Under current law, staff members with firearms would face misdemeanor charges.
 "We absolutely clear that both students and school staff are prohibited from bringing weapons into our school systems," Weinstein said.
 The bill would apply to public and private schools, community colleges and universities. It is endorsed by the N.C. Council of School Attorneys, the N.C. Association of School Boards and the N.C. Bar Association.

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This year's theme is Pregnancy: Nine Months & More

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- 6:30-7:30 Panel Presentation in the practice rooms of
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 - Pediatrics
 - Breastfeeding
- 7:30-8:30 Exhibits, refreshments, register for tours
 - Anesthesia
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