

Editorial And Opinion Page

AS I SEE IT

Bruce Barton

"Joe" Dial remembered

Just a note to mark the death of Vernie Clinton "Joe" Dial Jr., 64, of the Reo Banks Community. He died Friday of a heart attack. The reason I want to note his passing is another way of saying gently to all of us that it is very difficult to be original, to be your own man or woman as "Joe" definitely was. He was an unschooled man but one of the smartest men I ever knew. He was a dreamer, a doer, a man who took chances. He began many businesses and ventures, and enthusiastically embarked on many life adventures. His faith never wavered in his ability to get a project done. We need more dreamers like Joe Dial, not less.

It seems like all of us want to be like one another, and it frightens the bejabbars out of us to dare to be different. As noted, "Joe" Dial was one of the last remaining Original Men. We offer sincere condolences to his family and his wide circle of friends.

He was known as a great fisherman too, at least as he saw it. May he rest in peace.

Thanks to my friend, Ms. Alta Oxendine

I want to publicly thank my friend, Ms. Alta Oxendine, for inviting me to attend revival services at Sandy Plains Methodist Church recently to hear Rev. Bob Mangum preach. I wanted to, and had made plans to do so when something unexpected came up. The hindrance was not life shattering, but just one of the vagaries of life that from time to time keep us from doing what we really want to do.

This column will shatter for ever, I hope, the myth that Bruce Barton does not like white people. I like Ms. Alta and I like Rev. Bob Mangum... a lot! Their birth certificates say white, I guess, but they are devoted to the Indian community they have served so well over the years. They are both devoted Christians, in the truest sense.

One of the things I really like about me is that I have always encouraged people to do whatever they want to do, if it is not darkly evil and a threat to others. Ms. Alta has always wanted to write, and I have always encouraged her to do so. I always read her column, *Reflections*, carefully because it always tells us how she is faring spiritually. She also speaks out sharply all the time against the evils of communism. She needs to, and all of us need to be reminded more often than we are that communism is, indeed, evil and life robbing and has not disappeared as some think.

Rev. Bob Mangum can always preach to me. He has lived a useful and decent life before me. I have known him as community activist, founder of the Robeson County Church and Community Center and former pastor of Sandy Plains, First Methodist and Prospect UMC. He has always stood up for the rights of others, and I put him in the first rank of men I have admired over the years. Bob Mangum speaks to the best angels of our collective hearts. I wish I had been able to hear him preach again. Maybe next time Ms. Alta. Thanks for the invitation. It cheered my heart considerably. Your invitation stirred my heart anew and reminded me of many social and political battles that Bob Mangum and I fought over the last thirty years or so. God, where has the time gone? Ummm!

Hurricane make up days questioned at PSRC Board of Education meeting

LUMBERTON-The Public Schools of Robeson County Board of Education wrestled with how to handle make up days for Hurricane Floyd at its meeting last Monday night. Supt. Barry Harding and the board had previously designated two days as workdays for staff when schools were closed to students because of the September hurricane. But many teachers were unable to get to work those two days because of the inclement weather, or because the schools were used at the time as shelters or they did not have electricity. The board, at Monday's meeting, voted to contact the N.C. Attorney General's office for an official opinion concerning the matter.

VFW post #2843 News

by Erwin Jacobs, Post Judge Advocate

On Monday evening April 10 the 2000 the V.F.W. Post #2843 held its monthly meeting on Union Chapel Rd. in Pembroke. The meal was blessed by the Rev. Smith Locklear. The number was up a little but way down on attendance for the meetings. We have 380 paid up members for 1999-2000 year. We need to have the support of those members at the monthly meetings. We realize that some are sick and can't make it, others seem to not have the interest in seeing the post grow. I sure hope that as you read this article you are not one of the latter group. There are many avenues we need to explore at these meetings. Following dinner the ladies retired to their meeting room.

Closed session was called to order by post Commander Daniel Jones. Prayer by Post Chaplain Archie Oxendine, saluting the American Flag, reading of last month's minutes by post adjutant Calvert Jones, report by quarter master Ardell Jacobs followed next. Post member Mr. Floyd Locklear was welcomed back by post commander Jones. [He is recuperating from a collision with a train west of Maxton on December 28, 1999]. It's good to see him even though he has to walk with a walker. It's a miracle he survived that collision. Member W.D. Oxendine reported his brother was better also. The charter was draped to pay tribute to two deceased comrades as their names were called out by Commander Jones

[Leslie Meadows, Fonce Oxendine] Quartermaster Ardell Jacobs echoed absent commander. A prayer was offered in their behalf by Chaplain Archie Oxendine. I hope you read the article in the V.F.W. MAGAZINE about the Eaton Rapids Children's Home how it has grown. A prayer was said by all members for these children.

State commander Art Shull gave a talk about the V.F.W. exposing our selves more, letting the public know who and what we are about. We are there to help others in need, also we are to take on more projects to help mankind. There is a great need to raise funds for projects the post wants to accomplish. Call your post commander Mr. Jones and see how you can contribute to these worthy projects. As other discussions resumed, the committee who named the post officers for 2000-2001 chaired by post chaplain Archie was named and voted on approval by post members present at this meeting. The officers will be sworn at the next meeting, Monday, May 15th, 2000. Please come out and show your support for those officers. Accompanying this report is resumes by two young teenagers as to how we should honor America's Veterans. Hope it will enlighten every one who reads this paper to what sacrifices were made so the United States will not suffer the after affects of war.

God bless you until next week.

BECK *Serving Robeson County Over 15 Years*

CHIROPRACTIC CENTER

- Specializing In Auto Accident Injuries
- Most Insurances Accepted
- "APPOINTMENTS PLEASE"
- Free Initial Consultation

OFFICE: 739-5751
Emergency Home Number
Dr. Woodrow W. Beck, Jr.: 738-3126



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Board of Education Election Should be about Children and not about grudges or personal agendas

Dear Miss Connee:

There is much ado in good ol' Robeson regarding the upcoming Board of Education elections. Everywhere I drive I am bombarded by signs urging the people to vote for particular candidates. Evidently the politicians have taken the lead from the educators and developed their own method of the flash card technique. I am almost afraid that there may be subliminal messages inscribed within all the ads and articles concerning these candidates. Regardless of the political propaganda, I am committed to vote for the persons whom I believe to be for the best interests of our children. It is for this reason, and this reason only, that I will support any candidate.

I have read ads that would make you believe that the interests of the children are their first and foremost priorities, but in actuality there are personal agendas at work to settle the score with Superintendent of Public Schools, Dr. Barry Harding. We all are well aware of the ongoing battle between Ms. Glenna Hicks, at-large school board candidate, and Dr. Harding, and certainly we cannot forget about Mr. Patrick Bullard, District 5 candidate, and his one man assault against the school system. Here we have the "dynamic duo" who would be better suited for the WWF than Public Schools of Robeson County. Maybe things would be better if we were to ring off

a section at PSRC give 'em gloves and let 'em have at it for three good rounds. The score may not be settled, but Ali would surely be proud!

On a more serious note, I reside in District 5 and I have strong reservations regarding Mr. Bullard's reasons for his candidacy. On one hand he purports that the children are his main objective, but Mr. Bullard is in the process of establishing his residency outside District 5. It has been said that if elected, he will allow his wife and children to move while he maintains residency within the district. I wonder how can he contend to have the best interests of our children at heart, when he would choose to ignore those of his own. After all it is not in his children's best interests to maintain a cohesive family unit, instead splitting for the sake of holding political office? Common sense screams "NO-NO-NO!!" Personally I have never met Mr. Bullard, but I vividly recall his ads on the Christian radio against the school budget. I did not feel this was the appropriate place to wage any kind of war unless it was against the devil, or does Mr. Bullard perceive PSRC to be hell and Dr. Harding the devil himself? If so, I respectfully request, that Mr. Bullard go for what he's really after - Dr. Harding's job - might I suggest that a simple resume would do it. After all Ms. Hicks has let us know Dr. Harding's job is up for negotiation.

I would ask the public to use common sense judgement when voting for any political candidate. Sometimes it is better to go with what you know, rather than what might be. I have not agreed with all decisions made by the existing school board or administration, but I believe we have a workable combination that has made great strides for our school system, and will continue to do so if given the chance. Just look around and see all the renovations taking place county-wide, didn't that come as a result of decisions made by the existing board? Certainly they are not perfect, but they do a pretty decent job.

Folks, let me be perfectly frank, I am content with the service I have received from my board member, Paul Brooks, and I have yet to be convinced that he is not the man for the job. We cannot allow personalities to infringe upon tangible issues. Our children are the real issue and we cannot afford to risk them for the sake of settling someone's personal agenda. I read that a wind was blowing in by the name, Hurricane Patrick Bullard. This gives cause for great concern, for every time a hurricane has come to good ol' Robeson, it has always been followed by disaster relief. Are we really ready to usher hurricane season in early?

Wendy Moore Cummings
Pembroke, NC

Pembroke Kiwanis Report

Representative Ron Sutton was the Tuesday evening speaker at the weekly Kiwanis meeting held at the Jade Garden Restaurant. He was presented by President Todd Jones.

The last special Session of the Legislature was on Tobacco. Punitive damages was the worry of the companies. It amounts to billions of dollars, more than the companies can afford, Rep. Sutton said. Trying to avoid this, is the difficult problem and it seems a Constitutional problem, according to Sutton. Policy states that "We will not pass laws that will affect the outcome of a law suit." So a measuring standard needs to be worked out concerning the death sentence. Spending also concerns the Department of Transportation. The State has a policy of liability of up to

\$150,000 some medical bills have been over one million dollars. The state will not pay over this \$150,000. Sutton is submitting a bill to remedy the situation, liability up to \$500,000. South Carolina pays up to \$300,000. State Lottery is also on the agenda. Eighty percent favor it, twenty percent are against it. Seventy-two percent favor the death sentence. Hard to believe but the cost for execution is greater than the life sentence. Representative Sutton faces a difficult session as he is chairman of all these committees. Good luck, Ronnie.

Chairman Furnie Lambert of the Fund raising committee for this Friday's dinner/dance to be held in Laurinburg said that tickets are still available.

Song leader-Ed Teets; Invocation-Albert Hunt; Reporter- Ken Johnson.

Hunt says article misled public

The following is a letter written by Jerome E. Hunt, teacher at Purnell Swett High School. He is the son of Ardean Hunt, Candidate for an at-large position on the Board of Education. Ardean Hunt is married to Nancy Owen Hunt. This letter speaks volumes about grudge carrying candidates and the ramifications that decisions have on others. She had filed a grievance over the position of Athletic Director at Swett High. Her stepson was holding that position when her grievance was filed and settled. We perceive that Mr. Hunt (Ardean) is seeking the at-large position on the Board of Education to settle a much deeper grievance. We reprint this letter for you the voter to decide.

The letter appeared in the Robesonian on Sunday, February 27, 2000: entitled "Hunt Says article misled public."

To the Editor:
I am writing in response to an article published Feb. 20 on Nancy Owen Hunt and her settlement with the Robeson County school system.

Nancy was quoted as saying that my father, she and myself sat down to discuss the 9th grade athletic director position and decided it was the "good ole boy system" at work. This never happened. Why should I sit down and discuss this situation, knowing that she wanted my job? It doesn't make sense.

She also mentioned being harassed at school. I and other staff members are curious as to who did the intimidating and harassing.

Nancy said that she was denied an interview for athletic director. When the position became available, there was no policy requiring interviews to be given. It was an appointed position, by which the principal could pick whomever he believed to be most qualified. Based on my knowledge of

athletics, work ethic, ability to get along with the athletic staff, students, community, and my willingness to give more than what is required, I was offered the position and accepted. My job performance during the past year and a half proves I am qualified.

She stated that she had been on athletic department staff longer than anyone else at Purnell Swett but we have two basketball coaches who have each been on staff for more than 10 years. Does Nancy Hunt think that she is more qualified than I am because she has been on staff at Purnell Swett longer? Being at one job for a number of years doesn't guarantee one doing a satisfactory job.

She said she was denied an interview for driver's education. She has been teaching driver's ed since last spring. I am also a certified driver education instructor but I can patiently wait until a position becomes available instead of making demands and filing grievances.

Nancy also said it was never a personal issue with myself. The article suggested we have a friendly relationship. This couldn't be any further from the truth. Since this situation has become public, Nancy Hunt could at least be honest. It is a personal issue and will continue to be a personal issue.

I believe in equal opportunity as well, but I also feel that your qualifications should ultimately determine whether or not you are selected for a job - not your gender.

I am proud to work for the Public Schools of Robeson County at Purnell Swett High School. I want to thank the administration at PSHS for giving me the opportunity to continue in an administrative position at a different level.

Now you know the truth!
Jerome E. Hunt
Red Springs, NC

Look out for the sharks, Elian!

Rantin' and Ravin'



Garry Lewis Barton

Elian Gonzales, a six-year-old Cuban boy, was discovered off the coast of Florida, his exhausted little body hunkered down in a flimsy inner tube, after drifting aimlessly and being exposed to the elements and untold dangers for several days.

He was one of several Cubans attempting to defect to the United States when the small boat they were aboard capsized. Most, including his mother and her boyfriend, drowned.

Little Elian was taken in by relatives in the Cuban American community in Miami, many who arrived over here after making the same perilous trip across the vast, raging, angry waters separating Mima and Cuba.

So far, so good. But, unfortunately for Elian, the story doesn't end there. His father in Cuba, no doubt at Castro's urging, demanded custody.

Now, emotions run high as his relatives and friends in Miami threaten riots if the little boy doesn't remain over here and in their custody, and his father and friends in Cuba, with Castro's blessings, are protesting vigorously for his return.

On one side of the issue we have little Elian's relatives with whom he's presently living, who, as I said, are part of the Cuban American population in Miami.

They have taken advantage of the situation to tell anyone who will listen that Elian's mother gave her life so that he could have freedom. In essence, they contend that it's a disservice to the memory of the little boy's mother to send him back to the repressive, totalitarian regime of Castro.

On the other side of the issue, and the ocean, is the politically-savvy Castro, no doubt who prodded Elian's father to fight for custody.

Castro has taken advantage of the phenomenal Elian Gonzales-generated publicity to campaign for his pet project, the lifting of the US-imposed embargo.

Castro has presented the Cuban exiles over here as a common and tangible enemy his citizens can blame for the horrible living conditions in Cuba. Most of these exiles, Castro has been quick to remind his people, fought for the Torricelli Act of 1992, which stopped the flow of food and medicine to Cuba, and the Helms-Burton Act of 1996, which tightened the embargo.

Castro has long blamed the embargo for the myriad of social problems besetting his country.

Indeed, once little Elian was lost at sea, the ocean, or whatever that expanse of water separating Cuba and Miami is called.

Now, alas! He's lost in the shuffle. The Immigration and Naturalization Service has maintained that we don't have the right to kidnap a Cuban child simply because we think our political ideology is superior to Cuba's. And Attorney General Janet Reno has publicly declared that Elian will be returned to his father in Cuba.

The reason for the on-going delays is because President Clinton and Vice President Al Gore, who is running for president, don't want to alienate the many Miami Cuban American voters.

Folk, the way little Elian Gonzales has been used by everyone, who seems to have something to gain from exploiting him, is a shame and a national disgrace.

All the grownups in the deplorable debacle ought to be forced to submit to the popular young'uns - raising method called time out. Y'all need to sit down! And shut up!

Then, perhaps the absurdity of the whole mess will sink in. Perhaps their quiet time will give them the opportunity to reflect on what should be an obvious truth: **THEY'RE DEALING WITH A LITTLE, TRAUMATIZED SIX-YEAR-OLD BOY WHO HAS NOT BEEN ALLOWED TO PROPERLY MOURN THE DEATH OF HIS MOTHER WHICH HE WITNESSED!** He can't mourn her passing properly because not only has he become the focus of a custody battle, but lead actor in a foreign relations nightmare as well.

Leave him alone, folk. Send the little fella home to his daddy. Folk have been so busy exploiting him under the guise of protecting his rights, they have forgotten a most important one - the right to the pursuit of happiness. And he'll never be happy until given the chance to resume some semblance of a normal life. Over here, fame is an unremitting, cruel, immoral, and far too often, fatal taskmaster. Send him home!

The sad truth is that he was safer from sharks while floating in that flimsy, exposed inner tube than he is from the selfish, self-serving sharks in human clothing who have been circling him ever since his highly-publicized rescue.

Leave him alone, boys!
We'll talk again, folk.

Let's Keep MITCHELL "BOSCO" LOCKLEAR Working For You! Board of Education-At Large This Is A County Wide Election



FOR Experience

- Current Member - School Board At Large - 4 Years
- Businessman: Owns/Operates Sunshine Learning Center in Pembroke.
- Prospect School Advisory Council - Past Chairman
- Member/ Sunday School Teacher - Galilee Baptist Church
- Robeson County Board of Elections - Past Member
- Parent: Daughter Jessica Attends Purnell Swett High

FOR CONTINUED PROGRESS

- Our Students Are Making Significant Increases In Reading, Writing, Math and SAT scores.
- Positive Leadership Changes Have Occurred In Principalships And Other Administrative Positions.
- Millions Of Dollars Have Been Approved For New Classrooms And Other Needed Facilities.

HE SPEAKS UP FOR YOUR INTERESTS

- Continued Open, Responsive Leadership for All.
- Supports Increasing Pay Supplements For Certified and Classified Personnel

Re-Elect Mitchell "Bosco" Locklear "A Man You Can Trust"