

Editorial And Opinion Page



AS I SEE IT

Bruce Barton

Danford Dial remembered

Danford Dial was a passionate man, no matter what the venue, no matter what the moment or the issue. He was passionate about life.

He was strongly identified with the Prospect community where he grew up as a boy and later became principal of Prospect High School. He always fought for the boys and girls and demanded more from them than they initially thought they had in them to give. He set high standards for his students, first in the classroom, then as principal. It seemed that he always forced us to give our very best and then some.

I knew him as a junior at Pembroke High School in the school year 1957-58 when he taught there. What a year that was. "Mr. Dan" taught us Spanish that year because no one else was available to teach it. He taught it possibly with a Prospect accent and I still remember some of the language from the old Spanish book - El Camino Real. ("The Royal Road," as I recall) Did you know that "Mr. Dan" had a crooked finger that he often pointed at who ever he was most upset with at the moment? He cared and he could get provoked easily, especially in the classroom.

"Mr. Dan" also coached basketball for a few seasons, not many because he could hardly stand the youthful imperfections of his players. Pembroke native Paul Brooks told me a story recently of the time that "Mr. Dan" whipped him at half time for not following his Xs and Os. The moral of the story is that Paul Brooks loved "Mr. Dan", and all of his players did. and I did too, from my vantage point in the classroom, reading aloud from the El Camino Real Spanish book.

And he gave Bibles away as a Gideon, and he fought furiously to save Old Main on the UNC-P campus. I always gave "Mr. Dan", my daddy, Lew Barton, Janie Maynor Locklear, along with Brantley Blue, the lion's share of credit for saving the historic building. I can see him now marching down 3rd Street in Pembroke with a stop sign in front of him, demonstrating and raising Cain to Save Old Main, the historic building on the UNC-P campus that he cared so much about and where he got his start as a student and lifelong learner.

And he tried to stand up for Indian people at Prospect High School in the early 70s before integration confused us even more than we were confused at the time. The Civil Rights movement over ran his efforts, but he tried to be a warrior, a champion, for his people. He was way ahead of his time.

I remember him in the last few years of his life at many gospel music concerts. Both "Mr. Dan" and I love(d) gospel music, songs from the heart. We often waved across the auditorium between gospel music acts when we found ourselves at the same place and the same time. It was always good to see "Mr. Dan."

We will miss you "Mr. Dan", for your life and your passion. **Mr. Danford Dial, 80, died Friday (Nov. 10) in Southeastern Regional Medical Center in Lumberton. We extend sincere condolences to his family and wide circle of friends.**

To vote or not, that's the question!

Ranting & Raving



Garry Lewis Barton

Maybe so. I don't know. But I suspect he took the term "staff position" literally in reference to White House Aide Monica Lewinsky. And when I hear about foreign affairs during the Clinton administration I can't help thinking they're talking about all the foreign objects he allegedly inserted in various and sundry parts of her anatomy.

The new election promised to end a scandalous era. But lo and behold! Ol' Dan Rather, who's supposed to know these things, projected early Wednesday morning after election day that Governor Bush was the next President. Indeed, folk put so much stock in what he said, even Vice President Al Gore called him and conceded. For y'all not in the know, that's a fancy way of saying he cried Uncle (Sam). Then, lo and behold! Ol' Al called the "Guv" back and took back his concession.

Come to find out, the President ain't elected by folk like you and me after all. Arguing that states with more people in them had more say in electing a President than states that didn't have a lot of people in them, someone came up with the present system whereby the presidents and vice presidents are elected by something called an electoral college.

Since folk like us were set in our ways, though, they decided to let us continue going to the polls and casting our votes anyhow. But, like the case of Vice President Al Gore getting more votes from the people than Governor George W. Bush, us going to the polls and voting seems to have become an exercise in futility, what with out votes not counting, and all.

Far as I can tell, each state is allotted so many electoral votes according to its population. That's why you probably heard ol' Dan Rather talking about Al Gore receiving 55 electoral votes from California, for example. And talking about the infamous 25 electoral votes from Florida which are still up for grabs, although Bush is leading the recount presently.

Oh, yea, I almost forgot! Also, a candidate has to have 270 electoral votes to win. Vice President Al Gore has something like 260 at this time. And Governor George W. Bush, 246.

Thing is, ol' Bush's brother Jeb is Governor of Florida. And if Bush wins Florida's 25 electoral votes, which seems highly probable, he'll have 271 electoral votes. In essence, that will have allowed him to "Bush"-whack the Presidency away from the people's choice, Vice President Al Gore.

No matter the outcome, any way you look at it, it's almost as big a mess as Clinton made (and I ain't talking about the one on Monica's dress this time). And Bush nor Gore ain't even in office yet! That scares the bejabbers out of me, folk!

I'm from the old school, folk. Before all this new math, and such, I believe that most times the simple way is the best way of doing things in most endeavors, including elections.

As such, no matter who is eventually declared the President to succeed Monica Lewinsky's boyfriend in the White House, perhaps it's time to take a closer look at revamping the present electoral system of electing presidents.

They can call the body of electors that elects the president an electoral college if they want to. But that doesn't mean it's the smart way of doing it.

Perhaps one of the reasons so few people go to the polls to vote during an election is because, like happened this time when we apparently voted in vain for Vice President Al Gore to lead us, it seems like our vote probably won't count.

Perhaps it's time to return to our roots. Dismantle the Electoral College and return to the basics of a president and vice president being elected by "We, the People," like our

Silly me, when I went to the polls Tuesday, November 7th and voted, I thought it was cut and dried. U.S. Vice President Al Gore received more votes than Texas Governor George W. Bush. So I figured surely he'll be the next President to reside in the White House when current President Bill Clinton vacates the premises.

And good riddance! I must admit I was anxious to see ol' slick Willy go. Indeed, Monica Lewinsky's dress wasn't the only thing to be sullied during Clinton's Administration. So was the image of the White House and the Presidency in the eight years during which Clinton seems to have done everything imaginable -- and some not -- with and to "that woman" (and others) he claims not to have had sex with.

Founding Fathers intended. We'll talk again, folk! And vote, too. Whether it counts or not? 'Cause it's not only our right, it's our responsibility!

Reflections

by Alta Nye Oxendine

"ALMOST FIVE"

For months Byron has been telling people that he's "almost five". Well, now he can say "I'm five years old". As of Wednesday, November 8, the day after our one-of-a-kind Y2K presidential election day (Around the beginning of this year, I finally figured out what all the Y2K talk was about, shorthand for FEAR TWO THOUSAND).

After five celebrations, it has just dawned on me that (through the years) Byron's birthday and Election Day will often come within the same week. Will they be on the very same Day in 2001? Will the time come when he will be voting on his birthday?

His mother had a nice party for him at his nursery school. Grandma's Tender Loving Care. Afterward he went to Fayetteville with his parents. He seemed to enjoy "his" day.

ELECTION "MONTH"

U.S. founders planned for MOST situations, not quite ALL.

George Bush and Al Gore each seem to STILL be under fire from the opposite party, more than a week after the election was supposed to be settled and completely over.

One thing I've noticed in all of this uncertainty about who really WON

THE ELECTION is that the campaign managers have had a lot to do with advising these two candidates on what action (or actions) to take next.

For example, Al Gore had already called George Bush to concede defeat, and was on his way to make a concession speech, when his campaign manager, Bill Daley, stopped him. Perhaps it's the people AROUND these two candidates, more than the candidates themselves, who are unwilling to give up without exhausting every possibility to make sure their own party's votes get counted.

The greatest legacy JFK left (as far as I am concerned) was his challenge:

"Ask not what your country can do for YOU, but what you can do for your COUNTRY!"

I do believe our COUNTRY, even more than one party or another, is at stake at this time. (Anyhow, LIFE GOES ON!)

As you have noticed over the past 24 years, I'm more likely to express an idea that is different from what I've been hearing than I am to merely rubber-stamp somebody else's idea. I want all of us to be able to think for ourselves!

Something for Nothing

In the past I've been accused of trying to tell people how to vote, because of sharing Why I was voting for a person I believed would help keep government leaders from being overly native about the realities of Communism, but who is perceived by many non-white people to be a racist.

After studying this man, I do not believe his statements have come from that kind of attitude, but from a firm belief in conserving old-time values. (For example, the first Black student to integrate the University of Mississippi later served on Jesse Helm's staff.)

Perhaps (now that the election is over) it's okay to share with readers a matter that still concerns me: the LOTTERY.

I believe this nation used to be characterized by "an honest day's pay for an honest day's work".

But, along with stealing to support a drug habit, and cheating to get through school, many members of our nation's younger generations seem to have grown up with the idea of playing it smart, and (whenever POSSIBLE) getting SOMETHING for NOTHING.

I myself have entered sweepstakes several times as a magazine subscriber. I never won anything, but neither did I lose anything. Millions of other Americans keep investing in the stock market, which I see as somewhat of a gamble. (Of course, in this case, our free enterprise economy depends on that kind of investment.)

To me the lottery is alot more dangerous than the stock market or the sweepstakes. I understand that any kind of gambling can become as addictive as substance abuse.

Here is a headline from an Associated Press story reported by The Robesonian a year ago (October 29, 1989): "Many Americans rely on lottery, not savings, for wealth."

As I write this on ELECTION DAY, I do not know whether or not Mike Easley, who has said that he is FOR a North Carolina lottery (to be used for education) has won.

Of course I have nothing against Mike Easley as a person and I enjoyed the UNC-TV report on the lives of both front-running candidates for governor. But I do not understand how anyone can believe that raising more money for our schools is our state's residents hooked on the DAY-DREAM of "getting SOMETHING for NOTHING" (more than a dollar here and a dollar there).

The article quotes Primercia Chairman Koseph Plumeri: "If Americans understood that their chances of winning a big lottery jackpot were 10 to 20 million to one but that they could accumulate hundreds of thousands of dollars through regular saving, more families would put \$50 away rather than spending it on gambling or unneeded consumption (of things)."

In fact, a front-page article in the November 1 (2000) Robesonian says polls show that most North Carolinians agree with Easley in favoring a N. C. lottery.

That's hard for me to believe! I grew up with LOTS of saloons, even in the smaller Montana towns. Then I watched liquor become legal during my student days in Kansas (in the forties) and in North Carolina while a rural worker in Caswell County (in the fifties).

Things did NOT get better, as they were expected to do. In fact, I believe we had fewer problems, back with the "menace" of bootlegging, than we do now that liquor is CONSTANTLY available all around us.

With a state lottery in place, I fear our society will develop even MORE problems, in spite of having more money available for education.

Unfortunately, it's usually the poorer people, with the least education (whose children are likely having the hardest time LEARNING to learn) who turn to GET- RICH schemes like a lottery.

FREE THINGS TO SEND FOR

(NAPS)—Information on avoiding the dangers of buying drugs online may be found by visiting the Food and Drug Administration at www.fda.gov or call 1-888-INFORMA.



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