

Editorially Speaking

RCC Board of Trustees Members Seem To Be Held Hostage Politically

We think perhaps the editor of the daily newspaper may have "flipped his bit." In his editorial on Friday he was ranting and raving about his own poll about whether the board of trustees should dismiss Fred Williams as president. Apparently the polls were showing that many people believed that Williams should be dismissed. On Tuesday, the editor was very distraught and raving again as he released the results of his poll. Apparently, according to his editorial, over 49% of the people responding said that Williams should be dismissed. He stated that the poll had been high jacked and would have us believe that people outside of himself and his staff who were on the inside with the poll and could easily manipulate, did something wrong. Well, understanding his mentality when it comes to Blacks and Indians in positions of authority, one can only assume that he was PO'd because Blacks and Indians had the audacity to participate in his poll. Not only participate, they had the nerve to vote to dismiss Williams. If it were not that we understand the racial bias of Donnie Douglas, editor of the daily newspaper, we could be frightened by what appeared to us to be anger and malice toward people who did not agree with him. We're so sorry, Donnie, editorially speaking, we very seldom agree with you on anything.

It was your poll and however you wish to rearrange and interpret the data gathered by it, Fred Williams does not have a mandate to remain as President of RCC. We were astounded that you would present a poll and then try to control it. We don't believe that you know where any of the votes came from because if you did, as mad as you appeared to be, you would have called names and locations.

Unfortunately for the citizens of Robeson County there are several Donnie Douglases out there who have the mentality that if it "ain't white, it ain't right." In the matter of RCC, he seems to advocate a continuance of unequal hiring practices and a continuation of the "I. Murchison Biggs mentality" demonstrated over the years. You all remember him, he served as attorney for the school system at one time. He was fired by the board and an Indian was hired in his place.

We assume that caused Biggs a great deal of anger and frustration. And now, Indians and Blacks are on another board where they have to make a decision on his position as attorney. You probably also remember, I.J. Williams, who served on the county board of education. When that body was underrepresented by Blacks and Indians, neither of the two made any effort to be fair and equitable in allowing minority participation. We wonder what relation I.J. Williams is to the President of RCC, Fred Williams.....Is there a connection? Nevertheless, these same gentlemen who have never spoken in favor of minority participation in any decision making, seem to have gone to a great deal of trouble to make it appear that Tom Jones and Johnny Hunt, an Indian and a Black Trustee, are the main problem at RCC. We have just given you three major problems: I. Murchison Biggs, Fred Williams and the infamous Donnie Douglas who seems to believe that God has ordained him to use the daily newspaper to dictate who serves on what boards and who serves in what positions. And believe me, if he had his way there would be no color serving. If you doubt that, read Friday and Tuesday's editorial. Douglas sends a message that once again Indians and Blacks have gotten out of their place. We have learned to participate in a poll conducted and controlled by him.....It would be funny, if it were not so sad.

Anyway, the best we can determine the race card as the whites like to call it was played by the President of RCC, Fred Williams, when he released a report about Blacks and Indians. Then in comes the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools. How many other community colleges have been exposed to the publicity and editorializing that RCC has had to endure? And where did Lancaster come from? Check the records and see who he is politically connected to? It just sounds like the old school "I. Murchison Biggs politics" to us. In essence, the Robesonian, Lancaster and the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools seem to be holding the minorities in this county hostage. They have gone far enough to write to the board of education and the county commission-

ers and it would appear they are trying to intimidate those boards into appointing only members who will not ask questions and who will not demand that the administration, faculty and staff of RCC be reflective of the population of this county. The General Statutes of the State of North Carolina states that the president of RCC makes recommendations for hiring and the board of trustees approve or disapprove his recommendations. Why is it that our daily newspaper has not told us that? Why is it that the Southern Association has not encouraged the board of trustees to fulfill their legislated responsibility? And if I Murchison Biggs has not shared that information with the board of trustees, in a public meeting, he should step down immediately and not wait for another vote on his retainer.

We editorially commend Johnny Hunt and Tom Jones especially for refusing to be held hostage by political pressure and scathing editorials. Perhaps the RCC Board of Trustees, the County Commissioners and the Board of Education should do as they have done in the past and refuse to spend any money with the daily newspaper until they get someone in the editor's position who will be fair to all and not keep instigating, ranting about polls, and attempting to dictate who is placed in positions of authority in this county. Wake up, Mr. Douglas, the population of this county has changed dramatically. People of color are definitely the majority!! We believe that you need to join progressive minded people of all colors and let's work toward a common goal....less destructive than power broking.

We editorially call again on Fred Williams to step down because in addition to the havoc he has caused at RCC, the poll conducted by the daily newspaper says that he does not have a mandate from the people to continue in that position. OK board of trustees, be courageous. Vote not to renew his contract, and change attorneys. It would be in the best interest of the majority of our county.

Editorial And Opinion Page



AS I SEE IT
Bruce Barton

local editor says, "you're a racist"

The local editor of the county newspaper called me the other day and said he was mad as the devil, or at least that is the way he sounded. Mad. Mad. Mad. Summing up, he said, "Bruce, you're a racist." He was mad about sundry comments I had made about carryings on in Ol' Robeson. I noted that I probably was, in some ways, as all of us are, including the local editor. We all have biases, and positions that we feel strong about. And none of us are as white as the driven snow, or the local editor, as he would have me and you believe.

I will admit that the conversation hurt my feelings, but I am encouraged that Donnie Douglas and I are able to talk, to communicate, even to disagree agreeably. I believe that dialogue is the answer to most of our ills.

I will admit to being a stong advocate for Indian people; I have always been that way and I do not anticipate me changing appreciably in that regard. I feel that it is my historical responsibility to speak up for Indian people. My daddy, Lew Barton, did it, and his daddy (Harker Barton) did it too. It's something in our genes, I suppose. From time to time, as the record shows, both were, when they advocated strongly for their people, also labeled "racist." It is one of the easiest charges to make, and one of the hardest to defend. Defending it is not pleasant, and gives credence to the matter in the defense of it. I usually say little about it because every Robesonian is entitled to their opinion, whether I agree with them or not. I can't remember who said it at the moment, but I read somewhere where someone was quoted as saying, "I don't agree with you but I will defend to death your right to do so." That's kind of how I feel about the episode with the local editor. I disagree with him, in the main, but I will defend his right to say whatever he wants to. I just appreciate him for not shooting or lynching me. I feel like we are making great progress.

Douglas and I disagree with the Robesonian's coverage of two individuals. One is Fred Williams, the nice, white president of Robeson Community College; the other is the equally nice Dr. Barry Harding, the Indian superintendent of the Public Schools of Robeson County. I believe the Robesonian is biased in its coverage. On the one hand, the newspaper has editorially called for the dismissal of some of the RCC trustees (at least two of them minorities, one an Indian, the other Black), and an extension of William's contract, all at the same time. On the other hand, Harding has been editorially pilloried on a number of occasions, and held accountable for everything imaginable in the school system; including low performance of students and teachers.

It is amusing to me. The Robesonian newspaper has been unyielding in calling Harding to task, but wants the RCC trustees, at least some of them, to step down (PRINCIPALLY A CERTAIN INDIAN AND A CERTAIN BLACK) just after they extend Williams' contract as president, even though the community college is on probation for SACS infractions, or infractions as they see it. The Carolina Indian Voice has editorially supported Harding whenever possible, and called for Williams to step down because the president's office ought to be where the buck stops. AT LEAST THAT'S WHAT THE ROBESONIAN SEEMS TO SAY CONSTANTLY ABOUT DR. HARDING.

Let's support both President Williams and Superintendent Dr. Harding

Nevertheless, I see a way out of our racial morass, if you're interested Mr. Douglas. Why not join me and call on the citizens of Robeson County to extend the contracts of both Williams and Dr. Harding and lay down our mutual racial biases and then support both of them fully with all of our talents and

energies and good will. We shouldn't pick and choose. Both President Williams at RCC and Superintendent Dr. Barry Harding of the Public Schools of Robeson County deserve our mutual support. Anything less is less than they (and you and I) deserve.

And, finally, in a personal note to Mr. Donnie Douglas, editor of the Robesonian, thank you for agreeing to disagree with me. I am encouraged, and hope you will call again when you are good and hot about something I have written. That's progress, as I see it. I reserve the same right and privilege. Amen!

Letter to the Editor Educator encourages support of Barry Harding

To the Editor:
I am writing this letter as a concerned citizen. My concern relates to the situation that the community currently finds itself in regarding Dr. Barry Harding's leadership as Superintendent of the Public Schools of Robeson County.

I had the distinct privilege and honor of serving Robeson County children as principal for eleven years. Those eleven years were some of the most rewarding years in my career, and I have fond memories of the students, parents, and citizens of Robeson County. Based on this, I will always be concerned about what is happening in Robeson County.

Barry Harding and I served together as principals in Robeson County for a number of years. Through this professional relationship, we have developed a life-long friendship. In the eleven years that I have known Dr. Harding, I have grown to admire him as a true professional that cares deeply for all children. He is also a devoted father and husband who many times places these roles behind his deep seeded concern for his commitment to the needs of all the children in Robeson County. This devotion to his professional calling also takes a much more prominent place over his health and well being than his friends and family would prefer.

Public education in Robeson County, I believe, is at a crossroad,

and the decisions that are made in the next few months will have a lasting effect on the community and, more particularly, the children. Under Barry Harding's leadership, Robeson County has made tremendous progress; yet, there is still alot that needs to be done. His leadership and commitment have made a difference in the past, and he will make a difference in the future for all children. His passion and devotion toward this calling is something that I respect.

The time has come in Robeson County to put all children first. The time has come for all the citizens in Robeson County to put aside differences and to look for the common bond that holds us together as a community. The time has come to set aside the attitude of the past and to resolve to create a new attitude for the future, an attitude that will be built around trust and commitment.

I encourage you, the citizens of Robeson County, to support Dr. Barry Harding as your Superintendent of Public Schools. I strongly recommend to the Board of Education to also support him and give him your endorsement for the future. I certainly don't ask this as Barry Harding's friend, but rather as a colleague that understands his commitment to the children that he so ably serves.

Sincerely,
Anthony L. Parker, Ed.D.

A Brave Perspective

By Benjamin Howie

The news came to my ears not long ago that our Jones store would be closing down. I very quickly became interested in knowing what would replace it. In a town with very few franchises, and much independent ownership, I pondered on the thought of a Wal-Mart or Kmart. Would that be a good idea for Pembroke? Money made by a Wal-Mart is going to be less distributed throughout our community, while money made by local owners, who live here, and buy their groceries here, and buy their house here, is redistributed throughout the community.

However, the reverse side of that coin always flips to convenience. It would be nice to have a superstore right around the corner for all of our endless needs. It would bring jobs into the community, and draw more attention to the area for other prospects. How bout that Huddle House? I am all for the Huddle House for the simple reason that it will be owned by local inhabitants. The money from the Huddle

House will in many ways come back to the community simply because of local ownership.

There is nothing wrong with a big commercialized city. As a matter of fact, sometimes they are more convenient, and provide easier solutions to everyday tasks. However, it is so nice to live where they still pump my gas, and the barber knows my name. It is nice to live where I know every stoplight, and how to dip in and out on the back roads to miss them.

What will we all do for the little things we need that Jones supplied for so many years? Will we drive to Lumberton to visit their Wal-Mart or Kmart, or will someone rekindle the flame that burns a little less bright everyday and open up shop to keep this little town united in the name of bare essentials and discount prices? After all, there is nothing wrong with moving into the 21st century, but let us not allow the 21st century to move in on us.

Lumbee Tribal Rolls Remain Open

The Board of Directors of Lumbee Regional Development Association approved an extension of the application deadline for tribal membership. The Tribal rolls will remain open 90 days to allow those individuals who missed the first deadline another opportunity to apply for Lumbee enrollment.

The deadline date for Lumbee enrollment application is April 12, 2001. If anyone needs enrollment information, please contact the Lumbee Tribal Enrollment Office at (910) 521-2462.

Native American Club at School of Science and Math to sponsor Annual Pow Wow

Greetings
The Native American Club, Akew:kon, at the North Carolina School of Science and Mathematics will be hosting our tenth annual powwow on Saturday, February 17, 2001. We are hoping for lots of good singing and dancing as well as displays of Indian arts and crafts. Grand Entry for dancers will be at 1:00 pm. Our building, the Physical Education Center, will be open at 9:00 am. We would like to invite you to join us for this occasion. Please help us spread the word!

Our host drum this year will be Dau-Ta-Noh Jr.'s. This is a dynamic drum composed of members from the Lumbee, Tuscarora and Coharie Tribes of North Carolina. We are sure to have some fine singing in the Northern Plains tradition from this renowned group of singers. We anticipate that Kau-Ta-Noh Jr.'s will be joined by several other drums, both Southern and Northern, so that we will have lots of variety in our music. We are excited this year to have a group of outstanding Native Americans join us as our head staff. Keith Colston (Tuscarora/Lumbee) will be sharing the Master of Cer-

emonies job with Derek Lowry (Tuscarora Nation of North Carolina). Brandon Locklear (Lumbee) will be our Head Man Dancer. Stephanie Hora (Coharie) will be our Head Lady Dancer. Archie Lynch (Haliwa-Saponi) will be our arena director.

The School of Science and Math is a residential school for eleventh and twelfth grade students from throughout North Carolina who show particular talent and potential in the areas of science and math. We would like to make our school better known in North Carolina's Indian communities. This is one of the major purposes of our powwow. We hope that through such efforts, we can attract more Indian students to apply to our school. We also want to make the point that once Native American students enroll in the School of Science and Math, they will find a supportive atmosphere as well as other Indian students interested in the advancement of their people and their culture. So, come join us on the 17th of February and contribute to the good time.

The Native American Club
Officers and Advisor



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Native American POWWOW

The North Carolina School of Science & Mathematics
Charles R. Eilber Physical Education Center
Durham, North Carolina
February 17, 2001

Intertribal Dancing 1-5 pm, 7-10:30 pm Feast for dancers and singers 5:30-6:30
Arena Director: Archie Lynch (Haliwa-Saponi) Host Drum: Kau-Ta-Noh, Jr.'s (Lumbee, Tuscarora, Coharie)
Masters of Ceremonies: Keith Colston (Tuscarora/Lumbee) Derek Lowry (Tuscarora Nation of North Carolina)
Head Man Dancer: Brandon Locklear (Lumbee) Head Lady Dancer: Stephanie Hora (Coharie)
Indian Arts and Crafts Traders by prior approval only. No contests, just plenty of good singing & dancing.
Traditional give-away for singers and dancers.
Information: On Weekdays - Joe Liles at 919-286-3366. Nights and Weekends - Joe at 919-286-9401.
Admission: \$3. 5 and younger free (All proceeds go to support the powwow).
This will be a traditional Indian gathering.

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