

Editorials

Student Transfers - A Significant Problem

Late last summer, the parents of some 40 Madison County school students in the Sandy Mush area filed formal requests with the county board of education asking that their children be granted permission to transfer to, or remain, in Buncombe County schools. They cited various reasons for their actions including long, tiring bus rides over "unsafe" roads, disruption of cultural and social life associated with Buncombe County over a number of years, and a general feeling that it was "in the best interest of their children" to attend Buncombe schools.

The parents and the school board went to court over the matter, and a consent agreement was drawn up which said, basically, that the majority of those particular students would be reassigned to Madison schools beginning this fall. (A few students were exempted from the "court order" because they would be finishing high school or the last grade of an elementary or middle school this year in Buncombe.)

The school board later sent registered letters to parents involved in the court proceedings informing them that their children are to return to Madison schools this August. At least seven of the letters have been returned to the board as unclaimed mail.

During both the May and July school board meetings, parents from other parts of the county requested transfers for their children to schools in surrounding counties. Their requests were denied by the board with board members saying they "stand on the court order" as if it provided a blanket coverage for all students in the county. It does not. It applies only to those students named in it.

That's some of the history and background. What concerns us today is there seems to be a growing number of parents who are becoming more determined to remove their children from the county school system. While they cite late buses and unsafe road conditions, or simple inconvenience, as their reasons, we are left with a feeling that there are other reasons or motives for their desire to transfer their children.

Some individuals have not been so subtle and have plainly told us that they want their children to attend another system in order to get courses that aren't offered at Madison High. Some have said they don't like certain policies at a particular school. Others have said they are fed up with politics in the system at the expense of the students.

We don't mind being an attentive listener to those who have complaints about the school system, but when we're asked to "do something about it" because we are a newspaper, we think an explanation is in order.

First, we are not in the school system business. Our business is running a newspaper. That business involves printing the news, reporting the facts. It also involves keeping our readers informed of town, county and school decisions that affect their lives. In addition, we serve as a sounding board for people through our "Letters to the Editor." We also feel an obligation to reflect the moods of the community; hence this editorial.

Secondly, the board of education, school administrators, and ultimately, county citizens are in the business of running the school system. We point out that citizens are also in that business because they elect the school board to do that monumental job for them. And, we remind taxpaying citizens that they help run the system by paying federal, state and local taxes which supply the salaries and equipment for school operations.

But back to our basic concern — that there is a significant discontent with the school system as it now stands. Perhaps a concerted effort on the parts of all parties involved in the school system business would bring about conditions which would reduce the discontentment and put a stop to the "out-flow" of students to surrounding counties.

We suggest the school board and school administrators practice the art of attentive listening when parents come to them with complaints or suggestions, and try to fathom the "why" — the underlying cause — of a parent's request. Falling back on "We've always done it this way; I don't see the need to change it now" is not very indicative of understanding a changing society.

We also suggest that parents and citizens take their concerns directly to school officials and "lay their cards on the table," publicly if the situation allows it, in order to let elected school officials know how their constituents feel and what they think.

Perhaps some basic, honest, real communication between everyone involved in the school system will bring about conditions that everyone can live with. We think everyone stands to benefit if the efforts are made — particularly the students.

Heard and Seen

By POP STORY

For the past several weeks Marshall and Madison County have experienced record-breaking temperatures of 90-plus in the daytime and really not much cooler at night. The humidity has been high and air-condition systems have been put to the test.

It's really been too hot to get out and "see and hear" very much. Having been

"under the weather" for several days I thought perhaps a few pictures taken from The News-Record might help keep us cool as we look back to January, 1977, to see what sort of weather we were experiencing in Marshall.

Just look at the pictures below... maybe they'll cool you off a bit.



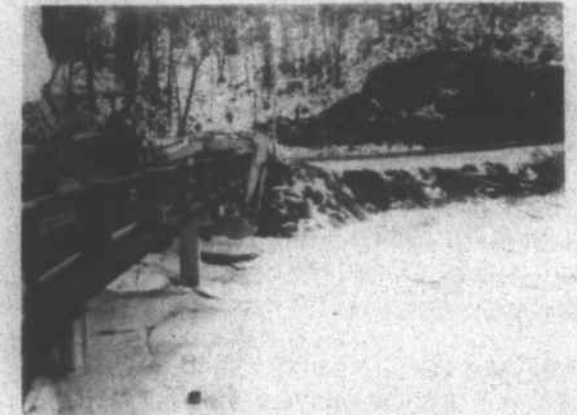
YOUNGSTERS living in the Walnut Creek Housing Project are shown with "Chester," a 5-foot high snowman.



FROZEN over French Broad River taken from bridge looking toward dam at Marshall.



MORE THAN 25 ducks are shown in the ice at Rollins where they resided for several days.



WORKMEN shown repairing bursted water lines on bridge in Marshall.

Living and Growing

Affairs Are A Common Thing

By CARL MUMPOWER
M.S.W.

Why do we have them? I first tried to find an answer by going down to the local drug store and asking people, but of the first 10 people I asked, 2 turned dark red and slinked out of the door, 1 took a swing at me, another asked me if I knew where the baby formula was located, 1 dropped a jar of vasoline on my foot, 2 threatened to call the police, and 4 got real excited, asked me how I knew, and began begging me not to tell on them.

I gave that up in a hurry, wiped the vasoline off my shoes and retreated to my typewriter to think it through myself. So, without statistical data to support me, I thought I would share some of my own thoughts on why people have affairs.

1) Fun and excitement no doubt about it, affairs can be fun. The newness, danger, and excitement can be a real turn-on. Now the fun is hostile, in that people usually get hurt one way or the other, but nonetheless this is a prime reason behind many affairs.

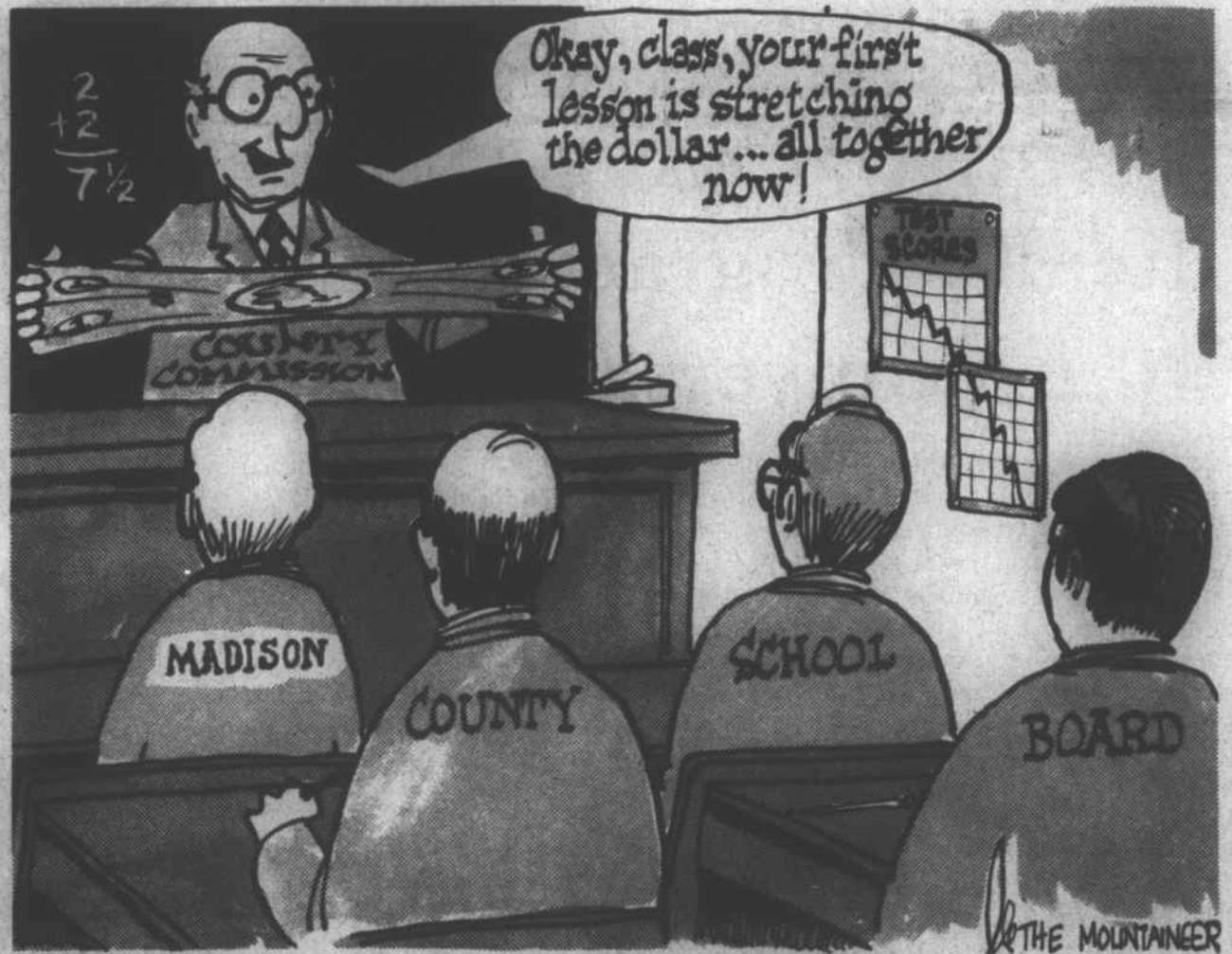
2) Self-destruction — Believe it or not, but a lot of us go through life making subtle efforts to do ourselves in. For one reason or another, we do things that undermine our emotional stability, credibility and well-being. Affairs, like cigarettes, fast driving, and taking long walks in the wrong neighborhoods, are excellent ways of sabotaging our lives. The underlying reasons are very complex, but they have something to do with having basic dislike of ourselves and confirming it by doing things that are basically "dislikeable."

3) Resentment — Living with a person over time is bound to produce at least some resentment, but when this resentment reaches extreme degrees, we often make an effort to take it out on the other person. Having an affair can be a good way of paying back your spouse for all of the "dirty" things that they have done to you through the years. It's a childish process, but not uncommon.

4) Power — Being able to emotionally and sexually seduce another person, can be viewed as a token of our personal power. Thus we see many who make an active effort to make conquests through affairs for this reason. Middle-aged men, insecure younger men, and divorced women who may have been put down in their marriage quite often take this approach.

5) Avoidance — This one is a biggy. Affairs can be an excellent way of avoiding intimacy, personal responsibility, potential hurt or pain, and other things. The superficiality and temporary nature of affairs lends itself quite well to avoidance.

I'll leave it up to you as to whether you feel affairs are worth the price. But do be aware that there is a price, and often it is one that we can ill afford to pay. Then too, you never know who you might run into at the local drug store asking funny questions.



Raleigh Report

By Ernest Messer

The General Assembly adjourned on Friday after a 127-day session.

A Fall 1981 session is scheduled for Nov. 16, to consider only budgetary matters. The date for the 1982 session is June 2, 1982.

During the current session, 2,155 bills were introduced and an \$11.7 billion budget was enacted.

Consideration of pay raises for teachers and state employees and reduction in class size in the public schools were deferred until the Fall session at which time pay raises will be given first priority.

Bills to increase the tax on alcoholic beverages and to levy a mineral depletion tax, both parts of the governor's tax package, were deferred until November.

The Senate carried over until the 1982 session a House passed bill to permit counties to vote on whether or not to levy an additional one cent sales tax.

After session-long debates

and much maneuvering, a bill to prohibit insurance premium surcharges on drivers with clean driving records and to continue the cap on insurance premium increases was enacted.

A study commission has been authorized to examine insurance problems and report to the 1983 General Assembly. The Study Commission on Aging will be continued.

The bill to increase the homestead exemption for persons over 65 has been deferred until the November session. This deferral creates no problem since the new schedule would not go into effect until Jan. 1, 1982.

A bill was passed to permit volunteers working for government agencies or for non-profit charitable organizations to deduct 16 cents per mile from their income tax for travel expenses.

The Department of Agriculture had a first priority in budget requests for \$4,120,000 to build a horse show arena at the fairgrounds

in Raleigh, and the Department had the votes in the General Assembly to pass the appropriation.

It was our opinion that if such facilities were to be built anyway, Western North Carolina should have a share in them.

Commissioner Graham was persuaded to divert \$1,650,000 of the appropriation to build a Horse Show and Livestock Facility on State land near the Asheville Airport.

The General Assembly also had to bail out the North Carolina Symphony with a \$1 million annual appropriation and to provide a million dollars to keep the Wildlife Commission in operation.

A three cent gas tax increase will provide the Highway Department with an additional \$88,000,000 for roads and municipalities with \$11 million for streets.

Eleven million dollars of the highway funds are designated for secondary roads.

A congressional redistricting plan has finally been worked out and enacted. The only change in the West was the shifting of Avery County from the 11th to the 10th Congressional District.

After four years of work, a Ski Area Safety Act has been passed. The bill outlines in some detail the duties and responsibilities of both the Ski Area Operator and the skier.

We in the General Assembly have, under the circumstances, done the best job we know how, or the best we could considering the fact that what we did had to be approved by a majority of 170 legislators, all from different areas and all having varying ideas and opinions.

It is now the public's turn to evaluate. Some of you will be pleased; some will be disappointed and even angry. But remember that the view is considerably different if you are inside looking out than it is if you are outside looking in.



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G. NICHOLAS HANCOCK, Editor

JEAN BLANKENSHIP, Office Mgr. JULIA WILLIAMS, Advertising Manager

JAMES I. STORY, Editorial Consultant
And Columnist

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