

Edmisten: Education Will Be Top Priority

Improvements in North Carolina elementary schools will be Rufus Edmisten's top priority as governor. The state Attorney General made the pledge during a campaign swing through Asheville last weekend.

In an interview with The News Record, Edmisten said, "Education has got to be our top priority in the coming years. I believe that the time has come for a return to basics in our schools. Our university system is in good shape. It's time we concentrated on our youngsters. The most important part of our educational system is the elementary schools, grades K through eight. If a child hasn't developed the

necessary skills in those grades, you've lost them."

A former third-grade schoolteacher, Edmisten said he would urge the schools to focus attention on developing students' communication skills. "It's terrible to see kids coming out of high school who can't even write a complete sentence. I'd like to see the schools get back to requiring the kids to diagram sentences. I'm probably the only candidate running for governor who has called for a return to diagramming sentences."

Edmisten said that he would not propose any new taxes to pay for improvements in educa-

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RUFUS EDMISTEN

Ackley Found Guilty

Richard James Ackley was convicted in Madison County Superior Court last week on three counts of damage to property and two counts of breaking and entering.

Judge William H. Helms, Jr. sentenced Ackley to two years in jail for the misdemeanor breaking and entering convictions and one year for the damage to property charge. The sentences are to be served consecutively.

In addition to the prison sentence, Ackley was ordered to pay \$160 in restitution to the owners of the homes in the Spring Creek section which he was convicted of illegally entering.

The court recommended that Ackley be eligible for work release and gave him credit for 125 days he spent in the Madison County jail while awaiting trial.

Following the Ackley trial, the court heard testimony in a case involving Joel Edwards. As a result of plea bargaining in the case, Edwards, who was

originally charged with the sale of a controlled substance, was allowed to enter a guilty plea to a misdemeanor charge of possession of drug paraphernalia.

The court gave Edwards a six-month suspended jail sentence and ordered the 17-year old to serve two years unsupervised probation. In addition to the suspended sentence, Edwards was fined \$50 and ordered to pay \$400 for the services of his court-appointed attorney. He was also ordered to attend Alcohol and Drug Education school and pay the school's \$100 tuition fee. He was also ordered to complete high school and not to enter property of the Madison County school system without permission.

In the only other trial heard during last week's special session, a jury found Joseph Ross Chandler not guilty of charges of discharging a firearm into an occupied vehicle and damage to property.

Pop Story

A 60-Year Love Affair With Madison County

By BOB HURLEY
The Greenville Sun

He has no children, but just about every man, woman and child in Western North Carolina calls him Pop.

Go to Marshall or to anywhere in Madison County, from the most secluded creek to the highest mountain top over there, and you'll find someone who knows all about Pop. You don't have to ask for James I. Story. Pop is all you need.

Pop Story started newspapering in 1924 when he was 12 years old. The ink not only got into his blood, it took over his heart. He fell head-over-heels in love with it. He was the newspaper industry's sole representative in Madison County for ages until his retirement from it a few years ago.

Pop's a printer now, an old-time printer. His trade died a generation or so ago, or the way he does it died. But Pop didn't participate in the funeral. He was too busy printing the old-time way.

So, he just kept on spreading ink, making signs and posters and letterheads and everything else in the world of words, doing it with hand-set type, antiquated type-setting machines, ancient presses and

doing everything else there is to do as a one-man show.

The real story of Pop is another about love. Everyone loves Pop, from the governor to the kids in the mountains of this high country place.

His work was a lot like a tight-rope situation. As head of the newspaper in a county that was pretty widely known for its moonshiners and overzealous politicians for many years, Pop maintained his position on the sunny, positive side of the street. While other newspapers and magazines sent teams of reporters and photographers to Madison to sensationalize many stories, Pop took a non-partisan stand in politics and stuck to reporting the facts as objectively as he knew how.

Besides, moonshine and politicians are not the stuff that love stories are made of. Love stories are about people who love other people and love stories are also about people who love places. That make Pop Story's love story a double whammy because he loves these Madison County people and he loves these Madison County places.

The love affair started when H.L. Story, Pop's pop, bought The News Record and moved

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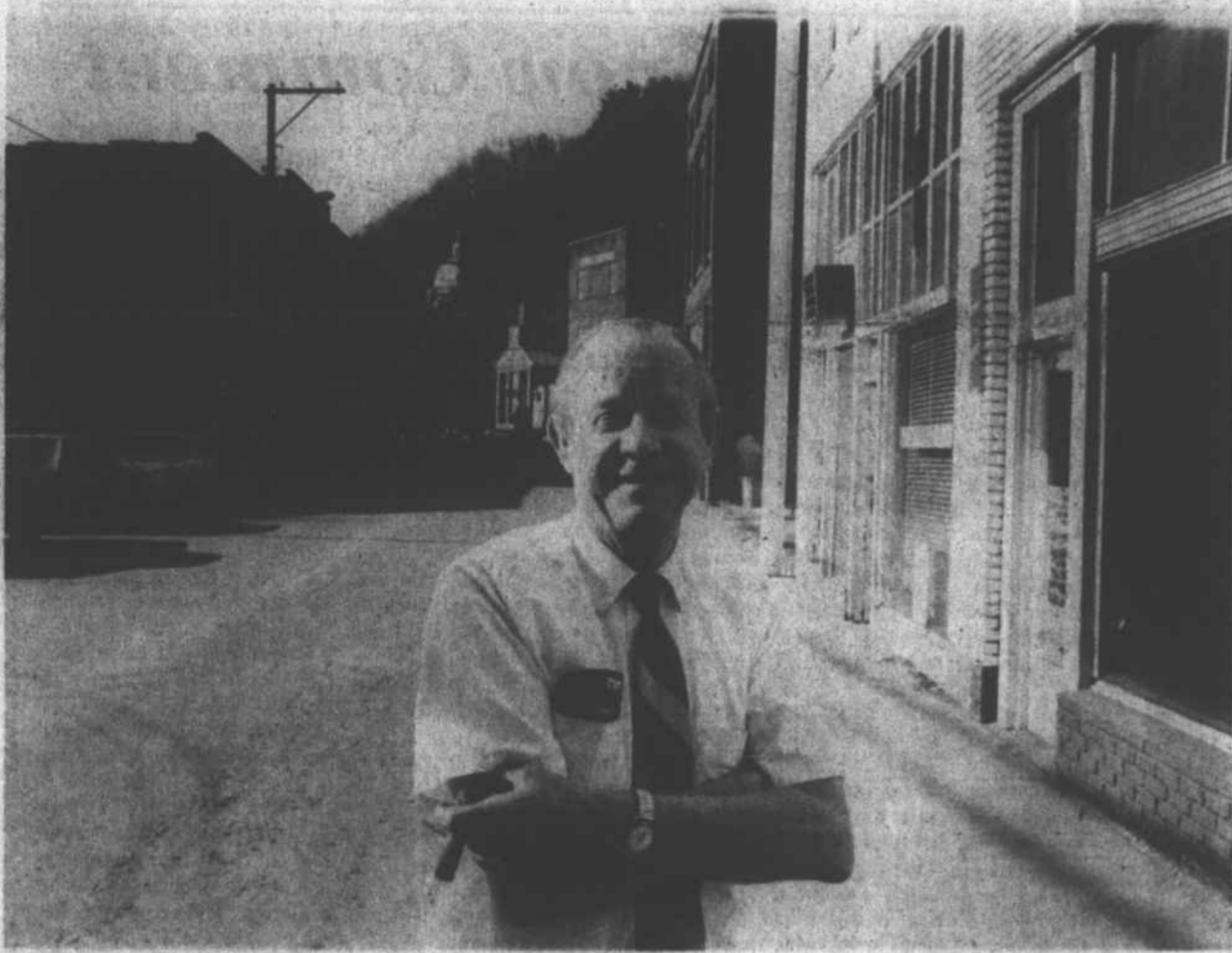


Photo by Bob Hurley

POP STORY

W'Ville Puts CP&L Request On Hold

Weaverville officials put a right of way request from Carolina Power and Light Co. (CP&L) on hold at their monthly meeting Monday night. The utility has requested a right of way through town property south of Weaverville where the town has a well and filtering station.

CP&L has asked for a right of way on a 200-foot section of town property located off Terrace Lane. The right of way is needed for the utility to provide service to customers on property adjacent to the town's lot.

Mayor Lawrence Sprinkle said, "When you give them the right of way, for all practical purposes, you're giving the land away." Although there was no objection to the request, several members of the town council asked if the utility could use an underground right of way instead of constructing power poles across the town land. Councilman Glenn Brank suggested the utility consider the underground right of way and the board deferred a decision on the request.

Jerry Gordon came before the board asking for clarification of the status of the road on which he lives. Gordon showed board members a county tax plat of his property on Wildwood Park. He told the council, "We'd like to know where we stand as taxpayers and residents of Weaverville." He asked if his road was a private road or a town street.

Town manager Larry Sprinkle said that there are several such roads within the town which were created by subdividing property. Sprinkle said such roads were created by the subdividers and are not town streets. "The right of way given you the right to get into and out from your property or to allow the power company to install lines. The right of way belongs to all the adjacent landowners."

The right of way on Wildwood Park where Gordon's home is located is 30 feet wide. The council told him that the town no longer accepts streets with less than a 40-foot right of way. In order to be accepted as a town road, current town policy calls for the property owner to build the road to meet state specifications and deed the right of way over to the town. In return, the town will then accept responsibility for maintaining the street.

The council said they will study Wildwood Park to determine what steps Gordon and the other four homeowners on the road will have to take.

The council will also be studying a thoroughfare plan prepared by the state Department of Transportation. Larry Sprinkle told the council that Larry Goode of the state DOT office in Raleigh will attend the March meeting of the board to discuss the plan.

The council also discussed water and sewer projects during Monday night's session. In old business, town manager Larry Sprinkle reported that the town's policy for sewer line connections were in line with other WNC communities and recommended the town retain its present \$75 tap fee.

Sprinkle also reported that the town had decided not to proceed with repairs to the sewer line at Lake Louise after learning that repairs would cost about \$11,000. Sprinkle also reported that the town has reached an agreement with Asheville for having the town's septic tanks cleaned out using Asheville's equipment. The sewer cleaning will have to wait until winter.

At Larry Sprinkle's request, the council also approved funds for a study of the town's water main system. "I think we have to look at a long-range plan to look at a long-range plan to look at a long-range plan."

Governor's Education Commission To Recommend A Return To Basics

By TODD COHEN
The News and Observer

North Carolina public school students would receive more instruction in the basic skills of reading, writing and math — and in how to apply those skills — under curriculum changes tentatively endorsed last week by a state commission, members of the commission and its staff say.

The curriculum plan, endorsed Tuesday by Gov. James B. Hunt Jr.'s Commission on Education for Economic Growth, also would provide uniformity in the curriculum taught in public schools throughout the state, commission members said in interviews.

Jay M. Robinson, superintendent of the Charlotte-Mecklenburg schools and a commission member, said the current statewide curriculum does not detail what teachers should teach and what students should learn.

"We're graduating many people from the high schools

in North Carolina who have not mastered reading, reading comprehension, math computation skills and science skills at a sufficient level to successfully participate in society and life in the future," Robinson said.

"The expectation that those (basic) skills are universally taught is adding that the current curriculum is 'more or less a suggested guide. We need to have a more specific (required) curriculum.' The commission Tuesday tentatively endorsed a proposal to ask the State Board of Education to rewrite the state's curriculum and establish new requirements for promotion and graduation.

The commission, a group of education, business and community leaders appointed by Hunt, is scheduled to meet March 15 to vote on its final report, which would be issued April 5.

Under the commission's tentative plan, the board would outline in greater detail the knowledge and skills

expected of students in all courses and subjects offered in the public schools.

Currently, the State Board of Education suggests — but does not require — a curriculum to be taught in Tar Heel schools for all grades from kindergarten through high school.

For example, the curriculum for reading instruction suggests that a student in kindergarten through third grade learn to "use resources." It suggests that a teacher measure a student's skill in using resources by how well the student can find information in a telephone directory, such as emergency phone numbers, or a friend's number or where to buy a pet rabbit.

But because the curriculum is merely suggested and not required, a teacher in one school might teach the lesson on using resources, including use of a telephone directory, while a teacher in another school might not.

Using a required

curriculum, as proposed by the Hunt commission, all teachers could be required to use the lesson.

Roy H. Forbes, director of the Hunt commission staff, said the public schools have improved the instruction in basic skills and noted that many teachers already successfully teach students how to apply those skills.

But he said the lack of a uniform curriculum detailing the instruction required in basic skills and in the application of those skills results in the failure of many teachers to provide adequate instruction.

For example, he said, few students learn how to write an essay through the process of preparing an outline, writing a rough draft and then rewriting a final draft.

The new curriculum could require instruction in that process, he said, rather than merely recommending it.

Now well students mastered the skills outlined in the new curriculum would be

measured by new tests that would be required for promotion from grades three, six and nine.

The tests would identify strengths and weaknesses of students and teachers — and hold teachers more accountable for the caliber of their teaching, commission members said.

"We need to build in a system of accountability to see that it's taught," Robinson said.

Bruce Stewart, provost of Guilford College and a commission member, said the tests would help reduce social promotion of students who advance from grade to grade without being held to rigorous standards of academic performance.

"Teachers are in effect letting students slide through the system," he said.

The plan also would ensure that schools across the state are teaching the same curriculum, officials said.

"The idea behind all this is to guarantee some uniformity

of instruction across the state," said Donald D. Jones, superintendent of the Asheville City Schools in Buncombe County and a commission member.

"What we're talking about," said Howard Maniloff, special assistant for policy development to the state superintendent of public instruction, "is making sure that there's a core of competencies that every kid in North Carolina has an opportunity to learn, regardless of where the kid happens to go to school."

Maniloff noted that the N. C. Department of Public Instruction is preparing a new curriculum at the request of a subcommittee of the General Assembly's Public Education Policy Council.

Maniloff noted that the General Assembly required the State Board of Education to establish a curriculum but does not require individual school systems to use it.

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