

Around Town

BY SAM C. MORRIS

New Dress Code Is Considered As Ruling Alters Student Styles

Clean-Up Leaders Named

Section leaders for county clean-up day Saturday were announced by Raz Autry, Hoke chairman of Keep North Carolina Beautiful.

Autry divided the county into 28 sections and named a leader for each area.

Heading the clean-up drive will be Louis Oxendine, Robert Taylor, George Wood, Allen Edwards, Leslie Frahm, Milton Williams, Autry, Haywood Artis, Don Steed, Ernest Sutton, Mike Lassiter, Willett Bissett, Glen Langdon, Earl Oxendine, Marion Hollingsworth, Joe Soles, John Pecora, John McAllister, W.K. Morgan, Jimmy James, J.K. McNeill, Wayne Mills, Charles Hottel, Steve Topp, Howard Smith, Audry Long and Hank Richards.

In addition to the clean-up day, the Keep N.C. Beautiful committee is working on plans to improve the appearance of the downtown area, and are asking for suggestions from the public.

Budget Waits Inspection

A proposed budget of \$1,409,707 for the coming fiscal year will be presented at a public hearing set for June 9, although officials are doubtful the budget will be approved without some trimming.

The 1975-76 budget reflects a net increase in expenditures over last year by \$171,122, according to figures released by County Manager T.B. Lester. Most of the increases are due to salary increases, additional employees, rising utility costs, acquisition of new building, and the sale of the school bonds.

The tentative tax rate, based on the expenditures in the general fund, is listed as 90.56 cents per \$100 of assessed valuation.

Appropriations for the schools are set at \$708,274.

The only change in this year's budget which was termed significant in Lester's report is the adoption of the single tax levy, which will centralize all revenue into the General Fund.

Under the new system, school appropriations will be paid out of the General Fund directly, instead of a special fund. Centralizing all of the tax levy into the General Fund increased revenue by \$1,066,563, and shows new contributions to other funds of \$720,707, Lester said.

Of this, \$18,226 is allocated to the governing body, up from \$16,090 this year. Travel increases and rising dues are cited.

Elections budget is set at \$17,670, including pay increases for poll holders, the purchase of new ballot boxes, and a part-time janitor. This year \$14,030 was allotted.

\$32,792 is set for the Finance Office, up from this year's \$29,417. Tax listings, \$33,740, up from this year's \$31,895.

\$28,950 is recommended for the Tax Collectors department, a boost from the \$27,750 requested. \$24,106 was budgeted this year.

Legal services are budgeted at \$1,200, remaining unchanged.

Register of Deeds, \$19,515, up from \$18,266 this year, reflecting the full amount requested.

Public buildings, \$57,541 is recommended, an increase over this year's \$39,730; Sheriff's Department, \$172,167, a boost in the \$171,280 requested, and sharply rising from this year's \$148,680 budgeted;

Public safety, \$17,600, as

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Hoke Sales Taxes

Local one cent sales and use taxes collected in Hoke County in April amounted to \$17,922.81, according to state revenue officials.

Tuesday night, May 20, I attended the Senior All-Star Banquet at the Gibson Gymnasium at Hoke County High School. This banquet is sponsored each year by the administration and faculty of the school. The banquet was well attended and enjoyed by all.

Members of the Sernior Class are selected to attend this banquet by the faculty for showing outstanding leadership or participating in other activities at the school. This year 82 members of the class were invited to the banquet. Also invited are the parents of these seniors.

After the meal, Principal Allen Edwards gave a short talk, which pointed out to those attending, the courses in life open for them.

The affair was short but to the point.

The Quewhiffle Community will sponsor a yard sale for the benefit of the Hoke County Library Fund, Saturday, May 31, from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. beside Junior Huff's Exxon Station. Everyone is encouraged to donate items for the sale. Mrs. D.R. Huff, Jr., asks that items be brought to the station before 10 o'clock Saturday morning, or to call 944-1127 by Friday, May 30, for items to be picked up.

This is for a worthy cause that is nearing a successful finish, so if you are in the Quewhiffle Community pitch in and help the cause.

School ends next week for the 1974-75 term, and it certainly doesn't seem like it has been nine months since the opening day. Of course, to most of the students, it seems longer than a year.

Anyway, all of us should keep in mind that school is out and that the streets will have children on them during the summer months. So, please drive carefully and may the school year for 1975-76 begin with all students ready for the bell.

It was a surprise to me last Sunday afternoon to hear the announcer of the Danny Thomas Golf Tournament say that the crowd broke the attendance record for a golf match. There were over 47,000 at the tournament, and that is a crowd for a golf tournament. Maybe times are better than most of us realize.

The following letter is self-explanatory:

Dear Sam: Since I started the dress code at Hoke County High School, with the backing of the late Superintendent W.T. Gibson, Jr., and the Hoke County Board of Education, I feel justified in expounding on its demise for a few minutes.

The long hair was really never the issue behind a dress code, although in all honesty I never liked it. The real issue was my way of teaching young people to accept authority. I could make a young man get a haircut and a young woman wear decent dresses without physically, morally, or mentally harming them in any way.

I challenge any historian or the greatest of liberals to show me a nation that has survived without discipline. I challenge any educator, parent, or student, to show me a school that takes pride in itself, that the youngsters can walk the campus in peace, and the teachers teach with complete freedom, without discipline.

I have no quarrel with protecting the rights of any individual as long as it doesn't destroy the rights of others. When the courts got into the business of running the schools they took the rights of school boards, administrators, and teachers, away from them.

I am equally sure that in some cases the rights of students have been abused, but a right should be earned, not given freely. Unfortunately, without any regard of the consequences of a ruling, the courts have exercised powers that have been a sacred right of a people to govern and operate their own schools.

Discipline can be administered in a hundred different ways, a dress code is only one of them. Now we will have to look at different methods and it will take work on the part of all of our citizens. Not only in supporting our schools, but in working to accomplish our ultimate goal of providing the best education for our children.

Sincerely, Raz Autry



FEELING GOOD - Freshman Allen Roberts was wearing an eye-catching shirt with the message 'If it feels good, do it!' Asked about the dress code, Roberts said 'I'm glad it's over. I reckon my friends feel the same way.' A haircut is not in his plans for feeling good.

Officials Reply

The board of education has called for continued interest in the schools and has promised that order will be maintained.

The five-member board and superintendent, in an open letter to Hoke Countians, said:

As you know by now, portions of the dress code for the Hoke County High School were declared unconstitutional. This in no way will lessen our interest and desires for our students.

We will not allow our schools to become disorderly because some of our undisciplined students might interpret this court order to be a signal for them to do their thing. You can rest assured that we will do everything humanly possible to provide the best education for our children. Disruption in the school will not be tolerated. Our principals and our teachers can rest assured that we will back them to the limit.

We only ask our citizens to continue to work for the betterment of all as they always have, and we will become stronger for it.

D.R. Huff, Jr.
R.L. Gibson
A.W. Wood, Jr.
R.M. Jordan
W.L. Howell, Jr.
Raz Autry

Judge Dismisses Suit Against Barrington

A federal judge dismissed a state prisoner's \$300,000 lawsuit against Sheriff D.M. Barrington and three others after ruling the court had no jurisdiction in the subject at this time.

U.S. District Judge Frank T. Dupree, Jr., granted the motion for dismissal on the grounds the plaintiff, William Franklin White, is seeking damages based on claims of illegal confinement, and any such illegalities must be decided in lower courts.

White, who was convicted in his petition his constitutional rights were violated when Barrington kidnapped him at gunpoint across the county line, searched and arrested him without a warrant, and failed to advise him of his legal rights, in addition to other allegations.

White is appealing his conviction in state court. Barrington's attorney, Palmer Willcox, said a ruling is expected sometime later this year.

If White's conviction is overturned, his suit for damages could be reintroduced, according to Dupree's order.

White was also suing former District Attorney Jack Thompson, Superior

Judge Donnie Smith, and defense attorney Doran Berry, and presumably was seeking \$300,000 from each.



SPEAKER - David Flaherty, secretary of the Department of Human Resources, will be guest speaker at a Lions Club meeting open to the public on June 9 at 7:15 at the civic center.

School officials plan to decide next week whether to draft a new dress code in the wake of a superior court judge's order last Thursday overruling dress regulations at the high school.

Meanwhile, students at Hoke High are still expected to come to school looking "neat, clean and wearing clothing which the parents so desire," Principal Allen Edwards said.

Superintendent Raz Autry said the dress code would be considered at the regular board of education meeting Monday night. "If we think it would serve no useful purpose, then we won't draft a new code," Autry said. "But, if we think it will be a problem with things like see-through blouses and halters and so forth, then we'll have to attack it from that aspect."

Autry and Edwards were named as defendants along with the Hoke board of education and teacher Donald Steed in a lawsuit brought by Hoke High eleventh grader, Joe Thompson, Jr.

After a preliminary hearing last Thursday in Fayetteville, Superior Court Judge James H. Pou Bailey ruled that the dress code at the high school was unconstitutional and granted an injunction prohibiting the enforcement of portions of regulations until a final hearing of the case.

Bailey ruled that the suit was a class action and therefore his decision forbids the enforcement of the regulations against any student at the high school.

School officials have a right to regulate dress with rules that reasonably relate to the educational process and that are reasonably calculated to preserve discipline, Bailey said.

While the lawsuit only attacked the portions regulating boys' haircuts and banning pictorial markings on clothing, Bailey warned that any new code could not discriminate among students, either by sex, age or race.

He rejected Autry's contention that the requirement for short hair was "a way to teach young men to accept authority without harming them, either physically, mentally or emotionally."

Attorney for the school board, William Moses, argued that the community supported the dress code and that the regulations were part of the methods by which school authorities have maintained discipline.

The members of the school board, with a composite service of more than 60 years, have each been elected at least five times, Moses told the court. Stressing the community support, he also cited the fact that Hoke County is one of the few school districts to pass a school bond issue recently.

Since the hearing, a few incidences of disorder were reported at the high school Friday, when Edwards said that seven students were suspended for rule violations.

"They were not suspended because of their appearance, but because they wouldn't go to class or follow rules," Edwards said.

School was back to normal by Monday, Edwards said, although some students were taking advantage of the relaxed clothing rules.

Edwards estimated that all but three per cent of the students met the old dress regulations Monday, but he conceded that that percentage would change during the remaining days of school.

One student estimated that 85 per cent of the boys would let their hair grow, at least until school is out.

Edwards stressed that, while school officials were accepting the changes, that the administration and faculty would continue to control the school.

"The sad part about this is now we are having to use methods that at times will hurt the young people, like suspensions," Edwards said.

No student was ever suspended over violations of the dress code, Edwards said.

Thompson alleged in his suit that he was suspended "several times" and his grades suffered because he was given zeros for the work missed during suspensions. Edwards said that Thompson, a good student, was never suspended from school and that during the year he received eight zeros in class, each given because he did not do the assignment or was asleep in class.

Edwards said that Hoke High students will continue to look neat and orderly when they are representing the high school.

He asked, "now, more than ever," for the cooperation of parents. "The school has and will continue to assume their responsibility and I challenge parents to do likewise," Edwards said.

The court ruling had been expected. "I always knew if we went to court, we'd lose," Autry said. Earlier this year, another student threatened to sue over the hair cut rules and Autry said he had been advised then by Moses that the dress code would not stand a court test.

Any new regulations will be drawn by an attorney, Autry said.

The hearing last week, set in Fayetteville since superior court was not in session here at the time, was held strictly on the request for an injunction to prevent enforcing the code until a final settlement on the case is made. The civil suit is still pending and, should it go to trial, will presumably be heard in Raeford. Thompson is asking for \$6,000 in damages from each defendant.

The preliminary hearing last Thursday was attended by Autry, Edwards, Steed and school board members William Howell, Bobby Gibson, D.R. Huff, and Wilton Wood. Dr. Riley Jordan, also a board member, was excused.

Only Autry and Edwards were questioned by Fayetteville Attorney Kenneth Glusman.

Autry, taking the stand first, was asked about the provisions banning clothing with any pictorial markings.

The attorney, picking out school board member Bobby Gibson, pointed to his tie and asked if the design was a pictorial marking under the dress code.

Autry first said it was not, but Bailey spoke up: "I can see them from here. They're little ducks."

"Little ducks would be pictorial markings," Autry conceded. "If a male student came to school wearing that tie, he could be suspended for three days then?" Glusman asked.

"Yes," Autry answered. Autry explained that the ban on pictorial markings was intended to prevent students from wearing clothing on which obscene material was printed.

"There is nothing in the dress code that proscribes a shirt with an obscene word written on it," Glusman pressed. "No, not as it is written," Autry answered.