

From the Superintendent's Desk

By G.R. (Raz) Autry

Autry Defends Board

The American people have a reputation of being a compassionate people, with which I agree. Unfortunately, some members of our people have a passion for blood, regardless of the disguise they use to conceal this passion.

In a controversy such as we have recently experienced at the high school, that passion for blood becomes more evident whether it is disguised as wanting to know the truth or simply give me more details. When an elected body speaks those who have a lust for the unusual become more vocal, the other part of society is willing to trust the wisdom of those whom they elected. If that wisdom proved false the elected could be changed at the polling place. This is the ideal way but as you and I know, it doesn't work this way. Those who want more and more information to justify decisions that are made become louder and louder until their demands are met. Those they claim they are trying to protect and support have their effectiveness and chance for making a contribution to his chosen profession destroyed. School business is like no other business in the world. A word here or publicity that spreads like wild fire will destroy an individual's chance to succeed. When this happens, those loud, vocal individuals will silently slip away and murmur to themselves "we didn't mean for this to happen". Those who caused the crucifixion of Christ didn't mean for that to happen but it did. The amazing thing about the loud, vocal crowd is the converts they pick up along the way. These converts are some of our finest citizens who apparently stopped thinking. The rumors that are flying around are amazing and are probably started by those who thrive on such.

The final decision to make a change in personnel lies with the board of education. It is their responsibility to weigh and examine all information and testimony submitted to them. They may accept or reject the recommendation of the superintendent or they may act on their own without a recommendation as they see fit. Information in personnel files is not public but private and privileged.

According to state law, only the person involved may have access to the personnel file other than the superintendent or his designate and members of the board of education. This procedure exists primarily for the protection of the individual. It is not public information and should not be made public.

No school board I have ever worked with would consider making a change in personnel without sufficient cause and that cause being in the best interest of the school system they have taken an oath to uphold and support.

I would not make a recommendation that I did not believe was in the best interest of our children and the school system.

Now, if I may be granted a few minutes of your reading time to state my feeling, I would be most appreciative.

I have been in Hoke County ten years. They have been rewarding years but I would be less than honest if I didn't say the last few days have taken their toll on me and have caused the sweet taste to be a little bitter. The board has been accused of being on a witch hunt and meeting illegally. I have been accused of being a dictator and wanting to dictate on how the high school is run. I guess the knife that cut the deepest is the one wielded by those with whom I have been closely associated that I felt privileged to call friend. I do not engage in self-pity. I knew the pitfalls of the job when I took it and my hide is tough enough to stand it. I will stand on my record and invite everyone else to do the same. I fully realize how short memories are and that the glory of today can become the condemnation of tomorrow.

I work under a contract. A board of education can give a superintendent a two or four year contract. I have two years left on that contract. At the end of these two years I will decide if my service to the Hoke County Schools is over. I will not place the board of education in the embarrassing position of deciding for me. If I said I did not deeply resent the criticism of the board and me I would once again be less than honest.

In the same vein, I have a special place in my heart for those who called and said we stand behind you because we know you are doing what you think is right.

The board of education members are the most honest, dedicated, straight thinking people I have ever known. I will be eternally grateful that God permitted me to pass this way and I can look back with pride on their accomplishments, and I hope with mine and say we did in all of our endeavors what we thought was right for the children. With that commitment I can walk away in the future and say proudly that I have no apologies to make.

CLIFF BLUE ... People & Issues



LEGISLATIVE DINNER...I attended the dinner for Tar Heel legislators -- present and former, Friday evening at the Velvet Cloak in Raleigh with close to 200 being present.

Several years ago a reunion of former legislators was started with the meetings being held at the Sir Walter Hotel. Later the meetings were held at the Royal Villa and this year's meeting was held at the Velvet Cloak. The meeting was pretty well divided between current members and former members and their wives.

Heretofore the dinner meetings were somewhat of a formal design with those attending seated at tables and with the usual remarks by the former legislators.

This year the meeting was strictly informal with the dinner being served buffet style around the indoor pool and no formal remarks.

ISSUES...You don't get a group of legislators, present or former, together without political issues and personalities being discussed.

It was interesting to note that President Carter appears to be faring well among the Democrat politicians. In fact, from what we have been able to hear it appears that the President is standing up pretty well among the people in general and that his energy program thus far has cost him little if any loss in his standing with the people.

HUNT & GREEN...Lt. Governor and Mrs. Jimmy Green were present at the reunion although Governor Hunt did not attend as he did last year. We heard right much discussion regarding the Hunt-Green contest over the chairmanship of the State Board of Education. Most seem to think that Hunt's candidate -- Dr. David Bruton would win.

TENURE...Tenure for government positions of any kind, education or otherwise, we feel is not in the interest of good government or education but promotes mediocri-

ty. Some years ago the North Carolina General Assembly voted to permit tenure in the public school system.

We wonder if "tenure" doesn't have something to do with the low standing of our high school students on reading and the other basics of a good education that Governor Hunt and others have been talking about of late.

UNC TRUSTEES...Back in the days when the General Assembly elected the 100-plus members of the University Board of Trustees there was always a long drawn out campaign for places on the board. We believe many people preferred a seat on the UNC Board to that of being a U.S. Senator! Now there are 32 members of the Board of Governors of the University of North Carolina with one-fourth being elected each two years plus any vacancies.

Last week three very potent and longtime members lost out when the General Assembly elected ten board members, the losers being Victor Bryant of Durham, Thomas J. White of Kinston and Wallace Hyde of Asheville.

GOVERNMENT & EDUCATION...Many years ago before we had any appreciable aid to education we would hear educators ask for "federal aid" to education but without federal controls. Well, we received federal aid and with it federal controls beyond measure! While you can secure government aid and grants, controls will follow as night follows day.

Our church colleges have been receiving state aid and now state legislators are asking that the General Assembly have a hand in setting "tenure" policy at Davidson College.

We suspect that most church members would prefer that the state aid be dropped and that the institutions be operated along the lines of the principles of their long-established educational policies rather than by the long-arm of government.

College News

In recent ceremonies at the University of North Carolina at Charlotte, Bobby Flowers of Raeford was named to the Society of 49, a campus honorary organized to recognize outstanding juniors and seniors for their involvement in the development of the University community. He also received the Frederick Douglas Award given by the Black Student Union and Black Studies Department for his leadership, service and dedication.

Flowers is a member of the Black Student Union at UNCC, and is a superior court judge in the student organization, was a member of the North Carolina Student Legislature and has been named to the Chancellor's List since he was a freshman.

The political science and black studies major was honored last year by the Black Studies Department at UNCC when he was selected for a six-week study/tour to West Africa. He and two other students from the University made the trip. He is the son of Mr. and Mrs. Robert Flowers of Rt. 4, Raeford.

Eleven Raeford area persons are among the East Carolina University students named to honors lists for the winter quarter.

Those named to the dean's list (B-plus average) were Lacy S. Hair, 2103 Fordham Dr., Fayetteville; Joanna Faye Best, 1005 N. Fulton St.; Gail Frances Conoly, Rt. 4, Box 105, Raeford; Charles Eugene Davis, 306 N. Jackson St.; and Ray Lee Jones, Rt. 2, Box 410, Raeford.

Those named to the honor roll (B average) were Rogers Boyd Frieron, Rt. 2, Box 67, Raeford; Omelia Susan Gillis, P.O. Drawer M; Robin Denise Maxwell, Rt. 2, Box 100-A, Raeford; Vann Winston Pennell, Rt. 1, Box 41, Raeford; Becky Sue Pope, Rt. 2, Box 79, Raeford; and Cynthia L. McNeill, Rt. 1, Box 222, Shannon.

Ruth Hope Williams, Mary Shelia Black, Lynda Gay Kirkley and Kimberly Shockley were recently inducted into the Pembroke State University Delta Theta chapter of Sigma Sigma national service sorority.

Miss Williams is the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Freddie G. Williams of Raeford. Miss Black is the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. John D. Black of Raeford. Miss Kirkley is the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. James A. Kirkley of Raeford. Miss Shockley is the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Shockley of Raeford.

John Manning, a Wingate College student, recently received a first place award for advertising in connection with a course.

Manning, a freshman, is the son of Mr. and Mrs. Ed Manning of Raeford.

Julie Kicklighter, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Franklin D. Kicklighter of Raeford, a Meredith College junior, has been inducted into the Silver Shield, the honorary leadership society on campus.

Members are chosen on the basis of Christian character, constructive leadership, service to the college, and scholarship. The 12 new members were selected from the rising senior class by members of the society and the faculty.

Shirley Gail McDowell is among 312 candidates scheduled for graduation at Gardner-Webb College on May 15.

Miss McDowell, the daughter of Curtis McDowell of Raeford, will receive a bachelor of science degree in psychology.

School Menu

FRIDAY, MAY 6
Sloppy Joe
Slaw
Buttered Corn
Sugar Plum Pudding Cake
Milk

MONDAY, MAY 9
Teachers' Work Day

TUESDAY, MAY 10
Cheesburger on Bun
French Fries, Catsup
Cole Slaw
Cookie
Milk

WEDNESDAY, MAY 11
Smoked Sausage
School Cooked Beans
Steamed Cabbage
Rolls
Up-Side-Down Cake
Milk

THURSDAY, MAY 12
Spaghetti w/Meat Balls
Tossed Salad
Rolls
Strawberry Shortcake
Milk

CUT DRIVING
IN HALF ...



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