

From the Superintendent's Desk

by Haz Autry

Confessions of A Superintendent

Some of the recent articles I have written have sparked a lot of comments and a letter to the editor. Perhaps I need to explain how the column came into being and exactly how I feel about writing under this title.

When I became superintendent seven years ago, I asked Sam if he would give me some space in *The News-Journal* to write about what was happening in our schools. Mr. Morris very graciously agreed and told me that Mr. K.A. MacDonald, a former superintendent, had a column of this nature during his superintendency. *The News-Journal* cooperated with me and the school system more than any one newspaper I have ever been associated with. For this I am most grateful. We don't always agree with each other but they have never censored anything I have written. I don't know of a group of people that I respect more for their integrity in dealing with our schools and the public than those who are employed by *The News-Journal*.

Having made the above statements, I would like to clarify my position, right or wrong, in writing the column. I have written about every topic pertaining to education in Hoke County and what is happening in the schools that I can think of. I have written about curriculum changes, GT program, school bus safety, testing, guidance, health, english, math, science, principal tenure, clubs,

athletics, coaches, etc.

After exhausting these topics, I decided to change and see if I could show another side of the teaching profession. I wanted to show the human side - the light side and also show the public that those of us in the educational profession are well-rounded enough to be interested in politics and all the other happenings in the world. So many people think that educators live in a dream world and don't know what is going on around them. Some of the general public would be surprised at some of the topics we discuss at the "Intellectual Club" early in the morning. Whether folks like it or not, I am the chief spokesman for the Hoke County school system, at least for a little while longer. I am also pleased and grateful that I have worked with a board of education that gave me total freedom to express myself although many times they did not agree with me.

I resent some things that are said about the teaching profession. A good example is the recent article that was in *The News-Journal* about Governor James Hunt. I resented the governor taking credit for our test scores even though he had given us the necessary resources to make this accomplishment possible. Governor Hunt has been an outstanding educational governor. Our teachers had a great deal to do with this improvement. We have many top-notch teachers in Hoke County. The road has not been easy. The board and I have been involved in some very trying moments in our efforts to provide the type of faculty that we now have to teach our children. It is only natural that I would feel strongly that our faculty

members should get some credit for the improvement of education in Hoke County.

I am a realist. I have always known that I don't fit the mold that a superintendent is expected to fit. I do not always carry myself in a dignified manner. I don't please everybody and don't try to. Many folks say that they don't understand me...some of them I don't want to understand me. I say what I think or I used to until I got hit in the head with a baseball bat enough times so the board members could get my attention. I certainly am not quiet. I have created enough controversies to last an individual an entire lifetime and I have enjoyed most of it. Things have been rather dull for a good while because there hasn't been any controversies. The board has enjoyed the peace and quiet and tranquility. They give the credit to the baseball bat. I must confess that is only partly correct. A lot of it is old age.

I see my job as solely being responsible for the education and welfare of our children. The adults will have to look after themselves.

I don't think the citizens of Hoke County can justify anything less than a first rate education for our children. If stepping on toes will accomplish this goal, I will have done my job. To my friends who want me to stick to educational matters I can only say that I will do this as long as I feel it is important and informative to the public which I serve.

If I feel it is necessary to show the human side of those in the profession, I will do that also as long as *The News-Journal* permits and feel that I am making a contribution to their readers.

Board

(Continued from page 1)

property owners be required to obtain from the county authorization to make repairs, alterations and additions to existing buildings, or erect new buildings. Commissioner Mabel Riley proposed the requirement to help Tax Supervisor Les Simpson identify for adding to the taxation property which has been given improvements since the last tax bills were sent to the owners.

Mrs. Riley said she would bring up the matter again.

Commissioner Danny DeVane, who made the motion to table, said people shouldn't be discouraged by restrictions from building and that the county has to adopt a building code by 1985 anyway, which would cover new construction and other improvements.

Commissioner Neil McPhatter said in effect the notification wasn't necessary, that the information could be obtained from a contractor doing the job.

Simpson had told the commissioners improvements to property are not always reported that it was extremely difficult and in cases impossible to identify property on which improvements have been made.



THIRTY YEARS -- Bucky Daniels, second from left, recently completed 30 years with Burlington Industries. He is a warp hanger on the fifth shift of the Weave Room of the Worsted Plant. He is shown receiving his 30-year service pin and certificate from (L-R) Ralph White, Weave Mill superintendent; Ralph Calhoun, department manager; Frances Byrd, supervisor; and Cecil Bond, plant manager. He also received a pen-and-pencil set for his outstanding record.

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