

Opinions

'Just kidding' meant trouble

One area I constantly worked on while I was working directly with teenagers was to try to teach them to learn to laugh at themselves.

During the height of the integration process when all other schools in North Carolina were having terrible interruptions because of racial unrest, schools were being closed, students were marching up and down, ours decided to put on a play.

It was quite a production. Some of our youngsters in the production, one that no one else in this state would have tried, portrayed their opposite race: the white youngsters portrayed Black Panthers; the black youngsters portrayed the Ku Klux Klan.

The entire student body enjoyed it immensely. I knew I had succeeded in getting them to laugh at themselves.

The one area that I have really had problems with as a superintendent was the area of sensitivity. I never could get adults to learn to laugh at themselves. I have really gotten into a lot of trouble over the years by kidding folks.

Recently, I got in trouble with the board of education because of a remark I made at a superintendent's meeting in Lumberton.

For the last 10 years the superintendents from Scotland, Robeson and Hoke counties, have met with the members of the House of Representatives and the Senator from our district. No one but superintendents had met with them.

Purnell Swett, Superintendent of Robeson County Schools, called me recently and said that we were having our yearly meeting with the representatives. He also said that we could bring some board members, if we wanted to.

Since we had never asked board members, I assumed that the rest of the superintendents would not bring any either, especially since no decisions would be made and only the bills in the General Assembly would be discussed.

Therefore, I didn't ask any of my board members.

When I arrived at the meeting and the rest of the superintendents had one or two board members with them, I realized I should have asked my members and that it would perhaps come back to haunt me.

It was too late then, and I couldn't do anything about it except try to kid myself through it.

When I was called on to introduce anyone I had brought with me I told them that I didn't invite my board because I didn't like any of them.

After everyone stopped laughing, I told them that they knew I was kidding and to not tell them I made a smart crack.

I told them that my board was not there because I didn't invite them.

Someone apparently made a mad dash to my board members and told them what I had said.

Some of my board members took exception to it, and rightly so.

All I could say was that I was sorry, and that I hoped I had learn-

Superintendent's Desk

ed a lesson, which I probably hadn't.

I have also been taken to task about saying that I only have five friends.

This bit of logic I learned from an elderly man I was extremely fond of. He told me for years that if an individual made five lasting friends in a lifetime, he had enjoyed a good life. I expected folks to know that I was joking, but apparently I have ruffled some features of some friends of mine.

If I didn't have but five friends, Ireni would have to hire some pallbearers for my funeral because it takes six to carry the casket.

It would be a crying shame if a man hadn't made enough friends to carry his casket.

Quite often I am the subject of conversation at one of the local coffee clubs.

One man was speculating on how many friends I had, and how many enemies.

They settled on 50/50.

I figured that was pretty good. If one made enemies out of 50% of the people in 16 years, it would take 32 years to make everyone in the county mad.

By that time it wouldn't matter. It is fortunate that I didn't want another contract if the speculation on friends and enemies is correct.

The vote on my contract would be two for, two against, one ambivalent.

It would be tough to wait for the ambivalent vote to turn to "for."

Sensitivity can be felt by some people in most any area. An article I wrote about school board members brought that to light.

Perhaps the article would have been better left unwritten.

However, I wrote it and at that time felt it would make a good one. In talking about each board member I had served with, I tried to tell how I personally felt about them.

I could have very easily have centered on some of the conflicts I have encountered with some of them but I looked at the best side of their nature and the difficult job they have.

One of the biggest boneheads I have pulled was when I made a crack about the budget. I said that I ought to give the commissioners the same budget I had to give to the state and that if I did some of the commissioners couldn't understand it.

There was no human being more surprised than I was when I read that statement in the newspaper. I couldn't deny it because it was exactly what I had said. When they were discussing it at a commissioners meeting Danny DeVane had me pegged exactly right when he said that I was just needing them.

That is exactly what I was doing.

It caused a strained relationship between John Balfour and myself and I deeply regretted that because John and I have been friends ever since I have been in Hoke County. John and I have had strained rela-

tionships before but never to the extent that we couldn't play a round of golf together.

John Balfour has always been a great supporter of education and my great error was in interpreting his reactions as having cooled on education.

In retrospect, I realize that not only had I misinterpreted John but the other commissioners also.

In the last few years I have fought practically a lone battle for the school budget. The commissioners are in office to represent the people, and if I am fighting a lone battle or only have one or two board members helping me, it is easy for the commissioners to feel that the public is not that greatly concerned about the school budget.

If I have been insensitive to peoples feelings, I apologize to one and all. I have always been a great kidder and expected folks to do the same to me. I only wish that over the years the folks I have dealt with could have Earl McDuffie's sense of kidding. He can dish it out as much as anyone I have ever known. He also can take it as much as any man I have ever known.

I really never learned to treat the disease I have always had.

It could have been treated so easily with a zipper.

WHEN SATURDAY HALF-HOLIDAYS BEGAN. Workers everywhere should be grateful to George Westinghouse, inventor and manufacturer of the air-brake, who began giving his factory employees a half-day off on Saturdays in June, 1871.



"JUST THINK HONEY, SOMEDAY OUR LITTLE GIRL MAY GROW UP TO MARRY SOMEONE WHO'LL BE PRESIDENT!.."

Food gets bad rap, and that's not sour grapes

By John Sledge
N.C. Farm Bureau Federation

"Hype" is what you get from a public relations firm that's trying to create or change an image. Maybe it's about time farmers, grocery store owners, restaurant operators and anyone else involved in the food chain pooled their resources and hired the best PR firm in the country to create some hype concerning food.

From the very beginning, food has gotten bad PR. When Adam and Eve fell into sin, what caused it?

They ate an apple. And, everyone knows what one bad ap-

ple does to a whole barrel of ap-

ples. When we buy a car that causes nothing but trouble, do we call it a lousy car? No - it's a lemon.

When somebody is given bad advice that causes nothing but problems, he wasn't given bad advice, he was given a bum steer.

A bad joke that's stupid isn't called a stupid joke - it's corny.

Take some pits from fruit and you can grow an orchard, but if something is awful, people say it's the pits.

Extremely homely girls and 99% of all female blind dates are distastefully referred to as pigs;

and extremely homely men and 99% of all male blind dates are called turkeys.

All children know that when Cinderella's time ran out at midnight, her beautiful carriage turned into a pumpkin...The gingerbread house landed on Hansel and Gretel in the witch's oven...The poison apple was the downfall of Snow White, and Little Miss Muffet was scared away by a spider eating her curds and whey.

Using the names of their products in vain leaves a bad taste in the mouths of food industry people, but that could be construed as sour grapes on their part.



Finally, A Way To Save Money

Dividend Declared By Family Dollar

The Board of Directors of Family Dollar Stores, Inc. (NYSE symbol FDO), declared a regular quarterly cash dividend on its common stock of 6-2/3 cents per share, payable April 15 to holders of record at the close of business on March 15.

Family Dollar Stores, Inc., operates a rapidly expanding discount store chain of 588 stores located in North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, Tennessee,

Virginia, West Virginia, Florida, Alabama, Mississippi, Kentucky, Louisiana, Arkansas and Maryland.

Fifty-nine stores have been added to the chain since the beginning of the Company's fiscal year on September 1, 1982.

The Company expects to have approximately 630 stores in operation by the end of its fiscal year on August 31, 1983.

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