

VIEWPOINTS

Remember, no campaigning at voting sites

Now that the State Board of Elections has ruled on the location of Hoke County's one-stop voting sites—putting them at the county office building and Rockfish community building—and campaigning is in high gear, it's time for a reminder about some election rules.

First, no campaigning or "election-related activity" is allowed within a 50-foot buffer of the site when voting is taking place. That speaks to one objection to using the county office building for voting, people remembering an incident in 2010 when County Commissioner James

Leach was accused of trying to sway voters as they entered the county building he frequents. (He denied it at the time.)

Second, churches and other tax-exempt organizations may not endorse candidates, raise funds or contribute to campaigns, distribute statements or "become involved in any other activities that may be beneficial or detrimental to any particular candidate," according to the IRS. Else, they can lose their tax-exempt status or end up paying taxes. While churches can certainly take stands on issues, they can't endorse candidates.

His dad threatened to buy a school bus

After my recent column on the Hoke High Class of 1969, I received a call from Hoke County Commissioner Ellen McNeill. She has a great interest in the history of education in Hoke County and is working on a publication that will educate us on our education. Hoke has a rich and distinguished history in this regard, and although Ellen has gathered a great deal of information, she is looking for new sources. Having been educated in the public schools of Hoke, I have been a part of the history and am interested in learning more.

I grew up in the far western part of the county in Ashley Heights. The next community going east is Montrose. Appropriately, the white segregated public school that serviced this area in my youth was called Ashemont. My mother had attended a prior Ashemont that had burned. The remnants of the second building still stand, but barely. It is located on the Fort Bragg side of Highway 211 near the intersection of Ashemont Road. The walls, portico and columns are about all that is left.

I first attended in 1957. The school was only a short bus ride on good old Bus Number 8, short enough that the bus barely warmed up on cold winter days. The school had seven grades in four classrooms. Mrs. Smoak taught grades one and two, Ms. Womble taught grades two and three, Ms. Thornberg taught four and five and Mr. Smoak, also principal, taught six and seven.

It would seem that we got shorted on education with the multi-grade classrooms, but they also offered greater opportunity for the younger



Frog Holler Philosopher
Ron Huff

students. I clearly remember "getting ahead" in several subjects by learning with the older grades. In the second grade, I regularly competed with the third grade in the weekly spelling matches and won more than my share.

The school had a fine auditorium where we put on school plays, gathered for community events and where I first had piano lessons. There was a lunchroom where the lunch ladies made meals to rival home. Mr. Smoak served as proprietor of a small room stocked with snacks that we called the candy room. That room kept me broke a penny at a time.

We had an outdoor sand lot where the buses parked and we played tag, kick the can, red rover, football, baseball and anything else we could think of. Ms. Womble took interested students on regular walks in the adjacent woods where she introduced us to the wonders of the local flora, and any fauna that might be brave enough to get near a pack of kids.

The school put on a yearly spring pageant in the auditorium. Participants were given patterns and materials to be taken home and transformed into beautiful costumes. My aunt Margaret Sinclair was the pianist for these events and she was another of my inspiring musical mentors. There was an annual Halloween Carnival with costume

contests, sales of homemade goodies and raffles for prizes.

Community dances were sometimes held there and it was in that building that I first stood face to face with a live bluegrass band. I remember being in awe and being inspired to learn to play.

Little did we know that we were being denied equal opportunity for education. My dad felt so strongly about this that he threatened to buy a school bus to take us to the big city of Raeford. Perhaps this bluff had some effect, but by running for the Hoke School Board, he was able to help prod the county into the consolidation of the schools in 1960.

Perhaps if I had been forced to attend Ashemont past third grade, I would have suffered, but upon entering fourth grade in Raeford, I felt on equal footing with my classmates. Maybe I was too ignorant to know I was ignorant.

Looking back on the situation, I feel I would have missed out on some great things had Ashemont not been there. The intimacy with the teachers, the opportunity for participation and the community involvement with the school were diminished after consolidation. On the other hand, I'm sure dad was thrilled that he didn't have to buy that bus. It would have been pretty embarrassing pulling up to school in Raeford in a cotton wagon or tobacco sled.

If you are interested or have your own stories and memories of Hoke education, please contact Ellen McNeill at EMcNEILL1005@aol.com. More later.



TODAY'S HOMEWORK (Notes on Education)

"The reason to oppose the Common Core standards is because they violate the well-established and internationally recognized process for setting standards in a way that is transparent, that recognizes the expertise of those who must implement them, that builds on the consensus of concerned parties, and that permits appeal and revision. The reason that there is so much controversy and pushback now is that the Gates Foundation and the U.S. Department of Education were in a hurry and decided to ignore the nationally and internationally recognized rules for setting standards, and in doing so, sowed suspicion and distrust. Process matters."

— Diane Ravitch, blog post "The Fatal Flaws of the Common Core Standards"

"All of you former students: you did not design curricula, plan lessons, attend faculty meetings, assess papers, design rubrics, create exams, prepare report cards, and monitor attendance. You did not tutor students, review rough drafts, and create study questions. You did not assign homework. You did not write daily lesson objectives on the white board. You did not write poems of the week on the white board. You did not write homework on the white board. You did not learn to write legibly on the white board while simultaneously making sure that none of your students threw a chair out a window."

— Valerie Strauss, former teacher who is now a lawyer, in Washington Post blog, "You Think You Know What Teachers Do, Right? Wrong."

5 Things

Every young person should know

Weekly Wisdom From Readers Of *The News-Journal* For The Youth In Our Community.

What are five life lessons you've learned that you think all young people should know? That's the question *The News-Journal* put to a list of respected local adults. The answers come from all walks of life. We want to pass on to our youth the wisdom of our community, a few lessons at a time. Here are five:

You can always do more—Remember when coach said, "one more lap" or "one more rep" and you groaned in agony? Well, that never really stops. You will have many nights ahead with endless assignments from teachers or bosses who have seeming disregard to all of your other assignments. ("Wait, you wanted to go out

with friends? Oh, that's nice; here's 35 pages to read for tomorrow's exam.") Yes, you will procrastinate, and yes, you will pay dearly when you do, but understand that hard work and dedication to the task will bring you some of the best feelings of accomplishment when you look back and say, "Wow, I did that."

Always put God first in your life, followed by your family and then everything else. Balance will always be a work in progress.

Life is a marathon, not a sprint. Don't worry if it looks like other people are getting ahead of you in the race of life. The object is to reach the finish line in comfortable fashion, and that is a long way

off. Set your goals so that you can enjoy a long, fulfilling life. Don't burn yourself out and then have to face that long life unhappily.

You are not bullet proof. Young people are often reckless and that is natural. Unfortunately, one bad choice or accident can follow you the rest of your life. Have fun, take some risks, but don't be stupid.

Plan to be successful! You can do anything you set your mind to do with hard work and determination! Set a goal for yourself and try to stay on track! Keep your "eye on the prize" and when you are tempted by your peers to make poor choices, think of your goal to avoid being derailed!

Civil Rights Movement benefited all

We recently celebrated the birthday of Dr. Martin Luther King, and last year we lost Nelson Mandela. These two men are credited for spearheading the Civil Rights Movement for blacks and minorities here in this country and in South Africa. In many instances this is true, but these movements were not designed only for blacks and minorities but they also were designed to aid and benefit ALL people that were on the lower level of society and those who had been overlooked by our politicians and community leaders.

I have pointed out in this column over the years that many groups have benefited because of civil rights bills that have been passed. We all have profited from the integration of the races. Many southern cities have progressed and grown and prospered economically because of these changes. Workers of all races that were in the lower income bracket made strides because of these movements.

Women's rights was one of the main issues of the Civil Rights Movement. This was not limited to blacks and minorities; this was for the rights of ALL women.



Paul Burnley

This movement at its outset was to elevate all people who were struggling to survive—those who were at the lower end of the pay scale. When Dr. King was assassinated, he was in the city to speak on behalf of the sanitation workers. I am sure that all the sanitation workers were not black or minorities. Many whites that lived in poverty have profited from these civil rights programs.

Race seems to be the major issue in this country. More progress could be achieved by everyone in this country if we were able to operate as the founders of this country outlined in the constitution, that we ALL were to be considered to be equal and to be judged in the same way. It is strange that this country has criticized and has entered wars with other countries because they have oppressed a segment of their population, yet we have done the same thing to many minorities

here at home. We should not be hypocrites by condemning others for what we ourselves are doing or have done.

This is the major problem in this country. We keep rehashing and talking about what happened years ago. There's nothing we can do about what happened years ago. But we can remember, and learn from the mistakes so that we do not repeat them.

We have seen many of our southern cities grow to surpass many of the northern cities economically since civil rights bills have been enforced. This should prove to the public that when ALL races and groups work together, it benefits everyone. The Civil Rights Movement has benefited all segments of the population. Although it may have been started by a black man, it has benefited ALL Americans.

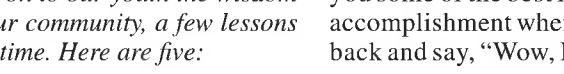
This is a similar situation in South Africa. Mandela in 10 years brought stability to a nation that was more racist than this country by showing that if people of ALL races and political groups worked together, progress can be made for all.

Paul Burnley can be reached by email at plburnley@aol.com.

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Home Page: www.thenews-journal.com



Ken MacDonald (ken@thenews-journal.com)..... **Publisher**
Catharin Shepard (cshepard@thenews-journal.com)..... **Reporter**
Hal Nunn (hal@thenews-journal.com)..... **Sports Writer**
Hal Nunn (hal@thenews-journal.com)..... **Sales Representative**
Wendy Tredway (wendy@thenews-journal.com)..... **Sales Representative**
Sheila Black (sheila@thenews-journal.com)..... **Office Manager**
Robin Huffman (robin@thenews-journal.com)..... **Composition Design/ Legal Advertising**

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