

Duplin Times

Straight from the Shoulder—Right from the Heart of Duplin

PROGRESS SENTINEL

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ALERT MONITORS - Duplin County has purchased 32 ton alert monitors for the eight rescue squads in the County. Each rescue squad will receive 4 pagers that can be worn on a belt or carried in a shirt pocket. The monitors can be plugged in at night and will go off like an alarm clock when an emergency arises. Hiram Brinson,

Civil Defense Director for Duplin County, is shown above giving Glen Jernigan four of the monitors for the Faison Rescue Squad. The inset in the photo shows the pager compared to a pack of cigarettes in size. The 32 monitors cost the county \$8,652.80.

Outstanding North Duplin Athlete Dies

By Nelson Brand
Mount Olive Tribune



STANLEY BYRD

Suicide has been ruled in the Sunday afternoon death of a North Duplin High school student. Chief Investigator Glen Jernigan of the Duplin County Sheriff's Department reported.

Jernigan said 17-year-old Hubert Stanley Byrd died of a self-inflicted shotgun wound of the abdomen at his home on Route 5, Mount Olive. Byrd lived with his maternal grandmother, Mrs. Nora H. Jones on the Kenansville highway, between Mount Olive and Sumnerlin's Crossroads. He was a senior at North Duplin High School.

The youth was found in the bedroom of his home, according to sheriff's officials. It was reported that two of his schoolmates were visiting with him when the incident occurred.

The Mount Olive Rescue Service was called to the Jones residence shortly after 5 p.m. Rescue officials said Byrd was dead on arrival of the rescue unit, and a medical examiner was notified.

Medical examiner Dr. Robert H. Shackelford of Mount Olive ruled the death as suicide. The body was transported to Tyndall Funeral Home by the rescue unit.

News of the young man's death reached and saddened the North Duplin school district and Mount Olive area.

North Duplin Principal J.C. "Jack" Atkinson described Byrd as a well-liked student, and "just a fine young man" at North Duplin.

Byrd was active in all three sports - football, basketball

and football - at North Duplin. He was a grid star on the Rebel "Green Machine" football squad, and was named to the 1977 All East and All Conference lists.

Head football coach Kenneth Avent described Byrd as an outstanding athlete in all sports. "Stanley's passing is a great loss to everybody and the school," Avent noted. "He was a good student and a good sportsman. We are all saddened by his death."

Byrd's mother was the late Mrs. Velma Byrd of Mount Olive. A brother of the victim, Bobby Byrd, died recently in an auto accident in Florida.

Funeral services for the victim were held Tuesday afternoon from the chapel of Tyndall Funeral Home in Mount Olive. Contributing flowers were Reynolds Funeral Home, pastor of First

Marsh Baptist Church near Beaufort, and Larry Withrow, pastor of Salem Advent Christian Church in Mount Olive. Burial was in Maplewood Cemetery in Mount Olive.

Survivors, in addition to his maternal grandmother, are his father, Hubert Byrd of Route 5, Mount Olive; his paternal grandmother, Mrs. Pearl Byrd of Route 5, Mount Olive; and one brother, Ronnie Clay Byrd of the home.

North Duplin schools were dismissed Tuesday afternoon in order that students might attend the funeral services. Each class at North Duplin met Monday morning to decide on appropriate memorial services for Byrd.

Heart Sunday

Heart Sunday is February 26th, and volunteers will be soliciting contributions throughout the County.

BEULAVILLE DRIVERS LICENSES

It has been announced that the Drivers License Examiner is back on a regular Monday and Friday schedule in Beulaville.

ROAD CLOSED

The North Carolina Department of Transportation plans to close SR 1725 approximately one-half mile south of SR 1735 in order to replace bridge #357. Work will begin on February 27 and should be completed within approximately two weeks. No detours will be erected. Traffic may use alternate secondary roads in the area.

Duplin County High School Juniors To Take Competency Test February 28

Duplin County high school juniors, along with all other high school juniors in North Carolina, will begin taking the High School Competency Test February 28, 1978. This first-year test (this spring) does not in any way determine a student's eligibility for graduation. This is only a "trial test" to determine a minimum standard for future eleventh-graders. The test to be given this fall will be the first one to effect the graduation status of a student.

The tests are designed to measure Basic Survival Skills in Reading and Math. (See Page 6 for sample questions.) James Kenan High School, East Duplin High School and Wallace-Rose Hill High School juniors will take four separate reading tests. North Duplin High School juniors and the juniors enrolled at the Extended Day School at E.E. Smith will take a combination package of tests consisting

of a math skills test and a test of reading survival skills.

During the 1977 session of the General Assembly, two testing programs were enacted into law. One bill, the Annual Testing Program, requires the administration of tests in basic subjects at five grade levels -- grades 1, 2, 3, 6, and 9; the other bill, the High School Graduation Competency Program, provides for the adoption and use of tests to assure that high school graduates possess skills and knowledge necessary to function in society.

From the results obtained by this spring's test, a special testing commission will recommend to the State Board of Education what they consider to be competency. In the fall of 1978, another test will be given to all eleventh-graders. Students who fail to attain the minimum standard will be given remedial instruction and addi-

tional opportunities to take the test. Students who fail to pass parts of the test will be re-tested on only those parts they fail.

Annual Testing Program

During the first two weeks of April, all Duplin County students in grades 1, 2, 3, 6 and 9 will begin taking tests in the basic areas of reading, writing and arithmetic. This is called the Annual Testing Program

and is required by legislation enacted by the 1977 General Assembly. The purpose of this testing program is to: (1) assess the effectiveness of our educational process; (2) insure that each pupil receives maximum benefit; and (3) help local school systems and teachers identify and correct students' needs in basic skills. Criterion referenced tests will be used in the first and second grades, and "norm referenced tests will be given in

grades 3, 6 and 9. Each parent will receive a copy of his or her child's score on the Annual Test by early June. More information will be available on interpreting the test scores from your local school.

In addition to the two state testing programs, Duplin County students in grades 4, 5, 7 and 8 will be tested by the Iowa Tests of Basic Skills. These scores will be available at your local school in early June.

Son Of A Gun

By Joe Lanier

Hardly a day goes by without someone mentioning the "communication gap" or "lack of communications." Usually it is in reference to parents and their offspring. A parent, or a child, asking the other a question that may be embarrassing will get the run-around and told everything but the "yes" or "no" they were looking for. This is nothing new. This so-called gap has been with us as long as there have been parents and children. In my childhood, I remember stories about storks bringing babies, or parents finding them in a cabbage patch or in a stump, just to mention a few. This gap existed then and probably always will.

There is, however, a communication gap that should not exist, in my opinion, and that communication gap is between the Duplin County School Administration and the people of Duplin County.

Several years ago when I first began trying to report the news and happenings in Duplin, I made a list of things I would like to see happen. On that list was "Get a straight answer from the school administration." I would go to school board meetings and hear several times during the meeting that "perhaps we should not discuss that with the press present." . . . Or when I would ask about some project, school, and numerous other things, the answers were lengthy, off-base, or so foreign to the question, I sometimes forgot the question I had asked.

After a few hours trying to get a definite statement, and after listening to everything but a definite statement, I would leave exhausted, and, in several instances, say the heck with the story. . . I was never sure if I was being given the run-around or if they were as dumb about the answer as I was.

However, . . . I thought I had noted a change during the past couple of months. I seemed to be getting answers -- straight answers -- without the usual hassle. . . I don't know if it was due to the large number of persons seeking the two school board seats or if it was a change of policy. . . I had called about the bus driver being caught driving under the influence and got answers. . . I called about the probability of school being let out due to the outbreak of flu. . . I got answers. . . A press conference was even held advising about the competency testing and the attempt to have Duplin schools accredited by the Southern Accreditation Association. . . Now, these may not seem too outstanding to you,

but to me they are. . . I was actually shocked as I was not used to getting the facts. The usual answer would have been vague, but I got facts and figures. . .

I was ready to mark off "Get a straight answer from the School Administration" . . . But my success was short-lived, for on Friday there was a school bus accident. It occurred before 8 o'clock in the morning. . . I waited until 3:30 in the afternoon, seven and one-half hours after the accident, to ask about it. The bus had overturned, 11 students were on the bus, one girl was taken to Duplin General by ambulance. . . I called the Administration office. . . I asked who the bus driver was and was told, but they stated they did not know who was injured. . . They stated they did know if the driver was charged. . . They stated they did not know who was on the bus, but there were eleven students on it, no one was seriously injured, they did not know how much damage was done to the bus, but no windows were broken. . .

When asked about the reason for the accident, I was told the driver had said he went to sleep. I was advised to call the school and talk with the principal. . . I did. . . He stated he did not know who was on the bus nor who was injured. . . He did not know if the driver was charged with a traffic offense. . . At this point, I began wondering what was wrong. . . I could not believe the Administration Office nor the school principal could care so little about the accident as not to have the information I requested. . . But they had not refused to answer my questions. . . They simply said they did not know. . .

I then contacted the Highway Patrolman who had investigated the accident. He had all the information. . . the driver's name. . . the citation issued. . . the student's name who was taken by ambulance to Duplin General. . . the other ten students' names and their minor injuries, as well as the damages to the school bus. . . Had I contacted the Highway Patrolman first and gotten the information, I would not be confused about the Administration Office nor the Principal. . . I would not be wondering if they didn't care, or if they were holding back the information. . . I want to believe the latter. . . Thus, the point of the story is. . . In Joe's opinion, there would be less problems and less confusion if every aspect of the schools' operations was made public. . . After all, I remember someone saying that "Public Schools" . . . Son-of-a-gun.



DUPLIN SCHOOL SYSTEM SELF-STUDY DISPLAY - Sixteen of Duplin County's schools will have completed a self-study and will have it ready for review by a visitation/accreditation committee in March as part of Duplin's efforts for

accreditation by the Southern Association of Schools and Colleges. Pictured are some of the self-study reports on display at the Duplin County Board of Education offices in Kenansville.



FmHA EMPLOYEES RECOGNIZED - Two local Farmers Home Administration employees were recently honored with certificates of service during a district meeting held in Wilmington. (L

to R) Sandra Williamson, County Office Clerk (10 year's service) and Grace McNeil, County Office Assistant (30 years' service) look over certificates held by District Supervisor Arthur Benton.

Duplin Leads The State In Farm Income

Duplin continued in 1977 to lead North Carolina counties in gross farm income with a total of \$157,162,135, according to Extension Chairman Vernon H. Reynolds Monday.

Reynolds told the County Commissioners the county's gross total dropped from 1976 and 1975 due to low prices for corn and soybeans, poor crops and low prices for swine.

Gross income from poultry again topped the agricultural area at \$79,232,000. Duplin has been the leading poultry producing county of North Carolina for two decades and is also one of the leading poultry counties in the nation. It is also the only

agricultural county of eastern North Carolina's tobacco producing area in which any crop or livestock total exceeds the total for tobacco.

Reynolds estimated tobacco grossed \$29,048,047 in 1977.

Duplin continued its state leadership in swine production, he indicated, with a gross return to farmers of about \$28 million.

In the poultry field, turkeys returned \$35,226,578 and broilers \$31,660,200.

Reynolds also reported an extension position as field crops specialist has been vacant since the retirement of R.E. Wilkins. Board Chairman Arliss Albertson asked Dr. W.G. Andrews,

district extension chairman from NCSU, if the state is reducing its proportion of extension salaries because the county has to provide half the salary of a new 4-H worker the Board agreed to hire.

Andrews said the state's share of the county extension salaries varies from 30 to more than 50 percent, but he agreed to take the county's request that the state put up a greater proportion of the salary back to the state administrator.

He blamed the lack of congressional oriented to the needs of agriculture for the insistence

(Continued on Page 3)