



Joe Lanier

**SON of A
GUN**

The county budget is out and the school administration has already asked for more than they received. They did not get all they requested; however, neither did anyone else in the county. The schools asked for about \$400,000 more than they received in current expense — those funds that pay the day-to-day running of the schools. The capital outlay (those funds that build and keep the buildings) were allotted about \$25,000 short of the request. In the allotting of funds for the schools, the county commissioners requested the school board leave \$360,000 in the utility bill (the money used to pay for heat and cooling in the schools, electrical costs and fuel oil purchases). The school budget only called for \$325,000. However, the county commissioners added in the advances in rates expected. Although the budget is officially out only one day, the school administration has already cut the fuel budget back to \$25,000. They did not honor the commissioners' request. I am not a commissioner; however, if I were and the funds ran short with there not being enough money to keep the school children warm in the winter or cool in the summer due to the movement of the money, I would cut the electricity off at the administration building and let the folks suffer their choice. When they came crying, the children are cold. I would reroute the electricity from the two administration buildings to the school buildings.

In the request for more money, the superintendent and the board chairman told of ball teams with no umpires, and so on. It should be pointed out by them it was their choice, the superintendent and the chairman of the board, cut the umpires and so on. The cuts they were talking

about could have come from the administration building, from travel, from the gasoline used to travel about the county, when they have an expensive telephone system. The Southern Association accreditation will cost the Duplin County taxpayers . . . not the state or federal government. . . But, the county taxpayers. . . between \$100,000 and \$150,000 this year, and this is just the beginning. . . To me, the schools already have the accreditation from the state. . . Not having Southern Association accreditation will not stop one child from going on to higher education. It will not stop one child from graduating from high school. . . To me, it is like trying to sell an insurance policy to a young man 18 years old. . . I just see no need for it. . . It is nice to say you have it, but you are insured enough to see you are properly cared for with insurance at home. . . state accreditation. . . The choice of where the money is spent is the choice of the school board and administration. . . not the county commissioners or even the tax-paying public. The tax-paying public can change the board by casting their votes at election time. . . Being only one of many taxpayers, I have no objections to increasing the school budget greatly. . . even to the point of adding to the tax rate if this money will be spent directly for the students' benefit with not one red cent added to the administration. In fact, one of the stipulations to agreeing to a tax increase would be a cut in the administration and several other money-wasting projects.

By the way, the county commissioners did add \$100,000 to the schools' capital outlay budget to be used only for school construction. They have added a building block for which to add. There were two fair things added to the county budget this year by the commissioners. They put the \$100,000 in for future school building, and they gave county employees an across-the-board raise of \$400 each. . . not a percentage. Perhaps one day the county will be able to put each person who is paid with county tax money into a single pay plan. . . It is simply not fair to any of the employees for some to be on a state plan with county money. . .

If you were a Star Trek fan when it was on TV, be sure to see the new movie. It is far superior to the movie of a year or so ago. . . Near the end of the movie, the sniffing of crying was heard practically all over the theatre. . . Sad it was. . .
Son-of-a-Gun. . .



DUPLIN DEMOCRAT HONORED - Warren Hepler of Wallace is pictured here being congratulated by North Carolina Governor James B. Hunt after receiving the J. Albert House Award given to the Most Outstanding Young Democrat in North Carolina. Governor Hunt received the Albert House Award in 1969. Hepler received the award at the Annual Young Democrats Installation Banquet held this year in Charlotte on June 5th. Governor Hunt, members of the Council of State and other leading democrats were in attendance as Bill Belk of Winston Salem was installed as President of the 4,000 member organization. Active in State and Local political circles for several years, Hepler has served on his Democratic Precinct Committee in Wallace, the Duplin County Democratic Executive Committee, several Young Democrat study commissions and was a delegate to the 1980 National Democratic Convention in New York City.

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