

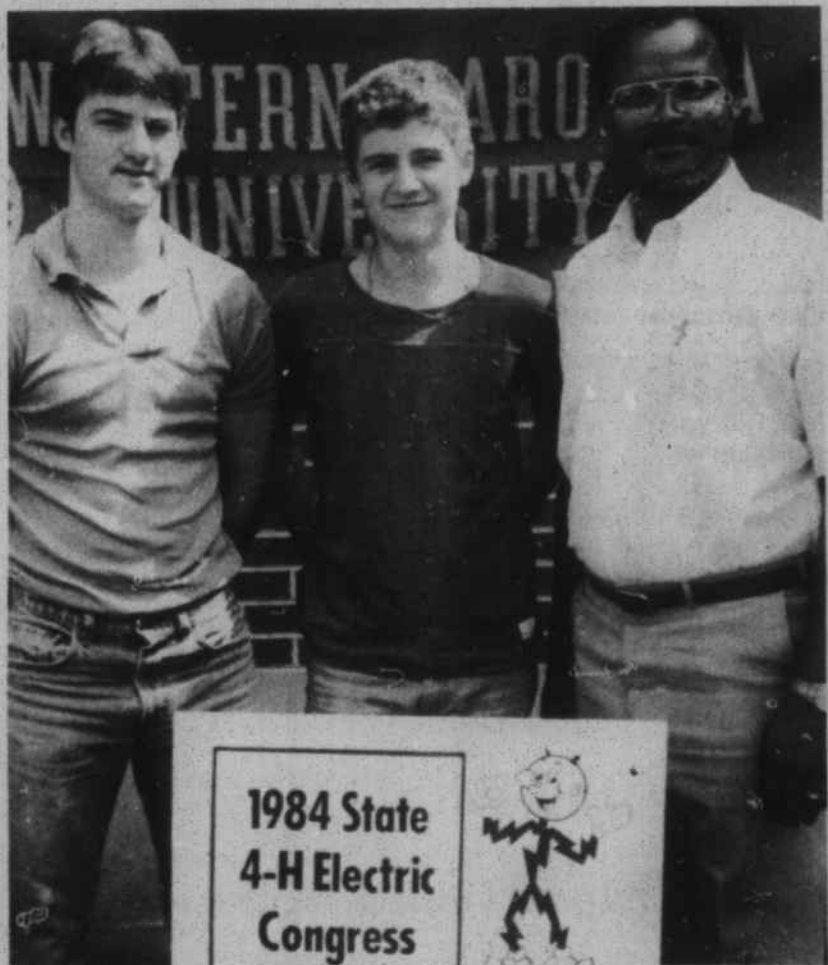


# SON OF A GUN

by Joe Lanier

If you felt a little uneasy — like something was behind you — like someone was doing something to you — something you were just not comfortable about — you turned around quickly but found no one behind you — but the feeling was still there — that feeling like it was happening to you. . . Well, it was. . . You were getting the shaft. . . It was coming from your elected commissioners. . . It was time for them to take another tax-payer-financed vacation to a far off place to a convention for fun and games. . . This past week they flew to Seattle, Washington, while you stayed home and footed the bill. . . The cost was only some over \$5,654. . . How much did you spend on your vacation? . . . Three of the commissioners went and took along two county employees. . . Now, no one blames the county employees. . . If they can fool the commissioners into giving them a paid vacation while no vacation time is deducted from their vacation leave (and they even draw their salary while having a ball in Seattle. . . Those on this trip were Commissioners Allen Nethercutt, Dovie Penney and Calvin Turner. . . Commissioner Turner has not missed a trip yet. . . They also carried along the county manager, Ralph Cottle, and the county accountant, Russell Tucker. . . The commissioners really like these two. They just gave them a salary increase of over \$1,500 a year each and a tax-payer-paid vacation to go along with it. . . That is not all. There is a convention coming up in Asheville, N.C. The commissioners already have their rooms reserved to the tune of \$3,522.24. . . That will make over \$10,000 they took from your pockets and threw away on a good time for themselves and a few chosen county employees. . . I said earlier, the employees have the commissioners fooled. That's not quite right. . . The commissioners have us fooled, and while we laugh and giggle about the way the commissioners claim to be doing great things at these conventions, and while we know differently, it is the commissioners who are laughing. . . And doing it at us. . . For we are foolish enough to allow such things to take place. The fault rests right here with the voters — we, who vote can stop this waste of money — if we want to. . . I really think it is time we stop ignoring the fact that this trip is not doing a thing for Duplin County. . . Not one thing. . . Not one bit of benefit does Duplin County derive from these conventions. Now, if you think the commissioners are deserving of a tax-paid vacation, then let's call it such. . . Call it a good time-off with pay. . . Let's not lie to ourselves. . . Call it what it is. . . However, there is no reason whatsoever I can think of to take county employees along and pay their expenses — except, maybe, to pay them off for some job or some thing they might have done beyond what they are paid to do — or supposed to do. . . I don't think this is the case, but I do wonder at times, why? . . . You know Seattle, Washington, is as far away as you can go without going to sea or into Canada. . . And, I might mention that the commissioners went to sea and visited Canada. . . They did pay the boat-fare from their pockets. . . The \$92 they paid for a meal in Canada came from your pockets. . . And the long distance phone calls they made each night to their spouses also came from your pockets. . . The fact that they are wasting some over \$10,000 on trips this year is bad enough, but when they say we of Duplin are benefitting, that is absolutely insulting. . . Oops! Let's not forget the Register of Deeds also went along. Christine Williams also flew to Seattle, Washington, for the register of deeds convention. She used up about \$1,000 on her hard-working trip. . . It, too, was tax monies. . .

It is a good time to ask for outrageous things after the commissioners return from one of those tax-paid vacations. . . The National Guard men asked the commissioners to buy each armory a copier machine to copy paper work. . . The commissioners agreed — three of them did — Commissioners Bill Costin, Dovie Penney and Allen Nethercutt. D.J. Fussell and Calvin Turner voted against the purchase. . . The National Guard is a fine organization, but they should remain financed by the state or federal government — not Duplin County. . . The commissioners asked why the federal or state people did not buy them a copier. . . No one knew. . . Well, let's look at the facts. . . There are 50 men in Wallace; there are 36 in Warsaw; there are 48 in Beulaville. . . If you add those together, you come up with 134. If you add the cost of the copier machings, \$8,550 to the expense of running them for a year, \$3,000, and divide the number of men into that figure, you get a cost of almost \$90 per man. . . That is too high a cost per man for copies. The National Guard folks said they had 2,000 copies made per month per unit. . . That figures to over 40 copies per man per month. . . I wonder if the commissioners spent their money as they are spending ours. . . If they do, we are sure to have some more on the welfare rolls soon, and they will be former commissioners. . . Son-of-a-Gun. . .



1984 State 4-H Electric Congress

**Attend 4-H Electric Congress**  
Duplin County 4-H members (from left) Charles Denning of Route 2, Faison, and Jay Hines of Route 1, Mount Olive, were delegates to the State 4-H Electric Congress July 9-11 at Western Carolina University in Cullowhee. Jimmy Farmer, Carolina Power and Light Co. senior customer service representative, accompanied the delegates. The 4-H'ers were selected for achievements in their electric projects. Denning was declared third place winner in CP&L's territory and the recipient of a portable AM-FM radio with cassette recorder. CP&L sponsored their trip and Denning's award. The congress was conducted by the N.C. Agricultural Extension Service.

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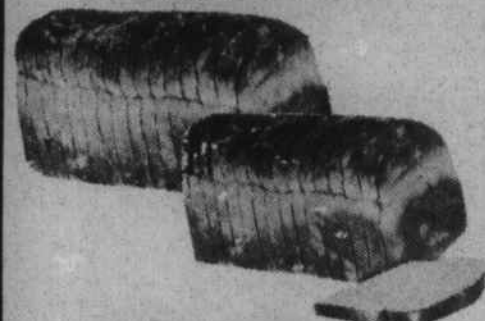
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