



Editorially Speaking

No Place For Politics

By Carolyn Yuzuk

Politicians controlled Yancey County's appointive offices for many years and the old guard won't give up without a fight. Two men who hold the important positions of Yancey County Superintendent of Schools and Yancey County Social Services Director have been finding that out ever since being appointed to their present jobs. The men are well qualified, experienced in their special fields and have been performing their work in an efficient and capable manner, but only time will tell if Yancey County has progressed to the point where these attributes are the ones that count here.

The 2-year term for our Superintendent of Schools is almost up and the question now is whether or not Landrum Wilson's contract will be renewed. This question will be answered within the next two weeks. Clearly the attempt two years ago by a few courageous individuals to keep Politics out of the school system by appointing an impartial out-of-county man for this job has paid off handsomely. Wilson's record of service and accomplishment is an impressive one. His comprehensive grasp of assistance available to Yancey County has brought our school system numerous benefits--mostly funded by the Federal or State Governments. And he has performed his duties without favoritism or prejudice.

We would like to know that our Board of Education's primary concern is for the welfare of the children of Yancey County by seeing them reappoint Wilson so that he can continue projects he has already started and put into effect programs he has been working toward for the past two years. In short--let him carry on a job well begun. We view this coming appointment with far more than casual interest, as the future of the educational system in Yancey County is at stake.

Also a matter of imminent concern is the forthcoming selection of a man to replace I. E. Clevenger who recently resigned from the School Board. The selection should certainly not be politically motivated. The person appointed by the remaining members of the School Board should not be a political figure, but a man who is completely non-partisan, interested only in the betterment of the School System in Yancey County.

An attack was leveled against the Yancey County Social Services Director last Friday that points to the part Politics still plays in our appointive offices. At a meeting of the State Personnel Board in Raleigh, a lawyer from Burnsville told the board that Randall Peacock is not suited for his job as Yancey's Welfare Director.--the reason cited being that Peacock doesn't know how many townships there are in Yancey County. The lawyer, Bill Atkins, was representing Bayard T. Howell, a former caseworker in the department who, having lost his job because he was "not capable of doing the abstract work," according to Peacock, was appealing to the Board to get his job back. Brought all the way to Raleigh to testify in behalf of Howell was not a member of the Social Services Department, but the Yancey County Democratic Party Chairman, Ed Wilson, whose authority in this matter apparently stemmed from the fact that he and Howell had worked together previously in the county school system.

It is the view of The Yancey Record that political intervention and favoritism have no place in either the Yancey County School System or Social Services Department. A person's qualifications, experience, competence and record of achievement should be the standards by which they should be judged. The people of Yancey County should keep abreast of the facts and make themselves heard in situations which affect their future and that of their children in such a direct and personal way.

Yancey School Bus in Traffic Accident; Citation Lists Five Safety Defects

As a result of a traffic accident involving a Yancey County school bus, a case came up in court last Friday on which the citation listed five safety defects in the vehicle. The bus had no emergency brake, no horn, no turn signals, no brake light, and no tail light.

Judge J. E. Holshouser, who was holding court, remarked that the case seemed to indicate a bad situation, particularly in view of testimony indicating that this was not an isolated case of a defective school bus transporting child-

ren. He stated that a court order might be appropriate relative to the inspection of buses, and suggested to Solicitor Clyde Roberts that if further investigation substantiated the apparent lax maintenance of Yancey County busses, the Solicitor should draw up a petition for a court order directing full inspection of the vehicles.

The Yancey Record has learned that Solicitor Clyde Roberts is preparing such an order for the Judge's signature.

The case before Judge Hols-

houser was "nolle prossed," since the Solicitor did not believe that the driver, who happened to be a substitute, could be held liable for the bus defects, particularly since the driver stated that the defects had been reported to the school principal.

The North Carolina school laws specifically spell out strict inspection requirements for busses, and equally strict requirements that use of defective busses be discontinued until the defects are remedied.

The Yancey Record's efforts to get at the facts regarding the safety of the county's busses have disclosed the following facts:

The school laws relative to bus inspection, and the making of written reports of such inspections, have not been fully complied with.

Highway patrolmen have expressed themselves as unhappy about what they consider lax maintenance of the busses. Parents of boys and girls who drive the busses have similarly expressed concern.

All those familiar with the bus maintenance problem recognize that it is a tough job, three factors contributing to the problem--the county's rough roads, the rough treatment of busses by some of the boy drivers, and a recurrent amount of wilful damage inflicted on busses by vandals.

(An editorial relative to school bus maintenance appears elsewhere in this issue of the Yancey Record.)



Action Taken

Sgt. Ferguson has informed School Superintendent Wilson that Highway Patrolmen will inspect school busses on the highway as any other vehicle. If found mechanically unsafe busses will be ordered out of service on the spot.

Wilson met with the school principals and informed them of this action.

Proper forms to report mechanical defects, repairs and responsibility will be instituted Wednesday morning.

Mr. Frank Harmon, Bus Transportation Office, will be in Yancey County Tuesday morning to assist in meeting the requirements of G.S. 115-187.

I. E. Clevenger Resigns--Citizens Send Petition

I. E. Clevenger of Burnsville has resigned from the problem-plagued Yancey County Board of Education. Immediately on learning of this event a number of concerned citizens started circulating a letter to Representative Ernest Messer

asking that any one of three suggested citizens be considered for appointment to fill this vacancy. They are Carroll Angel, or Dr. Garland Wampler, or Bill Hess. In less than three days more than 450 persons from throughout the county signed the letters and they have been forwarded to Mr. Messer.

There is some confusion about the method or procedure of selecting a person to fill the vacancy, that is, whether the Board itself will select the person, or the General Assembly, or the County Democratic Executive Committee recommending to the State Board of Education. Perhaps the best expression of opinion on this problem was that stated by one interested citizen who said: "I don't care who does the choosing so long as the person chosen has the ability to help us get out of this school mess in Yancey County".

Scout Drive

The Boy Scouts plan to continue their paper and coat-hanger drive. Anyone who has old newspapers, magazines or coathangers that they would like to give the Scouts, please bring them to Mr. Forest McCall's home on Robertson St. Mr. McCall lives in the 2nd house on the left behind the Mt. Mitchell Motel.

The Scouts will make house to house pick-ups on April 17. The pick-ups will be made on telephone requests only. Call 682-2916.

Tournament Set

The Yancey County Jaycee Basketball Tournament will be held March 25th and 27th. The four teams include East Yancey Shell, Mitchell County all stars, Brevard, and Cane River all stars.

The Basketball Tournament starts at 7:00 Thursday night with a game between Brevard and Mitchell County all stars. The second game, 8:30 p. m., will be East Yancey Shell vs. Cane River all stars.

Saturday night a consolation game between the losers of Thursday's game will play at 7:00 p. m. The Championship Game between the winners of Thursday's game will play at 8:30.

Admission is .50 and .75. Come on out and support your favorite team.

To Visit Here

Tom L Mallonee, 11th Congressional District Assistant to Congressman Roy A. Taylor, is now making scheduled visits to the county seats and other sections of the counties.

On Thursday, April 8, he will be at the Yancey County Courthouse, Burnsville, from 1:00 to 2:00 p. m.