

Opinions

Your Right To Say It

BOB McRAE
Superintendent
Kings Mountain Schools



**Education
key issue**

The short session of the North Carolina General Assembly convenes on May 26. While the agenda for this year is not as lengthy as in 1991, there still are important issues to be discussed which will effect the public schools. I hope you will monitor the proceedings and let your representatives hear from you when needed.

In today's column I will identify several of the key issues to be debated which affect education. Hopefully, this review will enable you to keep better informed as the session proceeds.

Any discussion of this year's legislative session must begin with a look at the current revenue picture. I'm sure you remember the critical shortfall of funds last year which resulted in both revenue producing measures and decreases in spending commitments. The public schools, Kings Mountain included, really had to tighten their belts to make ends meet. The revenue picture for 1992 is better but not good in terms of growth.

Current projections indicate there will be less than \$100 million available for new programs this year. While that may seem like a large figure, its size shrinks when you realize that it takes \$54 million to raise salaries of state employees by 1%. Since the third year of implementation of the new teacher salary scale was postponed in 1992, there has been much hope that it could be funded this year. However, that would require a 6% increase on the average.

While the economy is showing signs of recovery, the potential for significant additional funds for education is limited, and it appears that will be the case for some years to come. If new sources of revenue are to be pursued so that salaries can be improved, legislators need to hear that citizens are willing to provide the funds to do so.

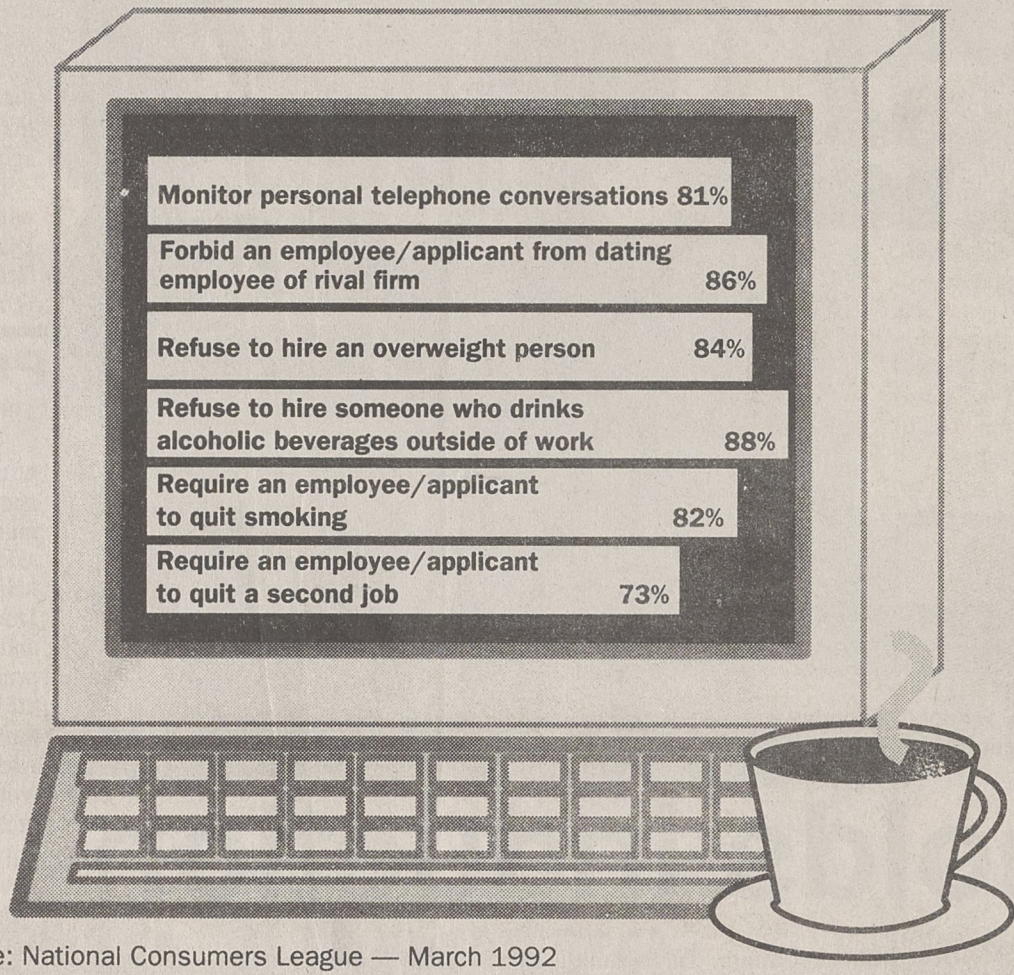
There is some talk about a statewide bond issue to fund education facilities. Such a bond would not produce an amount of money for us as large as our local bond of a few years ago but could allow us over \$1 million to enhance our facility program. With such funds we could continue to address facility needs which exist on each of our seven campuses. The proposed amount of such a statewide bond would probably be limited to the maximum figure that could be financed and not require a tax increase.

There are also important non-monetary education issues on the agenda for this session. One of the most interesting is the governance issue. The position of state superintendent of public instruction has always been an elective position. One piece of legislation being considered would make it an appointive position, named by the State Board of Education. Supporters of this legislation contend that appointment is the best way to assure that a qualified person serves in this role. Another bill being considered this session would keep this office elective but make the state superintendent the chairman of the State Board of Education, giving that position more authority than is currently the case. The governance issue seems to be discussed most years but changes have been slow. Whether that will change is unknown but it deserves your attention this session.

Another issue not related to budget which may be discussed in the upcoming session relates to a variety of bills which center around the issues of dropouts/at-risk children/school discipline. Most interesting may be the discussions about violence and weapons in schools, the possibility of requiring parents to assist in the disciplining of their children at school, and the possibility of limiting the number of hours that students may work after school. Legislation in any of these areas could substantially change the current situation.

As the session develops daily reports on legislative activity will be available through the media. I want to encourage you to follow the education issues closely and to communicate with our representatives when it is important to do so. I have worked with them enough to know that they value the opinion of the citizens back home and are willing to listen. I think it is important that they know when people are willing to step forward for public education in the state, and I hope that the recent indications that citizens are willing to work for better school continue to materialize. Keep up with the activity of the General Assembly. The future of our children depends on our attention.

FASTFACTS
Americans Agree —
Employers Have No Right To:



Source: National Consumers League — March 1992

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Twain had the right idea

"Suppose you were an idiot. And suppose you were a member of congress. But I repeat myself." Mark Twain's timeless quote appears to be especially apt for the current collection of misfits in Washington.

I'm talking about that same old gang of spendthrifts that always shows up to throw taxpayer money at any real or imagined urban problem that comes down the pike.

I guess it's Los Angeles' turn again. They practically destroyed their city in 1965 and now they've done it again.

Who will pay to rebuild it? You and I, just as we did before.

Racism is deplorable and I believe most right-thinking Americans are fair-minded. Those loudmouths who constantly equate being white with being racist are wrong. I'm not saying there isn't a race problem in this country. Nobody should be that naive. I am saying that the burning of L.A. was not rooted in racism. Neither was it caused by hunger, sub-standard housing, poverty, or any of those terms employed by the Jesse Jacksons of the world. Nor was it a result of 60's social programs, as Marlin Fitzwater would have you believe.

I saw the looters, arsonists and thugs on television and it seems to me everybody was represented. There were blacks, whites, Hispanics and orientals.

The fact is, a group of common lawbreakers took advantage of a situation.

The Rodney King case was reprehensible. It is beyond me how a jury could find the L.A. policemen completely innocent in view of the famous video tape that clearly shows excessive use of force, if nothing else. The bad verdict, however, is not a reason to burn, pillage and murder.

I certainly don't profess to have all the answers, but I can tell you if our elected officials try to apply a huge taxpayer-funded band-aid to Los Angeles, many of them will find themselves out of work. I believe there is a term-limit throw-the-rascals-out mood among the electorate these days.

Voters are fed up with with the current crop of politicians from city hall to the white house. The recent Gastonia city council election is the best example I can think of.

Gastonia's voters tied a can to the entire city council with the exception of the mayor and one council member.

The losers are crying the blues. I've not heard such sour grapes in years. Some of the comments were:

"I hope the voters are as happy in three months as they are now."

"I can't believe they elected (use any newly-elected member's name)."

"None of them have any experience!"

What those crybabies don't understand is that the

**Jim
Heffner**
Columnist



people were weary of the unfeeling treatment dished out by the defeated members for the past several years.

They don't understand that the people didn't want an airport built at Pasour Mountain. I'm not even sure Gastonia needs a new airport.

Experience? The losers didn't have experience when they were elected either. There is no school for city council members.

The losers don't comprehend that citizens were tired of their complaints falling on deaf ears. When a controversial issue arose, the council went into the neighborhood to hold their next meeting. They made a great show of "listening to the people," but, in every case, their minds were already made up.

I attended one of those meetings and correctly predicted the exact vote count before it was taken. The council sat, not unlike a line of mute toads, and listened to a parade of citizens who presented reams of information and arguments as to why the Hoffman Road connector shouldn't be built. As soon as the meeting ended a vote was taken and the people lost again.

The council could have at least taken a few days to study all the new information.

Such is life I guess.

I really get a kick out of watching people running for public office, on all levels. Some of the comment is hilarious.

I find I am unable to look at, or listen to, Ross Perot without laughing. Every issue put forth brings the same comment from him: "I consider that the number one priority." He's almost a caricature of himself.

Before you Perot supporters start lambasting me, I signed the petition to get him on the ballot. I did it to add humor to the staid election process. I'm afraid, however, if I tried to place my mark beside his name, I'd lapse into convulsions and they'd have to cart me off to the hospital.

If you think Perot is a saint, and sent forth by God to save the country, talk to somebody who has worked for one of his companies.

Oh well, Mark Twain said something else appropriate for the times: "Man is the only animal that blushes—or needs to."

Sincerely,
James Falls

Letter Policy

The Herald welcomes your letters to the editor for publication in each week's paper. We ask that you follow these guidelines and deadlines:

Keep your letters brief and to the point. The Herald reserves the right to edit letters for spelling, length, good taste, libel or slanderous statements, or any other reason; and reserves the right to reject any letter for any reason.

All letters must be signed in ink and include the full name, address and telephone number of the writer. If possible, type and double space the letters but always sign them in ink. Hand-written letters should be clearly legible.

Hand-delivered letters will not be published. Mail letters to the Editor, P.O. Box 769, Kings Mountain, NC 28086.

SCREEN TEST

Each horizontal and vertical row in the grid below contains the six-letter title of a famous movie, one letter per box. The top row contains *Psycho*, as shown. Cross off the letters as you solve. When you've found 12 titles, read the leftover letters to find a quote and its author.

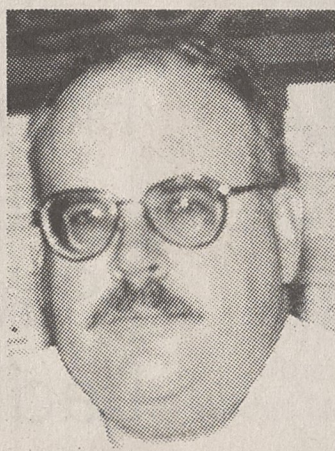
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ANSWERS

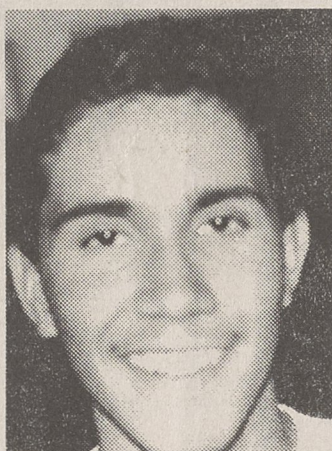
make a western. —Director (John Ford)
6. Batman
QUOTE: "When in doubt."
2. Atmos 3. Patton 4. Frenzy 5. Top Gun
5. Oliver 6. Arthur 7. D.O.M.N. 1. Grease
2. Splash 3. Ben Hur 4. Cocoon
SCREEN TEST ACROSS: 1. Psycho

SIDEWALK SURVEY

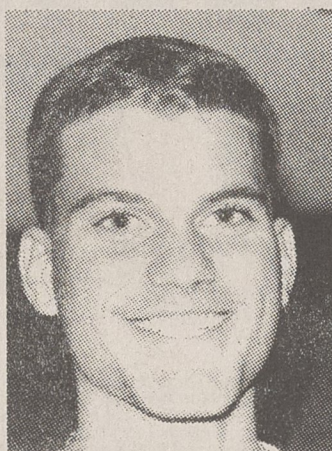
Who should the Charlotte Hornets choose in the NBA draft?



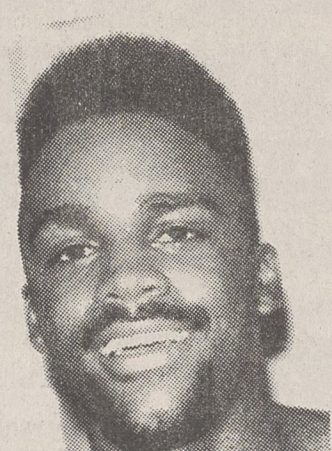
Eddie Sparks
I think they'll take the guy from Georgetown. He can run the floor, shot block and rebound.



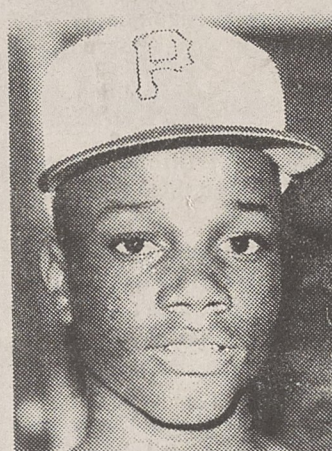
Oscar Ortega
Mourning. He's good.



Lewis Nantz
Mourning. They won't get Shaquille because they don't have first draft pick.



Steve Moore
Mourning. They need a shot blocker.



Randy Williams
Mourning. He's the next best after Shaquille

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