

# THE PILOT

"A long time ago, a wise editor said, 'The function of a newspaper is 'to print the news and raise hell.' I haven't been able to improve upon that definition."

Sam Ragan, Editor and Publisher, 1968-1996

## In Time of Crisis, True Selves Show

There was a lot of emotion to process on Friday in the immediate aftermath of the shocking stabbing of 17-year-old Avery Slatcher in the parking lot of Pinecrest High School.

You could see that emotion on the drained and distraught faces of students, parents and faculty as they tried to get through the day and the hundreds of early student withdrawals from campus. You could see it in the angst-filled, confused and frantic messaging across social media.

No school campus is immune from violence, and no amount of drilling can prepare a community for the day one of its students harms another. The only things we have to rely upon when a crisis occurs are the professionalism and compassion of school staff; the responsibility and trust of parents; and a level-headed thoughtful response from our leaders. Two out of three ain't bad.

### A Violation of Trust

The Moore County Board of Education, which has bragged about its transparency to the public, spent the better part of Friday morning raging about discipline, violence and student safety in a private text exchange that violates the public meetings law.

Their first act was not to ask what they could do to help or support school staff, students and their parents. It was to second guess just about everyone and assume they had all the answers. Board Vice Chair David Hensley even goes so far as to threaten to take over the Moore County Schools Police Department, which reports to the superintendent.

Then, he wrote, "We will ensure they (students) are incarcerated."

Board Chairman Robert Levy, who had a long career as a California divorce lawyer, demonstrated his ignorance for North Carolina law by trying to excuse the conversation as "an emergency dissemination of information during an emergency in which school safety was the subject matter. The Pilot, however, elected to publish confidential information specifically kept confidential by law."

Text messages, like emails, memos and other documents, are public records. And there was nothing sensitive in these texts, especially the sentiments.

Yes, worse than breaking the law and trying to make lame excuses were some of the callous, reactionary and ugly comments that occurred before investigators and school officials were even able to get a clear sense of what had happened.

### Lock Them Up

Board Vice Chair David Hensley: "Again, we need to start expelling and incarcerating students. I have only been saying that for 2+ years. It is time we actually start doing it, or the School Board will start running the Police Dept directly and we will ensure they are incarcerated."

Hensley, again: "This is what almost a decade under far left 'no consequences,' restorative Justice, etc gets us."

Board member Pauline Bruno: "We are doing these kids no favor by letting them get away with everything or giving them a slap on the wrist."

And Hensley follows up: "'Here is part of the problem. We send 'counselors' when we should be sending severe consequences.'" He then goes on to malign the student charged in the stabbing.

Let's end where we began: There is a lot of emotion to process in this tragedy. Two families' lives have been overturned. The victim faces a difficult recovery, but the teen suspect and his family also confront challenges. Two young lives were changed in an instant, and we can't forget that. They both deserve prayers.

Teens are in an emotional crisis today, and yet this is a school board that has frequently railed against social emotional learning and school-based counselors as tools of leftist devils.

Our children are screaming for help, but this school board offers handcuffs. Children are longing for empathy. This school board pushes expulsion.

At their meeting Monday, with cameras rolling, the board was controlled and positive, a big change from when they thought no one was watching.

But it is in times of crisis that we become known for who we really are and what we stand for.

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*In memoriam, Frank Daniels Jr.*

## LOCAL LIFE: THE GREEN SCENE



Kim McAllister arranges plants at Gulley's Garden Center Thursday afternoon.

TED FITZGERALD/The Pilot

## That Old Typing Class Served Me Pretty Well

*Because I'm kind of stove up from recent hip replacement surgery (more about that in a future column, perhaps), please allow me to offer instead a reprint of this piece, which first ran a decade ago, back in 2013.*

A friend forwarded me one of those emails that make the rounds. This one was an "Age Test" that asked you to identify a couple of dozen items or activities shown in old photos. I passed.

There were 45 rpm records, jacks, a window speaker from a drive-in movie, and so on. But the black and white picture that caught my eye showed a bunch of high school girls sitting at manual typewriters. It asked: "Did you, or anyone you know, ever take this class in school?"

Did I ever.

When I was in high school back in Missouri, I worked early mornings and late afternoons for a veterinarian, cleaning out cages and feeding the dogs and cats. I worked on Saturdays, too, sometimes accompanying the vet on house calls. He was a stolid old German named Dr. E.W. Millenbruck. He seldom had anything to say. But when he did, you listened.

On the spring day in question, I was riding shotgun in his 1954 Pontiac as we headed for a

distant dairy farm, where I was to help perform a cesarean section to remove a mummified calf from a Guernsey cow.

On the way out, I began leafing through some materials from Carthage High School. Dr. Millenbruck asked what I was doing. I explained that I was trying to decide what other elective course to take for my junior year the next fall, besides General Shop. He offered a two-word piece of advice: "Take typing."

Typing?! That was the last thing I would have been caught dead signing up for. Basket weaving, maybe. But typing? That was what girls took if they were going to be secretaries. No way.

But the doctor was a smart old dude who generally knew what he was talking about — when he talked. So after consulting with my parents, I relented and decided to take his advice. And the next September, I found myself sitting self-consciously in Edith Owens' Typewriting I class, surrounded mostly by girls and confronting a massive, gray Remington manual (that was the only kind they had back then) typewriter.

Mrs. Owens was a good teacher who brooked no nonsense and accepted no excuses, and soon our room was echoing with the sounds of dozens of

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**Steve Bouser**  
Columnist

## THE PUBLIC SPEAKING

### Join Us in Supporting The Aberdeen Library

The Friends of Aberdeen Library held a gala on April 13 to celebrate "Turning The Page" toward a new, high-functioning library.

The evening was sold out, had tremendous local business support, grass-roots support and support from the town officials. Mitch Capel provided a festive air to the evening, supported by Derrick Numbers of the Neon Rooster and Rod Harter's portrayal of a well known character from "Cat on a Hot Tin Roof."

It was an enjoyable evening for all. Just as importantly, it gave me an opportunity to answer a question I have received from a few Doubting Thomases during our efforts to raise money for our challenge: "Why does a town need a library, when we have computers?"

I always explain that a high-functioning library is not just a warehouse for books in today's society. Well-run libraries create a sense of place for the community, through various programs for children and adults alike. They provide

The Pilot welcomes letters from readers. Email them to [letters@thepilot.com](mailto:letters@thepilot.com) or mail them to 145 W. Pennsylvania Ave., Southern Pines, NC 28387. Letters must include name, phone number and city of residence and may be edited for length and content. The limit is 300 words.

community space for small groups, technology capabilities for those that can't afford it at home, children's reading programs, speaker engagements for all ages and, for many, a simple respite site from day to day chaos.

Our vision is to have all of that plus a balcony for relaxed reading and a "library reading garden" just a few steps from the front door.

We are not there yet. However, the evening of the gala clearly expressed that the vast majority of the residents understand the need — and they want it sooner than later.

*Tom Cruce, president Friends of Aberdeen Library*

### Protection Needed

I agree with the assessment allowing CCNC a short-term rental exception. HOAs by their

very nature are small governing bodies within a specific community with everyone knowing the rules/regulations prior to purchasing a home.

An HOA community does not affect me, a homeowner in a non-HOA residential area. However, residential homeowners need protection against a proliferation of short-term rentals, which no matter how you cut it are commercial businesses.

If we do not protect residential areas, other businesses may want a piece of the action, for example, a small bump shop or party store. You think it couldn't happen?

Now, onto Ms. Boesch, who wants short-term rentals in residential communities. This stance comes across as a bit disingenuous considering she lives in Pinewild, a gated community restricting short-term rentals. Perhaps Ms. Boesch should leave Pinewild and live among the rest of us; otherwise it's another example of being for something when you aren't affected.

*Kathy Taylor Pinehurst*