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## THE SOURCE | Politics & public life in the Carolinas

# Daylight saving foe takes case to people

Daylight saving foe

takes case to the people

Drivers on Independence Boulevard may be a bit perplexed by the billboard near Eastway Drive showing a school bus and proclaiming "IT must be abolished."

Those with sharp eyes may catch the smaller type: "Daylight savings is ruining our schools."

**Norris Plott**, a Charlotte property manager, has been stewing about daylight saving time for 35 years. He blames it for a host of woes, from kids too sleepy to succeed in school to drivers wasting gasoline during the extra hour of evening light.

For years, he's bombarded reporters and public officials with complaints about the time change. This year, when the school buses rolled through his neighborhood at 6:10 a.m., "which is 5:10," he decided to spend \$5,600 to rent four billboards for two weeks (the others are on North Tryon Street and Wilkinson Boulevard and in Monroe).

Mostly, Plott hopes to build awareness. "If somebody else wants to take the ball and run, that's fine with me," he said this week.

There does appear to be one benefit to Plott's crusade. When telemarketers call, he says, he gives them a spiel on the evils of daylight savings.

"Most of them hang up on me." -- *Ann Doss Helms*

### Even in loss, there's work to be done

**Ken Gjertsen** may have failed in his bid to become Charlotte's mayor, but at least he's still around to carry out his latest school board assignment. "My 5-year-old, who's in kindergarten, would like me to adopt a rule where he can talk in class," Gjertsen reported at Tuesday's meeting.

Gjertsen, who ran a low-key campaign and refused donations, may have had an inkling how his GOP primary challenge to longtime Mayor **Pat McCrory** would end. Before polls closed, he was asked what he'd be doing when the board meeting ended and results were in.

He said he planned to take down his signs, "win or lose."

Yeah ... McCrory probably isn't removing any campaign signs before the November election. -- *ann doss helms*

### Election? Zzzzzzz ... what election?

Scenes from Tuesday, a day of 5 percent turnout in the Republican primary:

In the heavily Democratic west side of Charlotte, precinct judges sat behind tables in silent gyms and auditoriums, chuckling at any mention of the word "turnout."

Muffins went uneaten. Coffee went cold. Ballots went uncast.

At Precinct 31's polling place, the gym at Barringer Academic Center on Walton Road, the only noise came from a small boom box tuned to Praise 100.9 FM, "Charlotte's Inspiration Station." The handful of precinct judges on site were something less than inspired. Two napped at their seats. Chief precinct judge **Barbara Heath** easily counted the number of people who, at 3 p.m., had cast ballots: "Zero." (The number eventually rose to one.)

Other west side precincts bustled by comparison. At one, five voted. At another, four.

In mid-afternoon at Precinct 23, where people voted at the Calvary Baptist Church gym on Ashley Road, assistant judge **Alan Gooden** greeted his wife, **Paulette**, who had already voted. They kissed.

"We're up to five now!" Gooden exclaimed. "Ed and Lib came in!" -- *greg lacour*

### 'Boy mayor' coaches next generation

Charlotte's "boy mayor," who's been 50 for almost a year now, says he's transitioning to elder statesman. "I'm trying to get new young leaders involved in Charlotte politics," says **Pat McCrory**, who says he's offering advice and encouragement to 30-something candidates **Edwin Peacock III** and **David Romero**, both Republican contenders for City Council, and **Trent Merchant**, an unaffiliated voter seeking an at-large school board seat.

McCrory says when he was a rookie politician, he got great guidance from such business and political leaders as **Bill Lee**, **John Belk** and **Alan Dickson**. "They never asked me where I stood on an issue," he says. "They asked me who I was and what I was made of."

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The "boy mayor" moniker irked McCrory back when he was first elected at 39. "Now," he says, "I'll take it." -- *Ann Doss Helms*

#### Fundraiser boosts Meck lawmaker

The newest state lawmaker from Mecklenburg County kicked off her re-election effort Thursday night with a fundraiser that drew some big names.

Rep. **Tricia Cotham**, a Democrat, was appointed to her southeast Charlotte district in March. She replaced former House Speaker **Jim Black**, who resigned and is now serving a federal prison sentence for corruption.

Cotham told The Source that about 150 people came to a fundraiser for her at the home of Springs CEO **Crandall Bowles**. Among those attending: House Speaker **Joe Hackney**, N.C. Democratic Party Chair **Jerry Meek**, House Democratic whip **Deborah Ross** and several Mecklenburg lawmakers.

"It was very humbling," Cotham said. "The support was overwhelming."

Other attendees, she said, were students, single moms and people who had never been to a political fundraiser before.

Cotham said she doesn't know yet how much money the fundraiser took in. Though Black won re-election in 2006 by only a handful of votes, the district strongly leans Democratic. - *David Ingram*

#### CMS won't add new tests this year

Critics of North Carolina's testing system are eager for Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools students to take nationally normed exams as a better measure of student accomplishment and progress. Superintendent **Peter Gorman** had hoped to launch such testing this school year, but he now plans to wait until fall 2008. Gorman said this week that consultants are still working with CMS officials to craft a plan. There's no way it'll be ready this fall, and students already face plenty of exams in the spring, Gorman said.

CMS had budgeted \$383,000 in state and local money for the new tests; that money was shifted to other items in the final rearrangement of the district's \$1.17 billion budget. -- *ann doss helms*



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