

**School Days**  
-by Herb Flanders

Another year of public education kicks off this month here in Pickens County and you can bet that there'll be a variety of responses to that reality. Teachers will wipe their brows, say their prayers, and wonder just where the summer went in such a hurry. The truly academic scholar types will be raring to rush headlong into a classroom and start the learning process anew again. The social butterfly type students have been counting the days since the last day of the school year past, just itching to get back to school to "see all their friends". (An aside - I'm married to one



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of those types and I can attest that they never really outgrow it!) And there are the ones like me, the "Why do we have to go to school" types who begin counting the days the exact opposite of the social types; on the first day of school we begin counting just heading for that magic "180" that says we've met the requirements set forth by the Governor of the great state of Georgia and the Superintendent of Schools.

Regardless of the response of students, faculty, administration or parents, the big yellow buses are going to roll, the school doors will be flung open wide, and the classes will begin in earnest. Some things will be different and many others will stay the same. But school will begin!

Among the new things are these - Hill City Elementary will open and bring us to three elementary; the Jasper and Tate Schools will now serve children from Kindergarten through 5<sup>th</sup> grade in the county. We'll have two Middle Schools serving 6-8 graders and, in the something old, something new vein, we'll re-welcome Steve Sewell in the position of Head Football Coach at Pickens High. Go Dragons!

And then the things that won't change. Teachers will still give homework, students will still groan and more than a few will come in empty-handed but bearing the age-old excuse, "The dog chewed it up." The Supreme Court won't be able to get rid of prayer in school because teachers will still give pop quizzes at the most inopportune times (anytime). Traffic jams will knot up downtown Jasper and the Superintendent will pull his hair out trying to figure out how to fix it. Somewhere in Pickens County a boy will pass a note, "Dear \_\_\_\_\_, I love you. Do you love me? Check Yes, No or Maybe." Pranks will be played and teachers and principals will find themselves choking back laughter, at least once, while saying, "You just can't do that at school. You ought to be ashamed."

*See Herb Flanders / next page*

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The light will dawn for a youth and Algebra will make sense. And a teacher will smile. Others will tentatively, slowly, deliberately, maddeningly get out, "See Spot run." And a teacher will smile. A kid will come off the bench to catch a pass, hit a ball, sink a basket, and a temporary hero will be born. And a teacher, who happens to be called Coach, will smile. A lifelong friendship will begin, somebody will fall in love, another will memorize all 50 states, and a kid will bring a picture of the family dog to "Share Time". And a teacher will smile.

Friends, can I share just a word or two of encouragement, caution, warning? First, drive a little more slowly, a little more carefully and, by all means, watch out for those big yellow buses. Leave a bit early if you have to but don't take chances with our community's most precious natural resource – our children and youth. Second, regardless of your views on educational matters, support the students, teachers, administration, system employees, Superintendent, and School Board (that is, everybody who has anything to do with the school system!) and encourage them in their work. There's a place for honest disagreement and Letters to the Editor but when the dust settles, get behind these folks and help them be the best they can be.

Lastly, and most importantly, pray for the entire educational enterprise. Pray for the power of God, the patience of Job, and the wisdom of Solomon for all who participate in education. They need it, and they'll appreciate it. I know; after all, every class has at least one little heathen like the one who grew up to be a Methodist pastor. With that in mind, it certainly won't hurt to pray for the kids!

Herb Flanders is Pastor of the Jasper United Methodist Church on West Church Street in Jasper. His column appears each month in Mountain Peeks.

Don't overlook the tear-out school schedule for Pickens County on page 2.

#### Some Mountain Peeks Facts

More movies are produced in India than Hollywood.

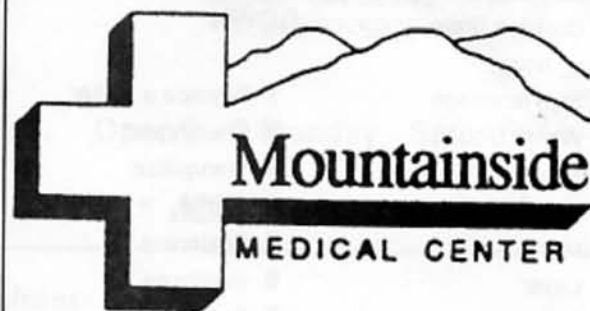
Peter the Great taxed people for growing beards.

Nobody knows who invented spectacles (eyeglasses).

The first submarine was designed in 1578.

Gibraltar is named after a former slave.

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