

# Chalkboard

By

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“It takes many brush strokes to paint the portrait of a child.” For the third time now, I share that thought to you as representing the theme of the Gentry Public School District for 2003-04.

Obviously the analogies I have been attempting to make in the last two articles have been related to art. The portrait, or painting, has of course represented the life’s education, academic and otherwise, of a child. The young child is the blank canvas. The painters or artists are the adults who interact in the life of that child. The brush strokes are the interactions between the child and the adults who populate that child’s world. The paint itself would be the things used by the child and adults in their interaction. The brush could well be the methodology used to drive the things in the interactions. I suppose the final extrapolation could be that the quality of the finished work is directly related to the quality of the canvas, the paint, the brush, and the skill and dedication of the artists.

This week I want to briefly look at the curators of the art gallery. In my educational analogy I believe that has to be the members of the Gentry school board. It is timely to do so, because next Tuesday on September 16, 2003, voters in Zone 2 will have the opportunity to elect a new member to the school board to replace John Trumble who is not seeking re-election. The voters will have two candidates to choose between- Tom Dillard and Kim Walden, either of which should do a good quality job. There will actually be three names on the ballot but Robin Barker has removed herself from contention for job related reasons. She too would have made an excellent board member.

I note again for any new members of our community that only electors from Zone 2 are eligible to vote in this election. Zone 2’s geographical area is the portion of the district that is north of Highway 12 and east of Highway 59. Driving out to the XNA airport from Gentry, leaving from the stoplight by “The Station, would place Zone 2 on your left. Leaving from the same location in Gentry traveling to Decatur would place it on your right until you reached the district boundary at the Y-City road.

The Gentry school board is comprised of five zones with a representative elected from each zone for a five-year term. There are also two members elected at-large from the entire district. The two at large

members are Keith Harper and Merrill Reynolds. Kevin Martin is the Zone 1 representative. Brenda Willett represents Zone 3. Ted Dorn represents Zone 4. Representing Zone 5 is Jim Barnes.

The school board has 12 regularly scheduled meetings a year. They are set to begin at 7:00 p.m. on the third Monday of each month. The board has a meeting room in the Central Office building where most of the regular meetings occur. Past history reveals the board usually has three to six special meetings a year usually called to discuss matters of special interest whose need for consideration require more time than a regular meeting might afford. Past examples of special meeting agendas reveal that the board has met to consider selling bonds, to select fiscal and architectural agents, to discuss construction plans, to conduct student disciplinary hearings, to consider personnel matters, and as occurred last Monday night, to hold public forums for Annual School Reports to the Public. At a minimum, and usually more, board members spend the equivalent of a 40-hour workweek each year meeting to conduct the business of a school.

Since my contract is good for another year, perhaps no one will accuse me of flattery when I state that the past and present members of the school board at Gentry have been and are excellent representatives of their constituents. Past members during my eleven-year tenure here as your superintendent include Phagan Shelley, Brad DeZurik, Jim Ward, Judy Reams, Jo Ellen Martin, Peggy Dillahunty, Jerry Harris, Fred Rosborough, and Dr. Jim Snow. Each of these individuals were able, in the final analysis, to balance their personal opinions with those of their fellow board members, balance the needs of the individual against the needs of the group, and arrive at good decisions.

Next week I will develop this Curator theme and share with you what I believe the role of the school board to be as it relates to the education of the students of Gentry Public Schools.