

Friday October 7, 2011

Between the hours of 8 & 9 a.m., a group of young ladies came into the office during 'One Stop' to register & vote. Sharon Ward (poll worker) and I asked them if they had ID with their name and current address. They replied yes, and we gave them the registration applications to complete.

They began to fill them out and filled in the residence section with their home (out of Pasquotank Co.) address. I told them that I would be happy to send the registrations to their home county, but they would not be able to vote in this county today, if they wanted to register in another county other than Pasquotank. They were students from ECSU.

They were puzzled. I tried to explain that if they did want to register here today, they needed to use their school address and school ID to do so and they would be able to vote here today. They asked if they would be able to vote in their home county and I explained that when they return to their home county, they could cancel their registration in Pasquotank (I showed them on the form where they would do that) and register in their home county.

They looked at each other and exchanged a few words about voting at home, etc. and they said they didn't want to do this. I followed them out because they still seemed puzzled and I was hoping that whoever they had come with could help explain to them the process I had already tried to convey.

As the 1st young lady approached a woman in the parking lot, she began talking to her; the woman threw her arms up and yelled "When you get home you cancel it." Then she motioned for a man in a car to come. She then slapped the back of her hand into the palm of the other hand and yelled, "Get back in there and vote."

The young ladies did an about face and began to re-enter the elections office. As I walked behind them I asked, "Who was that woman" they replied "Coach." I asked, "Are you on the basketball team?" They said, "Cheerleaders." As we approached the room, I told them that registering and voting was their choice. As we entered the room for registering I asked, "Is this what you want to do? They made no comment; they just picked up new registration forms and began to fill them out.

I said, "If you choose to vote here today you must use, 1704 Weeksville Rd for your residential address, otherwise use your home address and I will forward your registration on to your home county, it's your choice.

Then the man who was in the car, in the parking lot came into the room. He was watching the women and looking over at me. I asked him if he had voted. He said "Yes." So I said, "Then you must leave the voting enclosure." He slowly walked out, but in a few moments returned. Again, I said, "Sir, you can not stand in here, I must ask you to please leave the voting enclosure." I walked toward the door extending my hand to walk him out. He was very agitated, and asked me what my name was. I told him, "Bonnie Godfrey." And he left the room. (His name was Lonnie Walton) With more assistance requested from Sharon and I the young ladies completed their registration applications and voted.

Later I would also hear from the poll workers in the front of the office that the woman (Coach) from the parking lot was coming to the front door (inside the buffer zone) and handing campaign materials to a student to pass out to the students inside the voting enclosure.

Later I would also be visited by Bert Birdsall, (treasurer, to the incumbent mayor) and asked what transpired when the young ladies came in earlier to vote. I told him and he said, Coaches are like surrogate parents, and maybe I didn't understand that.

More students arrived from ECSU to register and vote and they requested 'I voted stickers' after voting because their criminal justice teacher would give the 100% if they voted. Another asked for a photo copy of their absentee application for similar reasons.

More cheerleaders arrived to register and vote and I handed them the registration forms. One of them said, "I'm not doing this!" another said, "It's mandatory!"