

Chairman Ramsey, Vice Chairman Gantt, Commissioner Peterson, Commissioner Stanley, Commissioner Young & distinguished citizens of Buncombe County, North Carolina, I'm Gene Hampton, founder, NC/Asheville-Buncombe Citizens for Quality Government (NC/A-BCQG); 'The One Party' & the independent Candidate for Mayor; City of Asheville – 2009. Until yesterday's C-T's front page headlines: "NC may decide Dems race"; I was considering the race for congress. What a difference a day makes!

It is written: "To everything there is a season..." This is the season when we give "grades" to candidates for public office. To be sure, we will begin the process next Saturday, April 5 at 10:00 am in the Lord Auditorium, Pack Memorial Library. We wish you well!

Our good friend and Government Quality Management Assessor (QMA) David Stanley says often: "Public trust is very difficult to obtain; once lost; it is virtually impossible to regain." The lesson learned from HRMC (Haywood Regional Medical Center) is: The "gob" system is dead; funeral arrangements are being mad for Nov. 4, 2008.

We need to restore confidence in our government. Two years ago on 11/7/2006 voters leaving the polls said there were 3 issues that they were most concerned about: 1. Peace 2. Economic Justice 3. Accountability! Today, with more than 4,000 Americans and, at a minimum, 400,000 Iraqis killed, peace is still a major concern; with about 1,000,000 homeowners facing foreclosure and our government making a loan to J.P. Morgan to buy Bear Stearns (the sub prime mortgage investment bank) "Economic Justice" is certainly a concern today; and with a president "breaking the law and making the law" at will, you know "Accountability" is most certainly a concern today. Enough is enough! It's time for a change - "real change!" It's time for Quality Government by the People & For the People!

And speaking of "Accountability," poor performance and lack of accountability by some law enforcement personnel has led to a lack of confidence in our government. We have had numerous oral/written reports of abuse, corruption and improper conduct by our law enforcement personnel in Asheville/Buncombe County. We believe the "root cause" of poor performance is a lack of accountability and independent oversight of law enforcement. ("You can't have democracy without oversight"). Article 1, section 1, NC Constitution states: "We hold it (truths) to be self-evident that all persons are created equal; that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights that among these are life, liberty, the enjoyment of the fruits of their labor and the pursuit of happiness." We need to restore confidence in our government and law enforcement services.

Let's be crystal clear, no one - president, congress person, county commissioner or law enforcement person - has rights superior to those of any other citizen of North Carolina! We know our rights and we know our responsibilities! We have the right and responsibility to ensure proper performance by our elected public officials, and we will!

We MUST, we can and we will ensure a quality law enforcement service and accountability of law enforcement personnel.

Thus, we respectfully request that our County Commissioners join us in urging our state legislators, Susan Fisher, Bruce Goforth and Charles Thomas to present a bill in the NC General Assembly to allow the county commissioners to “create an independent law enforcement Quality Assurance Commission” to review incidents of law enforcement actions when serious injury or death occurs.

And, while we are talking about education quality and accountability, let me add this: when some folks tell newcomers, like Randy Hammer of the Asheville Citizen Times, “you will have to put your children in private schools,” you know we have a problem with public education. We will invite Mr. Hammer to one of our future ex. comm. Meetings (4/7 or 4/21) to help our Education Quality Manager identify possible causes and determine the “root cause” of a lack of quality public education in our community.

Thank you, peace be with you; Namaste! April 2008