

Toooooooo hot for school, football

By: TOM GOETZ, DAILY LEADER Sports Editor

August 08, 2008

Yes, my dear. It is too darn hot to be playing football or going to school. August should be reserved for vacations in the mountains and visiting those Yankee relatives way up North.

Why are those utility bills so high in the school systems across Mississippi?

Ever try cooling a classroom full of children on a 90-degree plus day. That's also known as Mission Impossible.

My soapbox is famous for challenging the establishment. OK, public schools, lend me your ears.

The Biloxi Public School System recently expressed concerns about the high cost of air conditioning the classrooms in August. Rightfully so.

Why not start school the Tuesday after Labor Day in September instead of the first week in August?

Good question. It would be a shade cooler and the humongous August electric bill would be absent.

The patented answer. Starting school later would conflict the Thanksgiving, Christmas and Spring Break vacation schedules. They might have to reduce the amount of vacation days reserved for students and teachers.

Golly, gee. That would be horrible.

By contrast, many average taxpayers consider themselves fortunate to get a week or two weeks vacation from their daily jobs once a year.

Obviously, there would be few tears shed by the general public if our education system had fewer days for rest and relaxation during the holidays. We realize that educators annually complain about their below average pay scale compared to neighboring states and the reduced benefits.

Welcome to Mississippi. Educators are not alone when it comes to lower pay scales.

Realistically, schools should start later and continue educating the students through the first of June. Many schools "up noth" actually don't close their doors until the middle of June.

Let's face it - school starts too early

Which brings up another question.

How in the world did schools ever evolve into the title of Attendance Centers?

Attendance Center sounds like Detention Center.

"Good morning, Podunk Attendance Center," chirps the school's receptionist when she answers the telephone.

School is supposed to be a pleasant, learning experience. Of course, mandatory attendance is required.

Sounds more like either juvenile detention or alternative center.

Retention Center has an academic ring to it. Better yet, Learning Center would qualify as an appropriate title. It sounds better, too.

Why not just call a school a school?

Attendance center buses or attendance center teams sounds ridiculous. Did you see that new attendance center letterman's jacket?

"Go! Fight! Win! WLAC!" screams a cheerleader. Sounds like the call letters for a radio station.

Ugh!

Department of Education administrators, complete with doctorate degrees, are paid 6-figure salaries to set school budgets, annual schedule, education format and policy in the Magnolia State. The drones or citizens are expected to just grin and endure it.

Somewhere, the commoners are complaining.

Returning to football. Mississippi State University's gridiron activity will draw lots of local interest this season. Five players from this area are Bulldogs bent on improving MSU's 8-4 worksheet which included a Liberty Bowl victory over Central Florida.

The MSU quintet includes defensive tackle Jessie Bowman of Brookhaven, cornerbacks Jasper O'Quinn of Meadville and Damein Anderson of Hazlehurst, offensive tackle Phillip Freeman of Wesson and linebacker Mike Hunt of Meadville.

The Bulldogs play their first game Aug. 30, at Louisiana Tech in Ruston. It will be an ESPN2 telecast.

At Ole Miss standout defensive end Marcus Tillman of Meadville will start his third

campaign for the Rebels. Ole Miss hosts Memphis in its season opener.

Some more area stars who are playing college football on Saturdays are Darius Perkins of Brookhaven, a redshirt junior tight end at Northwestern (La.) State University; and Cameron Achord of Brookhaven (Academy), a redshirt junior safety for Belhaven College.

At Western Kentucky, Zach Ray of Brookhaven is a junior redshirt offensive tackle for the Hilltoppers. At Nicholls State (La.) University, Kentario Hardy of Monticello is a junior defensive tackle.

At West Virginia, D.J. Shaw of Meadville is a junior defensive tackle for the Mountaineers who finished 11-2 last season and beat Oklahoma 48-28 in the Fiesta Bowl. Shaw caught West Virginia's eye when he was playing for the Copiah-Lincoln Community College Wolfpack.

Another former Co-Lin player, defensive end DeAndre Davis of Meadville, is starting for New Mexico. Teammate Glover Quinn of Summit is working at cornerback.

Two more Franklin County products, cornerback Jonathan Brooks and offensive lineman Emmanuel Mohammad, are playing for Millsaps and Jackson State respectively.

Please let this column know if we have overlooked some local player.

Write to sports editor Tom Goetz, c/o The DAILY LEADER, P.O. BOX 551, Brookhaven, MS 39602 or e-mail sports@dailyleader.com