

Skyland Kids

Finding Out

What Life Is

By DOROTHY NIX

"Who am I?" asked 110 sixth-grade students at Skyland Elementary School; so they began to hold discussions, write papers and paint a mural to find the answers.

They began by exploring their problems — the "sticks and stones" in their lives and the world around them—broken homes, anger, race relationships, war, the drug problem and problems of the environment.

THEN THEY TALKED of what they had known of beauty—the woods and streams of Georgia and Florida beaches. When they were asked to write about the most beautiful person they had ever known, three-fourths wrote about their mothers.

Then they looked at the future and were optimistic about chances to change the environment and solve problems. Mrs. Fern Williams, their English teacher, and Art Pellenberg, student teacher, directed the study.

WAR WAS illustrated by an atomic bomb explosion with handcuffed hands in the smoke showing the futility of it. Good and harmful uses of drugs were represented by a syringe with a red cross at one end and a skull and cross bones at the other.

Students kept a daily log as they read books, listened to tapes and records and delved into the five-week humanities course which Mrs. Jewel Ketchin, school librarian, helped Mrs. Williams develop.

IN ANSWER to the question, "Who am I?", they wrote revealing personal replies—"I am me, I never go away."

"I am jealous sometimes and proud, too. I think everyone is, don't you?"

"I'm the middle person in my family . . . I can't wear makeup or see mature movies. I am a Catholic who goes to public school, and I am about 1 different parts of nationalities."

"I am the oldest child in my family. Because of this I am told good and bad things first. The other children hear what I've been told later."

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Skyland Closed Despite Appeal

By HELEN ORDNER

Skyland Elementary School parents said Monday night that they really had held no hope that the DeKalb Board of Education would change its decision to close their school at the end of the spring term.

They expressed bitterness and disappointment however, following a 6/0 vote against their appeal of the closing, and they questioned the motives of board members who voted against them. The vote was taken in closed, executive session.

"They made a mistake on the other two schools recommended for closing and they were big enough to back down. By closing Skyland, they are saving face," said Mrs. Gene Smith.

Three parents who had taken part in the appeal said they felt board members were motivated by the sum the Skyland property

will bring if it is sold. "I really think the school is already sold," said parent Linda Stacy. She, and others who expressed this belief said that it came from information they obtained about adjacent properties.

BOARD CHAIRMAN

Elizabeth Andrews said Tuesday morning that "I have heard not one indication of such a thing." If other board members knew of such a potential sale, she said, she would have heard.

"The school was closed," she said, "because there are not enough children to fill the seats. When you are looking at consolidation, you don't hang on to the most expensive (property) to maintain.

"The board is charged with the responsibility of stewardship of the tax dollar. We must be sure the same amount of tax money

is spent on each child. Whenever there is an under-used school, a larger proportion of the tax dollar must be spent there. That's why we have to make these hard decisions."

Mrs. Andrews said that she had passed on information from school authorities to parents that Mercer University and the Southern Association of Schools and Colleges were both seriously interested in purchasing the Skyland property. Parents said that their investigation did not reveal this and questioned why those groups would purchase Skyland with its asbestos problem.

School officials had estimated that \$300,000 will be required to remove asbestos from the building and return it to usable state.

Parents anticipate that the state will soon fund asbestos removal from pub-

lic schools and asked board members to postpone action. Seven million dollars has already been provided for colleges, according to Mrs. Stacy. She questioned how Forrest Hills Elementary got moved up on the priority list for asbestos removal, while her school will be closed.

Parents had made a plea that 3,000 more housing units will spring up in the area from rezoning of the Standard Club property and the impact of the Brookhaven MARTA station.

School projections discounted this impact that parent spokesmen anticipate.

Gene Smith, spokesman for the group, said that he feels there would be no future in an appeal to the state Board of Education.

**Dept. Of Labor
Opens Offices**

At DeKalb Schools

The Georgia Department of Labor has opened two new DeKalb County centers, in conjunction with the Department's opening of the Summer Youth Campaign of 1972.

The centers are expected to assist in-school youth between ages 16-21 in finding summer employment. Assisting in the work will be the National Alliance of Businessmen and the EOA offices in Metro Atlanta.

The DeKalb offices are located at Skyland Elementary School, 2600 Skyland Drive, N.E., and Avondale Elementary School, 10 Lakeshore Drive, Avondale

*DeKalb County Schools
Skyland Elementary*