

Chad Evans looks toward fast lane

By JONATHAN SHEEHAN
Sentinel Staff Writer

It took a court order to get Chad E. Evans on the Keene Board of Education.

But now that he's there, he's determined to be successful in the post to which he was elected.

After just three months, Evans — the youngest member to ever be elected to the board — realizes he has a lot to learn. But he's willing to rise to the challenge. If past experience is any indication, he'll keep rising.

Keene's school board has had teenagers at its meetings before, but they've been student representatives, non-voting members who usually give a quick report on activities at Keene High School and then leave the meeting.

Evans, 19 when he was elected, describes his feelings about his election with youthful elan.

"It was really neat being the first teenager on the board," says Evans, who's now 20.

After five years at Keene's McDonald's restaurant, he's risen from working the counter taking customers' orders to first assistant manager, the store's second-in-command, and he's "waiting for a store" to manage on his own.

Not everyone can thrive in a tightly organized work place such as McDonald's, he says. But "I recommend it to every kid."

"It's stereotypical as a job for kids. But it takes a professional to run it," he says, adding that there's "more to it than flipping burgers. You're a wheel in a big

machine.

"I used to get laughed at for working at McDonald's," he says. "And I went out and bought a Corvette that was one year old." That stopped the laughs, he says. But the gains didn't stop there.

McDonald's has sent him to its management school, dubbed "Hamburger University" outside Chicago, to learn "a bit of dealing with customers, figuring out problems, people skills."

"And I got my degree in 'hamburger-ology,'" which sounds funny but offers genuine college credits toward a business management degree.

"McDonald's has been a great experience for me."

Recruiting the family

He's even gotten his family under the golden arches. His father, Chester, was in semi-retirement after selling Chet's Rubbish Removal, the business he had owned for 20 years.

His father taught him the value of hard work. "My dad was the hardest worker I ever met," he says. "If I had to have a hero, it would be him."

"I talked him into coming to McDonald's," Evans says. His father, working late at night when the restaurant is closed, "fixes all the things we break during the day."

His mother, Pam, is the restaurant's administrative assistant, handling office work, payroll and related duties. "So we have McEvans," he says.

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Sentinel photo by STEVE HOOPER

FAST TRACK — Chad Evans, 20, of Keene became the school district's youngest board member in January when a Cheshire County Superior Court declared Evans the winner. A clerical error put the name of Evans' father on the ballot.

Keene's youngest school board member: a quick student

(Continued from Page One)

Chad still lives at home with his parents, a brother Jason, and sister, Nicole, on Sullivan Street in Keene.

Daniel D. Frazier, the manager of Keene's McDonald's, says Evans is "full of energy, bright, always thinking."

Evans oversees all employee training, hiring and orientation. "Developing the younger managers is his particular duty."

"He balances everything. Sometimes I wonder how he balances the things he has to do," Frazier said. Frazier said he's never had an employee who holds an elected office.

"This is the first celebrity who's worked for me."

He sees a bright future for his young assistant. "It's unlimited as far as I'm concerned. He can go as far as he wants to at McDonald's."

For his part, Evans wouldn't mind that. In 10 years, "I'd like to be an area supervisor for McDonald's if I'm still with them."

Kenneth R. Swift, who was Evans' 6th-grade math teacher at Keene Junior High School, still keeps in touch with his former student.

"He just was always there — someone you could depend on," said Swift, who's now retired and substitutes in Keene's schools. "He was always one of those kids who would talk to you about anything and everything."

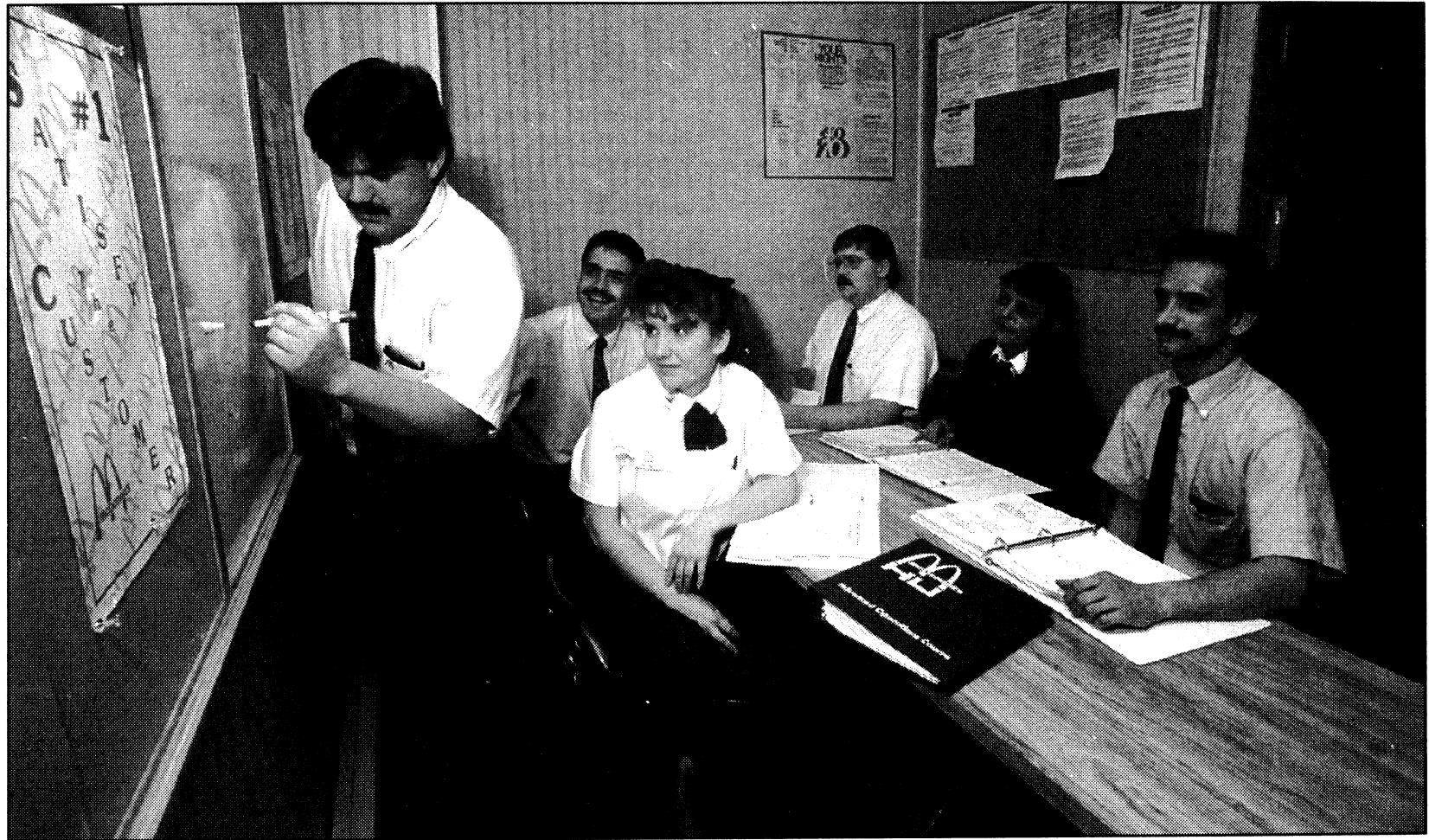
"He was a good student in class. He was always a friendly individual. He was cooperative, courteous."

Swift was surprised when Evans ran for school board, but he predicts big achievements "because of his willingness to listen, his attitude. ... He wants very much to succeed."

"He works well with people," Swift said. "I think he's a super young man."

Fresh perspective

He ran unopposed for a seat on the Keene Board of Education last



Sentinel photo by STEVE HOOPER

IN CLASS — Chad Evans leads a management class at the Winchester Street McDonald's in Keene. His students include, left to right, Pat Healey, second assistant manager; Kimberly Wood, crew chief; Shawn Merkle, second assistant; Pam Evans, administrative assistant, and Robert Roy, crew chief.

fall but a clerical error caused his father's name to be listed on the ballot. State officials wouldn't certify the 3,222-12 vote as a win for Chad Evans without a court order.

Evans is the youngest of the school board's nine members. While he brings limited life experience to the board, the memory of school is still fresh in his mind.

After all, he graduated just two years ago from Keene High School.

"I really am fascinated by the school board. Every time I think

I've got something, I learn something new."

Kathryn M. Kendall, who's been on the Keene school board for eight years, said Evans is picking up fast on the board's complex business.

"He's doing well. He's learning quickly," she said.

"He's a sincerely interested young man," she said. "He's not afraid to ask questions. He's not afraid to speak his mind."

Before Evans decided to run for election, he talked to Kendall, wor-

rying that his youth and inexperience might be a problem.

"I respected that thought," Kendall says, but she told him to run because a young person's perspective would be good to have at board meetings.

He thinks his unique point of view is valuable to the board. "I'm sure it makes them think."

Asked why he ran for the school board, he offers a simple, direct reason: "Pay back the free education." But the motivation actually comes from bitter disputes about teacher

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Evans, a Keene High student at

's youngest school board member: a quick study

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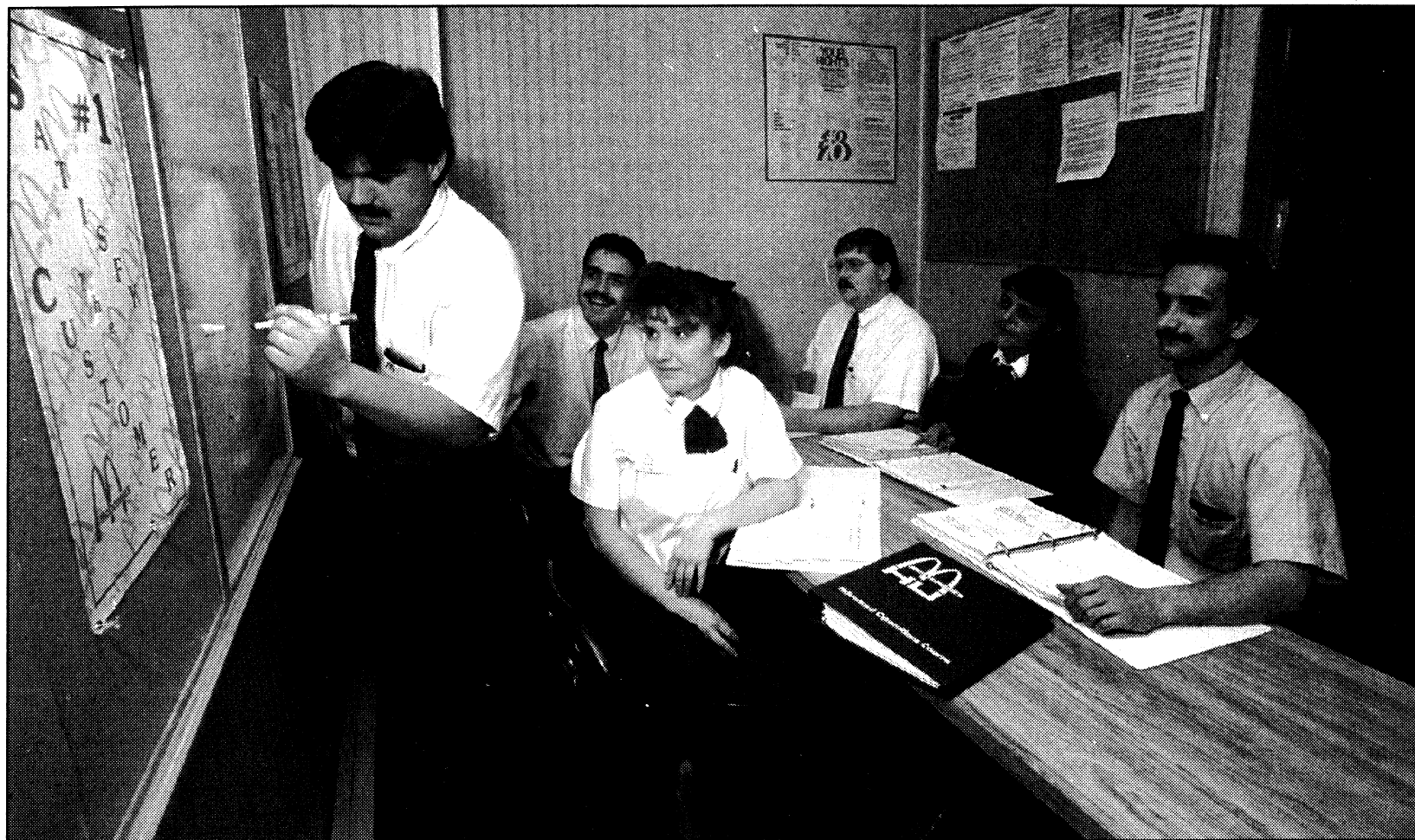
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Teachers were so upset with the school board's bargaining positions that they "worked to rule" or refused to perform any duties not spelled out in their contract.

Evans, a Keene High student at

the time, "almost felt cheated."

"There was a great bunch of teachers," he said. "They forgot us stuck in the middle. You could see the hostility ... I wanted to remind people we were the reason they were there."

Now, he's getting a look at education from the other side — the elected officials who oversee the complex administration of Keene's public schools, twining the responsibilities laid out by state and federal law, the education students need to succeed in the world and the staggering burden of local taxes, which pay for most public education in New Hampshire.

"It's incredible how the taxes are. I don't want second-rate teachers, but I don't want to force people out of their homes either."

He thinks the state needs some sort of broad-based tax to help relieve property taxes.

Evans has enjoyed amazing success for someone his age, but he keeps things in perspective. On the rare occasions when he has free time, he likes to target shoot, lift weights or play basketball to stay in shape, or hang out with friends. "I guess I'm your typical kid."

He kept the Corvette in perspective by driving old cars during the winter when frost heaves could destroy the underside of the fancy car. His current ride is a 10-year-old Toyota pickup truck.

"Every winter, it seems, I buy a new 'beater' and it seems that gives me an appreciation for that Corvette."

He's sold the '88 'Vette but he has an eye out for the 1993 model, which is being re-designed.

He'll get it — and then watch out. Chad Evans is going places — fast.