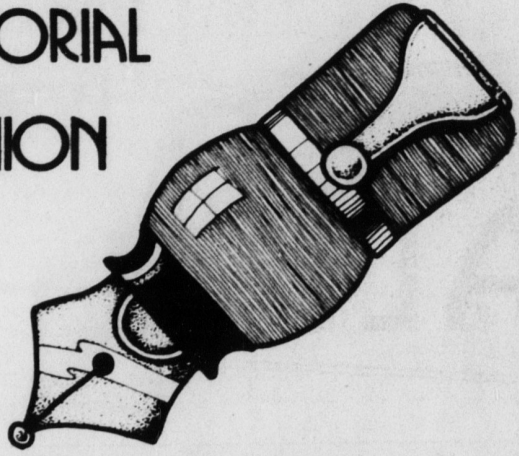


EDITORIAL
OPINION



Painted into a corner

In its efforts to see that medical services during emergencies are updated to give victims a better chance for survival, the state has also painted the rescue service into a corner.

Last July 1 Cleveland County became responsible, by state law, for providing rescue and ambulance service to countians. There were five rescue units operating on a volunteer basis in the county at the time. Two of those units, Shelby and Kings Mountain, voted to go under a fee system in order that fulltime Emergency Medical Technicians could be on call five days each week during daylight hours. The evenings and weekends would still be covered by volunteers just as before.

Now, according to Larry Revels of the Cleveland County Emergency Services, one of the three volunteer units still operating under the original system is in danger of folding.

Why? Public donations have fallen off to practically nothing. It was for this very reason that the Kings Mountain Rescue Squad voted to go under the fee system — which means patients would be charged for transport trips. The further the trip, the greater the charge.

The county emergency services sends the bills to the patients, collects the charges, then passes them on to the rescue squad. In addition the county supplements the Shelby and Kings Mountain units to help meet expenses. They do not do this for the other three units because originally these units (Grover, Boiling Springs and Upper Cleveland) chose not to accept the system.

The problem is that the charge system is not working. At present the emergency services has outstanding bills totalling \$20,000. This week garnishee papers in the hands of a process server are being carried around. The process server has orders to rattle doorknobs and come back with the money.

Last week the members of Kings Mountain Rescue Squad stated emphatically that they did not like this action in the least. Larry Revels admitted that he does not like the action at all, but that he has a job to do and his orders are to do it.

How has the state's good intentions painted rescue service into a corner? Simple. The law has made it impossible to return to the old volunteer basis — unless the general public again feels it is better to donate regularly to support a rescue service, as it did here for almost 20 years. The state demands that all rescue transport vehicles be standardized and carry sufficient equipment, plus that the vehicles be manned by a qualified driver and an EMT in attendance with the patient in the back of the vehicle. This is to have a qualified person available who knows where all of the equipment is stored and which piece to use for treatment enroute to hospitals or medical clinics.

This same rule has applied even when the rescue unit has transported non-emergency patients to and from one hospital to another, or from hospital to home. The longer the trip the more the expenses incurred and the less likely the squad has of breaking even. This is because the squad can only charge the transport patient for a one-way trip.

These non-emergency trips also place the local citizenry in jeopardy because of the unavailability of qualified men and equipment should a real emergency develop right here at home.

What do we do about this situation?

Dr. Frank Sincos suggests a second organization of volunteers to handle the non-emergency trips using vehicles that will allow people to either sit up or lie down. Vehicles not equipped with all the first class devices nor manned with EMTs as prescribed in emergency cases.

Sincos insists this can be done if the organization sells itself only as a transport service and not a medical or rescue service.

The problem — who will organize such a unit and how would it be paid for? But even with the existence of such an organization fully funded by public donations, that does not answer the problem now existing — how to get the charge system to pay for itself.

If we can put any dependence in history, then the other units in the county will eventually be forced to come under the same system as Shelby and Kings Mountain and the problems of paying the freight will increase.

The light at the end of the tunnel, in this case, might very well be a tax on every property owner in the county to raise the funds to pay for ambulance and rescue service. The commissioners do not even want to discuss this possibility at this time, but if the system continues to fall more and more behind, the point of no return will be reached and the commissioners will be forced to make a decision.

This week in tar heel history



ED SMITH

Jackson left his mark

Andrew Jackson left his mark in North Carolina, though history associates his rise to fame with the state of Tennessee.

On Mar. 15, 1767, Jackson, the seventh President of the United States, was born in the Waxhaw Settlement, which straddled the border between the two Carolinas. As some doubt now exists as to the exact location, both states have claimed him as a native son.

North Carolina figured prominently in Jackson's life, however, for he was educated at Queen's Museum in Charlotte, and studied law under Judge Spruce Macey in Salisbury. He was admitted to the Rowan County bar on Nov. 6, 1787, before he was old enough to vote.

Jackson was remembered there as . . . "the most roaring, rollicking, game-cocking, horse-racing, card-playing, mischievous fellow that ever lived in Salisbury, the head of the rowdies hereabouts. He was more in the stable than in the office!"

A month after he was admitted to the bar, the General Assembly of North Carolina created a new Western District Superior Court to handle all of the troublesome, distant territory that would soon become the

state of Tennessee. The cocky Jackson talked himself into being appointed prosecuting attorney for the area, thus becoming one of the frontier territory's most prominent political figures.

Today North Carolina seems either to have lost interest in its claim as Jackson's birthplace, or to have lost the battle by default. Its site — in Union County — is difficult to find, marked only by a small stone monument located in a weed-grown field down an obscure country road. South Carolina, meanwhile, has built an impressive state park in Jackson's honor, complete with a restored log cabin and museum.

For a general who had just lost an important battle the day before, Nathaniel Greene was strangely elated. Referring to the Battle of Guilford Courthouse, which had been fought on March 15, 1781, Greene wrote "One more such action and they are ruined! The Enemy got the Ground, but we the Victory. They had the Splendour, but we got the Advantage!"

On paper, things looked bad for Greene.

Though his troops had outnumbered the British by two-to-one (4,500 to 2,200)



READER DIALOGUE

Safety precautions needed at lake

To the editor,

Upon reading the Mar. 2 issue of the Mirror-Herald, it has come to my attention that the Moss Lake swimming area will be re-opened next summer — with improvements.

According to the article, improvement of the swimming area will consist of (1) expanding the beach area; (2) fencing in the swimming area and (3), construction of control booths. However, nothing was said about repairing the dangerous drop-offs and snags which exist within the roped swimming area as it stands now.

I have worked as a lifeguard at the lake for the past two summers. Last summer alone there were 12 swimming incidents, six of which I was personally involved with. (Incidentally — only two of these, one of which was a broken neck, were deemed serious enough by lake officials to appear in official accident reports).

For two summers the American Red Cross has been willing to conduct a safety study of the swimming area at no charge to the city. This would include an evaluation of the swimming conditions as well as the beach surveillance practices and rescue equipment. I attended a city council meeting last summer, during which such a study by the Red Cross was approved. In a news article at the time of the closing of the lake's swimming area it was announced that a private firm, Gardner Gidley and Associates would conduct a safety study. To my knowledge, no such safety study was conducted. I am curious to know if Gardner Gidley and Associates had anything to say about the swimming conditions after conducting their recently announced survey. I suspect that nobody got his suit wet.

I am by no means condemning the proposed improvements, they are good and necessary. However, in the interest of public safety, it seems to me that unless further improvements are made to protect the hundreds of poor or non-swimmers who visit the lake, re-opening the area with such hazardous conditions still existing would be a serious mistake.

As a former lifeguard and a concerned citizen, I strongly urge the lake authority to consider the safety matter. I feel that it would be wise to let the Red Cross run a safety study of the area before the swimming season begins, so that improvements can be made.

I sincerely hope that the lake authority has enough interest in public safety to take action. While I realize that any swimming area is bound to have its share of problems, I also feel that a human life is too valuable to neglect any precautions which can be taken to protect that life. Do you agree?

REBECCA THOMPSON
Rt. 1, Box 844
Kings Mountain

haul off tons of garbage from our town each day, I ask myself — what would we do without them?

DONALD W. SHORT
Sanitation Supervisor,
City of Kings Mountain

Money not everything

To the editor,

No one in their right mind denies that money is essential in our everyday lives. But if life were composed only of money it would be most miserable.

Could be many of the problems we face as a nation and as people come from our failure to recognize that all good and perfect gifts come from above. We, as Americans, have been well blessed from above, but how much longer we may expect this depends on us.

Perhaps the problems we are facing now with coal strikes and short power supplies is something we are being told from above.

Dr. Leslie D. Weatherhead, eminent preacher and author, tells of the poor native African woman hauled into court and fined for a technical offense. She paid her fine with a single gold coin and prepared to leave.

The court clerk called her back and said the price of gold had gone up and to her astonishment she had change coming.

"How often that has happened to us. We lost this, but gained that," comments Dr. Weatherhead.

EVERETTE PEARSON
Kings Mountain

What would we do?

To the editor,

I would like to use your column to pay tribute to one of the most dedicated, yet over-looked public servants in our city today — the sanitation worker.

He is the man who everyone sees, but very few people really get to know.

He is the neighbor who comes to your house twice each week. But very few people give him a neighborly smile or even bother to say good morning.

He works under some of the harshest conditions possible and the weather is his worst enemy. I have seen these men when the wind and cold burned their faces and made their eyes water. When their hands and feet were so cold they were numb, yet somehow they go on trying to do a good job and serve the people on their route.

Sure, I agree he might miss your house some time or might drop paper on the ground while hauling off the garbage, but it is never intended to be this way. How many people can say they have never made a mistake on their job?

When you consider we have only 11 men who make over 6,000 pick-ups per week and

Worst shot in history

David Smith, the young seminary student who associate pastors at First Presbyterian Church, has been bitten by the golfing bug.

Last week, while pursuing his new hobby, David racked up a brand new record on the Kings Mountain Country Club course.

It was around 5:30 p. m. when David, Pop Foster and Parks Neisler teed off on the 17th hole. The fairway lies as straight as an arrow and as flat as an ironboard and measures maybe 200 yards from tee to green.

The 17th hole also runs adjacent to numerous homes off Sherwood Dr. Darrell and Shirley Austin live in one of these homes. They were sitting in the dining room chatting at the time David teed off. A few moments later the Austins heard a thump — a noise about like something falling off the kitchen cabinet onto the floor.

Darrell saw Foster and Neisler wandering around his backyard a bit later and went out to ask what they were looking for. David appeared about then and answered, "My golf ball."



TOM MCINTYRE

Darrell found the ball and told David he had set some kind of new record — a window-box-in-one. The ball had hit the house and dropped into the windowbox.

"It was also the worst shot in golfing history," Darrell said.

Poet's Corner



A KITE IN FLIGHT

High above the tree tops
flies the restless kite,
Carried on the breezy current
More than a child's delight.

A kite unanchored free to fly
high above the earth,
Oh, how fragile are the wings
But, oh strong the mirth.

Eager eyes follow you
and envy how you soar,
Until you dart out of sight
beyond the sycamore.

Oh, pretty kite so fragile
what shall be your fate?
Will bramble briars soon claim you
and continue to captivate?

With rhythm you have tried your pretty wings
you know the thrill to fly,
Although you may never touch a star
You are so pleasing to the eye.

VIVIAN STEWART BILTCLIFFE

KINGS MOUNTAIN MIRROR-HERALD

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