

# Cheryl thinks Durante's the greatest

For over a year now Cheryl Peppers, age 10, has corresponded with comedian-entertainer Jimmy Durante.

It was "love at first sight" the first time the Bethware School fifth grader saw him on a television screen. She sent him a card and signed it "love and kisses".

Jewel Peppers said the happiest day of her daughter's young life was the day she received a reply from Durante. It came in an envelope with the star's picture. Cheryl could hardly wait to get to school to share the news with her friends.

Since Christmas, Jimmy hasn't been able to write his little friend, so Margie Durante continues to be her pen pal. "Please tell Cheryl," she wrote recently, "that Jimmy can't talk. It is very sad. He had a bad stroke. All we can do is pray." Replying to an Easter card, Jimmy Durante wrote, "Thanks a million for your kind words. Believe me, from the bottom of my heart, I appreciate your thoughtfulness." Love and Kisses, Jimmy Durante.

Cheryl asked her Sunday School class at



## TOM MCINTYRE



Oak Grove Baptist Church to pray for the fading comedian and she continues to write at least once a month.

Five-year-old Derand Peppers is also a Durante fan and makes an effort to scribble messages on the cards his sister writes to the Durantes, including daughter, Cece.

In our family, said Jewel (Mrs. Gerald David) Peppers, Jimmy Durante will always be a very special person.

Darrell Austin has had his first experience as a Superior Court juror.

"Wasn't much of an experience," Big D said. "I was never seated."

"You mean you had to stand up for a week?"

"No, dummy. I mean I was never seated on any of the cases tried in court."

"Oh."

Well, actually, Darrell had one opportunity to be seated, but he messed it up. Seems someone was suing this real knockout of a beauty. The defendant's attorney asked him if he would have any problems making a decision in the case.

"To tell you the truth, she's so good-looking I'd be reluctant to convict her of anything," Darrell said.

The attorney laughed and said that's the first time he had ever heard that one. "Come down."

Darrell said the cases weren't very exciting, just a lot of people suing other people.

The judge had offered to let Big D serve this week instead, when the criminal cases are to be tried, but D declined. "I didn't even want to be there for the civil cases," he said.

## EDITORIALS & OPINIONS

### Mind your own business

To the editor,

My daughter was involved in the classroom discussion of sex education at Kings Mountain Junior High.

I am glad because it gave us another opportunity to discuss a natural process of life; to explore together needs, values, morals, commitments and responsibility for one's actions due to the choices made.

I will thank the Rev. Seay to keep moral judgments and beliefs to himself, or to those who seek his counsel. I don't want his or any educator's opinion of the rightness or wrongness of sex before marriage, from whatever source they choose, to be taught to me or my family.

By the time I was 30 I had had enough church "don'ts" and "thou shalt nots" to last several lifetimes. I certainly don't want it being slipped in now under the guise of some well-meaning person involved in teaching the availability of public resources.

If a local banker is called in to discuss before a lab class personal finances and the availability of loans, savings, checking and trust accounts, I certainly don't expect to have half a dozen ministers in also to teach morality on stealing, forgery, post dating checks and embezzlement.

In these lab classes teach the basics and an awareness of civil law. Keep your morality as something you abide by, then be so busy doing it that you don't have time to use it as a yardstick to measure someone else's life with. Mind your own business.

My daughter understood the option of not participating in the sex education program and so did her friends. It was a good class program, handled with the teenager and potential parent in mind.

In view of the number of young women pregnant at the junior high, it would be good for us to remember just that; they are young women and not our little girls anymore. Innocence in this case is only a word for irresponsibility.

Yes, Mr. Davis. Have the instructors teach sex education, but I do not want any one's moral code being taught as "the way", thank you. It is not their job nor is it their right to do so.

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### Censorship

To the editor,

I went to Russia in 1961 as a private citizen to see how Russia and its people differed from America. There was very little travel between the two countries in 1961. August 14, 1961 saw the Berlin wall begun. In the fall of 1961 the 100 megaton bombs were being set off by the Russians. Bomb shelters were on display for sale in Gastonia's Akers Center.

May I share the most important thing I remember about this four day visit. I saw people standing in small groups looking at something on a wall. I asked my guide what they were looking at. She replied they were reading the newspaper. They were reading what the government wanted them to read, where they wanted the newspaper read. Can you imagine reading your paper in this manner? I lifted a silent prayer of thanks for living in a country where I can express myself and read the expression of others when and where I chose.

I have found one exception. The Biblical Recorder, our Baptist newspaper, restricts expression and questions on certain subjects. The Recorder especially likes to print letters and editorials that raise questions about other religious organizations with problems. However, I have found the Recorder will not print expressions of concern about its own advertising policy.

Why does the Biblical Recorder censor the concerns and expressions on this matter. The editorial policy says the Recorder does not speak for Baptist of North Carolina. It says every Baptist speaks for himself. I want this privilege.

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### It beats watching

### four walls all day

A bus comes by their home in the morning and picks them up. When they arrive they have a breakfast snack and later, lunch. They participate in a variety of arts and crafts, educational and recreational programs. They also take field trips, have their own rhythm band and play all kinds of strange instruments. The bus brings them home in the afternoon.

Sound like a group of school kids? Sorry, you couldn't be more wrong. They are a group of 64 senior citizens and handicapped adults who participate in one of North Carolina's 21 certified day care centers for adults.

This particular group participates in a center near Fuquay Varina in Wake County operated by Wayne Tingen and his wife who also run a rest home.

Adult day care is a relatively new program in North Carolina. It allows the elderly to remain in their own homes, where ever possible. It is one of the optional Title XX programs that county social services departments may elect to provide.

Beth Barnes, consultant for Adult Day Care for the Division of Social Services of the N.C. Department of Human Resources, says the division is requesting funds from this session of the legislature to expand the program to serve an additional 1000 persons. Funds for this fiscal year are available for only 475 people.

"After observing some of our adult day care programs we feel that is a very good alternative to residential group care for many of our state's elderly or disabled adults. Many of the participants live with family members who work. This program allows them to continue working and know their senior members are being cared for during the day. It is also an excellent program for the elderly who live alone," Ms. Barnes said.

Tingen says, "After operating a rest home for years, I saw that this was not what many of our elderly citizens needed or wanted.

Before this program started there were many negative statements about being in a rest home. But, everything has been positive about this program."

Ms. Barnes says when you look at it from an economical standpoint it is less expensive than group care. She gave as an example the \$150 per month plus \$20 transportation (effective July 1, 1979) for a total of \$170 per month for day care compared to \$370 per month for rest home care.

Several patients interviewed at Tingen's Center verified what he said.

"It took a lot of begging to get me here, but since I've been here it would take a lot of begging to keep me away. I thought I would go crazy the week it snowed so much that we had to stay home," said one elderly lady.

Another said, "This is where I get my joy. I feel like when I'm home, I'm just visiting. I used to be bashful, but since I've been here, I'm like a 16 year old."

"It's not easy to sit and look at four walls all day. I needed something more than that and I've found it here," said an elderly man in a wheelchair.

When 40 or more of the participants began playing "She'll be Coming Around the Mountain" using kazoo horns, a bass fiddle made out of a tin tub and many other unusual instruments, a man and woman in their seventies got out of their chairs and began dancing a jig.

Another handicapped man, who is partially paralyzed, was sitting on the sidelines with several other men. During the tune he began rolling his wheelchair closer to the band. Before the number was over, he was beating two sticks together and playing with the band.

The look on this man's face and those of the others who were participating told the whole story of what adult day care means to them—a new life with companionship and fun things to do together.

As the man says, it certainly beats sitting alone and watching four walls all day.

### Poets Corner



TO MY FRIENDS

Sunny days and starlit nights  
life's many joys to hold,  
May today bring you happiness  
With surprises to unfold;  
Bluebirds and flowers  
blessings by the score,  
May today be the happiest day  
you've ever known before.

Hearts to share love with  
laughter by the hour,  
Music that rings in the soul  
As bells that shake a tower;  
Quiet moments and pleasure trips  
in ships brought into shore,  
May today be the happiest day  
you've ever known before.

VIVIAN S. BILTCLIFFE

## School bus safety program

By LINDA HOWELL  
Special to Mirror-Herald

CHAPEL HILL — In North Carolina, this school year has been unlike any other in one unpleasant aspect. There have been eight school bus passenger fatalities.

Louis Alexander, director of transportation of the N.C. Department of Public Instruction said, "Every other year, we've had one or two deaths related to school bus accidents in North Carolina, but this year we've had five years' worth."

At the Highway Safety Research Center at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, concern about school bus safety began more than a year ago. In 1977, the Governor's Highway Safety Program contracted with HSRC to conduct a two-year pilot study of how to further protect the more than 750,000 N.C. pupils who travel 600,000 miles or more each day on buses.

Since the study began, the four-person school bus accident investigation team has examined school bus driver training and studied more than 54 accident sites in Chatham, Orange and Durham counties.

"The purpose of these investigations is to identify those factors that lead to school bus accidents and to explore other questions, such as what part of the bus causes injuries," said project director John Lacey. "Despite the high number of fatalities," Lacey said, "this year's accident rate at all levels of severity is about the same as last year's."

So far, the study's findings suggest that buses and driver's training are good, but passenger safety knowledge should be increased.

"Seven of the eight fatalities involved children who were either about to get on the bus or had just gotten off the bus," Lacey said. "Five of these seven were 5-and-6-year olds. This has brought up questions about the quality and quantity of school bus passenger safety training that is directed at primary-grade age groups."

HSRC has produced with the Division of Motor Vehicles Traffic Safety Education Section "Willie the Turtle," a slide-and-sound presentation on school bus passenger safety aimed at elementary school children. Two other solutions are being tested:

+A six-foot walking arm that automatically swings out from the right front bumper when the bus door is opened. Lacey said this "encourages the children to pass further in front of the bus so they are more likely to be in the bus driver's view."

+Four additional mirrors installed at the front of the bus.

"Both the walking arm and the additional mirrors will be added next year to the 8,200 N.C. buses that carry elementary school-aged children," Lacey said. Other alternatives being considered include monitors to help school bus drivers supervise passengers and a radar-sensing device that signals the presence of children in front of and behind the bus.

"Funding is a problem," Lacey said.

"These new additions will cost, and hiring qualified monitors will bring up the same recruitment and wage problems that are now being faced in hiring bus drivers. But also at issue is whether any particular countermeasure will work."

HSRC researchers began their study by attending school bus driver training.

"We were generally impressed with the quality of training," Lacey said. "We spent two days in the classroom and then began the on-the-road training."

"One instructor usually goes with three or four students, and the instructors won't give the student his license until the driver is comfortable with handling the bus," he said. "Sometimes that means more than a week's worth of driving."

For three weeks, the team followed 80 randomly selected buses to observe the driving performance of the drivers and to record any unsafe driving acts.

The researchers are combining their observations with data obtained at accident sites to determine the most frequently observed unsafe driving acts and how often these acts caused accidents.

"The most frequent acts were improper stopping procedures and speeding," Lacey said, "however, improper stopping accounted for only 5 percent of the accidents. Speeding as an accident cause was virtually negligible. So although they were frequent unsafe acts they are relatively low risk."

"Improper backing procedures, driving left of center and improper turning were rarely observed by the followers," he said,

"but these acts accounted for 52 percent of the accidents making them high-risk unsafe driving acts."

"An interesting finding was that high school-age drivers had fewer unsafe driving acts per mile than the adult drivers," Lacey said. "The actual difference was not great, but it does indicate that the young drivers are not driving about the roads in a more reckless manner than the adults."

When an accident occurs, the Highway Patrol, local law enforcement agencies or local school bus officials notify the team. The team members then go to the site to interview the bus driver, draw field sketches, inspect the vehicle for mechanical failure and photograph the site.

The study is continuing through the current school year. After the results from both years are combined, Lacey and his team hope to draw some firmer conclusions about what leads to school bus accidents in North Carolina and to make some helpful suggestions about how they can be prevented.

### What's your opinion?

We want to hear your opinion on things of interest to you. Address all correspondence for this page to Reader Dialogue, Mirror-Herald, P. O. Drawer 752, Kings Mountain, N. C., 28066. Be sure and sign proper name and include your address. Unsigned letters will not be published.