

# The champagne flowed like champagne

As a rule I detest attending weddings and funerals.

Both are very depressing. For years now I've been whispering into my daughter's ears shortly after they go to sleep... Elope... Elope...

And my wife has been shouting in my ear... shut up... shut up... But last Saturday night a couple we rank high on the friendship list were giving their daughter on the altar of wedded bliss and blisters and we were duty-bound to attend. The wedding took place at The Good Shepherd Lutheran Church in Mount Holly and the Rev. Cyrus Frazier was officiating. Yes, he is also a friend. But I never knew until Saturday night just how long-winded he could be. Don't take my word for it. Ask the bride's father.

"Cyrus said that if the spirit moved him he just might have a few words to say," the bride's father told me later. "I think the spirit not only moved him, it chased him around the block."

The wedding was to begin at 7 p. m. Of course we had to be there at 6:30 p. m. My wife said so. I don't know why because we were just invited guests. After getting a look at the wedding party I'm real glad I wasn't called on to do something.

All of them involved were dressed in white ties and tails.

"My don't you look handsome," my wife commented to the bride's father.

"I look like a penguin," he replied.

No, I said. You look like the headwaiter at the Little Moo. Another close friend of ours and the bride's family went me one better. He said the



TOM MCINTYRE

and rattled the stained glass windows with his basso profundo voice. He sang one of those songs that go on forever and have nothing whatsoever to do with the tune the organist is playing. Or maybe the organist was just trying to keep up. Whatever.

At seven sharp, Cyrus entered from the wings and surveyed the house. He was pleased. He should've been. It was standing room only. That was the signal for the groom to enter. He did. And from the back came the bride clinging to the arm of her penguin, er, father. She had to step over the feet of the people seated in the extra chairs brought in for the overflow crowd. I took a real good look at her, because it was the last I saw of her until the wedding was over and she and the groom came trooping back up the aisle.

Some rather thin young lady had settled herself in front of me and as we sat there the thin lady's hair began to grow. Her hairdo blocked out the entire view of the altar.

Then we all waded through a reception in the basement. A quick handshake with the happy couple, a cookie and we were crowded out the side door.

Later, at the Bride's parent's home my wife and I and several other couples were drafted into service. You know, spreading the goodies all over the house opening the champagne, keeping the hardcases out of the liquor.

Frank and I (Frank's the one who made the comment about the third-rate Italian Opera, etc.) decided to sneak and have a chip with dip before the freeloaders arrived. It was then we discovered the dip was mustard and horseradish sauce.

As we lay there on the floor gagging, gasping for breath and wiping the tears away, our wives exchanged that dip for something a little cooler.

"Boy, it's a good thing we found out this now," our wives said.

When the thundering herd finally arrived there were more at the house than had been at the church. They ate chicken drumettes, ham sandwiches, beef patties and stuff like it was going out of style. And you would've have thought the champagne supply in that house was the last bottles in the world.

One guy was tossing down the bubbly like water. His buddy, who had a lace handkerchief tucked up his sleeve, stamped his foot after awhile and said, "Remember,

silly. You have to drive home." Anyway, it was a lovely wedding. But, after giving myself a rough estimate of the loot it must have cost the bride's penguin, er, father, I don't care what my wife says. I will resume whispering in the precious ears of my daughters... elope... elope... elope...

## READER DIALOGUE A higher power

To the editor, Expressing one thing and meaning the opposite, seemingly Big Duke Power has some thoughts of its own.

Not satisfied with a coal surcharge to its customers, which should be questioned as to its constitutionality, Duke wants to go a step further, suggesting another surcharge due "to an act of God."

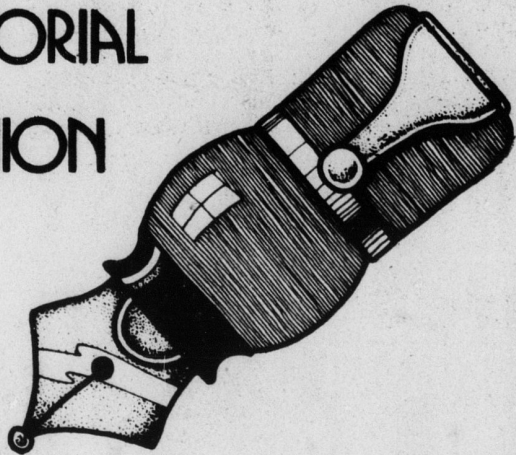
How gullible can one be?

Perhaps Duke stockholders should ask for far greater dividends on their investments.

One thing is for certain, the weather damages we've suffered recently should awaken Duke to the fact there is a greater power above.

EVERETTE PEARSON  
Kings Mountain

## EDITORIAL OPINION



## Program worth considering

Thursday night could be a red letter night for Kings Mountain's commercial business community.

The mayor and commissioners are calling all interested citizens who might be interested in investing in a local development corporation with a goal of planning and building up the city's business community.

The stimuli for this potential program is the city's recent eligibility status to participate in a three-year Urban Development Action Grants program — a \$400-million nationwide federal funding program for small cities.

At the 8 p. m. meeting at city hall Thursday just what the citizens are capable of doing will be outlined. The city officials ask that interested citizens come prepared to offer suggestions and recommendations concerning forming the Kings Mountain Development Corporation to work toward the revitalization of the city's entire business community.

According to the mayor's interpretation of the guidelines handed down under the UDAG program, existing commercial businesses are also eligible to receive funding for upgrading and renovating properties. That is one of the most important questions to be answered concerning this program proposal.

Several meetings in the past have been held to discuss revitalizing the existing downtown business houses and it always wound up with the individual owners being responsible for footing every penny of his own costs. This made it tough for the entire business community to agree and work on a mutual theme concept. Perhaps with financial assistance in the wings from the federal government, this particular aspect of injecting new enthusiasm into the existing business community will gain new life.

The UDAG program is worth consideration and the organization of a local development corporation to rebuild this city's commercial business and is worth considering.

## Grover is waiting, KM

Attention Kings Mountain governmental officials.

This city's neighboring community of Grover has an opportunity to realize some of its potential, but it needs help.

Grover is included under the Gaston County 201 Wastewater Treatment Facilities planning and the community has completed its portion of the program. Grant and loans have been offered, but there is one big barrier still in the way. The price is treating wastewater.

The Town of Grover has three choices, but two of them only are within financial reach. The very expensive third choice is to construct its own treatment facilities. The two more desirable choices are to use the facilities now existing in Kings Mountain or at Minette Mills.

The engineering firm assisting Grover on planning leans more toward the town using the Kings Mountain facilities. The reasons are many, but the most important is the fact that with KM's help, Grover will stand a much better chance of growing both residentially, commercially and even industrially (small industry).

But Grover needs to know what this city is willing to treat wastewater pumped here for. The estimated payback on loans to construct the Grover collection and pumping system is based on a figure of 53 cents per 1,000 gallons. That is an old figure and not very sound for doing business on a projected \$900,000 program.

## Blood donors come through

Blood donors, you done good.

The Red Cross Bloodmobile, visiting this area at Bethware Elementary School last Friday, set a goal of 126 pints with an overall total expected of 100 pints.

The results of the visit was 100 useable pints of whole blood out of 115 possible donors. Last Friday's visit also marked the day that Steve Rathbone gave his eighth gallon of blood. James T. Guffey became a seven gallon donor and Eugene Patterson a four-gallon donor.

Members of Bethware PTA contributed toward making this visit a success with their tireless telephone talks with past donors, urging them to attend and bring friends with them.

And it should be mentioned also that Bethware is the only elementary school willing to sponsor a Bloodmobile visit out of 80 counties in North and South Carolina in the Piedmont Carolinas Blood Region.

wedding party looked like members of a third-rate Italian Opera company that had been stranded in town and were working their way north.

On the fast drive over from Gastonia to Mount Holly I asked the wife, "Which side do we sit on?"

"The bride's," she answered.

"Didn't you tell me we are related to the groom's family?"

"Yeah, but it was the bride's family who invited us."

"What's the matter with the groom's family? Don't they like us?"

"Shutup and drive."

We got there at 8:30 and still wound up on the next to the last row on the groom's side of the church. Some cat with a mustache was playing the organ and another cat with a beard turned the pages for him.

My wife began digging into my pocket for the tissue she had placed there before we left home. "Weddings make me cry," she whispered in church.

"But, it hasn't even started yet," I whispered back.

"You're so hard-hearted," she whispered back, dabbing a tear from the corner of her eye.

Then the cat with the beard who had been turning the pages for the organist stood up

## James Polk never forgot Valentine's day



ED SMITH

James K. Polk, the North Carolina-born eleventh President of the United States, never forgot Valentine's Day.

It was at a party on that day in 1823 that he met Sarah Childress, his blind date for the affair. It was love at first sight for Polk, then a young Tennessee lawyer. He immediately asked her for another date the following night, but Sarah kept him dangling for three days before accompanying him on a picnic, well chaperoned by another couple. When he quickly proposed, she kept him waiting until he proposed a second time — the next day! They were married on New Year's Day 1824. Polk never regretted his impetuosity. When he died in 1849, his last words were "I love you Sarah, for all eternity. I love you."

A series of tornadoes, one begetting another is a fearsome chain reaction, spread across six southern states on February 18, 1864, leaving an incredible toll of death and destruction in their paths. The twisters raged from Tennessee to Louisiana. Although North Carolina was apparently less severely mauled than some, widespread damage was done here too on a belt stretching across the center of the state.

Raleigh was "devastated" according to the newspaper reports. In Rockingham, a mammoth twister struck with such suddenness that no one had time to run. "A path of destruction some 400 yards wide" was carved through the town. People were whirled through the air for "distances up to 300 yards, then smashed to the earth with killing force." Others were crushed by flying wreckage and even impaled by fence rails.

It was later estimated that the Rockingham twister lasted from two to three minutes. The air was dark with flying debris. In the path of the storm "everything was swept off the face of the earth as if by fire." Even "... the birds of the air, as well as all the chickens, were picked clean of feathers." The total loss of life (over 800) and destruction of property across the six states was the greatest on record for any tornado or series of tornadoes in this nation's history.

In 1864, as confidence in the South's ability to win the Civil War faded, a ruinous in-

flation spread across the state. The February 13 issue of one Northern periodical, "Leslie's Illustrated Magazine", carried an account of an auction held "near Danville on the North Carolina border." A five-dollar gold piece, the story said, had been sold for \$150 in Confederate paper money.

As faith declined in the South's money, coupled with the acute shortage caused by the war, prices of ordinary items reached incredible levels. A pound of tea ultimately cost \$500. Hams sold for as high as \$175 and turkeys for \$250. By the war's end the exchange rate would zoom to \$2,000 in Confederate paper currency for one dollar in gold.

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David Stone, the most famous "dove" in North Carolina history, was born February 17, 1770. Few political careers in this state have begun more auspiciously than Stone's. Elected to the Legislature at the minimum legal age of 21, he went on to serve as U. S. Congressman and Governor 1808-1810.

Chosen U. S. Senator in 1814, however, Stone ran into trouble. He opposed some of President Madison's wartime measures of the War of 1812 and was censured by the General Assembly.

Stone resigned his Senate seat, his career at an end, and died a few years later, some said of a broken heart.



Poet's  
Corner

AS LONG AS THERE IS LOVE  
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There will be the essence of roses  
Under skies in a shade of blue,  
Life with a shining purpose  
With ambition to pursue;  
There will be a definite reason  
To welcome each new day  
As though each unfolding day  
Were a special holiday.

There will be glory in the flaming sunset  
Until the last rays dimly glow,  
Sweet ecstasy in each sunrise  
That sparkles sunlight on the rose;  
There will be joy in touching springtime  
To awaken the emotions aglow,  
When Mother Nature with her glory  
Dots daisies' ore the meadow.

There will be comfort in the depth of winter  
When the snow has drifted deep,  
Pillowing the resting roses  
In their peaceful beauty sleep'  
There will be a reason for rejoicing  
As the angels rejoice above,  
There will be a reason for living  
As long as there is love.

VIVIAN STEWART BILTCLIFFE

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