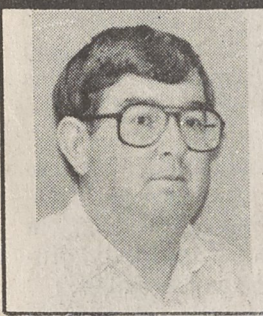


Opinions

OUR VIEW

Pictorial Editorial

Your Right To Say It



Gary Stewart

Give To Empty Stocking Fund

Last February Dot Hayes of Kings Mountain came by to see me about the possibility of the Herald beginning an Empty Stocking Fund to help buy toys, clothes and other items for needy children at Christmas.

It sounded like a good idea at the time and we agreed to talk again closer to Christmas.

To be honest, I had forgotten all about it until one day recently when Mrs. Hayes came back and mentioned it again.

Through Mrs. Hayes' efforts, a special committee chaired by Margaret Dilling was named to coordinate the project and arrangements were made with Rev. Harwood Smith, president of the Kings Mountain Ministerial Association, for the Empty Stocking Fund to be a special Christmas project of that organization.

Now, it's time to go to work.

As you may have read in last week's Herald, the fund has been established at Home Federal Savings and Loan. You make take your contribution there or mail it to The Empty Stocking Fund, P.O. Box 1491, Kings Mountain, 28086.

Christmas may seem like a long time away, but it's not. By the time you know it, it will be Thanksgiving and thoughts will begin turning to Christmas.

Everyone has needs. Christmas is a time when all of us need extra money. By the time you buy for your own kids, brothers and sisters, mothers and fathers, in-laws, etc., you're broke.

But, if we spend wisely and do without some of the things we really don't need anyway we can find some extra money to help some of those less fortunate than ourselves.

Hallie Blanton, who is a social worker for Kings Mountain District Schools and who is a member of the special Empty Stocking Fund committee, and I went to interview a family last week for a story which is on the front page of today's Herald. Of course, the names of the people are not in print because we wouldn't want to embarrass them, but the page one story is real.

There are many people out there like "Mattie" who need help. Thank God for people like Hallie Blanton who work with these people. Everyone is not cut out for this type of work.

Hallie told of one well-known Kings Mountain family who work with her each year to help a needy family in the area. They purchase clothes, food, toys, whatever, to see that a family's needs are met. One year, they wanted to go with Hallie to deliver the Christmas gifts but after seeing the conditions the needy family lived in, said they would continue to provide Christmas for a family each year but they didn't want to go with her anymore.

I felt much the same way after going out on last week's interview. I could not do Hallie's job. If you're an emotional type person, which I am, the pain goes deep.

But, those of us who can't go into that type of situation can help those people through organizations such as the Empty Stocking Fund. We can cut back on some of the extras that we don't really need and give that money to the fund. I know I must waste \$30 or more a week on junk food and ~~knock~~ waste it on cigarettes, alcohol or games of chance. We could cut out, or at least cut back, on such things and give that money to the fund.

Many people mail hundreds of Christmas cards each Christmas. We could hand deliver the cards and give the money which would have been spent on stamps to the fund. Ditto for wrapping paper. The Kings Mountain Herald makes good wrapping paper!

Ask your church and/or Sunday School class to take up a special offering. You tithe 10 percent of your wages to the church each Sunday, consider tithing 10 percent of your Christmas bonus to the Empty Stocking Fund.

Kids, get involved by selling drink bottles or having a yard sale, car wash or some other fund-raising project.

Whatever you do to help will be greatly appreciated. It will make Christmas brighter for some people who really need it and I guarantee your Christmas will be better too.

A lot of people have been asking me how I came out against Bob Hayes in picking football winners this year.

I beat him by three. I had a 114-37 record and he was 111-40.

I appreciate Bob picking against me all year (I didn't really think I'd beat him) and I also appreciate all the guest pickers we had each week. I poked a lot of fun at them but all of them except Jonas Bridges know that I really didn't mean it. Seriously, I appreciate Jonas too. He's the best sport in town.

I hope we can do it again next year.

I'm thinking very seriously of calling for the State Elections Board to investigate Tuesday's School Board election. I was told by a reliable source that I received a write-in vote in the East Kings Mountain precinct. But it was not counted.

Darrell Austin says he received one in the City Council race and his wasn't counted either.

I'm sure if Donald Duck had received a vote his would've been counted!



Jim Heffner

Happiness is....winning!

Newcomers to Kings Mountain politics celebrated their victories after the results of Tuesday's city council run-off election were posted at the Governmental Services Facilities Center. In photo at left, Scott Neisler, who soundly defeated incumbent Harold Phillips in District Six, gets ready for a big hug and kiss from his wife, Jan. In photo at right, Elvin Greene, who edged incumbent Humes Houston in District Two, sings the gospel song "Feeling Mighty Fine" with one of his supporters, Jeannette Mullinax.

Letter To The Editor

Dear Editor:

Red Cross needs help!

These words have been heard many times in the past six months and we have come through so much with your help. So many have helped through cash contributions, volunteering their time and talents, in kind gifts and free labor.

Red Cross has successfully made it through a capital fund drive, the May tornadoes, construction, Hurricane Hugo and the California earthquakes. We still have volunteers from Cleveland County on disaster assignments. It has been the worst of times and the best of times but we have come through it together. You responded with money and volunteer hours to Red Cross and disaster victims.

Now we need your help again. We have learned that both United Way campaigns need an extra boost to have successful campaigns. Red Cross is the top funded agency by both United Way organizations and

would be in serious financial trouble if funds had to be cut. We depend on United Way dollars to help us provide CPR, First Aid and water safety classes, to offer immediate assistance to fire and disaster families; to serve as the link between those in military service and their relatives here in Cleveland County; to provide blood and the blood products needed by hospital patients; to take care of emergency transportation needs in winter storms; and the many community needs Red Cross is involved with.

We know it has been tough for all of us but we need your help so we can help others. Please make your pledge or contribution to your local United Way. So many families, individuals and agencies are depending on this.

MARTHA H. SCRUGGS
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
CLEVELAND COUNTY CHAPTER
AMERICAN RED CROSS

AT ISSUE

Public School Selection—Parental Choice?

Joe Nathan, former public school teacher and administrator, is a senior fellow at the University of Minnesota's Humphrey Institute. He recently edited "Public Schools by Choice" (Meyer-Stone Books).



YES

Would parental "choice" of public schools benefit all children?

Yes. More than 60 percent of the public favors expanding choice among public schools. In East Harlem, N.Y., Cambridge, Mass., Prince Georges County, Md., and the entire state of Minnesota, increasing choice among public schools helped stimulate widespread improvements. In the best public school choice plans, students of all abilities do better in school, graduation rates increase, parents are more involved, and educator morale is higher. In each district cited above, public school choice helped produce significant, system-wide test score improvement. Allowing Minnesota high school juniors and seniors to attend colleges or universities full or part time benefitted both youngsters who stayed in high school and those who enrolled in college. Why? High schools state-wide improved programs — for example, quadrupling the number of advanced placement courses offered — since they no longer had a "captive audience."

How would this affect integration?

Well-designed public school choice programs helped produce more effective integration programs. While 60 percent of the general public endorses public school choice, support is even higher among racial minorities and low-income parents, who now have the fewest options. The best choice programs include racial balance guidelines, equal access to schools and extensive parent information and counseling programs.

How would choice affect efforts to improve other school programs?

The best choice programs complement other reforms. That's why after initially opposing efforts to expand public school choice in Minnesota, 61 percent of the teachers in the Minnesota Education Association now like the idea. Expanding choice for parents increased opportunities for educators to help create distinctive programs from which families can select. We have learned that there is no one best school for all students, or all educators.



NO

Would parental "choice" of public schools benefit all children?

All children, no — not until our poorer public schools get the resources and help they need to make parents want to choose them. Lots of choice plans assume that if parents could switch schools, "bad" schools would shape up or empty out. But that assumes "good" schools have lots of empty places and are willing to take in kids from failing schools. There's little evidence of that. Generally, choice plans enable a few kids — the most talented or those with the most motivated parents — to switch into a better school. That's great for them, but it further destroys the quality of education for the majority of kids left behind in schools that have lost their resources and their role-model students.

How would this affect integration?

Some choice plans have helped integration; many others have not. It depends on the type of plan. The most difficult integration problem we face is not so much racial as economic class. Choice plans may benefit middle-class minorities, but few have helped poorer children. Their parents often don't have the information to make choices — and wealthier public schools, like private schools, aren't very eager to admit these kids. Let's face it: Until poorer schools are improved, middle-class parents of all races aren't going to choose them.

How would choice affect efforts to improve other school programs?

If choice is part of an overall improvement strategy, it could lead to distinctive, quality programs that meet the needs of diverse students. Unfortunately, many choice proponents act as if choice *by itself* will lead to improvement.

It won't. It would be like rearranging a few seats on the Titanic: a few people might get a better view, but the ship — public education — will sink. **ll**

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I am not a Jim Bakker supporter. I am, however a supporter of justice, and I don't think Bakker got a fair shake. Three weeks ago, a federal judge in Charlotte sentenced the Reverend Bakker to 45 years in prison and a fine of one-half million dollars. Bakker, you will recall, was convicted of 24 counts of fraud.

The same week, in Winston-Salem, a federal judge sentenced a bank robber to 46 months imprisonment. The bank robber was a woman and, if I recall accurately, she had held up 6 banks.

The excuse for the light sentence was that she was a "community activist," whatever that is, and that she had given the money to the needy.

Murderers, rapists and others of that will seldom receive a sentence as stiff as that meted out to Jim Bakker.

I am not trying to excuse his crimes. Certainly, they were serious and deserved punishment. I'm just having trouble understanding the wide range of sentences handed out in the courts.

Judge Potter's conduct in the courtroom was bizarre, at times, as well. I have heard that he went so far as to stick his fingers in his ears at one point. Another time he chastised the defense attorneys for bringing in character witnesses whose testimony was similar. One of you attorneys out there enlighten me--doesn't a defendant have the right to choose his own character witnesses?

If the judge was so concerned about the fleecing of the poor, why fine Bakker \$500,000? Where does he think that money will come from? It almost certainly will be donated by those poor souls who subscribe to the Bakker religious dogma.

And why wasn't the man allowed to post bond while his appeal was being processed? Isn't that a normal procedure in all but the most heinous cases?

Once more, I am not a Jim Bakker supporter. I'm glad he was given a prison term, although I question the fine.

I guess I just don't know much about the law.

PSYCHICS, FORTUNE TELLERS, FLYING SAUCERS AND SUCH

I was shocked to find out there is a convention of psychics and fortune tellers going on in Charlotte as this is being written. Even more surprising is the fact that this is the twentieth consecutive year such a gathering has occurred.

We must have the market cornered on gullible people in these parts. I rate psychics and fortune tellers right up there with astrologers and people who like to hear Telly Savalas sing. If I only had a couple of Brooklyn Bridges to sell.

In my opinion, a psychic can tell you nothing of value, and anybody who thinks his future can be seen in an oversized deck of funny looking cards or a gob of messy tea leaves is whistling in the dark. Nor is your future discernible in the palm of hand. Oh! if it were only that simple.

Just think for a minute. Where do these people get their training? Is there a Doctor of Voodoo Degree available somewhere?

And why is it that flying saucers are always spotted by two old guys out fishing in the middle of the night somewhere in a Louisiana swamp.

My oh my! P.T. Barnum was right--there's a sucker born every day.

NOTES AND STUFF

I took a leisurely drive around Kings Mountain Sunday afternoon, looking for a feature photo or two. No luck there but I was struck by the colors of the leaves. I've heard that there was no peak season in the mountains this year, well, all those tourists ought to come to Kings Mountain. We've got beautiful color here. Take a stroll through some of the neighborhoods and enjoy. Crowders Mountain and Kings Mountain are really decorated. Highway 74 toward Gastonia is breathtaking.....I see where former Governor Jim Hunt has decided against opposing Jesse Helms for the U.S. Senate again. Hunt has been called a lot of things but nobody ever accused him of being dumb.....Is it just me, or is pro football getting boring.....If you get a chance to read just one book this year make it Pat Conroy's "Prince of Tides." The best novel I've read in five years.

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