

# Opinions

## OUR VIEW

## Your Right To Say It



**Lib Stewart**

### Remembering Central

The date was 78 years ago but Lillian Ramsaur Mauney has fond recollections of her first year at Central School in 1912.

She was a first grader and she won't ever forget cracking the whip, skipping the plank, marble shooting, mumble peg and puffing tobacco tags, the outside games the children enjoyed on the playgrounds.

Mrs. Mauney, who resides now in Gastonia but who made her home in Kings Mountain almost all her life, shared some of her early memories of Central School with program planners of last weekend's successful Central Celebration which brought alumni and teachers from a wide area back to the campus for hours of reminiscing and renewing friendships.

Mrs. Mauney, widow of Paul Mauney, remembers that back in 1912 there was no inside plumbing in the school. Each class had one container of well water with one dipper. Each student drank out of the same dipper. There were outside "privies"-one for boys and one for girls.

Her recollections were just one of many stories recalled about Central's heydays that would fill a book.

Irene Gladden McAbee of Grand Blanc, Michigan and five of her eight brothers and sisters traveled to Kings Mountain for the farewell party. Because she graduated 42 years ago, it's been more than a few years since she had seen her former classmates. Joining her for the day were other members of her family, including Ozelle Gladden Dixon of Charlotte, Louise Gladden Fisher of Raleigh, Janice Gladden Jernigan of Mint Hill, J. W. Gladden of Plymouth, Michigan and Tim Gladden of Kings Mountain.

Mrs. McAbee exchanged memories with others who attended the school when it burned Nov. 14, 1932. "I don't know why but I took all my books home that day. My friends lost all their books in the fire," she said.

Janet Falls, retired Kings Mountain teacher, was the oldest returning student to sign the register. She graduated in 1923.

Grace Neisler Page, member of the Class of 1927, was also among returning alumni.

The veteran teacher signing the register was Mrs. Josephine Ellerbe Weir who received a standing ovation after she was introduced by Reg Alexander, master of ceremonies. Later in the program, Clayton Kelly was reminiscing of days spent in Mrs. Weir's English class and asked, "Where are you Mrs. Weir? Do you have any chewing gum?"

Those who missed the Saturday night showing of the Central slides hope that the slides can be made available to civic groups and churches for showing throughout the community. Even after the old building closes this fall, the memories will remain and the film is too good to be filed away and forgotten.

## Letter Policy

The Kings Mountain Herald welcomes your letters to the editor for publication in each week's paper. We ask that you follow these guidelines when presenting letters:

All letters must be brief and to the point. Type and double space them, if possible, but sign them in ink and include the entire name, address and telephone number for verification purposes.

The Herald reserves the right to edit letters for spelling, libel, slander, or any other reason, and reserves the right to reject letters for any reason.

Mail your letters to Letter to the Editor, P.O. Box 769, Kings Mountain, N.C. 28086. Hand-delivered letters will not be published.



"He is not here, but is risen! Remember how He spoke to you when He was still in Galilee, saying, The Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, and be crucified, and the third day rise again."

ST. JOHN 24: 6-7

## A True American Hero

Easter Sunday is also the 125th anniversary of Abraham Lincoln's assassination. Here is a little known story about that dark incident:

On April 14, 1865, Dr. Charles A. Leale, a surgeon in the U.S. Army, went to the theater to see a play called "Our American Cousin" starring Miss Laura Keane.

Leale, a New Yorker, was stationed at a Washington, D.C. hospital for commissioned officers wounded in the war.

He chose this night to go to the theater because he knew the President of the United States would be there. Leale was a great admirer of Abraham Lincoln. A few days earlier, he had finished his duties at the hospital a little early and gone directly to the White House to hear the great man speak. That speech turned out to be the last given by the President.

Further, Dr. Leale had mounted several pictures of Lincoln in his room.

He came to Ford's Theater this night not to gawk, but to gaze upon the face of a man he idolized. Leale got there late and went directly to his seat.

After the presidential party entered, acknowledged the applause and was seated, the play commenced.

Dr. Leale's seat afforded him a good view of Lincoln, so naturally he turned his head to look several times. He was one of the few people who saw a well-dressed man trying to get into the President's box, and finally succeeding. That man was John Wilkes Booth, and a short time later he would fire a derringer at close range directly at Abraham Lincoln's head.

Later, Dr. Leale was to write: "The play began and held my attention until suddenly, the report of a pistol was heard and a short time after I saw a man in mid-air leaping from the President's box to the stage brandishing a dagger. His spur caught in the American flag festooned in front of the box, causing him to stumble when he struck the stage, and he fell on his hands and knees. He quickly regained his posture and hopped across the stage, flourishing his dagger, clearing the stage before him and dragging the foot of the leg, which was subsequently found to be broken."

There were cries for a doctor, and Charles Leale, age 23, responded. He was the first to be admitted to the box, where he was met by Mrs. Lincoln. "Oh Doctor!" she cried. "Is he dead? Can he recover? Will you take charge of him?"

After assuring the distraught Mrs. Lincoln he would do what he could, he began his examination. There was no pulse at first but Leale removed a clot of blood from the President's wound and the stricken man began to breathe erratically.

By now, two more senior physicians, Drs. Charles Taft and Albert F.A. King, had arrived. They placed themselves at Leale's disposal. He had begun mouth-to-mouth resuscitation and external heart massage. At



**Jim Heffner**

his direction the two doctors continued artificial respiration while Leale finished his examination.

The young doctor lifted the eyelids, saw signs of brain damage and declared: "His wound is mortal; it is impossible for him to recover." Taft and King agreed.

The President was carried across the street to a private residence and placed on a bed. Dr. Leale cradled Lincoln's head in his arms as he was being moved, several times ordering the procession stopped while he removed the clotting blood from the wound, as it seemed to give the President a measure of relief.

Throughout the night, while Senators, Congressmen, Cabinet members and other officials came and went, Dr. Leale held firmly to the wounded President's hand. The good doctor had a reason for this. He believed that, just before death, reason and recognition often return to a patient for a brief moment. He would later explain that if reason did return he wanted Lincoln to know he was in touch with humanity and had a friend.

At twenty minutes past seven on April 15, one hundred and twenty-five years ago this Sunday, Abraham Lincoln died of his wounds.

"Now he belongs to the ages," Secretary of War Stanton would declare.

Dr. Charles A. Leale quietly left the house across the street from Ford's Theater. It had begun to drizzle. As he headed back to his patients, he noticed his detachable cuffs and his sword were caked with the slain President's blood. He put them away and never wore them again.

Leale left the Army a year later. He continued his medical career and became a specialist in massive gunshot wounds, once saving a man who had taken a shotgun blast in the chest. He died in the 1920's.

There is little mention of Dr. Leale in the pages of history, but he was a true American hero. At 23, because of his obvious competence, he was allowed, by more experienced physicians including the Surgeon General and Lincoln's own family doctor, to take charge of and care for the dying president. He prolonged Lincoln's life for nine hours, long enough for Robert, the President's son, to see his father alive one last time.

## Thanks For Help

To friends of Kiwanis:

On behalf of the Kings Mountain Kiwanis Club, I would like to personally thank you for your generous contribution to this year's Advertising Campaign. Your support is greatly appreciated. Thanks to concerned citizens such as you, the Kings Mountain Kiwanis Club is participating this year in the following community projects:

1 - Kiwanis Terrific Kids Program, which recognized good citizenship among our elementary school students. This year over five hundred local youngsters will be given this award.

2 - Kings Mountain Helping Hand Fund. This year the Kiwanis Club has donated \$250 to this charity which helps destitute families in our community.

3 - Kings Mountain Crisis Ministry. The Kings Mountain Kiwanis Club is a major contributor to this new organization which provides assistance to those individuals and families in our community who are suddenly placed in urgent need of assistance, such as fire victims, victims of spouse abuse, etc.

4 - Drug Abuse Resistance Education Program. The D.A.R.E. program was set up this year to educate elementary school students in our school district to the dangers of drug abuse. Each week a law enforcement officer visits each of our elementary school and spends approximately one hour with each fifth grade class. The Kings Mountain Kiwanis Club will be one of the major contributors to this program during the 1990-91 school year.

Without your support, the Kings Mountain Kiwanis Club would simply not be able to participate in these various community projects. Thank you again for your generous contribution.

Sincerely,  
David Neisler,  
President, Kings Mountain Kiwanis Club

## Have A Heart!

Dear Editor,

As co-chairmen of the Kings Mountain Business Blitz for the American Heart Association, we want to make everyone aware of our upcoming Kings Mountain campaign on Friday, April 27.

During this campaign, our team members will be contacting all the local businesses between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m. for a donation to the American Heart Association. We will have one day to reach our goal.

Our team members include: Shirley Austin, Sherwood House; Stella Putnam, Neisler Brothers; Brenda Lovelace, First Carolina Federal Bank; Susie Sellers, Home Federal Savings Bank; Vickie Smith, First Citizens; and Elaine Grigg, First Union National Bank. One of us will contact you on April 27 for your contribution.

Consider the odds: heart and blood vessel claim an American life every 33 seconds, almost a million lives a year-including 200,000 under retirement age. Heart disease is a monumental problem. People like you and I can make a difference.

If you would like to make your contribution in advance, please mail your tax-deductible check to us at First Union National Bank, PO Box 459, Kings Mountain 28086.

ELAINE R. GRIGG  
VICKIE T. SMITH  
Blitz Co-Chairmen

## Shriners Drive Planned

Dear Editor,

Shriners of the White Plains Shrine Club of Oasis Temple are conducting their "Plaque Donation Drive." These area Shriners support the Shriners Hospital for Crippled and Severely Burned Children with this project.

These hospitals, now in operation for more than 65 years, have helped over 300,000 children regardless of race, creed or affiliation with the Shrine. The hospitals have no cash register, not one parent has ever paid for a child's treatment.

A Shriner will be calling on local businesses to explain our program and appeal for help. As a good business citizen of the community, we are asking businesses to give this request genuine consideration.

Our plaques range from \$25 to \$100, \$100 to \$500, \$500 to \$1,000 and for those for over \$1,000 donations.

Your tax-deductible check can be mailed to White Plains Shrine Club, c/o Dan Bagwell, 406 West Gold Street Kings Mountain, N.C. 28086.

DAN BAGWELL  
Plaque Chairman

## Dear Ole Central Is Still Loved

They came from miles--some from as far away from Michigan, Florida, and other cities in the two Carolinas--to remember "Dear Ole Central School" Saturday.

Central, an "institution" in Kings Mountain for over 100 years, will no longer be a facility to house students after this school year but will remain forever in the hearts of thousands of teachers and students whose lives have been touched by it.

Celebrate Central Day last Saturday was a huge success. An estimated 500 people came by Saturday afternoon to walk the halls once more and see displays of old photographs and other memorabilia in the gym, or to take part in a three-hour program Saturday night in the auditorium in which former teachers and students talked about the years gone by.

Central, which now houses sixth and seventh graders, began as a military school. But through the years it has housed students in grades one through 12 and moved from a private military school to a public school. It survived the lean years of the Great Depression, several wars, a fire which destroyed the main building in 1932, and ushered in the era of consolidation and integration. Many students attended grades one through 12 at Central. Some attended part or all of their high school years, and others went there as junior high or middle school students.



**Gary Stewart**

Saturday's celebration was a dream of Central teacher Cindi Wood and her "Celebrate Central Club." Mrs. Wood and members of her family recruited several former teachers and students to help organize the event.

"There have been so many positive comments about it," she said. "It was just such a positive promotion for our community and for Central School particularly. It really makes me feel good that Central is going out on such a positive note."

Mrs. Wood, who worked long and hard to bring the Celebrate Central dream to reality, took very little of the spotlight Saturday. She presented a pen and ink drawing of the school to Supt. Bob McRae and it will hang permanently in the lobby of B.N. Barnes Auditorium. After that, Mrs. Wood was happy to sit

back and enjoy. The smile on her face and the spirit of her applause showed she was well pleased with the way the program went.

The opportunity to talk to some old friends and go into the old "crackerbox" gym once more to see the memorabilia was good, but the thing that made the Central celebration great was the Saturday night program in the auditorium.

Mrs. W.T. Weir, long-time teacher and librarian at Central, and Coach Don Parker were certainly the "stars" of the show. Together they probably spent about 75 years in the Kings Mountain School System, and most of them at Central. Countless thousands of lives have been influenced by them.

Steve Baker, a former student and teacher, also spoke as did former students William C. Kelly and Billy Houze, all three recalling some of their most pleasant memories of Central School. Steve Baker's kickoff return for a touchdown against Shelby in the 1963 Southwestern 3-A Conference championship game at the old City Stadium was shown on video and was almost as exciting as it was on that cold October Friday in '63. Most people attending Central at that time remember that run. I remember leaving home at 6 p.m. to go to that 7:30 game and there were so many people already in City Stadium that I had to sit near

See Central, 5-A

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