

Opinions

Cartoonitorial

JIM HEFFNER

Columnist



'This might sting a little'

Dracula's wife was in good form yesterday morning. She isn't really Dracula's wife. Actually, she's a pleasant young nurse. You know the one I mean, the lady who siphons your blood at the doctor's office.

She went into her usual routine just before she jabbed the needle in my vein. "Now this might sting a little," she said. Whereupon she stabbed me in the arm with what felt like a pneumatic drill. I could have sworn I detected glee in her bright, blue eyes. I swear to you she smiled when I jumped.

Why do they always say that?

They used to behead criminals in some European countries. I wonder if the executioner's last words were, "this might sting just a little," as he released the blade?

Everytime I have blood work or donate blood to the Red Cross the same questions run through my mind.

Why do all Federal Government employees speak broken English? Have you ever had occasion to call a government office on the telephone? Try the IRS sometimes. I think they recruit all their employees from South America.

Are there any Americans working for the government?

I think there is a conspiracy out there in the world, and large department stores and airlines are in on it. Why do they have what is referred to as "customer Service Departments."

Have you ever tried to deal with one of them? If that's customer service I'm glad they don't have "Customer Harassment Departments." Just try to get service from one of them.

You'd better have the receipt, the day and date of purchase, the time of day and a signed note from your mother or a notarized statement from your minister, and, if you bought the item or ticket on sale, forget it.

As Mary Lou Retton would say, "and another thing." Why do door-to-door salesmen always say they are not trying to sell you anything? All they really want to do is get through the door to show you what they have.

Once a guy came to my door and the conversation went something like this:

"What are you selling?"

"What are you buying?"

"Nothing."

"Good, because I'm not selling anything."

"Then what do you want?"

"I'd like to come in and show you my line of pots and pans."

"I don't want to see them if I can't buy them."

"You can buy them."

"I thought you weren't selling anything."

"I'm not, you suggested buying them."

"But, if I buy them, you'll have to sell them won't you?"

"That's just a technicality."

Unable to conjure up a clever return, I just closed the door and went about the business of not buying alone.

In case you're wondering, that's a true story.

Why do financial institutions run ads telling you how easy it is to get a loan? Have you tried to get a loan in the past few years? Believe me when I say it isn't easy.

You need collateral, 300 references, good credit, that notarized statement from your minister, and, to speed up the paper work, you must give up your first born child.

Have you seen all those people standing around shopping centers holding up those little signs that say, "I will Work For Food?" Did you fall for it the first time you saw one of those people? I did. I gave the guy five bucks, now I read in the papers those people average about 50 dollars a day, and they don't put in a full eight hours.

My question is, Why don't some of them pool their money and open a shop, manufacturing and selling the signs? It makes sense to me.

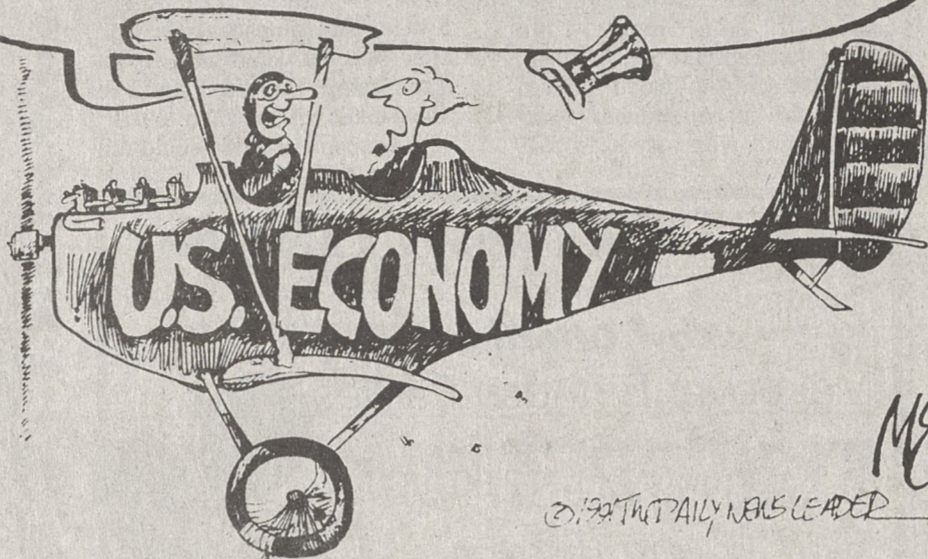
Remember that old adage, "It's not whether you win or lose but how you play the game?" Where did that come from? If the object isn't to win, why compete? Ask any professional sports team owner if he's paying all those millions in salaries just so his guys can "play the game." Not a chance, he's paying them to win. They can learn sportsmanship at home or church.

The last question on my list is why do people say, "This is going to hurt me more than it will hurt you just before they bang you up side the head with a blunt instrument?"

I can remember my sainted Grandmother telling me that just before she striped my legs with a little keen branch from the sweet gum tree in the front yard.

And another thing.....

LOOK, WE'VE PULLED OUT OF OUR DIVE... WE'RE FLYING LEVEL!!



BOB McRAE

Superintendent Kings Mountain Schools



Support the K Team

I hope your summer was as enjoyable as mine. Even though I hate to see vacation come to an end, I'm really eager about the coming year. I hope you are going to be very excited about our school system and what we are trying to do.

At our Employee Appreciation Breakfast last week I gave each of our employees a button which reads "K Team". I hope you'll see them worn prominently in our schools this year. They are intended to deliver a two-fold message.

The first part of the message is to convey to all of our employees their importance, regardless of what their jobs are. We cannot be as successful as we want to be without all of them doing their jobs well. We must each support each other and work together so that our children can learn.

The second part of the message is equally important, and it involves our entire community. We in the school system must realize that all of our community, and especially the parents of our students, are key players in our efforts. I am asking our employees to reach out to the parents of our students in an effort to involve them in a way which goes beyond anything we have previously done. I hope you will accept our invitation.

I want us to keep you well informed. I want you to expect that and to let us know how we can do a better job when needed. The greatest thing parents can do for our school system is to keep informed about how their students are doing and then work together with us when improvements are in order.

Non-parents can help as well. There is plenty for you to do. ONE of the areas on which we will focus great attention this year is the dropout rate. We decreased our dropouts by 25% last year. That's a great start, but there are still far too many. In fact we cannot even be satisfied until every young person in our high school system earns a high school diploma.

I believe we can make further strides in decreasing the number of dropouts we have by establishing more one-on-one contacts with students who seem to be heading toward leaving school before graduation. We need volunteers to work with these students. There is no qualification necessary other than a sincere desire to help young people. Business people, retirees, homemakers - everyone can help. Why don't you consider giving your time?

We've got a lot to do. North Carolina implements a new testing program this year, and we begin to teach the revised curriculum which it will test. That's our major mission - to assure you that we will teach so well that all our children will learn what they need in order to be successful.

It's got to be a team effort. I hope each of you will choose to be a positive member of the K Team. If we work together, the results can be something.

Have a great year and, please, let us know whenever we can help you or whenever we can improve our service to you.

Our View

GA did pretty good job

The "short session" of the 1992 North Carolina General Assembly will probably be remembered as the session that didn't do much, and, to our way of thinking, that's not a bad way to be remembered.

State lawmakers usually work themselves into a frenzy trying to see which one can out do the other, but there wasn't much of that this time.

The best thing to come out of Raleigh this year was a pared down education construction budget.

According to a report from the John Locke Foundation, the package, dubbed the "bondwagon" by Representative Anne Barnes of Chapel Hill, started out large. Original estimates went as high as \$1 billion, but the final figure was a more manageable \$400 million, to be used for construction of colleges, universities and public schools. That is still a huge amount of tax money, but at least it isn't a billion dollars.

Spending for education is always a hot issue in North Carolina and especially during an election year.

The university and community college systems enjoy a national reputation, and even when legislators try to keep a tight rein on spending, they will make sure those systems are well funded.

According to the Locke Foundation report, North Carolina spends about \$3000 per college-age person on higher education, ranking 13th in the nation when all factors are considered.

It is important to remember that this package will not be administered by the present legislature. By January we will have a new governor and, if the national trend holds, a fair amount of new legislators.

Those newly elected officials will have their work cut out for them in the field of education. It remains to be seen how responsibly they act next year.

Perhaps the new guys in town should keep in mind the last legislature could have left them in much worse condition.

'Sleaze questions' shabby journalism

Last, week journalism at its shabbiest was on full display in this country.

First, the New York Post, a tabloid about half a notch above those appearing in the supermarkets, picked up an obscure reference, actually a foot note, in a non-selling book by a now dead author. The foot note stated an ambassador told others, who told the writer, that the ambassador had arranged a "sexual tryst" between George Bush and a woman who worked for him in 1984 while Bush was still Vice-President.

The ambassador claimed he had arranged for adjoining rooms for the two.

Next, a CNN reporter, during a press conference that was attended by Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin, asked the President about the so-called incident.

The topper came when NBC reporter Stone Phillips, usually a non-combative newsman, asked Bush about the incident.

Phillips got the same answer as the CNN reporter.

"I am not going to take any sleaze questions. I am outraged that you would ask a question like that. It is a lie and you ought to be ashamed for asking it," said Bush.

That wasn't enough for Phillips. He went on to ask the President if he had ever engaged in an extra-marital affair.

The President was livid, as well he should have been.

The White House had granted NBC a 30-minute face-to-face interview with the President. Their reporter could have asked about the national deficit, health care, or any issue crucial to the populace, but he chose the low road instead.

The rumor of impropriety had been floating around Washington for several years. Many news people had been told about it, researched it and found nothing to build a story upon.

At a time when news organizations are being pilloried for exhibiting blatant bias, NBC and CNN did everything they could to prove their critics correct.

A recent national poll produced the following results when participants were asked about the two presidential candidates, Bush and Clinton: 77% said they thought Bush would raise taxes, while 75% indicated Clinton would do the same.

The implication here is that the electorate views both national candidates in an ill light if taxes are used as a barometer.

We wonder if this attitude will affect voter turn-out, and if it does, which party will benefit?

It's time to say bye to Christmas tree

Several years ago, a committee in charge of refurbishing Mauney Memorial Library recommended that the big White Pine Christmas tree in the front lawn be removed.

The idea of such a thing stirred the emotions of many citizens. Some even organized walking protests, and the recommendation died.

Looking back, the committee probably had done a thorough job in its evaluation of the grounds but didn't carry through with the original plans so as not to upset so many people.

If you've driven by the library lately, you've probably noticed that the tree is dying a very fast death. What was once a beautiful city landmark is fast becoming an eyesore.

We're not forestry experts, but one who has dealt in forestry all his life told us that the life of a White Pine is about 25-30 years maximum, and if memory serves us correctly the White Pine was planted at the library in the early fifties.

The tree has brought many happy moments, especially around Christmas time, but we feel the time has come to take the ax to the big White Pine.

Your Right To Say It

Pay back money

To the Editor:

I have read in the Herald for the past several weeks allegations from Todd Hambright that he was "allowed" to play ball on the City's time.

Mr. Hambright apparently wants everyone that read the Herald to forget the reason he was fired from his job. He was dismissed for failing to observe proper safety procedures. Now, that is the real issue. He seems to have forgotten that his actions cost a lot of money and could have possibly injured someone. NOW - he is acting like a child and saying, OK, I'll tell everyone about what is really going on.

It is not right for Mr. Hambright or anyone else to take advantage of their employer as he has admitted himself. He was paid for the hours he was supposedly working. Does he not have a conscience? Just because someone told him it was all right for him and other to play basketball while he was at work doesn't make it right. Has he thought about adding up the hours he supposedly played basketball and giving this money back to the City? That is the right thing to do. Instead of doing that, he is trying to cause other employees to lose their jobs because he has lost his, with good cause, I might add.

I'm sure George Wood and Charles Webber will get to the bottom of this. These people cannot be everywhere all the time. They Department Managers that are supposed to be taking care of these employees. That is part of their job.

The people of Kings Mountain need to stop and think of all the good things that have happened since George Wood came as City Manager. They far outweigh anything that people like Todd Hambright, who was fired with good cause, can say. Let them have the time to investigate and take the proper steps, which I am sure they will.

It seems to me that Todd Hambright is more interested in getting his name on the front page of the paper than realizing that he has stolen from the City and do the right thing, which is to pay back the City for the money he took from them and urge the other employees to come forward and do the same thing.

Lavon L. Ramsey

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Sidewalk Survey

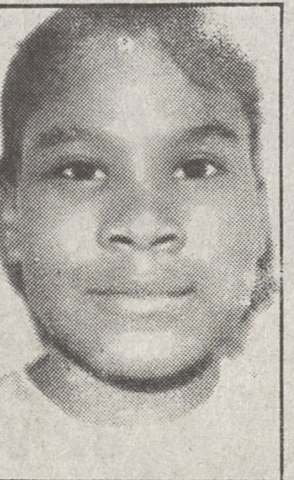
What do you like most about the new West School?



Shakara Young
No bugs.



Casey Short
The lunchroom.



Monique Williams
It's pretty and a good school.



Tiffany Reeves
The library.



Brad Bridges
The pizza.



Laymond Caldwell
It's better than the old one.