

Opinions

JIM HEFFNER

Columnist



Let's talk news

I am an avid reader of newspapers and magazines. I'd rather watch a news program on television than any of those moronic series programs.

There's much to talk about in the news today. Try these conversation starters.

...I've heard it said that perhaps it's time to elect a president from the Democratic party to go along with a Democrat-controlled congress and senate.

You'd think that hadn't been tried before.

Doesn't anybody remember Jimmy Carter? One of the features of his administration was double-digit interest rates (22%), and, as I recall, that's about the time Americans started losing their jobs in great numbers.

...Speaking of employment, presidential candidates like to say how many jobs they will create if elected.

I do not believe it is a function of the government to provide jobs for the people. In my opinion that's a bogus issue.

...I have researched, to the best of my ability, as far back as 1953, and I am unable to find any instance in which a tax increase has resulted in the reduction of the national deficit. On the contrary, when those big spenders in Washington get wind of more available tax money, they pull out their new-ways-to-waste-money files.

...The budget deficit is always prominent during an election year, especially since this country started going down the fiscal tubes during the early 60's.

I'm afraid that escalating social security benefits, and the interest on an ever-increasing national debt, prohibits any significant gain on the country's overblown monetary deficiency. I'm no expert, but it seems to me the only way to harness federal spending is a constitutional amendment, coupled with a presidential line-item veto.

...I am not in the business of sports predicting, but I can't believe the Atlanta Braves will win the National League pennant, much less the World Series, with the kind of pitching they're getting these days.

I intend to root for them, and I hope I'm wrong, but if Glavine, Avery, Smoltz and company don't improve fast the fat lady can start tuning up.

...Contrary to what Spike Lee thinks, I believe the construction of a black cultural center at UNC-Chapel Hill would further racial inequities just as would a white cultural center. If another building is needed on that campus, and I'm not convinced it is, why not just a student cultural center? Isn't that what we are supposed to be doing--getting people of all races together?

...I'm hearing that the coming winter will be colder than usual, and, for that reason, natural gas will cost more.

Last year we had a mild winter and the state utilities commission allowed the gas company to charge more for their product. Is this called a no-win situation for consumers?

...On October 15th, Billy Ray Cyrus, the guy with the "Achy Breaky Heart," will appear at the Hickory Motor Speedway. I'm not too sure that people know how popular this fellow is, especially with the women-folk.

Yesterday, a woman in her thirties told me she had a stereo tape player installed in her car for the sole purpose of playing her "Achy Breaky" tape.

The point is, the Hickory police department should get themselves prepared for this date. I have a distinct feeling that place is going to be an explosion of female-type people. Traffic and crowd control should not be underestimated.

...I know it's a little late, but if enough volunteers will make the effort to get my name on the ballot in all 50 states, I will run for president. I am available next Saturday morning at 10:00 a.m. if the Bush and Clinton people wish to come down and discuss my economic plan.

PERSONALLY SPEAKING - Back in August, I mentioned that I am a devoted fan of the late June Christy. One week later a package arrived in the mail.

Said package contained two lengthy tapes of nothing but the best June Christy cuts, some of them rare.

Doug Norwood, a data analyst with Jefferson Pilot in Greensboro, sent them, along with a nice letter. Doug is a former Belmont resident, a native actually, who tells me he fell in love with Miss Christy when he was a sophomore in college.

In Doug's words, "I was prompted to spend a very enjoyable Sunday afternoon putting three hours of JC on tape."

The tapes are of excellent quality. I called Doug and we had a nice chat, but he wouldn't allow me to pay for the tapes.

What a prince of a man!

Pictorial Editorial



SIGNS OF THE TIMES - If you don't already know there's an election around the corner, just ride by Dean Westmoreland's home. The Cleveland County Democratic Party Chairman has decorated his lawn with political posters - all Democrats, of course.

Our View

Address issues

Every election year, the same scenario occurs. The presidential candidates, as well as many other running for public office, talk about everything under the sun except the issues that are crucial to this country. It's especially true this year, or so it seems.

What makes it so obvious this year is the unorthodox television and radio coverage that is happening.

Candidates for national office, especially president appear to be using the news media to dodge the news media.

If that sounds confusing consider this: Where have you seen George Bush, Bill Clinton, Ross Perot, Dan Quayle and Al Gore the most?

They're haunting those viewer call-in shows, radio and TV talk shows and the morning network offerings, and there's a reason for it. These shows, ranging from Larry King and the morning news shows to local copy-cat productions are allowing the politicians to show their faces while dancing around the hard issues that need to be discussed.

The hosts of these, more than anything else, entertainment shows, with rare exceptions, almost never ask hard questions of the candidates. Generally, they toss them softball, allowing them to evade unpleasantness, and twist the truth. The result is, presidential candidates are getting around the hard-core political press and, to a large degree, are avoiding close scrutiny.

While it may be true that the politicians feel more comfortable answering the easy call-in questions that seldom challenge their veracity, it isn't necessarily the best way to pin them down on the pressing issues of the day such as the economy and health care costs.

Forcing candidates to get specific is best accomplished by tough questions and follow-up by experienced interviewers.

Larry King, Phil Donohue, Sally Jessy and all the rest are entertainers, not news people.

The public wants to know what the candidate plans to do about an ongoing recession, the national debt and the host of other real problems that plague our country.

Without information, an informed decision is impossible, and until the candidates are willing to face the music and take a stand, the electorate cannot be expected to make a sound choice.

Your Right To Say It

Need change

To the Editor:

For the past two years, our country has been in a recession. The national media have laid the blame squarely on the President and the Republican Party for trickle down economics and not reacting quick enough. Well, during this "recession," the North Carolina legislature saw fit to levy the largest tax increase in state history. It does not take a rocket scientist to realize taking money out of the pockets of the consumers will hinder, not help the staggering economy.

I propose the following questions: What did representatives Hunt, Withrow and Lutz do in Raleigh to help stimulate the economy? Well, I will tell you. According to the North Carolina Taxpayers Union, they collectively received a rating of 60 out of a possible 100. The highest single rating was 25. Any first year economics student will agree that higher taxes strangles the economy, it does not promote growth.

A pro-group business, NCFREE, has rated these same three legislatures as Anti-Business. According to NCFREE, "Business taxes are going up, education is going down, and management of government is going down." NCFREE rates legislators on a 100 point scale. Once again, representatives Hunt, Withrow and Lutz received a less than outstanding rating. Their ratings ranged from a high of 62.1 to a low of 34.2.

It is clear that we need a change of the guard. These representatives are out of touch with business and the general public, I ask that the voters take this information into consideration before sending these people back to Raleigh. If the voters truly want change, vote Republican on November 3.

P.S. Bill Withrow has advocated a \$3.00 a gallon gas tax. Imagine what that will do to the economy of North Carolina.

Sincerely,
Rick Hood, Chairman
10th District Young Republicans

Thanks participants

To the Editor:

We at the Cleveland-Rutherford Kidney Association would like to express our most heartfelt appreciation to those who participated in the 1992 annual benefit golf tournament September 16 at River Bend Golf Club. We hope everyone had a good time and will want to participate again next year. After playing, the golfers were served barbecue sandwiches, chips and drinks. Desserts were provided by CRKA volunteers. The sandwiches were provided by Porta-Pig of Shelby and Debbie Saratte of WADA.

We also want to thank Cleveland County Jaycees for co-sponsoring this event again year. The Jaycees sold hole and team sponsorships, solicited prizes and helped serve the hungry golfers. To the businesses that sponsored teams and holes, we thank you for your generosity.

To Phil Wallace and the staff of River Bend Golf Club, we thank you for all you did to make this event run smoothly. As always Wallace put in a great deal of time and work to make the event successful.

To the never-failing volunteers of the Kidney Association thanks again for all the cakes and yummy desserts. Please remember you are appreciated for all the work you do to make the Kidney Association a life line for many fellow citizens in Cleveland and surrounding counties.

Thanks everyone for your efforts in keeping the dialysis van transportation program on the move. Last but not least, thanks to Martha McClure and Renee Ledford for helping to organize and plan the golf tournament and to all for helping to save lives.

Margaret Ledford
Executive Director

It's me again, Margaret

The telephone is one of our most important possessions, but sometimes it can be one of the most aggravating.

If it were not for the fact that I'm at Fort Caswell catching some of the biggest flounder ever to come out of the Cape Fear River and Atlantic Ocean, I would be attending the Chamber of Commerce's telephone etiquette seminar in Kings Mountain.

I always try to use good telephone manners at work. Even when the caller has a gripe, it's good business to be nice.

At home, I try to be nice as well but sometimes it's difficult.

It seems like we're getting more and more phone calls from people trying to sell everything from aluminum siding and windows to water filters. And their sales pitch is done so cleverly, without them even taking time to pause between sentences, that it's hard to break in to tell them you're not interested. I swear one time a man held me on the phone so long that I laid it down, went to the bathroom, came back and he was still jabbering.

I really don't pay attention to the phone sales pitches. Every once in awhile I just say "Uh, huh" or "yeah" but it's about come to the point to where I'm going have to try to out-wit them.

I have what I think is a good answer to the aluminum siding salesman who, after determining that you own your own home, seems to always begin his pitch with "wouldn't it be nice to never have to paint again?"

"It sure would," I say. "The next time I have to paint my house I'm going to put on aluminum siding. But I just painted it about six months ago."

One of the most annoying sales pitches I've gotten lately, believe it or not, was from a telephone company. The caller assured me that her company could save me 50 percent over my present phone service supplier and that she could sign me up for a 30-day trial right over the phone. It took me about 30 minutes to get her off the phone despite telling her several times that I never do business over the phone. I told her if she would send me some information through the mail I would gladly take a look at it, and I might subscribe to her service. That's been several months and nothing's come in the mail. In fact, a couple days later my wife said she got another call from the same company. She was much smarter than I and told them she wasn't interested, and hung up. I wonder how much those two long distance calls from Phoenix cost her!

Sometimes, the calls come so frequently that I lose my patience and don't use good telephone etiquette.

Several weeks ago someone, who I quickly determined was selling water filters, called and gave some fancy government sounding name and said they were conducting water samples in our community and would like to come by my home and take seven samples. Fine, I said.

To hear the lady talk, you'd think she had known me all my life (or at least all of hers, because she sounded much younger than I). She wanted to know if I still lived at Route 4, Box 428.

Well, if she knew so much about me I figured she should have known that several years ago the county did away with rural route numbers and assigned streets and street numbers to every road in the county. So, I said, "yeah, I still live here." That really wasn't a lie,



GARY STEWART
Editor

was it? I still live in the same house!

She said someone would be out that night to take the water samples. Of course, they couldn't find Route 4, Box 428.

The next day, someone called back and said their representative couldn't get around to all the homes the night before but he'd definitely be there tonight. Fine, I said.

I had already decided if someone came up to say he wanted to conduct a water sample, I was going to send him around to the spigot behind the house and tell him to sample all he wants, but I was not interested in buying anything.

The next night, she called back and said he couldn't find my home and would I please give directions so he could come out tonight.

"What are you selling, water filters?" I asked.

"Yes."

"I don't need any."

It seems everyone has a telephone number almost identical to a big business or government agency, and that can become quite annoying sometimes.

One of the other businesses in the Herald building has the same last four digits as the City of Kings Mountain. Their prefix is 739 and the city's is 734. They're always getting calls from irate citizens wanting to know when their garbage is going to be picked up, or when a street is going to be repaired.

A nice lady called one day to report that her last four numbers are the same as the City Recreation Department. People are always calling her wanting to know when aerobics classes are taught.

If the middle two numbers of my phone number are reversed it's the number of one of the town's biggest grocery stores. I get several calls a week for them, and I've often wondered if they ever get a call from someone upset about something that's been in the paper.

I've always tried to be nice to people who dial my number by mistake.

But several years ago, I was working like a dog out-side and had hurried in the house several times to answer the phone, and most of the calls were for the grocery store.

It rang for about the umpteenth time and I went running in, dirty shoes and all, and the caller, who sounded two sheets to the wind, asked:

"If I send my wife down there with my pay check, will you cash it?"

"Sure," I said. "Send her on down."

"Do I need to send my driver's license or some kind of identification?" he asked.

"No, send her on. We'll cash it."

I'd be willing to bet that someone at the grocery store got a good blessing out when they refused to cash the check because the woman didn't have identification.

October 20

Attend Vision meeting

For the last six months, about 150 citizens from all areas of Cleveland County have been meeting to discuss the future of our county. The effort has been called the Cleveland County Visioning Strategy; and, has been supported by Cleveland County, the City of Kings Mountain, the City of Shelby, and the Town of Boiling Springs.

The Urban Institute from the University of North Carolina at Charlotte was retained to facilitate an in-depth review of the following areas: economic development potential, public health issues, educational improvement, historical, cultural, recreational and arts programs, and transportation and utility systems improvements. A random survey of 600 county residents was conducted to determine what citizens felt were both strengths and weaknesses in Cleveland County.

For this process to be successful in setting specific goals for improvements in these key areas, we need to hear further from the citizens of Cleveland County.



GUEST COLUMN
George Wood

The first of five meetings throughout the county will be held in Kings Mountain at Barnes Auditorium on October 20 at 7 p.m. The program will give an overview of the work to date, and open the floor for comments and questions from all citizens.

On behalf of the mayor, city council, county commissioners, and the many citizens involved in this process, I encourage each of you to attend this meeting.

George Wood is city manager for the City of Kings Mountain.

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