

Opinions

Cartoonitorial

JIM HEFFNER

Columnist



Loose nuts

Another year is almost by the boards and people are getting stranger every day.

Throughout the past year I've noted a surplus of nutty happenings and utterances by the famous as well as ordinary folks such as you and me. I don't mean ordinary as an insult. On the contrary, I'd rather be ordinary than some of the people who makes news.

The world of sports, as always, produced some of the best quotes of the year.

ESPN football analyst Joe Theismann, came up with this one: "Joe Gibbs a genius? No way. First of all the word genius is inapplicable. Norman Einstein was a genius."

That one reminds me of the former Georgia Tech football coach Pepper Rogers, who said: "I used to have trouble remembering names until I took that Sam Carnegie course."

You can always count on a juicy goof from Sparky Anderson, manager of the Detroit Tigers, and this year was no exception. "You are who you are," said Sparky, "and if you aren't you're not you." Only Sparky knows for sure.

Then there was pitching ace John Smoltz of the Atlanta Braves. Smoltz commented, after breaking the Braves' single game strikeout record, "I felt I could be dominating, but didn't think I would strike out 15. As far as stuffwise, I haven't pitched a better game than this." Stuffwise?

The Greenville, S.C. Social Services Department sent, to a deceased man's relatives, a form letter cutting off his food stamps.

"Your food stamps will be stopped effective March 1992," the letter read, "because we received notice that you passed away. May God bless you. You may reapply if there is a change in your circumstances."

The recipient passed away in mid-February. If his circumstances change to the degree that he does reapply, we have a scoop.

Out in la-la land, which is to say, California, a gunman, described by police as tall and burly, pulled a gun on a San Francisco liquor store clerk and demanded all his cash. The clerk, Frank Boutte hesitated.

"I don't want to hurt you," said the would-be robber. "You'll get nothing from me," replied Boutte.

At this point, according to police, the gunman stuffed the weapon in his pocket, burst into tears and fled.

Is it just my imagination or are crooks getting more stupid? Read on.

Two burglars in Wallingford, Connecticut were hauled to the local lock-up after a woman came home and found them cooking a rib roast in her kitchen.

"They were bustling about my kitchen as if they belonged there," said the woman. "When I asked who they were one of them replied, 'we're burglars.' They were really soused."

The current price of beef probably means the goofy twosome was charged with grand larceny as well as breaking and entering.

There's a Wendy's in La Gran, Oregon that at least one consumer doesn't like.

Shortly after midnight on a recent Saturday, a guy in a white mask, riding a bicycle, tossed a dead muskrat through the drive-in window. Nobody can figure that one out, but the culprit made a clean getaway.

Let's see now, does this mean Dave Thomas will start serving a "patty-pelt."

I saw the following classified ad in an area newspaper: "Guys, live girls are waiting to talk to you." The charge was \$3 per minute. I wonder how much it costs to talk to dead girls?

Politicians, of course, are always good for a gaff. Senator Dennis DeConcini, D-Ariz., made the following statement as part of his endorsement of a proposed balanced budget amendment: It is going to be a great day because we're finally going to wrestle to the ground this gigantic organism that is just out of control, that just absolutely can't put itself together."

Considering recent developments in Washington, I wonder if that was a Freudian slip, or did he really mean organism?

My favorite 1992 story comes from the world class city after the river.

A motel clerk was shot during a holdup by two men. One of the two thieves was wearing a pair of boxer shorts on his head. The clerk, who wasn't seriously injured, told police that two men came into the motel in the early morning and told him to fork over the money from the cash drawer. One of them brandished a gun in his hand and the aforementioned underwear on his head.

Investigators said the clerk didn't take the crooks seriously because of the unusual headgear. The poor guy was probably in danger of laughing himself to death.

Update - To those who read the column about my lost wedding band, I did find it. After the weather cleared enough to rummage through the window boxes, I found it in less than 30 minutes. Maybe I ought to consider putting that thing in my nose where it belongs.

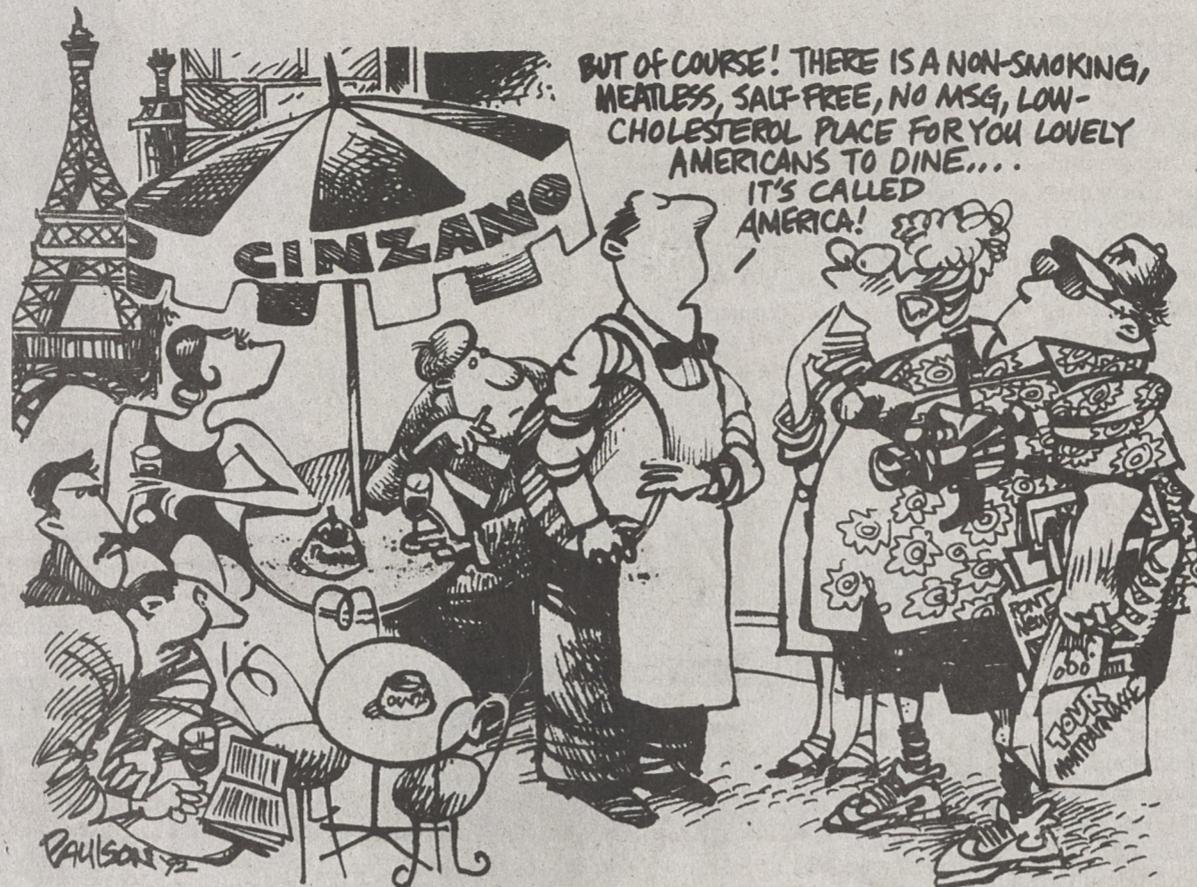
Herald Letter Policy

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

Keep the letters brief and to the point. The Herald reserves the right to edit letters for spelling, good taste, libel or slanderous statements, or any other reason; and reserves the right to reject any letter for any reason.

All letters should be typed and double spaced, if possible, and signed in ink. If not, write them clearly and sign them in ink. Unsigned letters will not be published.

Mail all letters to The Editor, P.O. Box 769, Kings Mountain, N.C. 28086. Hand-delivered letters will not be accepted.



Your Right To Say It
Policy unfair to students

To the editor:

I'm writing in response to the tardy policy at KMHS.

Personally, as a concerned citizen, I feel I have a right to speak on this issue. This policy is totally unfair to these students. Punishing a student is one thing. Taking away their education is another. You can't even talk to the school officials about this, because every time you try to call the principals or anyone else about this subject you're told they're not in, are at lunch, or are in meetings. Now is this giving you the run around or what?

This Saturday detention is totally ridiculous. If the students were allowed to or required to use this time to study, or work on homework, or do something educational, that would be fine. These students are only allowed to sit at separate tables, not allowed to read, or to look or speak to anyone. It's a crying shame that when our children finally do graduate from KMHS they may not be able to read, write or do algebra, but at least they will be able to tell you how many blocks hold up the walls of the school's cafeteria! I may be wrong, and I may expect too much out of our school system, but I do feel that when my child graduates they should be able to do more than count blocks like a three year old. Parents, is this what our money is going to? I don't know about everyone else, but when my tax dollars go for an education that's what I expect it to be used for.

Now, don't get me wrong. Schools need rules and regulations, but this tardy thing is going to the extreme! O.K., a child is late, they're sent to "Chill Out" during first period. That's punishment enough. Especially if it's a legitimate tardy. Parents calling should be satisfactory for the school, but the situation with Ms. Peterson calling proved that it's not enough. Shutting doors in students' faces is more childish than most elementary school children. Faculty, if you're adults, start acting like it. Grow up!

Most of the parents who are complaining about this policy graduated from KMHS, and we graduated with pride. Now you're treating our children as if they're in a prison camp instead of the school we were proud of. You may take our pride in your school away, but we simply refuse to let you take our children's education away. You want power? Well, we as parents intend to use any power we possess to see that our children receive the education we pay for and send them to your school for; not a prison camp.

Our children attend a community based school, not a military school, and you people need to learn the difference between the two. You teachers harp on the court square in Raleigh for more money. Well, if you'd do more teaching of our students you might find it easier to get the money you want.

For all concerned parents, there will be a Board of Education meeting on Monday night, December 7th at 7:00 p.m. in the Superintendent's Office. Be there and support your child's education!

Gregory Thompson, Michael Stephen Goode, Dr. David Hossunan, Doris Winstead, Paula King, Mr. and Mrs. Jack E. Peterson, Kim Dover, Marie McDaniel, Coleman Anderson, Emmitt McClain, Ronnie Carroll, Marvin Smith.

Don't waste education

To the editor:

The people who enforce this tardy policy at Kings Mountain High School need to stop and put themselves in the shoes of the students.

These students go to school for an education. If they don't get in trouble, and then when they make a ditch effort to go, and they're a few minutes late, they get in trouble.

Now what's wrong with this picture: A child does something wrong, and some judges sentence them to attend school, then because of being late for a few classes the school puts a child out of school for a day. I don't understand where anyone who works for our school system can do this. To me it's defeating the purpose completely.

Some kids like the suspension because it gives them a day off. You should be making these children stay at school for so long each day for a week if it's just lame excuses for being tardy.

child to school late because of car trouble, and etc., and the parent contacts the school of the reason, then that should be sufficient. Children should not be punished for things beyond their control. If a parent has car trouble or a lady starts her monthly, that's beyond her control. Accept it people! It's not hard to do.

I heard some young girls say the teachers say they can't prove a girl started her monthly. What do you want to do, go to the bathroom with her for proof? Then so be it! Otherwise, use a little common sense in a situation like this. Otherwise, all young girls will feel compelled to quit school when they become 16 years old, and just stay out of school until they do turn 16. After all, she's going to be put out anyway. I'm a man and a father of three, and I can even understand that. It may help your tardy rate, but I can't see how it helps your attendance rate because these suspensions are being counted as absences!

Children should be punished for some things, but not for unavoidable tardies, especially with parents explaining to you why. There are things people just don't have control over, and we as adults should accept these things, and help a child understand and accept them. Let's grow up and work with students instead of against them. Education is too good to waste, so stop wasting our children's education for something like a few tardies. After all, they are in school instead of dropping out.

Jackie Peterson
Kings Mountain

Thanks for support

To the editor:

On behalf of the City of Kings Mountain and the Parks and Recreation Commission, I want to thank all those who lined the parade route on Saturday, December 5. From many accounts, your patience and resistance to the chilly temperatures and brisk breezes gave you a great view of a very successful Christmas parade for our city. This year's event was a departure from our recent Sunday schedule but proved to be the largest in the last several years.

With the hard work of Denise Falls, Recreation Program Supervisor, Kim Roper, Parks and Recreation Secretary, and David Dellinger, volunteer, all aspects of the preparation allowed the parade to run quite smoothly. The City Police and Public Works Departments provided outstanding support in traffic control, crowd control, safety and post-parade clean-up. A special thanks goes to the Kings Mountain High School Marching Band, Oasis Steele Drum Band and to the Livingstone College Marching Band for their wonderful contributions of music and showmanship. Also, special thanks to the New Bynum Chapel AME Zion Church for the excellent hospitality provided to the Livingstone Band members.

Our Grand Marshals, Bob Lacey and Sherri Lynch of Sunny FM 107.9, were very complimentary of the crowds, the parade and our city. Their on air promotion and discussions before and after the parade have been most positive.

Finally, a thanks to all those 120 or so entries for making the parade a fun event for all of us. The Parks and Recreation Department welcomes comments and suggestions from spectators and participants alike as we strive to provide safe entertainment for our city. We value your input!

Sincerely, J. David Hancock, Director
Kings Mountain Parks and Recreation

We need lottery

To the editor:

I would like for everybody to get a petition up and all that agree to sign for a national lottery with all profits to go on the national debt.

Instead of raising taxes and send it to Washington, it is for the good of the people.

Will you help?
Thank you.

Mary Kelly

GARY STEWART

Editor



About being late

Much has been written lately about the tardy policy at Kings Mountain High School.

The purpose of this column is not to try to influence the opinion of anyone; nor is it an attempt to discredit any statements made by anyone in any story or letter that has appeared in this paper in recent weeks.

It is, however, an attempt to clarify the policy as I understand it.

I was present at the Board of Education meeting a year or so ago when the policy was approved, and double checked with Supt. Bob McRae to see if my recollection was correct.

The first of the tardy policy is this:

The first time a student is late for class for an unexcused reason, he or she is sent to a "Chill Out" room for the remainder of that period and has to serve 15 minutes detention during his lunch period. On the second offense, he serves two lunch detentions. On the third unexcused tardy, he spends an after school detention.

On the fourth unexcused tardy, he has to come to detention at school on Saturday morning; and on the fifth offense, he is suspended from school for one day.

Many tardies are excused. These include all of the lawful reasons, such as illnesses and religious observances as defined by the State of North Carolina; as well as doctor's appointments, death in the family and court appearances. There is also a provision for students who become ill during class. They can attend to their needs by clearing it with their teacher or the principal's office.

Much has been said about students being late to class because of car trouble. It would probably not be a good idea for the high school to allow that to be an excuse because many, many students would automatically give that as their reason for being late. It would be almost impossible for the school to verify car trouble.

However, there should be room for common sense in any policy. If a student who has not had a history of being late for class or causing trouble at school experiences car trouble, he should be given the benefit of the doubt and be allowed to report to class.

As Bob McRae said when the policy was approved last year, it is a "sad" policy. Everyone connected with the school system probably wishes it were not necessary, but they feel the school had to take a drastic step to stop tardiness because it had become a common practice by many students.

Whether you're dealing with tardiness or mischief, it's usually three or four percent of the students who are involved. And sometimes, unfortunately, those three or four percent make life tough for the other 96 or 97 percent. Such may be the case here. I don't know.

But, I do know one thing. A teacher cannot teach a student who is not in class. And that, I believe, is what led to this tardy policy.

When students are tardy for class, they are not only hurting themselves but all of the other students. Late students disrupt the train of thought of the teacher and all other students who were in their seats and ready to learn when the bell rang.

As is the case with any school policy, time will show either good or bad results. If the tardy policy results in students being in class on time, it will prove good for all students who are at school to get a good education. If it needs adjustments along the way, the school board should certainly be willing to make those adjustments.

AND, FURTHERMORE - While we're on the school board, at Monday night's meeting the board will once again discuss - and maybe even take action - on designating an at-large seat for future elections which would mean that the board would consist of two residents of the city, two from outside the city, and one person who could live either inside or outside.

This idea was first presented by Billy Houze about a year ago, when he pointed out that the majority of the population now lives outside the city.

However, recently it seems the some are trying to complicate the procedure by considering staggering elections so it would be more equal to minorities and giving people inside and outside the city an equal shot at the same time.

Staggering elections - which, by the way was done by the School Board just in the last decade when they went from six-year to four-year seats, only confuses the voters and people running for office.

This is not a minority issue. It never was. It is a population issue. We hope that Monday night the board will either designate one inside city seat as an at-large seat, or drop the matter entirely.

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