

Opinions

Nostalgia Corner

Your Right To Say It

JIM HEFFNER
Columnist



An abundance of bullies

Bully: one who hurts or intimidates smaller people. That is Webster's definition of the word, but a bully in today's climate isn't necessarily an individual. Today's bullies are organized groups or powerful publicity seekers.

The American Association for the Advancement of Science is a bullying bunch if there ever was one.

The AAAS is the world's largest general science organization. Recently they canceled plans to hold their 1999 national meeting in Denver. Why? Because Colorado passed some tough legislation regarding homosexuals.

I don't know much about the amendment passed by Coloradans in the last election, but I suppose it is designed to prevent homosexual marriages and the adding of same-sex lovers to group insurance rolls.

Anyway, the AAAS board of directors has decreed that they will not meet in Denver, and they will hold no association meetings anywhere in the state until the state constitutional amendment is repealed.

Now, is that bullying or is it blackmail? The state of Colorado should tell the AAAS to take their business elsewhere. I don't think they are going broke because one organization fails to show up.

Jesse Jackson is also a bully, in my opinion. Remember when he got all over Cincinnati Reds owner Marge Schott for using the N word? Jesse bullied organized baseball, and they capitulated and suspended Schott. This is the same Jesse Jackson who referred to New York City as "Himeytown."

Recently, Jackson tried to force Fuzzy Clinton to stick by his ill-fated nomination of Lani Guinier to a high government office, but it didn't work this time. Maybe Jesse will bring down the Clinton administration, but I wouldn't hold my breath.

The National Basketball Association is loaded with Bullies. I don't follow the NBA too closely, but I did watch most of the Bulls-Knicks series. Both teams are loaded with would-be bullies. Charles Oakley is probably the worst of that lot, but I am beginning to think one of the traits NBA management looks for is the ability to push people around. Maybe they ought to establish an intimidation factor. Oakley would rate high, as would Isiah Thomas, Bill Laimbeer and Dennis Rodman of Detroit. Of course this would leave Tyrone Bogues out in the cold. Muggsy is just too small to push anybody around.

Many in the news media right now are bent on trying to intimidate Ross Perot. The squirt from Texas has been on Fuzzy's case recently and some have perceived that as treason.

I don't know where they get the idea that Perot was ever a Clinton fan. Ross is his own biggest fan, but his programs, during the election, were not a mirror image of Clinton's. They sounded similar but that's just because all liberal programs sound alike.

Recently, one network newsman chastised Perot for withholding support from Fuzzy, but the tiny Texan threatened him with his charts, and the guy backed off. Who can blame him? All those colorful charts ever did was produce headaches.

Ross Perot certainly doesn't need my help, and even if he did I wouldn't volunteer it. He's just another blow-hard, left-wing Democrat, and he always has been.

Robert F. Kennedy was murdered by a nut case with a double name twenty-five years ago. That incident reminds me of an attempt by a TV station to bully all its viewers. Some station in New York, after Kennedy's death, ran a sign for 24 hours, and nothing else. The sign read simply, "SHAME."

Now what do you suppose they hoped to accomplish? Were they saying all New Yorkers or all Americans were at fault for the despicable act committed by one little foreign head case?

I wonder if the station considered that a simple twist of the dial relieved those who did feel shame? Is it possible they believed that people would sit there all day and watch the sign?

Bullies are a dime a dozen in this world and there are two ways to deal with them. You can punch them in the nose or ignore them.

Punching them in the nose is more fun, but the most effective way is to ignore them.

You can be sure that if everyone ignored Jesse Jackson it would drive him up the wall.

I like that thought.



Nothing is as exciting as winning a state championship in front of your hometown fans. Kings Mountain's Mountaineers are pictured above celebrating after winning the 3-A state crown in 1989. They hope to repeat the feat Friday and Saturday when they host Asheboro in a best-of-three series at Lancaster Field.

Central School the place to be

At its May 10 meeting, the Kings Mountain Board of Education indicated its desire to renovate the Central School facility for use as the school district office. For some time the current district office has been without enough space to adequately meet the needs of the system. Central certainly offers ample space for those needs. It may be helpful for community members to know the background of this decision, which goes back several years, and to also know what would be involved in a renovation project.

The formal discussion about the long range use of the Central facility goes back at least to the work of the Blue Ribbon Citizen's Advisory Committee of Public School Facilities in 1981. In that year the Board appointed a broad-based citizens' committee to review school facilities in the system and to make recommendations regarding future facilities work. In November of 1981 that committee made its final report to the Board. It made six recommendations, all of which have been completed in the recent facilities improvement work except the one which recommended more adequate space for administrative and support services. No specific solution to meet that need was presented although the committee did discuss various options for Central School after its use for students was discontinued. One of them was to use it for a district office facility. That project has been purposely delayed until the Board could feel comfortable with the facilities available to its students and faculties.

In December of 1987 the Board approved a school facilities plan for submission to the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction. The renovation of the Central facility for use as a district office was a part of that plan. The projects in that plan that were a higher priority have been completed except for a redesigned automobile traffic pattern at North School which no longer seems to be a pressing need.

In February of 1989 the Board revised its 1987 facilities plan in light of the bond vote scheduled for April of that year. The only substantial change was the inclusion of required asbestos abatement work, and these projects were given a high priority. They have now been completed as well. Again, the renovation of Central School for district office use was approved.

While the funds from the 1989 bond issue have been consumed the school system continues to receive funds which can be used for capital needs from the sales tax redistribution plan approved by the county commissioners in 1988. Since the implementation of the redistribution based on taxing effort concept, the system has received approximately \$500,000 a year from this source. Funds are now available to begin work on the Central renovation project.

During the 1991-92 school year the system's maintenance facility was moved from the Park Grace property to the metal buildings located on the back side of the Central campus as the first phase in the plan to consolidate all district wide service offices to the same location. However, converting the main Central building for use as an office facility is not as simple an issue. Changing the main function of the facility requires meeting a number of building code stipulations. The most costly of these involve improving the access of handicapped citizens to the facility through the installation of an elevator and upgrading the fire prevention system through the installation of a sprinkler system. Plumbing, electrical, mechanical, and roofing renovations are also needed to bring the building up to par.

The first phase of the work, that needed to allow the system to occupy the building, will not involve all cosmetic changes that must eventually be made. Some should be made up front, however. Our finance department must be essentially completed so that additional moves of the main computer system do not have to be made. A completed meeting room needs to be in place as it will be used for a variety of purposes such as staff development workshops. Some walls and other cosmetic work will be done in the initial renovation work. Much of the cosmetics will come later as additional funds become available. We estimate the cost of the work needed to initially occupy the building to be

BOB McRAE
Superintendent
Kings Mountain Schools

approximately \$500,000. The remaining work will take, as estimated, between \$300,000 and \$400,000.

As the board considered how to move forward it had to discuss a number of issues:

1 - Would the cost of Central's renovation project be a poor business decision? Could a new district office building be constructed as economically or more economically than the renovation of Central? The architect advises that \$60 per square foot would be his minimum recommendation for an estimate on an office building. The minimum square footage requirement for a district office building for the system would dictate an expenditure in the neighborhood of what renovating Central School will cost. The current district office uses about 10,000 square feet on its existing site and does not have enough space. It appears Central can be renovated at about the same cost as building a new structure and provide significantly more square footage. Storage needs alone are demanding of the additional space. Structurally, engineers confirm that the Central facility is in good condition. Additionally, a new district office would require either the demolition of the existing structure or the disposal of it along with the acquisition of new property for district office placement. Either would require an additional expenditure.

2 - Is it detrimental to the facility to leave it unoccupied? The answer to this question is obviously a yes answer. Unoccupied buildings are good candidates for vandalism and a decrease in the efficiency of existing hardware and equipment even with the maintenance department on the same grounds. Quoting from a recent issue of the newsletter of The Historic Preservation Foundation of North Carolina, "How long can a building stand empty before it is unsalvageable? In North Carolina climate, between five and eight years after abandonment serious damage has begun, and the costs for rehabilitation quickly escalate. Unless you are prepared to take extraordinary measures, after 10 to 12 years, the costs for rehabilitation become prohibitive and the only reasonable solution is demolition." We have already experienced some minor vandalism to the site.

3 - Are there other uses for the site which could be lost if it were demolished or abandoned? Although the Little Theater hopes to eventually be housed in its own facility, the auditorium at Central currently provides a location for some of the Theater's productions. The system is happy to host these, and that advantage could be lost if Central is not utilized in the future. Also, the Boys Club headquarters in the gymnasium at Central. If that site is demolished or abandoned, it is unknown as to where a new option for it would exist. Other large meeting areas in the facility could be made available for community use if the Central facility is kept open.

4 - Does the community in general see the facility as a place of such heritage that it should be kept as a school system site? Our opinion has always been that the answer to this question is also yes. If this has changed in recent years, it has not been obvious to the board. Also, a recent visit by a representative of the State Historic Preservation Office gave reason for believing that the facility might qualify for the National Registry of historic sites.

Having studied all pertinent factors the current board of education decided to continue with plans to renovate the Central facility for use as a district office. Authorization was given to have the architect develop plans for bidding the project with construction set to begin in the next school year.

Chief should run for sheriff

To the editor:

I am a resident of Cleveland County now, but for the vast majority of my life, my home has been in Kings Mountain. I have always taken an interest in our law enforcement and their duties and performances. For the past six years I have noticed a tremendous change in our Police Department in Kings Mountain. I give the credit for this transition to Chief Warren Goforth. Under his leadership we have seen a D.A.R.E. officer placed in our schools to educate our children of the devastating effect of drugs. My son graduated from the D.A.R.E. program in his school this year. It definitely made a lasting impression on him. He will think back to the things he learned in this program for years to come.

As an aggressive effort to keep drunk drivers off the streets of our city, Chief Goforth assigned a special enforcement team to high crime areas in Kings Mountain, which I might add had a tremendous effect.

We have all been concerned with the issue of weapons in our schools. Chief Goforth has been more than willing to work with the school systems to try to prevent the violence and weapons issue. I phoned Chief Goforth last week to express my appreciation for the outstanding job he has done since he has been the chief of police here in Kings Mountain. In our discussion I was expressing my concern with the problems of crime in our county. I also asked him if he had ever thought about running for sheriff. He said he had thought about it but it did not seem feasible for him to do so at this time. As a Cleveland County resident, I would like nothing more but to see him in the election. When I pick up paper after paper and read about the wonderful accomplishments he has made for Kings Mountain, I can't help but think what a difference he could make in the county. I for one would like for him to reconsider his decision not to run for sheriff in the next election. After my discussion with Chief Goforth, I had to leave him with this question. If you can make such a difference in the city of Kings Mountain, can't you imagine the tremendous challenge and the difference you can make for Cleveland County.

Jean Peterson
Kings Mountain

Thanks for support

To the editor:

On behalf of the City of Kings Mountain, the Parks and Recreation Commission and the Parks and Recreation Staff, I want to take this opportunity to thank the several hundred wrestling fans who came out this past Sunday to enjoy our first World Championship Wrestling event at the Community Center. The participation by spectators and volunteers alike was especially gratifying because all proceeds from this event will be used to help finance our State Dixie Youth Baseball AAA (9-10) tournament July 23-30.

Volunteer assistance with admissions, concessions, and match announcing helped to make this a successful event. Special thanks to Jeff and Sharon Putnam, Barry and Kathy Whitlow, Mike and Christopher Bennett, Janet Walker, Gerald Carrigan, Jeff Rosebeck, WKMT Radio personality Drew Fulton, Matt and Tommy Rikard, Robert Roseboro, and the Kings Mountain Rescue Squad.

This same volunteer's will be essential to the successful completion of the tournament. Volunteer opportunities are available for various groups and individuals in the areas of concessions, parking attendants, admissions controllers, and visitor information. Program sponsorship opportunities are also available for area business, industry and individuals. Interested parties are encouraged to contact the department so together we can welcome over nine visiting DYB teams.

Thanks to the support of our volunteers and spectators this [past weekend, we are off to a great start in building a strong and impressive tournament which will represent our community very well in July.

Sincerely,
David Hancock, Director,
Parks and Recreation

Herald Deadlines

The Kings Mountain Herald welcomes your news for publication in each Thursday's paper. We ask that you follow these guidelines when submitting articles or information:

The deadline for all B section copy, which includes weddings, engagements, birthdays, anniversaries, school news, birthdays and club news, is Friday at 5 p.m. Information received after that time will be published if time and space permit; if not, it will be withheld until the following week.

Deadline for all A section copy, which includes community and school news, sports, and letters to the editor is Tuesday at 5 pm. News occurring on Tuesday night will be accepted until 9 a.m. Wednesday.

Defeat of gubernatorial veto a 'Blue' day for North Carolina

The recent defeat of the gubernatorial veto is a setback to the people of North Carolina because it focuses too much power in the hands of a government official not elected by the citizens of this state. The real issue behind the defeat of the veto was one of power and the determination by the Speaker of the North Carolina House of Representatives, Dan Blue, to hold onto the power of his office. With the defeat of the veto for the Governor, North Carolina will remain, at least for the foreseeable future, the only state in the union that does not give this power to its chief executive.

The historic explanation for the denial of the gubernatorial veto relates back to North Carolina's history as a "Royal Colony" of England. The Royal Governors appointed by the Crown had a bad habit of "overtaxing" the good people of the colony. Once the colonists were able to secure the power of a formidable colonial legislature, they quickly acted to weaken the powers of the Royal Governors. Since our colonial days, time has changed. The Governor is no longer appointed by the Crown, but elected by the people. He has no power to tax - that power is given to the General Assembly. However, with the veto he would have

GUEST COLUMN
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Carolina Syndicated
Columns

the power to stop tax increases and other actions by the legislature that he finds objectionable.

The day before the panel appointed by Dan Blue killed the veto, Mr. Blue stated, "I think that any intrusion by the executive (governor) into the legislative function substantially impairs the ability of the common person to have an impact on his or her government." Mr. Blue

conveniently overlooked the fact that by not giving the veto power to the Governor, who incidentally is elected by all the people, the power vacuum created is filled by none other than Mr. Blue, the Speaker of the House. Without the veto power, the true power of the state's chief executive is significantly weakened. The legislature is not required to seek the Governor's approval of its bills and the Speaker's ability to appoint committees and assign bills to those committees make him incredibly powerful - so powerful in fact that he becomes, by default, the most powerful individual in state government.

These facts make Mr. Blue's true concern for the "common people" highly questionable. The "common person" has no voice in electing Mr. Blue. He is elected to the General Assembly by the several thousand North Carolinians of his district and he is elected to the post of "Speaker" by his fellow Representatives in the House.

It seems ironic that a man so concerned about the "common people's" ability to have an "impact" on state government is not elected by, nor responsible to the citizens-at-large. Perhaps it would be more appropriate to attach "Royal" to Mr. Blue's title as Speaker of the House.

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