

Opinions

Cartoonitorial



1975 SOUTHWEST CONFERENCE CHAMPIONS - The 1975 Kings Mountain High School baseball team won the Southwestern 3-A Conference title with an overall 14-4 record. The Mountaineers lost to McDowell County in the semi-finals of the Western N.C. High Schools Activities Association playoffs. Front row, left to right, Scott Moss, Hal Glass, Shane Gibson, Mike Sisk, Kenny Baliles, Darrell Queen. Second row, Steve Southwell, Scott Ledford, Monte Falls, Chuck Austin, Chris Johnson, Kevin Ford, Tim Spicer. Back row, John Yarbro, Tony Payne, David Lancaster, Dale Hartsoe, Richard Gillespie, Steve Lancaster, and Kenny Falls.

Your Right To Say It

Winning came before thinking

To the editor:

Prior to getting into the "meat" of this editorial, let me first say that usually the word "I" is avoided because we (the coaches) try very hard to follow a team concept. This particular letter will be very individualistic because in no way did Coach Ronny Funderburke have anything to do with the unfortunate situation I caused.

In last week's Herald, I had several quotes that caused great concern with several of the players on the American Legion baseball team. It was also a source of embarrassment to their parents, friends, and relatives. Let me put it as simple as I know how and hopefully this will place any blame away from the players and back to me. I did know about the trip that they took and, in fact, was approached about it by them as far back as January. I agreed to allow them to go under certain guidelines and they, in all honesty, met all of them. It was not until after the "quotes" did I realize that this had occurred because the play-off meeting took place at 7:30 on Wednesday and the paper had already been printed. After that meeting I was very embarrassed about the entire situation and knew that I had indeed made a very bad mistake - one that I apologize for to the players, parents, and entire community.

I also want to express some general concerns about coaching in general. It does not take long for coaches to mess up but it takes a career of 30-plus years to gain credibility. During the last week, I probably have learned more than in the previous 14 years of coaching. People thought of as friends so quickly forget the past and join in with the crowd of "boos" when a coach makes a mistake. It's almost like saying that everyone else can mess up except coaches and whoever else is in the wrong at that particular moment. Coaches spend more time with other people's children than they do their own and I can assure you it is not for the money - it is for the purpose of providing opportunities that, in most cases, did not happen for them. The problem in this case, as so often is true, is the desire of winning on the part of society in general. Because we had lost, and those nine that did not leave had worked and tried so hard, I lost my composure and said things that indicated it was their fault when, in actuality, it was my fault all the way. Those individuals that were involved are great kids and have always brought the best to the success of baseball in Kings Mountain.

I hope that this provides both an explanation and a prospective that so often is not considered when people complain about coaches. I am very sorry for this situation and apologize to anyone that feels that I did wrong. It was simply a situation when winning was much too important and thinking about what was being said was not considered. I can assure everyone that this will never happen again. I have learned a valuable lesson.

Bruce Clark

JIM HEFFNER  
Columnist



Paying the price

I wonder if anybody remembers when the Richardson family started making noises about acquiring an NFL team to be located in the world class city?

I don't know where the information came from, but the word was the Richardsons would construct their own stadium. I thought that was a great idea. Too many times, sports franchises expect taxpayers to foot the bill for arenas and coliseums and such. Here was a group that would build their own facility. The last time I'd heard of that happening was when August A. Busch built a baseball park in St. Louis for his Cardinals.

The first thing that happened is that the city had to spend \$55 million for the purchase and improvement of the land. Now the Richardsons have come up with a new wrinkle. Prospective season ticket holders have to buy a permanent seat license.

Unless I have it all wrong that means they have to pay for the privilege of buying a ticket, and the charge isn't cheap. I don't want to quote figures without documentation, but the way it shakes out is, after all is said and done, the seat license money will go a long way toward paying for the stadium.

You make the call. Are the Richardsons building their own stadium or are the taxpayers and fans footing the bill?

**Sacrificial lambs** - I couldn't believe my ears last week. There I was driving along minding my own business, listening to the radio. During a news segment, there was a report that the supreme court had just ruled that it was perfectly legitimate for some obscure, barbaric religion in South Florida to sacrifice animals as part of their service.

A few days later, the wire services carried a photo of some weird looking dude slaughtering a goat and draining its blood. I guess that was his way of praying.

The court has again gone too far. Their view of freedom of religion is skewed to my way of thinking.

Haven't we learned our lesson when it comes to off-beat religions in this country?

Who is to say a bunch of screwballs can't get together and sacrifice humans as part of their ceremony?

Regardless of how much the people who interpret the constitution are investigated, it appears we still end up with a bunch of air heads.

Where are all the animal rights radicals when you need them?

Sometimes I think the supreme court ought to be against the law.

**Ink blots** - I've seen businessmen ruin their white shirts with ball point pens for years, and I'd never done that until recently.

Now, in the space of two weeks I have destroyed three, count 'em, three dress shirts.

While rushing around the composing room trying to hustle to meet deadlines, I have stabbed uncapped pens into my shirt pocket. I was wearing one of the shirts for just the second time.

I tossed two of them immediately, but I just couldn't make myself throw the new one out.

I read, in one of Ann's cookbooks, that denatured alcohol and petroleum jelly will remove the stain. The problem with that is, I've been unable to buy a small amount of denatured alcohol, and I consider that a dangerous chemical to keep around the house.

I've tried just about everything else, but nothing seems to work, although the blot has faded somewhat.

Anybody got any ideas? I might just remove the pocket from an old shirt and have it sewed on the new one. That will probably cost as much as a new shirt.

**Bombs away!** - Last week Fuzzy Clinton had the military toss a few missiles into Iraq, because a group of terrorist had conspired to murder George (RML) Bush. Several of the bombs went astray and killed a few civilians.

At the same time a gang of muslims in New York was arrested for plotting to blow up several buildings, including the United Nations.

There is ample evidence that a muslim "holy man" in New Jersey was the leader of these Arab terrorists, yet Fuzzy has decided not to arrest this jerk with an unpronounceable name.

I have two questions. Is it reasonable to take several lives because one man's life was threatened? Should the U.S. Air Force attack New Jersey?

Today's Bible Verse

"But no man can tame the tongue. It is an unruly evil, full of deadly poison.

"With it we bless our God and Father, and with it we curse men, who have been made in the similitude of God.

"Out of the same mouth proceed blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not to be so."

James 3:8-10

Our View

Time to work together

The recent clash between the Kings Mountain City Council and Kings Mountain Planning and Zoning Board over zoning of three subdivisions in town underscores a central municipal problem that won't go away overnight.

The clash apparently aired what has become a sore spot for many years between the appointed board and the city fathers. The Council ignores them.

Planning Board in a fit of pique sent the controversial matter to a non-existent land use committee but that drastic action got the message to Council.

"We've had this land use committee on the back burner too long," says Mayor Scott Neisler.

"It's time the two boards sit down together," says Mayor pro tem Norma Bridges.

We agree.

We suggest that the membership on the new land use committee include a number of people from the community at large with no majority of membership from either of the two boards. We also suggest that Council recognize the many

non-paid, thankless boards like Planning & Zoning, Utilities and Lake Commission.

We urge that if Council has been dragging its feet on a rewriting of zoning and land use plans that it will take steps now to start the project rolling. What happens now in the dispute over whether three subdivisions should be protected from multi-family dwellings will ultimately affect the whole city.

Results that are in the best interest of the whole community are goals we hope that city fathers will pursue.

✓ The Herald welcomes your letters to the editor for publication in each Thursday's paper. Keep your letters brief and to the point. We reserve the right to edit letters for spelling, clarity, slander, libel, good taste, or any other reason; and we reserve the right to reject any letter for any reason. All letters must be signed and mailed to the Editor, P.O. Box 769, Kings Mountain, N.C. 28086. Hand-delivered letters will not be accepted.

It's sad to see the good guys go

When I was growing up in the fifties, it seems like James Van Dyke was the only person in Kings Mountain that pulled for anyone other than the Yankees and Dodgers.

James was then, as he is now, an avid Braves fan. The Braves were in Milwaukee then.

Except for a couple of years when the Braves won the National League pennant, most of the decade of the fifties and on into the early to mid sixties belonged to the Yankees and Dodgers. They hooked up some classic battles in the World Series.

Because of that, you pulled for one or the other.

I was a Yankee fan through and through. That meant, I hated the Dodgers. My best friends, Jackie and David Hughes, were big Dodger fans so, needless to say, we hooked up in some classic battles, too, from words to the old paper ball games we used to play in the back yard.

Even though I still don't care too much for the Dodgers, I have learned over the years to appreciate the talent of those Brooklyn and Los Angeles teams of the fifties and sixties.

It seems almost like a bad dream that two of the superstars of those teams passed away recently.

Roy Campanella's death a week or so ago was not that surprising. He was 71 years old and had been in declining health since an automobile accident tragically ended his career.

But the death last weekend of pitching star Don Drysdale, who was only 56 years old, was totally unexpected. Since his retirement he had been a broadcaster and, despite some heart problems in the past,



GARY STEWART  
Editor

looked to be the picture of health.

Had the car accident not paralyzed Campy and shortened his baseball career, he would have been the greatest catcher of all time. He could hit the ball a mile.

Drysdale was a fireballing right-hander who feared no batter. He was a consistent 20-game winner and teamed with southpaw Sandy Koufax to form the best 1-2 pitching combination in the major leagues. In 1968 he pitched an incredible 58 straight scoreless innings, a feat that was bettered by one inning in the late-eighties by another Dodger hurler, Orel Hershiser.

Those old Dodger teams, although Bums then, were loaded with Hall of Fame talent. Besides Campy behind the plate and Drysdale and Koufax on the mound, they had people like Gil Hodges at first base, Junior Gilliam at second, Pee Wee Reese at short, Carl Furillo in right field and Duke Snider in center. Snider was one of the greatest home run hitters of all time, and

there hasn't been an outfielder since with the arm of Carl Furillo. He had arms like a telephone pole, played the tough right-field wall at Ebbets Field better than anyone before or after him, and could throw a perfect strike to home plate from anywhere in the outfield.

Those guys, along with the great Yankee stars like Yogi Berra, Mickey Mantle, Roger Maris, Hank Bauer, Bobby Richardson, Gil McDougald, Billy Martin, Whitey Ford, and others, gave a lot of little kids the thrill of their lives every Saturday afternoon. Back then, only one TV channel brought the Saturday Game of the Week, and if the Yankees and Dodgers didn't happen to be playing on the tube, every kid in the country was twisting the radio knobs like crazy trying to pick up their games.

Needless to say, those guys never were paid what they were worth.

One spring after one of their best seasons, Koufax and Drysdale held out for a pay raise. Koufax got \$125,000 and Drysdale \$115,000. I interviewed Mickey Mantle once and he said after his brilliant Triple Crown season of 1956 he signed for \$80,000. And, believe it or not, when a player had a "bad" year their pay was cut the next season. If these guys were playing today, the Dodgers and Yankees' payrolls would be in the billions because a lot of players today who are making millions of dollars a year couldn't even carry their gloves.

It's sad to see those guys, who aren't old-timers by any stretch of the imagination, leave us. But, I'll bet you one thing. If there's baseball in Heaven, some team has one heck of a battery.

Best defense your money can buy

At a time when North Carolina's crime rate is at an all time high and the time served by prisoners is at an all time low, it is appalling to learn of this additional statistic - North Carolina currently spends one-third more on defending those charged with crimes than on prosecuting them. Last year the state's district attorneys spent just over \$25 million to prosecute offenders across the state, while during the same time period taxpayers paid well over \$33 million to defend suspected criminals.

What's the trick in order to have the state pick up the tab for your defense when it charges you with a crime? All you have to do is ask for an attorney and claim to be indigent. There are supposed to be background checks by indigent screeners. However, rarely do the screeners have the time or resources to do anything other than have the offender sign a statement claiming indigency and pass it on to a judge for approval.

Once indigency is approved by the court, the accused party receives representation either by a private attorney or by a state public defender. Regardless of the type of defense given - the taxpayer foots a heavy bill. Of the more than \$33 million spent last year on indigent defense, less than \$4 million (11 percent) was paid back by defendants who were given legal services.

We truly live in a crazy world. When the fact that



GUEST COLUMN  
THOMAS GOOLSBY  
Carolina Syndicated Columnist

we spend one-third more on defending criminals than on prosecuting them is coupled with the fact that our state's prisons are full and we will release 30,000 convicted criminals early under the state's prison cap statute, it seems as if we are living in an Orwellian nightmare. We spend more to defend criminals than to protect society from them. Even when society "wins" and a deserving offender is sent to prison, he will only serve one month for every year of his sentence if he is convicted of a felony. If he is convicted of a misdemeanor, he will serve no prison time. Monopoly calls this a "Get Out of Jail Free" card. The politically correct name is "alternative sentencing."

The real test of sanity is for our police, prosecutors and judges who must constantly put up with this luna-

cy called a criminal justice system. While the rest of us are simply waiting in line to either be a victim or to buy a handgun to protect ourselves and our families, the hearty souls working in criminal justice system exist in a world of madness. Police arrest the same people again and again and again, only to see them let loose on society as soon as they can be "processed." Prosecutors and judges work themselves into an early grave attempting to see that justice is done, only to have an already full prison system kick out offenders, as fast as they are sent off to jail.

The politicians we elected last November promised to fix these problems. Now they tell us that it's too complicated to do anything too quickly. They have refused to spend almost half of the \$200 million bonds approved by taxpayers to build more prisons. They waste millions on plush Raleigh office complexes and large staffs of bureaucrats. They refuse to support legislation abolishing the ridiculous prison cap. All the while the death toll and suffering of the innocent continues to mount up. The veneer of rhetoric and tough talk has worn away to reveal mere politicians who stand for nothing and everything. The best defense our money can buy should not be used to defend criminals, but to defend us from the likes of the politicians who refuse to repair a criminal justice system that is anything but just and everything criminal.

**Kings Mountain Herald**  
Established 1889  
Published Thursday at East King Street at Canterbury Road, Kings Mountain, North Carolina 28086.  
USPS 931-040. By Republic Newspapers, Inc. 2nd Class postage paid in Kings Mountain

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**REPUBLIC NEWSPAPERS, INC.**  
Postmaster: Send Address Changes To:  
Kings Mountain Herald, P.O. Box 769, Kings Mountain, NC 28086  
Back issues, one month or older, when available, are 70¢ per copy.

Subscription Rates: In Gaston & Cleveland Counties: 1 Year \$16.00; 6 Months \$9.00. Other NC Counties: 1 Year \$18.00; 6 Months \$10.00. Outside NC: 1 Year \$21.00; 6 Months \$11.50.