

Opinions

JIM HEFFNER
Columnist



Commenting on the news

Every now and then, I take it upon myself to comment on the news. That way, you can just read this column and skip everything that happened last week. Does everybody understand that?

My friend, and ace advertising rep, Bill Fulton brought an item to my attention that has a stench detectable for miles.

The Social Security Administration, a body that has been in trouble for several years, handed out \$32 million dollars in employee bonuses last year. If that doesn't shock you enough, try this on for size. The largest bonus, \$9,256 went to an executive who had been on the job for less than three months.

That agency was voted an additional \$200 million in funds last year because they were behind in settling disability claims. Obviously, they believe the way to clean up their problems is by rewarding management employees.

Some congressmen are asking why people who have an inefficient operation are rewarding themselves with bonuses. That's a question that needs to be answered.

This whole thing of bonuses is a sham. After Marty Shugrue, appointed by the bankruptcy court to run Eastern Airlines, had tried and failed, then closed the airline down, he was given a large bonus for "doing a good job."

I don't get a bonus, and chances are you don't get a bonus. Most people "do a good job," but are not rewarded with bonuses.

Certainly, no government employee should get any kind of a bonus. After all, their salaries come from taxpayers. That's just another way of saying you and I.

For the record, the gentleman's name who received the large bonus for two and a half months at Social Security is Lawrence Thompson. The payment was approved by Donna Shalala, one of the Clinton administration's feminist cabinet members.

Amber Nikoles, of Boston, was suspended from school for three days for packing a pink, three-inch-long squirt gun in her lunch bag. School officials called it a mock weapon.

The young girl was also ordered to undergo psychological evaluation.

If you think that's ridiculous, remember that a couple of years ago, the mayor of Boston urged department stores to stop selling water guns, because they are "dangerous." The mayor had nothing to say to the same stores about selling real pistols and ammunition.

I wonder which is more dangerous, a three-inch water pistol or a teacher's paddle?

How can anybody refer to a small, pink, plastic squirt gun as a "mock" weapon?

Anita Hill, who tried to torpedo the nomination of Clarence Thomas to the Supreme Court is writing a couple of books. One is an autobiography and the other is a "study of sexual harassment in historical and contemporary contexts."

I assume one must look in the fiction section for these books.

Somebody threw a brick through a car window and crushed a man's head in Statesville last week.

While he lay critically injured on a hospital gurney, a Statesville police officer slipped a citation into his wallet. The man was charged with possession of drug paraphernalia because the officer found what appeared to be a homemade "crack" pipe in the man's car.

Is that, or is that not, carrying law enforcement a step too far?

Dan Quayle has written a book that is supposed to make everybody forget what a klutz he is.

The book is designed to get him nominated by his party as the next presidential candidate.

The Republican party would do well to remember that people are tired of mediocre presidential candidates. Look what happened last time.

I predict if Quayle is the Republican candidate, Clinton will be reelected.

HERALD LETTER POLICY

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

Keep your letter brief and to the point. Type and double-space them, if possible; if not, write legibly. All letters must be signed in ink and include the full name, address and telephone number of the author for verification purposes.

The Herald reserves the right to edit letters for length, spelling, good taste, clarity, libel, slander or any other reason; and reserves the right to reject any letter for any reason.

Mail your letters to The Editor, P.O. Box 769, Kings Mountain, N.C. 28086.



HONORED ON RETIREMENT - These 10 employees of the Kings Mountain District Schools racked up a total of 252 years of service and were honored on their retirement Monday night at the annual Service Award Banquet. Front row, from left, Juanita Herron, Grover School Kindergarten, 1961-94; Mary Ellen Davis, East School Cafeteria, 1977-94; Sara Griffin, KMHS Librarian, 1960-1994; Brenda Neal, KMHS English teacher, 1967-1994; Mae Grigg, Grover School teacher assistant, 1976-1994; and Stella Ware, Child Nutrition Director, 1953-70; 1986-1993; back row, from left, Dr. Larry Allen, Associate Superintendent, 1968-1993; Bill Wellmon, KMHS drafting, 1982-1994; Bill Hager, Community Schools Director, 1961-1994; and Billy Lemons, Bethware School fifth grade teacher, 1965-1994.

Your Right To Say It

Abstinence - only curriculum needed

To the editor:

On behalf of over 400 parents and concerned citizens of our community I questioned the Board of Education on the possibility of implementing an "abstinence-only" sex education curriculum. Along with these 400 people there are also 83 students whose parents have removed them from the current curriculum. Although the board noted that they felt a need for sex education to be taught to some students, they were also told that they have a responsibility to meet the needs of all the children in the school, including those who do not want to be exposed to the current curriculum.

The number of parents and citizens opposing the current curriculum and desiring an abstinence-only curriculum is expected to continue to grow. The Board said they would look into this and we will follow their progress closely.

The Board was also told of the need to inform the community of the goings on at the school in all areas, especially when a new or revised curriculum is initiated. There is a tremendous need for parents and the community as a whole to know exactly what is going on. Although it is the school's responsibility to get this information out, it is the community's responsibility to get involved in their children's education.

Another point presented was that all forms relating to parental approval or disapproval of curriculum should be somehow put directly into the hands of the parents. The best way to accomplish this, it seems, is to mail the forms to the home and have the parents indicate exactly what program they want their child to be enrolled in.

We feel that with this tremendous outpouring of citizens in the community in favor of an abstinence-only curriculum the School Board will have to seriously consider implementing such a program. There are other North Carolina counties currently using courses such as "Sex-Respect" with tremendous success. The Board was reminded on Monday night that they are responsible to educate all the children.

The Board was also asked to take a closer look at the material being used in the current curriculum. It is the feeling of many that some of the materials being used are not appropriate in getting the proper message out to our children.

We now wait for the response from the Board of Education as to what will be done. Before you know it the next school year will be upon us. We hope that the Board will move as fast as possible in this matter.

If you feel that an abstinence-only curriculum is desired send your name and address to me. We are keeping a file of all who have responded and will forward these names on to the Board of Education. Remember that all citizens need to get involved in what's going on in the school, in government and the community as a whole. Your voice does count. If you will just stand up for what you believe you will have an impact.

Tom Sees
Grover

Springtime nostalgia

To the editor:

Poets tell us that home is where the heart is. If they are right then Kings Mountain will always be home for there is a part of my heart that will forever belong to KM.

Nothing reminds me of this relationship more than the smells of spring. Before February had faded the odors of a Carolina spring would waft into your nostrils. Walking to Central School would be a melody of spring flowers. The bush we fondly called breath of spring was the harbinger of good smells to come, of good weather on its way.

There were sounds too: the seven AM mill whistles - the Saturday noon siren - and yes, those middle of the night trail whistles! Sounds of home, sound that meant security, order.

And there were places too: Central School, City Hall, Myers Department Store, Belks and Plonks and Keeters. They all marked downtown. They meant community. The drug stores with their lunch counters where we stopped for a soda and a visit. And there was the Post Office.

For more the Post Office was a special place. Centered where people could and did walk to pick up their mail, buy a stamp, send a money order, and, say hello to each other. If one could use the term "hub" it certainly would be fitting for the days I love to remember.

Even a poet has to accept that we cannot bring back those gentle days. They have faded away, probably remembered far grander than they were. But, the Post Office still stands on the corner of Mountain and Piedmont.

More appropriately, the building still stands. More ghostly than real now, the granite steps don't welcome the morning arrivals, the brass is not so polished as it was, there's only the structure waiting. The building must struggle with questions of how long before it will see life again, or, if it ever will see life again.

Will there ever again be a hub of activity and continuity? Will the building ever again be useful? Will the corner of Mountain and Piedmont become a derelict of our past?

And, where will our hearts go when there's nothing left to remind us of home?

Forever a Mountaineer,
Martha Cox Potat,
McLean, Virginia

Parents should get involved in children's education

There is a new movement afoot in public education and, at first glance, it seems to be in the right direction. Best of all it does not involve hiring more bureaucrats or simply throwing more money at the problem. The new movement is parental involvement. Its sponsors claim that it's not simply more opportunities for PTA gripe sessions or fund-raisers sold as parental involvement. The latest invention for getting parents immersed in the public education quagmire is the "parent advisory team."

As the education technocrats finally seem to be getting the message that the system is broken and it isn't getting any better, attempts are slowly being made to decentralize the morass that is our government-run school system. Parents who are numb from complaining may finally have a chance to voice an opinion in the decision making process.

Hundreds of schools across the Tarheel state are implementing parent advisory teams to "advise" the school authorities on important issues such as student safety, course selections and the creation of apprenticeship programs. However, these parents groups have no official decision making powers. That authority continues to reside with the principals, but the reality is that school administrators find it hard not to listen. Maybe a lesson in real power is starting to kick in - parents are voters and taxpayers and many of them don't feel that they are getting their money's worth of education for their children. If no one listens to the concerned parents then they may take matters into their own hands at the polling booth by electing "radical" school board members who will simply clean house. This is the biggest fear for the education bureaucrats.

GUEST COLUMN

THOMAS GOOLSBY
Carolina Syndicated
Columns



As more and more parents get involved in the government-run education system and see what a mess we have, one can only hope that these moms and dads will roll up their sleeves and go to work. The public schools must realize that the advice of parents is much better than the alternative - their dissent. Currently, the U.S. spends more money per student on education than any other country in the world, save Switzerland, and gets less back for it. If simply spending large sums of tax dollars were the answer, we would be heading toward raising a nation of Einsteins, rather than a land of Jugheads.

Caring and concerned parents who will force public education to "do its job or else" are our best hope for raising future generations who are "educated givers and creators" rather than "uneducated takers and destroyers."

Faircloth wants welfare cut

Unlike President Clinton, who has yet to offer any plan in keeping with his promise to reform the welfare system, North Carolina's own Senator Lauch Faircloth has put forth legislation to drastically reduce and re-

Our View

Tour DuPont big event for county

Kings Mountain and Cleveland County citizens have a once in a lifetime opportunity Friday.

The Tour DuPont, the largest bicycle race in the United States and the third largest in the world, will come through the area during the early afternoon hours.

The race will come into Cleveland County on Highway 74 shortly after 1 p.m. and should come down Oak Grove Road in the Kings Mountain area around 2. It will move on through Bessemer City, Dallas and Mount Holly, and then end for the day in Charlotte.

To sports fans, and especially bikers, this is a big event, comparable to the World Series for the baseball fan and the Super Bowl for the football enthusiast. The finest riders in the world, including three-time Tour De France champion Greg LeMond, are involved.

The event has drawn complaints from some in the business community. Some folks fear that it will bring aggravation for customers trying to get in and out of the area, and may even cause a loss of business because roads will be blocked off to everyone except the bikers and emergency vehicles.

However, the roads should only be blocked off for about 30 minutes before the bikers come through, and the race through any one area should only take about 20 minutes. We feel the advantages far outweigh the disadvantages.

The event is sure to bring many visitors to the area, and we hope they will be hungry and thirsty and driving on empty tanks, and will see the need to purchase some goods in Kings Mountain and Cleveland County.

Even if one runs the type of business that will not benefit from visitors, the race and the break in a busy day will offer them an excellent opportunity to do some public relations work. Order a deli tray or have a cook-out for those employees and customers who are land-locked, and have some good old-fashioned fun and fellowship. Even if it doesn't pay off Friday, it will pay off in the long run.

The race will be covered by all the major TV networks, including ESPN which will air the event in 90 countries around the world. With the sprint race in Shelby paying the biggest purse of all the sprints along the route, Cleveland County is sure to be put on the map.

It will be an exciting day for all, especially the youngsters. One word of warning, though: Be sure to stand in a parking area, such as the one at Patterson Grove Baptist Church, or if you're at your own residence or a friend's house, be sure to stand in the yard and not on the highway. In the sprints, the bikers ride at speeds in excess of 50 miles per hour, and with 119 bikers involved it can be dangerous.

The ride through the Kings Mountain area should be at a more leisurely pace than in a sprint city like Shelby, so everyone should get a good chance to see their favorite rider and take some good photographs.

So, get out and enjoy it.

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
Bob Rop Publisher
Darrell Austin Associate Publisher
Gary Stewart Editor
Elizabeth Stewart News Editor
Shirley Austin Advertising Representative
Bill Fulton Advertising Representative
Laura Hullette Advertising Representative
Nancy Miller Advertising Representative
Sarah Griffin Business Manager
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Fran Black Production Manager
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Norman Morrison Pressroom Manager

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.

REPUBLIC NEWSPAPERS, INC.



Member
North Carolina Press Association

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.