

Opinions

JIM HEFFNER

Columnist



If not courage, what?

Courage is defined in Webster's as mental or moral strength.

CBS News anchor Dan Rather once used the term to close out his broadcasts. Nobody knows what he meant.

I've given the word some thought in the past few days, because I've had some dealings with people I consider courageous.

One of my best friends lost a daughter to cancer a few years ago. She was a lovely, smart school teacher, and it took the disease a couple of years to consume the life in her. She left a young husband and two young children. Her parents had a great deal of courage.

I used to tell my friend he was a very strong man, and he would say, "I do all my crying in hallways and at night, walking the streets where people can't see me."

Steve and Cindy Ellis of Bessemer City lost their only child, Michael, to a nest of yellow jackets last August. I've had occasion to talk to them in the past couple of weeks at their place of business, Mike's Family Restaurant, and I've told them both how much courage they have.

"No, I don't," each of them said at separate times.

I must respectfully disagree with them. I know they have experienced undefinable grief, but they've pushed it aside and named their restaurant for Michael. They've raised money and established a scholarship fund in his name. Both of them talk freely about their son.

Until I can come up with a better definition, I'm still going to call it courage.

I can point to three paraplegics that I consider courageous: Lois Smith, Louise Simmons and Ricky Helms. I'm sure there are others, but I happen to know these three.

Everybody in these parts knows Lois' story; an automobile accident when she was in her teens that left her in a wheel chair, a free-lance writer, an award-winning newspaper editor for several decades; a storehouse of knowledge; and loved by all. She is always cheerful and she has a special knack for brightening the day.

Louise Simmons was shot in the back over ten years ago by a youthful robber, who laughed at her as he rode away on his bicycle. She had parked her truck and was using a phone booth in New Orleans when the attack occurred. She is a skilled craftsman with a ready smile and no time for anyone filled with self pity, a remarkable woman indeed. Much of her time these days is devoted to those less fortunate.

Many of you may have seen Ricky Helms wheeling around. That's how he walks his dog. Many days he rolls to the super market and back to his home. Ricky was shot over in Charlotte 18 years ago. He appears to have incredible upper body strength. Ricky took care of his mother until her death a couple of months ago.

All these people are imbued with more than a fair share of courage.

Recently, I had a conversation about courage with two people, a man and a woman who spend their lives trying to make things better for people with terminal illnesses. I told them I admired them for their work, but I would never be able to do anything like that. They informed me that I didn't know that for sure.

"You never know what you are capable of until you've tried," the woman said. "People who know they are going to die are the ones with real courage. Think about this, some of them wake up in the morning not knowing if this will be the last day of their lives, yet they get up and go about the job of living. Most of the time, when I am with one of them, they tell me to cheer up. They don't want to see long faces, they don't have time for it. That is real courage."

A good point, but if the folks I've mentioned don't have courage they certainly have a quality with which I am not familiar.

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.

Fast Facts

Industry inside water and sewer bills for 6 inch meter based on forty-eight million gallons per month usage.

RANK		WATER AND SEWER
1.	Lincolnton	152,946.13
2.	Gastonia	143,495.58
3.	Newton	143,056.09
4.	Bessemer City	143,043.65
5.	Mt. Holly	115,200.00
6.	Belmont	113,991.76
7.	Kings Mountain	107,903.09
8.	Hickory	106,235.50
9.	Shelby	93,189.00
10.	Morganton	64,760.53

Gastonia rate reflects 4% increase on Sewer. Kings Mountain rate includes 8% proposed increase on Water and Sewer. Shelby rate reflects 33% inside rate increase. Outside rates historically were used to generate their revenues. Morganton has been low due to no big long term debt. This will change as they are considering a 10 Million dollar bond in July 1994.

Your Right To Say It

Disappointed in City Council

To the editor:

I am very disappointed reading all about how the City of King Mountain is treating Spectrum on their utility bills. Not once have I heard from Spectrum about the city taking them into the City of Kings Mountain a couple of years back in order for them to pay lower utility rates. No, that doesn't come up.

Neither do I hear about Mayor Neisler flying his own plane to Arkansas to pick up a part to repair a water line at Spectrum in order for them to be back on line in about five hours or so; otherwise it could have taken lots more more.

Neither do I hear about the lawsuit that Spectrum has against the City of Kings Mountain.

How come all we the citizens hear are Spectrum's complaints and how the city is treating them, and not hear the city's side in all of this?

One reason is that Spectrum has four of our Commissioners Buffaloed and the other three don't have a chance at all in the running of the city. Needless to say, I am very disappointed in our new commissioners and also Jerry White for siding with them on these matters.

With all of these things happening I don't believe that Spectrum is the good corporate citizen that they let on to be. If they are the city certainly doesn't need enemies.

I think that it is time for the citizens of Kings Mountain to let these new commissioners know that we elected them to run the city fairly, not to play politics and not to play favors, like they are doing with Spectrum. If they don't run the city fairly then we ought to do something. If not now, certainly when the next election comes about.

Needless to say, I am disappointed in our newly-elected officials. Norma Bridges, Jim Guyton and Philip Hager, stick in there, because without you we would have nothing.

Kyle Smith

Lucille did good job

To the editor:

It is always sad to see a neighbor move away, especially a good one and the Senior Center will be losing a good neighbor soon. In a few days, Mrs. Lucille Williams, manager/secretary of the Kings Mountain Chamber of Commerce, will no longer be with the Chamber after serving tirelessly and loyally for 31 years. For the past nine years, Lucille has worked out of one of the red cabooses at the depot adjacent to the Senior Center and during this time she has not only operated the one-woman operation at the Chamber, but she has provided a tremendous amount of assistance to many clients at the Senior Center. The Senior Center ceramics shop is located directly beside the Chamber office and she has always been there to lend a hand when the seniors needed access to the shop when picking up and dropping off ceramic items.

Lucille presently serves on the Kings Mountain Senior Center Advisory Board and has offered valuable input and advice regarding program operations. She has shown that she cares about improving the quality of life of senior adults and has been a strong advocate for them.

It is rare these days to find individuals who have been loyal and faithful as Lucille has been. The Kings Mountain Senior Center appreciates these attributes and realizes that she will be greatly missed and can not be replaced!

Sincerely,
Monty Thornburg
Aging Director

A taxpayer expense?

To the editor:

Both my wife and I are natives of Shelby, and lived there for almost 25 years. I graduated from the U.S. Military Academy at West Point, served in Korea during the early stages of that conflict and then resigned for compassionate personal reasons.

Ford Motor Co. hired me in Charlotte but when the paychecks were forwarded to Washington, DC and later to Detroit, MI, we naturally followed in the moving van. In spite of numerous Ford relocations, we have maintained close ties to Shelby. Mr. Edwin A. Beam is the "grand old man" of the family - a third generation native.

At my parents' death in 1985, we established a trust fund in their memory to provide a small annual schol-

Mayor's Corner

Scott Neisler



Engineer department should be retained

With the city council's vote to do away with the city's engineering department, I feel as if I am a passenger on a runaway train, down a dead-end side track. It has confirmed my fears that indeed there has been an agenda from the very beginning to reorganize city government to the detriment of our citizens. Meetings on the side for purpose of block voting is not the way city government should perform.

Our engineering department has not been a luxury we can't afford, but a department that has made a great impact on our city. This department single handedly negotiated with the state for a project to extend a 12" water-sewer line down Dixon School Road to serve the Welcome Center. This project in excess of one million dollars will cost the city \$110,000 split into three yearly payments. More importantly, the water line extension will open more opportunities in Kings Mountain for industrial growth which equates to more revenue for our utilities. I don't know anyone that would turn down that deal!

Also, after July 1 any minor water extensions the city plans for will have to be signed off by a certified engineer. It is illegal for us to extend lines without this approval. By contracting this out it will probably cost the city twice the amount it would have taken had our city engineer done the work in house.

Year after year I have observed workings of this department and I have been continually impressed with their performance. During the Firestone project our engineer saved us \$20,000 by boring under I-85 to make provisions for a 6" gas loop for the future. We achieved these significant savings because the boring equipment was already in place. These are but a few examples of the value of this department.

It seems as if the patient has been diagnosed with stomach cancer and the city council wants to prescribe brain surgery. We did not address the problems of our industrial water rates when we should have. Since January the consumption has stabilized but we have already lost \$191,095 that needed to be made up. We failed to act because of special interest groups. This loss has eaten into the fund balance that would have been carried over into next year. We have lost this opportunity because we do not want to charge a fair price for our water. The same costs we incur for purifying water is the same for every city. Take a look at the sample of a utility bill to a large water user. The increases have been added, look at how affordable our water rate is compared to those around us.

In 1988 a bold new step was taken to make our city government professional and responsive to citizens' needs. A management study was undertaken to best staff our departments. I have always been a supporter of the plan because as laymen we have no expertise in what it takes to run our city. The professionals have information from hundreds of cities in which they tailored a plan for Kings Mountain. Our city for the past four years has run the best it ever has with only those that tried to get something for nothing in opposition.

I cannot with good consciousness support this budget because of the serious cuts that have been made in personnel. It is already affecting service at the expense of the lack of adjusting our water and sewer rates. I would like to ask each and everyone of you to call your council member and tell them how concerned you are over the current situation and ask them to restore our engineering department to our city. Our future depends on your response.

GUEST COLUMN

THOMAS GOOLSBY
Carolina Syndicated
Columns



More bike races needed

To the editor:

My sympathy to William H. Stewart of Oak Grove Road. I'm happy that his business is doing so good. By my rough calculation his business is grossing \$22,400 daily, \$112,000 weekly and \$5,600,000 yearly. I can see no reason not to purchase a \$50 NASCAR ticket.

My reasoning for more DuPont Tours as a taxpayer is simple. Never in 24 years of living on Chestnut Ridge Road has any county picked up trash, must less inmates under guard. Our road was repaired and pot holes filled. Another crew cut grass and weeds twice in one week. Another crew trimmed trees and limbs off the right-of-way.

On Wednesday, May 18, grass cutters were back cutting grass again. For a 30-minute shutdown, I consider it a taxpayer dream of a hassle with county employees.

Most important, observations were made of a Yankee photographer on a motorcycle cutting my Honeysuckles and smelling them with delight. He traveled over a thousand miles to smell and see what we take for granted.

I can only see positive things in events like this. I had never seen a bike tour race and he had never seen Honeysuckle vines!

Bud Medlin
Kings Mountain

Kings Mountain Weather Report

(Compiled by Kenneth Kitzmiller)

	May 15-24	Year Ago
Total precipitation	0	.58
Maximum one day	0	.38 (19)
Year to date	19.96	27.33
Minimum temperature	46 (20)	40 (21)
Maximum temperature	91 (24)	82 (24)
Average temperature	61.7	61.1

Car in every garage

If you thought you had heard it all when it came to government give-away programs, here's another one - federal grants to help the unemployed buy cars.

No, you're not dreaming - you are wide awake in a brave new world. State and local officials recently announced with serious looks on their faces, that three North Carolina agencies will soon begin receiving federal grants to "help low-income residents find affordable transportation."

Under the federal JOBS training and basic skills program, unemployed or under-employed individuals will be selected to receive taxpayer-financed loans to help them purchase, repair or maintain an automobile. Who's going to monitor the success of this program? The same people who deliver all of your current superb government services, and you can bet that the program will rival the efficiency of the U.S. Postal Service and the collection rate of student loans.

Caring and concerned government bureaucrats like Jim Ritchey, general manager of Triangle Transit Authority, explained just how wonderful the program was at a recent press conference by saying, "This will be able to help people get the jobs and educational opportunities they need." You may be correct in a few instances, Mr. Ritchey, but what about the taxpayers individuals from whom these funds were taken? What gives the government the right to take money they earned and give it to those whose only qualification is a presumed "need."

Since when did a "need" become a "right" or a "qualification for a freebie" in this country? Most of us worked long and hard in order to earn our first car. We never expected a government handout or loan to buy a car. Besides, federal, state and local governments already spend millions of our tax dollars subsidizing low-cost public transportation systems all across the Tarheel State. However, the modern-day social welfare state apparently has an unquenchable thirst for money and an uncontrollable desire to spend.

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
Cheryl Pullen Bookkeeper
Deniece Talbert Circulation Manager
Fran Black Production Manager
Julie Long Graphic Artist
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.