

Opinions

JIM HEFFNER
Columnist



The EPA logic

Three or four years ago, you could buy cans of freon from any auto parts store for your automobile air conditioner for \$1.50 a can. If you had your own gauges, you could charge your air conditioner for less than five dollars. Service stations would do it for about \$15.

Today, thanks to the Environmental Protection Agency, a can of freon costs \$7, and you can't even buy it unless you have a permit. To get your auto air conditioner charged these days, you'll pay upwards of \$65.

A couple of years ago, you could get your car inspected for a few dollars, now, the minimum is around \$15, and that's if your car is in tip top condition. If your inspector decides your car doesn't meet emissions specifications, you could pay hundreds of dollars, another little EPA touch.

Inspection stations had to put in emissions testing equipment at a cost of between \$18 and \$20 thousand. Those who work on air conditioners were forced to install freon recovery systems, another high-cost item.

You can't even legally flush your own radiator unless you recover the old anti freeze and dispose of it "properly."

There is no scientific proof that freon or anti freeze contaminates the environment, but they are an easy mark. Their targeting by the EPA defies conventional logic.

Now the EPA is concerned that counties in our area aren't doing all they can to lower the ozone content in the air. They're telling us we need to trade in our cars for newer models, and there have been hints that gas-powered lawn equipment might be outlawed. Service stations, now almost obsolete, may have to install more expensive equipment.

Some companies may have to cut down on some of the chemicals they use to stay in business, according to the EPA, that will separate the consumer from more of his money.

What all this boils down to is that consumers, that's you and me, are going to have to pay through the nose because some environmentalist whackos get all bent out of shape when the weather gets hot. Gasoline will cost more and local products will go up. It happens every summer, and cools down in the fall.

We are likely to find that auto inspections will become more rigid, too.

Frankly, I'm getting a little concerned about all the starch laundries are using these days. My shirts are definitely stiffer than they used to be. This is a danger that the EPA ought to look into. If the continued misuse of starch isn't stopped, there's no telling what will happen.

Pigeon droppings are another problem that should be addressed. Everybody knows that these droppings are laced with vermin and disease. You can't even go out on the ledge of a tall building anymore because of the danger of a close encounter of the bird kind. The EPA is sitting around worrying about ozone when pigeons continue to produce droppings that are hazardous to the health of humans.

If you find yourself in a room with someone who has been around fresh pigeon droppings, you are subject to second hand contamination that may be carcinogenic. Pregnant women should make it a point to stay away from any area containing more than three pigeons per acre, especially in the third trimester.

Television news is another pollutant that the EPA ought to look into. There is so much of that emanating from the world class city that everyone within a 100-mile radius is in danger.

TV news is a known contaminant that affects your hearing and the flexibility of the brain. Anyone exposed to more than two hours a week is taking a chance on losing his hearing and his sanity.

It's time we got tough with the EPA. If they're going to ride herd on one pollutant, they ought to monitor them all. Anything worth doing is worth doing right, and that reminds me, cliches are dangerous too.

The next time someone says "a stitch in time saves nine," he should be arrested for violation of EPA pollution standards. Filling our clean air with cliches will rot the brain almost as much as TV news.

Next time we'll discuss creosote-laden railroad ties and people who say "have a nice Da-ay."

Pictorial Editorial



HELPING HAND - One-year-old Lacy Willis (in stroller) gets a shove from two-year-old Heather Black at the Kings Mountain Parks and Recreation Department. Lacy is the daughter of Lisa and Harold Willis and Heather is the daughter of Michael and Lisa Black.

GUEST COLUMN

THOMAS GOOLSBY
Carolina Syndicated
Columns



Education is a joke

Rather than praise the state Board of Education's recent decision to institute tough competency standards and hold back students who cannot pass them, state schools Superintendent Bobby Etheridge criticized the plan, claiming that it could create "administrative bottlenecks" in school systems. While employers and universities have completely lost faith in the value of a North Carolina high school diploma, Mr. Etheridge seems more concerned about simply churning out numbers.

Public education has become a sick joke in the Tarheel state. Administrators and staff personnel outweigh our low-paid and overwhelmed teachers almost two to one. Many schools are war zones, where education takes a distant second place to safety. All the while, the focus is on the bureaucrats' convenience, rather than the education of our children. We spend more and more money to get less and less for our "investment" in education.

The current high school competency test is indicative of our farcical system. The test measures not twelfth-grade abilities, but sixth-grade skills such as figuring out a restaurant bill on a menu or the ability to balance a checkbook. Ninety-eight percent of the students taking the exam pass it and, by simply attending classes regularly, will typically receive a high school diploma regardless of their grades.

The result? Underachievers are merely required to "perform" on a sixth-grade skill level and warehoused until they have attended school for twelve years. They are then given a worthless piece of paper deeming them "educated" and are thrown into the work force.

Mr. Etheridge needs to reexamine his role as state schools Superintendent. His job is not to simply be the "roto-roter man" of the state school system by pumping out uneducated students like old sewage. His job is to see that our children receive an education that prepares them to compete in the global marketplace. The state Board of Education is correct - our children deserve high school diplomas that mean something!

Your Right To Say It

Thanks for making fundraiser success

To the Editor:
LIVE! (Living Independently through Volunteers for the Elderly) recently held its annual spring fundraiser - Wheels and Deals Auction - to benefit the frail elderly, disabled and handicapped of Cleveland County.

Raising more than \$10,000, LIVE's board of directors, volunteers and staff members want to thank the entire community for its generosity. Cleveland Home Health Agency Inc., Hoechst Celanese Corporation, Carter Chevrolet, All American Fabrics, and all 200 businesses which contributed items, we thank you.

A great deal of time and hard work made this fundraiser successful. We extend a special thank you to Joyce Dixon and Ralph Elliott, who conducted the day-long auction with their usual professionalism. They worked as hard to make the auction a success as the board members who not only solicited the many items to be auctioned but also worked tirelessly throughout the sale. Alta Pernel and Cindy Binion, solicitation chairmen, we appreciate the many hours you graciously worked and your outstanding organizational skills. Also, special thanks to John Allen who donated an entire week of time, back breaking labor and his truck. John, Lance Marshall, Frank Garver and Charles Alexander moved and organized items from many locations throughout the county.

Special mention must be made of the youth in our community who gave of their time and energy to help us. The National Honor Society from Shelby High school has always been eager to help the LIVE program and assistance prior to the auction was no exception. Young Life was also very much a part of our success, working with us the day of the auction.

Janet Edwards, concessions chairman, and her committee dispensed delicious refreshments to the large crowd throughout the day. All supplies were donated by local restaurateurs and local bottling companies. We thank you.

We would be remiss if we did not thank the local newspapers, television and radio stations for their promotions - we thank you for communicating to the community the time and place for the auction. We appreciate the sheriff's deputies who handled the traffic, the owners and managers of neighboring businesses who graciously allowed us to use their parking lots. Finally, but not least, we thank the people who attended the auction. Through your continued support of LIVE's fundraisers, we are able to provide volunteer in-home services to an increasing number of elderly who prefer to live independently in their own homes.

Sarah M. Wray
Executive Director
Sandra B. Marshall
Administrative Assistant

Thanks for reunion

To the Editor:
My husband and I returned to Kings Mountain to attend my 35th high school reunion on Saturday, June 18.

My former classmate, Betty Sue Kirby Morris and her husband, Bob, very graciously opened their home and grounds to the Class of '59. They and others on the reunion committee (Gertie Pearson Barnette,

Judy/Dean Bowen, DeWayne/Jerralene Caldwell, Freddy Hambright, Maude Owens Morton, Wray Plonk Jr., Brenda McFalls Ross, Patsy Foster Simmons, Charity Goforth Tignor) deserve recognition for their efforts. Also, thanks to Bob Morris, Jake, Jeff, Mark, and Greg Dixon for a delicious meal; Sarah Cox Shaw for serving as waitress; and Linda Mitchem Dover, Travis Hawkins and others for their assistance.

Those of us who traveled from other states to the reunion had the easy part - just showing up and enjoying ourselves. The locals did all the work and staged a memorable reunion.

Jackie Merrill Andrew
Oklahoma City, Okla.

Media went too far

To the editor:
I am a concerned viewer of television and subscriber of magazines. Like many people I have seen the O.J. Simpson case on television and in magazines. Because of this media frenzy, I am concerned about the future of the media in trials and in anything relating to the cases.

I feel the media has overstepped its boundary in this area. They have obviously overstepped their boundary in the O.J. Simpson case, and I feel that it will be extremely difficult to find an impartial jury for Mr. Simpson.

The media has already shown that it is going to use this tactic with such cases as the Michael Jackson "trial," the Menendez brothers, and the Bobette trials. I think if they are going to use this tactic they shouldn't use it during the trial and definitely not before it!

Clint Kale

You call this firm?

To the Editor:
If we look back to the past presidential campaign, we note the candidate Bill Clinton correctly castigated President Bush for being soft on the Chinese Communist's abuse of human rights, accusing Bush of having "coddled the regime, pleasing for progress, but failing to impose penalties for intransigence."

He further pointed out that the Chinese people "are still denied their basic rights and liberties. They are denied the right to choose their own leaders; they are still imprisoned for simply calling for democracy; they continue to suffer torture and cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment and punishment."

Candidate Bill Clinton pledged to be firm with the Chinese Communists.

President Bill Clinton was as firm as a wet overcooked spaghetti noodle. In 1993, Bill Clinton gave the Chinese Communists a year to come up with sufficient cover to save face by promising that future renewals of "Most Favored Nation" trading status would depend on their improvement in human rights. However, last month, President Clinton not only renewed MFN status but permanently delinked human rights from MFN. The Chinese Communists, of course, still produce much of their goods in a "Gulag" system, using the labor of political prisoners.

Wang Xizhe, a Chinese dissident who spent 14 years in Chinese gulags, told The Washington Post, "I think the Chinese saw early on that the United States is a paper tiger." The Washington correspondent for Japan's influential Asahi newspaper wrote, "It is a 180-degree change in direction from policy up until now and leaves the strong impression that Clinton gave in completely to China's demand."

Clinton did stop the import of approximately \$200 million per year of Chinese firearms and ammunition, but that was obviously aimed at thumbing his nose at American gun owners, rather than exerting any pressure on the Chinese Government. As The Nation in Bangkok remarked, "it would have hurt far more if Clinton had banned imports of artificial flowers."

In the meantime, the Chinese Communists still continue its brutal treatment of dissidents and political prisoners. China is strengthening its Army by having it involved in various commercial businesses. We need to also remember that China continues to send advanced military technology to countries such as Iran, perform nuclear weapons tests, and aiding North Korea.

Of course, President Clinton can make claim to be getting tough on China: free China on Taiwan, that is. He has slapped limited trade sanctions on Taiwan and refused permission to the President of Taiwan, Lee Teng-hut, to spend a night on U. S. soil in Hawaii on a recent trip, giving him only a 90-minute stop to refuel.

Mr. A. M. Rosenthal of The New York Times remarked: "When foes don't believe a President, the risk is war by miscalculation, as in Korea and the Persian Gulf. The teaching of Mr. Clinton is: Don't coddle tyrants, just surrender."

The American people must take note of what's happening in Washington and around the world. Our government continues to grovel to petty communist tyrants, "ex-communist reformers" (what a joke!) and a bunch of tin-horn dictators in the United Nations. We must end the erosion of our country's sovereignty.

Richmond C. Beecher
Shelby

HERALD LETTER POLICY

The Herald welcomes your letters to the editor for publication in each Thursday's paper. The following guidelines apply:

Keep your letters brief and to the point. Type and double space them, if possible; if not write legibly. Letters or guest columns containing more than 600 words will not be accepted.

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.

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