

# Opinions

## Pictorial Editorial

**JIM HEFFNER**  
Columnist



### Betty will be missed

Most people who aspire to write need help, whether it be from an editor, another writer or a teacher. I'm talking about people who want to sit down and put words on paper, not those who think of the writing life as glamorous, and like to spend their time talking about writing.

You know who you are. You're one of those people who jot down items on scraps of paper to use later, and you'll read anything, including the labels on food cans.

For once in my life, I was lucky. Around 1971, I met a couple from New York, Harry and Betty Folts, who had come down to Charlotte to start up Charlotte Magazine.

Harry was going to handle the advertising and Betty would be the editor. Harry didn't last long in the advertising end. He had been an executive with ABC in New York, and was ready to get out of a strict schedule, so he hung out a shingle and sold his considerable moxie on a free-lance basis. Betty continued as editor of the magazine.

Soon after I met them, Harry passed away. He was my friend, and I missed him. I still think about him on occasion.

Betty and Harry were not typical New Yorkers. They had time for everybody, and they treated each individual as somebody important.

I sent a baseball article to the magazine, and was called in for an interview. The two of them took me in as one of their own. Harry, even though he was no longer a part of the magazine staff, encouraged me and created article ideas for me.

Betty set aside space for me each issue, and sometimes I would go in for story conferences and she would, subtly, suggest changes or additions, all the time letting me think the changes were my idea.

Once she called me and asked me if it would be all right to eliminate seven lines in a manuscript so that it would fit. When I checked, I found that the seven lines were not necessary, and by cutting them, the story was much better.

Betty and I went to the old Charlotte Coliseum together for Billy Graham Day. The speaker was President Nixon. That was my only live look at a president.

There were times when Betty and I wrote the entire magazine. I know I wasn't the best in her stable of writers. Once I mentioned that to her, and she shrugged it off with, "You always turn in your manuscripts on time, and your work is easy to edit."

I learned to write under Betty Folts' guidance. I had a short story that had been rejected by several magazines. "Leave it with me and let me take a look at it," she said.

Less than an hour later she called to tell me she had made a few changes and the story would be published in the next issue. I was amazed to find she had merely shifted a few lines around and added one short comment from the mouth of a minor character. That couple of changes made all the difference in the world, and the story was published.

Betty Folts passed away last Tuesday at the age of 75. She left the magazine many years ago and I had lost track of her, though I tried to find her on several occasions.

She was a magnificent gourmet cook, bringing some of her concoctions to the office and calling in a few of her free-lancers to partake. She was an outstanding food writer and an absolutely remarkable editor.

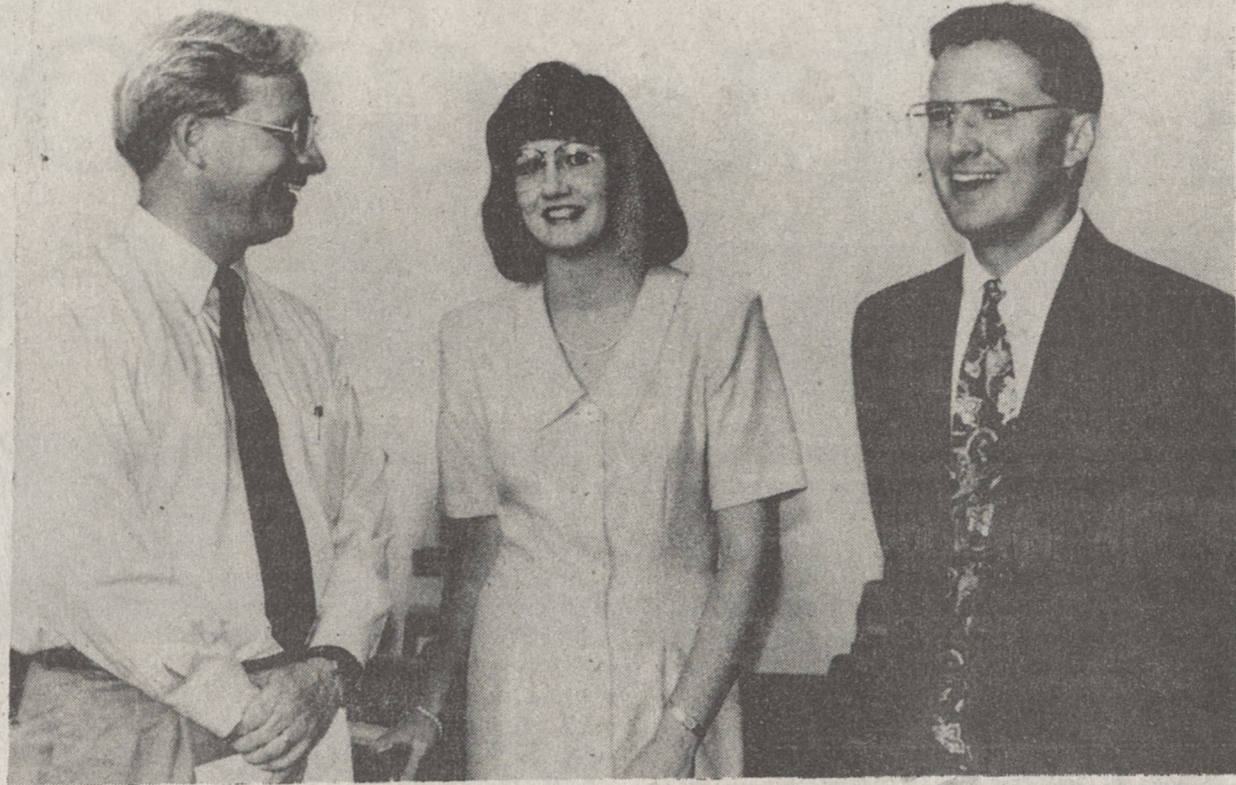
Most of all, she was my friend and mentor. She taught me more about writing than I ever learned from any school or writing course.

I can hear her now saying, "Why don't you try this word there, honey, and see how it sounds." She was always right, and the story was always better.

Once I told her she was a skilled editor. "Only to those who give me something to edit," was her reply.

Betty Folts was a rarity, an editor who cared for the people who worked for her. I wish I had made a more intense effort to locate her over the years, to let her know how much I appreciated her and cared for her.

I will treasure her memory, but I will miss her a lot.



**GREETING NEW CITY MANAGER** - Kings Mountain Mayor Scott Neisler, left, welcomes the new City Manager Chuck Nance and Mrs. Nance on their recent visit to City Hall. Nance, of Spindale, is spending Thursdays in the city until he assumes full responsibilities as the city's chief executive officer on September 1.

## Your Right To Say It

### Serious penalties for weapons

To the editor:

During the past school year the Kings Mountain District Board of Education appointed a Community Task Force Against School Violence. The group, which included not only school personnel but also students, parents, and other community representatives, studied the issue or providing safe schools and made a number of recommendations to our board. Included in this letter are those recommendations, both the interim recommendations received by the board in November and the final recommendations received in August.

Each of the interim recommendations has been accomplished. We are working diligently to implement the final recommendations as well and will have many of them in place this year. The primary purpose of the letter is to call attention to recent board of education action in regards to the recommendations regarding the suspension of students involved with weapons. At its meeting on August 4, the Board approved the following policy:

- 1 - Students in grades K-12 (all grades) who bring or possess a firearm on campus will be suspended for the remainder of the school year.
- 2 - Students in grades 6-12 who bring or possess any legally defined weapon on campus will be suspended for the remainder of the school year.
- 3 - Students in grades K-5 who bring or possess any legally defined weapon other than a firearm on campus will be disciplined as determined by the administration.
- 4 - Other weapons (pocket knives, etc.) will not be allowed on a school campus. Students who bring such will be subject to disciplinary action.

Legally defined weapons include any gun, rifle, pistol or other firearm or any kind, or any dynamite cartridge, bomb, grenade, mine, or powerful explosive, BB gun, air rifle, air pistol, bowie knife, dirk, dagger, slungshot, leaded cane, switchblade knife, blackjack, metallic knuckles, razors or razor blades (except solely for personal shaving), and any sharp-pointed or edged instrument except instructional supplies, unaltered nail files and clips and tools used solely for preparation of food, instruction, and maintenance.

These are very serious penalties adopted by the Board to deal with very serious circumstances in an effort to assure safe school to our community. You must understand that to violate the provisions of #1 and #2 listed above is to give up your right to attend school in our school system. We will also report instances of legally defined weapons on campus to the appropriate law enforcement agencies. We hope such action never has to be taken. However, our first responsibility to you is to do everything we can to make our schools safe places. We solicit your support in these efforts.

If you need further information concerning any part of this letter, please contact your school or my office. I encourage each of you to discuss it thoroughly within your family and to pledge yourselves to putting safety first in our schools. Thank you very much.

(Interim recommendations Nov. 23, 1993)

- 1 - Erect signs on the campuses of Kings Mountain High School and Kings Mountain Middle School

which proclaim that weapons and drugs are not allowed on those campuses.

- 2 - Work with the Kings Mountain Police Department to begin a Crimestoppers program for our schools.

- 3 - Make our entire community aware of applicable laws and board of education policies and procedures that relate to violence on school grounds. As a minimum: Distribute informational letters to parents of all students; Conduct assemblies or smaller group meetings with all middle and high school students; Use the Phonemaster system in the high school and Middle School to alert parents; Use the sign at the High School to highlight the effort.

- 4 - Hire a police officer to patrol the high school/middle school campus from 2:45-4:45 p.m. primarily to monitor the outside area.

- 5 - Continue random locker searches at the high school and middle school.

- 6 - Conduct weekly random searches with metal detectors of at least 10% of the student bodies at the high school and the middle school.

(Recommendations, April 19, 1994)

In an effort to ensure safe schools, the task force recommends that:

- The school system develop a broad based awareness campaign that involves community agencies, civic organizations and churches.
- The Board of Education encourage student led involvement in violence prevention efforts through activities such as S.A.V.E. clubs and special projects.
- Every school develop a security plan with recommendations for addressing areas of need.
- The school system adopt a policy of zero tolerance for legally defined weapons.
- The school system explore alternative school opportunities, determine the most suitable direction for Kings Mountain District Schools and pursue funding for its implementation.
- The school system work with the City of Kings Mountain to hire a resource officer to work between the high school and the middle school.
- The high school and middle school administrators continue to conduct random searches using a metal detector with a minimum of 10% of the student body each week. A review of the policy is recommended at the beginning of the 1994-95 school year.
- The use of metal detectors be expanded to include football games during the 1994-95 school year.
- The school system provide a comprehensive violence prevention curriculum, supported by appropriate conflict resolution and peer mediation efforts.
- Additional measures be taken to control crowds at athletic events: Metal detectors will be used at the entrance to football and basketball games; profanity will not be tolerated; loitering will not be permitted while game is in progress; improve lighting in high traffic areas.

Bob McRae  
Superintendent

## REFLECTIONS ON RELIGION AND LIFE

Rev. Harold Schwantes  
Pastor  
Central United Methodist Church



### Safe learning experience

It has been a busy summer this year just trying to keep up with the grass mowing.

My teenage son has done the lion's share of it for me, and has learned some things in the process. A couple of weeks ago he called me at work and asked where the oil was for the mower. I made sure he knew which was the right oil, then remarked, "I don't understand why it needs oil. I just checked it yesterday." His explanation was that the mower became clogged, so he turned it on its side to clean it out, and all the oil ran out - on the front lawn. Now that grass is not growing quite as fast as it was!

My son learned from the experience, just as I did years ago the first time I turned a mower up on its side to clean it out. What little damage that was done to the lawn is not worth comparing to learning. My son and I talked about why this accident happened and let it go at that. I may not be as easy about it next time, but right now I want him to know it's OK to make mistakes if we are trying to do it right and if we learn something from the experience.

Today, most of the children in the community begin a new school year. They will be challenged by the reality that there is more knowledge to be learned today than ever before in history. They will be blessed with some of the finest facilities, educational materials, and well-trained teachers that we could ever ask for. The most important element to a successful school year is a safe atmosphere in which the kids can learn how to learn. But "safe" I'm not referring to the problem of weapons or threats at school, although I recognize that is a problem that is being addressed. After the lessons have been taught and the work assigned, a child needs to know that learning is the bottom line, even if mistakes are made. If a child is affirmed for what he/she learns and not hounded for their mistakes, education and growth will happen. It is more important to me that my children learn how to learn, how to work, how to give their best, and how to seek what is right than whether they get it right the first time. And it is as important for we parents to provide this safe atmosphere for our kids as it is for the schools.

A wonderful truth of the Christian faith is God's generous forgiveness to us who make both ignorant and/or willful mistakes. My understanding is that God is very patient with us as long as we honestly and diligently seek the Way, Truth, and Life. Dare we be any less patient with our children?

BOB McRAE  
Superintendent  
Kings Mountain Schools



### Let's all promote the good

When I was six years old I contracted acute poliomyelitis, polio. In 1953 polio was a much feared disease which often had terrible results for the victim. I spent a week in Mercy Hospital. While I thought little about the long term consequences of my illness, I am sure my parents worried quite a bit. Those were the days of iron lungs, and many who suffered from polio never walked again, if in fact they survived.

Luckily, after much good care and many prayers, I recovered and walked back in my first grade classroom six weeks later. It's sometimes amusing how we forget. Early last summer I was in my usual mode of complaining about mowing the lawn. It was a particularly hot day, and I mow the entire yard with a push mower. For some reason - perhaps a nudge from the Good Lord - it occurred to me that I might now have been able to push a mower at all and that I was focusing on the wrong thing. I think my wife, Jackie, can verify that I don't complain nearly so much now about mowing the yard.

Here's the challenge. There are quite a few things in life that could be better. I'm certain that there are things in the school system that could be improved, and we're working to do just that. But there are many, many good things going on in our schools - far more good than in need of repair. I hope the coming year will be one where we focus on the good. That doesn't mean that it's not okay to express concerns. Don't let them be the "end-all, be-all." Let's work together to promote our system, not drag it down.

Here's hoping our community's effort for the schools in 1994-95 can focus more on being glad that we don't have polio than mad that we have to mow the yard! All of us who work in this very important effort sincerely ask for your support.

## Passing bill would have been crime

It was indeed a good day in the Tarheel State when the Clinton crime bill went down to defeat in the U.S. Congress. Although the president cried out that "The Republicans had ruined everything," it was quite apparent, to those who had bothered to read the bill, that it did not deserve passage.

Oh sure, it sounds great to say that thousands upon thousands of new policemen would be added to the streets of our nation's troubled cities. However, as with most political rhetoric, those figures are very suspect. The new cops were to be partially funded, with some funding to be as little as \$15,000 per police officer. In most North Carolina cities, where salaries, equipment and benefits are well into the \$30,000 or even \$40,000 range, the "free cops" scenario becomes a joke.

It gets even worse. The federal money is gradually reduced each year and after five years, it is eliminated altogether. Then the taxpayers in our state's cities, many of whom are already having problems paying for their current police forces, will have to pick up the tab

### GUEST COLUMN

THOMAS GOOLSBY  
Carolina Syndicated  
Columns



for the new "not-so-free cops."

Even the funding for the \$33.2 billion crime bill is highly questionable. The Clinton administration claims that the money will come from a fairy-tale reduction of almost 300,000 federal employees. There is of course no guarantee that these federal employees will march off into the sunset, and do we really expect them to drop their paychecks into the till on their way out the door?

The crime bill was loaded with \$9.1 billion in new

social welfare spending, even though 226 current prevention programs already address most of the targeted areas covered in the bill. Many of those opposing the Clinton crime bill questioned the role of the federal government in micromanaging such things as after school clubs, midnight basketball and arts and crafts.

One of the best examples is seen in the proposed midnight basketball program. The red tape is laughable, and indeed expensive - the leagues require 80 players and half must live in public housing areas with high drug activity and high HIV infection.

President Clinton was quick to blame the failure of the bill on the Republicans and the N.R.A. However, he conveniently forgot that his own party has an overwhelming majority in the U.S. Congress. He also conveniently forgot that 58 of his own fellow Democrats voted against his crime bill.

In truth, the passage of Clinton's crime bill would itself have been a crime. Once you strip the proposed legislation of its rhetoric, it stands naked for all to see as just another government grab bag of "form over substance."

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