


Opinions

JIM HEFFNER
Columnist



Wake up, people

What is wrong with people?
Two more children were killed last week on Franklin Avenue in Gastonia, and they were shot by another kid.
The school term is less than a month old, and already two students have been kicked out for carrying loaded firearms to school in Gaston County alone.
It is past time to put a stop to the senseless slaughter of our children on the streets.
When teenagers are running up and down the roads at all hours of the night, the authorities need to stop them and find out why they're not at home.
When my generation was younger, you couldn't ride around the streets at three a.m. without being questioned by the police. A teenager has no business in a car riding around aimlessly in the middle of the night. Given the opportunity, youngsters will find trouble.
Where are the parents? I've said it before and I'll say it again, if a youngster is caught with a gun, his parents should be made to pay. That would put a stop to it. It should be just like the "Click it or Ticket" program - no excuses.

How many people have been affected by the alleged murder of the two Kings Mountain boys? How much longer does the citizenry have to put up with these kinds of acts? How many more guns will be purchased because of the latest dead kids?

This is a sorry state of affairs when we can't even let our grown children go out the door without worrying whether they will get back in one piece.

Over in the world class city, the superintendent of schools wanted to ban book bags, because that's where most of the young people carry their weapons. You think he was allowed to do that? Many citizens raised the roof and yelled about their rights of privacy. I say your rights won't do you much good with your toes turned up.

People must take their personal situations in hand. They have to maintain discipline in the home. It is necessary that they guide their charges, and make sure they know where their children are and when they will return home. People cannot allow their children free rein. It just doesn't work that way.

The burden of grief is almost unbearable when a child dies of natural causes. To lose one in a senseless manner, when it really isn't necessary, has to be ten times as bad at least.

There seems to be an outbreak around here of late. A 20-year-old killed by a train, a couple of youngsters accidentally killed while playing with guns. One junior high student stabbed to death, and another from the same school killed in an automobile accident at age 15. Now the latest tragedy.

Where does it all end?
Last week in Chicago, an 11-year-old boy was gunned down by police just after he had shot a 14-year-old to death. That was a double tragedy if there ever was one.

Are we reaching the same level? I hope not.
Our children are precious. They are a continuation of ourselves. It is our duty to take care of them to the best of our ability. To bring a child into the world and feed him into a system that kills him is the ultimate form of abuse.

Am I my brother's keeper? You bet I am, and so are you. It is incumbent on each and every one of us to do everything within our power to make sure that all children can walk and ride the streets safely. If that means violating some kid's right of privacy, then so be it.

It's much better to violate his or her right of privacy than to go down to the morgue and view a young, dead body on a cold hard slab.

Wake up people, before it's too late for you and your children.

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.

Mail your letters to The Editor, P.O. Box 769, Kings Mountain, NC 28086. Hand-delivered letters will not be accepted.

THAT'S A FACT



FAMOUS FIRST
JIMMY DOOLITTLE OF TOKYO FAME, WAS THE FIRST PILOT TO FLY BLIND, USING INSTRUMENTS ONLY, HE TOOK OFF AND LANDED IN A DRAMATIC PROOF THAT FLYING HAD ENTERED A NEW ERA!

ENCOURAGE
THE OTHER MEMBERS OF YOUR FAMILY TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THE BEST PLACE FOR YOUR EXTRA DOLLARS - U.S. SAVINGS BONDS! THESE BONDS WORK FOR YOU, SECURE YOUR FUTURE AND HELP YOU TOWARDS YOUR PRIVATE GOAL!

HAZARDOUS PASSAGE
ONE OF THE GREATEST TESTS OF HUMAN ENDURANCE AND COURAGE WAS THE FAMOUS DONNER PARTY'S EFFORT TO TRAVEL FROM WYOMING TERRITORY TO CALIFORNIA IN 1846 FIGHTING SNOW AND STARVATION, ONLY 47 OF THE ORIGINAL PARTY OF 89 SURVIVED THE GRUELING MARCH!

FROM THE MARCH 7, 1957 HERALD

Our View

Clean up sex education material

If we lived in a perfect world there would be no premarital sex, no teen pregnancies, and no disease (sexually transmitted or otherwise).
But we do not live in a perfect world. Sadly, all of the above exists and it is not going to go away.

Teaching that premarital sex is contrary to the will of God may be the responsibility of the home and church, as some opponents of the sex education curriculum of Kings Mountain Schools have correctly stated in recent months, but we must also realize that many children in this day come from broken homes, many either do not know who their father is or have had numerous fathers or "live-ins" before they even begin their school years, and a large percentage never enter a church door. And, believe it or not, there are "good" children who come from good homes and have been "brought up right" that also practice premarital sex.

Therefore, we believe it is vital that Kings Mountain Schools stress abstinence in sex education classes, but also recognize that despite our best efforts some teens are going to engage in sex and they need to have accurate information on how to prevent diseases.

That is not to say that we agree with how the course has been taught in the past. We applaud the parents of this community who have publicly opposed the sex education curriculum. They have that right and they have brought to light a lot of unnecessary "extras" that the Kings Mountain Board of Education and school administrations have allowed to be added to the sex education curriculum through the years.

We were present at that Board meeting in the early-eighties when the original sex education curriculum was approved, and publicly applauded the board's decision to teach abstinence-plus. But we do not believe it was the intent of that original Health Council to allow the use of filthy videos and other material to enter the classrooms of sixth and seventh grade children.

We urge parents to back off for a few months and give the Board the time it says it needs to devise a new curriculum. But we would also suggest to the Board that an effective abstinence-plus curriculum can be taught in a cleaner way.

Your Right To Say It

Writer says Northern Durham doesn't teach Sex Respect

To the editor:

In a letter to the editor on August 25, 1994 about an abstinence only curriculum, incorrect statements were made about the Durham County Health Department, Durham County's Northern High School, the use of the "Sex Respect" curriculum in Durham County and its effect on teens.

The letter stated: "Durham County Health Department reports that since Sex Respect, there has been a change in sexual attitudes of teens toward abstinence." The Durham County Health Department has never used the Sex Respect curriculum as part of its instructions in the schools or in the community.

The letter stated: "At Northern High School, Durham County, over 2,000 students took the Sex Respect course over the last three years and only five pregnancies were reported (less than 1%)." The Northern High School principal reports that Northern High does not teach Sex Respect as part of its health education curriculum. Likewise the number of teen pregnancies cited at Northern High School was incorrect.

In our community we support a broad, comprehensive approach in teaching students about human sexuality. While all students are encouraged to postpone sexual involvement, we also recognize teen pregnancy rates and sexually transmitted diseases including AIDS are increasing. Many teens are not abstinent so to disregard or ignore this fact endangers their lives. We teach students refusal skills in combination with information about how to protect themselves if they choose to become sexually active. To do less would be negligent.

John D. Fletcher, M.D., M.P.H.
Health Director,
County of Durham Health Department

Thanks for loving Carrie

To the editor:

Thank you for your excellent tribute to Carrie Hughes. I had told her many times you and the staff were outstanding journalists, and you proved me correct once again, and with love.

Thanks also to the Kings Mountain community for appreciating and loving Carrie over the years. Special thanks to her church communities at Dixon, Kings Mountain Baptist and Love Valley.

Most special thanks to the loving staffs at Kings Mountain Hospital and Harris Funeral Home.

And to James and Margaret Childers, Ray and Catherine Childers, Betty Hughes and Conrad Hughes, we are forever grateful.

Forgive me if I omitted anyone's name.
May God continue to bless us all through the wonderful life of Carrie.

Paul Starnes (nephew)
Jennie Starnes (sister)
Gaffney, SC

HUD 'using' Fair Housing Act

To the editor:

Many people will tell you a Hitler and his Brown Shirt goons couldn't happen here. Don't be on it. Already federal bureaucrats are threatening to fine citizens \$50,000 for speaking and writing against HUD's policy of polluting peaceful communities with hazardous material.

The Fair Housing Act is certainly not fair when HUD sets up housing for homeless alcoholics, drug abusers, paroled rapists and sexual pervers in the midst of safe residential neighborhoods. Nobody should be forced to accept the dumping of such dangerous human garbage on their doorstep - by force of law, or with public funds.

HUD officials should be reminded that using the Fair Housing Act in attempts to override first amendment rights is unlawful and unconstitutional. Remember "Congress shall make no law" superseding constitutional guarantees - and certainly not HUD Storm Troopers!

Already twisted political decisions by federal judges and oppressive tax laws are pushing citizens to the brink of revolution. If free speech and press fails to protect our freedoms under law, then violent actions by citizens are recommended by our Declaration of Independence.

Let us never forget the basic purpose for the Second Amendment to our Constitution in granting the absolute right of the people to bear arms - and use them when government becomes destructive to their life, liberty, safety and the pursuit of happiness!

Surely Americans will never march into political prisons tranquilly.

Willa Dellinger
Gastonia

National or political interest?

To the editor:

Clinton's Administration has now claimed that Haiti must be invaded because "American credibility and national interests are at stake." We might know that the disaster in Somalia resulted in damage to the credibility of the administration in general, and Clinton in particular, rather than the U.S. We might note that at the White House ceremony where the parents of the two of the Rangers killed in Somalia received their sons' posthumous Medals of Honor, one of the fathers told the president that the disaster was his fault (for denying the requested armor) and that he was "unfit to lead." We might also note that the invasions of Haiti is also little more than a bribe to the segment of Congress for their votes for Clinton's Crime (pork and government oppression) Bill and, possibly, a Socialized Medicine Bill. Plus, with elections coming up in November, Clinton has to do something to appear to be something other than a lying adulterous buffoon, who has severely damaged the election prospects of his political party.

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How much of America's national interest is at stake? We might look back to the words of USMC Major General Smedley D. Butler, a Medal of Honor recipient, who was involved in the 19 year occupation of Haiti early in this century as well as other campaigns through South and Central America. He pointed out that "And during that period I spend most of my time being a high-class muscle man for Big Business, for Wall Street, and the bankers. Thus I helped make Mexico, and especially Tampico, safe for American oil interests in 1914. I helped make Haiti and Cuba a decent place for the National City Bank boys to collect revenue in. I helped in the raping of half a dozen Central American republics for the benefit of Wall Street...The Record of racketeering is long. I helped purify Nicaragua for the international banking house of Brown Brothers and Co. in 1909-12. I brought light to the Dominican Republic for sugar interests in 1916. I helped make Honduras right for American fruit companies in 1903. In China in 1927 I helped see to it that Standard Oil went its way unmolested."

Once again, American soldiers will be asked to risk life and limb for the vanity of those in government, for the profit of the Wall Street bankers and big business, and, worst of all, for the aggrandizement and further empowerment of the United Nations and its New World Order.

We now have a president who, during the sixties, was an active supporter of the Viet Cong, demonstrated with those who spit on American servicemen, lied and connived to avoid service. We might note that in his two years as president, he has been more aggressive in involving our troops in more conflicts around the globe than did the "War Monger" Ronald Reagan during his eight years. Not bad for someone who loathes the military, is it?

At a time when our defense force is being gutted to the point where it can no longer defend the U.S., why are they being frittered away in unnecessary military adventures? At a time when more and more petty little tin pot dictators are building nuclear weapons and sticking them on Chinese or old Soviet rockets, why are we spending our money on the personal vanity and glorification of vain politicians instead of an antiballistic missile system to protect the citizens of the U.S.? At a time when petty dope smugglers routinely penetrate U.S. air space, setting a tempting example for any crazed middle east madman with a nuke and an airplane, why are we not implementing a viable air defense system for the U.S. instead of restoring an insane marxist dictator to power in Haiti? Which would better serve the interests of the citizens of the United States?

Richmond Beecher
Shelby

Safety General prefers politics over safety

Even though ten other states and several cities suffering under onerous prison camps are preparing to act on the Helms Anti-Prison Cap amendment as quickly as possible in an attempt to stop early prison releases, our state's Attorney General hastily and shockingly ruled the new law "irrelevant" for North Carolina.

Attorney General Easley's Department of Justice quickly fell in line with the attorneys for criminals incarcerated in Tarheel state prisons, saying that: "We don't believe that the sections of the (Helms Anti-Prison Cap) amendment that apply to our case are relevant."

Easley's selective memory and illogical reasoning are most disturbing. Back in June of this year, attorneys from his office lost almost 1,000 prison beds due to space limitations ordered by a federal judge. Soon after the judge's ruling, Governor Hunt stated, "That is not acceptable, and I've urged Correction Secretary Franklin Freeman and Attorney General Mike Easley to look under every rock to see how we can keep prisoners behind bars. That means pursuing every legal

GUEST COLUMN

THOMAS GOOLSBY
Carolina Syndicated
Columns



option and pursuing every practical option to squeeze out more prison space."

The order from the governor sounds simple and straight forward. Likewise, the Helms amendment is simple and straight forward. It prevents federal judges from setting up space limitation requirements that effectively cap prison populations, hereby putting a revolving door on state penal systems. Easley just doesn't get it and victims groups across the state are appalled as the crimes, bodies and broken lives continue to pile up.

Why is Easley so quick to reject the Helms amendment? As shocking as it may sound, it may be purely

for partisan political reasons. Why else would so many other states and cities be excited about the prospects of the Helms amendment and Easley be so quick to reject it? Could it be that the Attorney General doesn't want to recognize the assistance of a conservative Republican senator in helping him to win a battle that he could not win on his own?

Crime victims and victim advocate groups from across the state recently saluted Senator Helms for his success in getting his anti-prison cap amendment passed into law. Last year, these same groups sued Easley for his support of North Carolina's prison cap that gave early releases to over 30,000 convicted criminals in 1993 alone.

As has been noted by other journalists, there appears to be more than a tinge of politics in this matter - don't forget that in 1990, Easley lost the Democratic nomination to oppose Helms. Would the Attorney General stoop to playing politics in this situation where the lives and safety of thousands of North Carolinians may be on the line from run amuck repeat offenders released early under our state's prison cap? Say it ain't so Mike!

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