

Opinions

JIM HEFFNER
Columnist



The EPA is at it again

If you smoke, stop now. If you don't smoke, don't start.

I am saying that up front, because I know there are going to be those who say I am endorsing something that everybody knows is unhealthy. This is not an endorsement of smoking, this is just a little story about how a government agency manipulates information, and lies, to get what it wants.

The Environmental protection Agency (EPA) has lost its latest court bid to keep everyone in this country from smoking.

A federal court in Winston-Salem has rejected a motion filed by the EPA to dismiss a lawsuit filed against it by Philip Morris USA, one of the tobacco giants. The lawsuit, which will now proceed into court, seeks to have the EPA's report on and classification of environmental tobacco smoke (ETS) as a "Group A Carcinogen" declared null and void.

I really have no idea why Philip Morris wants to go to the trouble. If they are successful nobody will ever hear about it. How many of you knew about the ruling in Winston-Salem.

There is no group as powerful as the militant non-smokers.

The EPA released its report almost two years ago, a report that generated a great deal of media coverage, and has resulted in a spate of businesses declaring their facilities smoke free, including several fast food chains.

Many parents were scared by the EPA document, and will not allow their small children near anyone who is smoking, to the extent of paranoia.

Philip Morris believes, with good reason, that the EPA report is riddled with inconsistencies and inaccuracies. That's a nice way of putting it.

Analysis of the report, according to Philip Morris, reveals that EPA researchers decided that their report would conclude that ETS is harmful to non-smokers even before they began collecting data.

The agency decided not to conduct any new research, but to sift through old reports and pick and choose anything they could find to support their thesis.

They chose, for example, to omit the largest study ever conducted on this issue. This study, funded in part by the National Cancer Institute, reflected no overall statistically significant increased risk among non-smokers exposed to ETS.

Of the 30 studies they did use, 24 showed the same, but the EPA conveniently manipulated these studies to support their own preconceived conclusion. The six that did show a statistical association did not take into consideration cultural and environmental influences.

Why hash this over here you might ask? Because it gives you an idea of the audacity of your government. They have decided what is best for us, and we have no say in it. Not only that, they've taken "scientific" data and bent it to their own use.

I wish Philip Morris all the luck in the world as their suit goes to court. I hope they win, and if they do, I'll let you know. This is probably one of the few places you'll see it printed.

I'm not quite through with the EPA and how they do business.

Several regional offices of the agency have launched a new campaign to intimidate restaurant owners into banning smoking.

Some restaurant owners, particularly in the New England and Mid-Atlantic regions have received a rather confusing letter from the Agency, asking them to sign a "Memorandum of Understanding." By signing, restaurant owners agree to prohibit smoking in their establishments.

What the agency does not say in this letter, is that they have absolutely no authority to require restaurants to ban smoking. Business owners are free to set their own policy in this matter.

Ladies and gentlemen, that's your government at work. One of our federal agencies uses intimidation and deceit and we let them get by with it.

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.

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

Pictorial Editorial



The good rains of the summer will mean good eating for Wayne Yarbrow's cattle this winter. Yarbrow is pictured above cutting a huge field of corn off Margrace Road near Kings Mountain. The corn is now stored in Yarbrow's silo and fermenting for winter use.

Your Right To Say It

Writer taught course in Durham

To the editor:

As national consultant for Project Reality (formerly Project Respect) for the past eight years, I have traveled to 38 states and trained over 15,000 teachers how to effectively implement abstinence based curricula in the classroom. I began this endeavor teaching the "Sex Respect" curriculum in three high schools in Durham County from 1986 to 1990. The course was taught by teacher invitation to me to enter their health and health occupations classes.

All this became a reality partly due to a 1986 meeting I had with Dr. John Fletcher (Health Director of the Durham County Health Department) who wrote a letter of endorsement for me to the NC Department of Human Resources to receive funding to teach "Sex Respect" in Durham County. This funding was granted to me through my local organization at the time called Project WAIT. The course was taught to over 2,000 students at North Durham High School alone over the next four years under this project.

In 1990, the counselors at Northern reviewed the names of the 2,000 students I had taught there and could only identify five pregnancies from that group (less than 1%). Out of the 775 students I taught at Southern Durham and Jordan High Schools, 94.5% said they will accept the abstinence message or a "secondary virginity" to avoid pregnancy or S.T.D.s. Project WAIT showed tremendous changes in attitude from pre and post testing of these students. As a result, in 1989, Dr. Fletcher wrote another letter of endorsement concluding, "Project WAIT shows excellent promise and based upon initial reports is achieving good results."

Although the Durham County Schools or the Durham County Health Department never officially adopted "Sex Respect" as part of their Health curriculum, the school system allowed me to enter these various classrooms by teacher invitation to teach the course and the Health Department supported me with letters of endorsement to the state. The abstinence teaching strategy I developed using this course in Durham County became so effective, it is now being applied to other great abstinence based curricula on the national scene today that are achieving even greater results in the classroom.

The Kings Mountain schools would be doing a great service to teens by adopting a true abstinence base curriculum and providing in service training for their teachers.

Michael B. Long,
National Consultant
Project Reality

Parent trying to help

To the editor:

The letter published September 15, 1994 from Dr. John Fletcher (Health Director of the Durham County Health Department), without contact on my behalf,

tried to discredit my integrity a one who would try to deceive the Kings Mountain School Board and the community.

My sources and statistics are not deceptive. It is my intent to help our community and schools, not to hinder.

Jean McAbee

KM doesn't need office

To the editor:

This letter is being written in response to your article in the Kings Mountain Herald on September 22 entitled "Sheriff Candidate Wants Office For Deputies in Kings Mountain."

Being a citizen of Kings Mountain and Cleveland County and speaking from a former Kings Mountain Police Officer and a 16-year veteran with the Cleveland County Sheriff's Department, I would like to say: Mr. Kellum stated warrants could be served out of his proposed satellite sheriff's office in the Kings Mountain area. How can this be possible? A warrant is an order by the court to arrest a suspect for a crime and the suspect, by law, has to be carried before a judicial official and/or magistrate to determine bond or suspect's incarceration. Being that this is the process a deputy has no other choice but to do what the law directs. Without the State of North Carolina and the senior resident superior court judge assigning a magistrate to Kings Mountain the warrants could not be served at this satellite office.

Having worked with the Cleveland County Sheriff's Department for 16 years, I had no problems in using the facility of the Kings Mountain Police Department. I see no need for taxpayers of all of Cleveland County to provide satellite and/or sub stations when there are departments such as Kings Mountain Police Department that will provide office space, assistance of any kind to any deputy just by asking. During my 16 year tenure, I have never seen a need for a satellite and/or sub station that would assist a deputy in doing his sworn duty. Cleveland County is a small department but is providing law enforcement duties to a very large county.

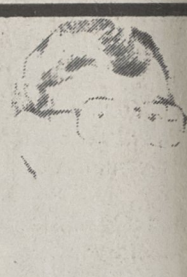
I was privileged to serve under three different sheriffs, Haywood Allen, Dale Costner and Buddy McKinney, and I feel that if there had been a need for a satellite and/or sub stations this would have been addressed by one of these three men with the Cleveland County Commissioners at some time.

It appears to me that these articles by Mr. Kellum are in an effort to deceive the residents of greater Kings Mountain to influence their vote and I can only hope that the residents of Kings Mountain can see through this political cloud.

I will be, along with numerous others, casting my vote for the man that can address the crime problems that our county has without using political promises, this man being Dan Crawford.

Joe King

GARY STEWART
Editor



Best place on Saturday night? At home watching HBO movie

Some items that have been piling up or didn't make it into more suitable parts of the paper:

■ Dean Westmoreland, Kings Mountain resident who is seeking Ollie Harris's Senate seat in November, recently had over 500 people show up for a rally at the Cleveland County Fairgrounds. The event exceeded everyone's expectations, so much in fact that the organizers ran out of food and had to go back to the store for more.

Many of North Carolina's political leaders attended, and there were a lot of speeches, hand shaking and back slapping.

The supporters also relieved Westmoreland of most of his political signs and bumper stickers, so you'll see a lot of them around the area between now and November.

■ Kings Mountain's State Representative, John Weatherly, got good grades from North Carolina Taxpayers United which tracked how each member of the House and Senate voted on key tax and spend items during the 1993 and '94 legislative sessions.

Weatherly was declared a "Taxpayer's Best Friend" for accumulating 100 points (the minimum required was 65 for Taxpayer Friend or 90 for Taxpayer Best Friend) on the group's scorecard which reflected how the House members voted on nine bills. The Senate was tracked on seven tax and spend matters.

Weatherly was the only area legislator to earn either of the honors. Rep. Jack Hunt scored 27.5 and Rep. Edith Lutz 55, and Senator Ollie Harris scored 30.

Overall, the group criticized the General Assembly for its spending record of the past several years. It pointed out that the state's budget has increased from \$1 billion in 1972 to more than \$10.2 billion today, and that North Carolina has the second highest state taxes in the Southeast. The G.A. was also criticized for spending most of this year's \$1 billion budget surplus.

■ HBO recently conducted a survey to see how Americans spend their Saturday nights. Forty-five percent of the 1,010 respondents said they see Saturday as their night out, but a huge number of them said their best plans usually go wrong.

Seventeen percent said they experienced their worst Saturday night at a party, while 16 percent suffered at dinner. A blind date was responsible for one in ten lousy Saturday nights.

Here are some others you might relate to:

When asked what was the worst thing a companion ever did, 19 percent said their companion got sick or drunk. Another 16 percent complained of fighting, and 14 had to listen to a companion talk about himself or herself all night.

A third of all omen who had a bad experience on Saturday night blamed their companion, and one percent blamed a pet.

More than 25 percent of 18-24 year-olds said their worst Saturday night occurred at a party, and one in six had their night ruined by companions who made advances on others or disappeared in the middle of the night.

Among those personally blamed for ruined Saturday nights were Bo Schembechler, two prostitutes and President Nixon.

Respondents said that among the worst things companions have done over the course of a Saturday night included: not showing up, talking about an ex-spouse and the ultimate in anti-social behavior - dying.

■ Former Kings Mountain teacher/coach Bruce Clark, now offensive coordinator for Southern Guilford High School, is helping create some excitement on Friday nights for the SG fans.

Southern won its first two games before losing the pat two weeks to a pair of state-ranked 2-A clubs - Randleman and Eastern Alamance. Southern needs one more victory to match last year's total.

The SG offense is averaging over 300 yards rushing and 100 yards passing per game and scored 57 points in a victory over Trinity. In their regular season opener they defeated Ragsdale 28-14 for their first home win in over two years.

Southern has two backs averaging over 100 yards rushing per game and their quarterback is hitting over 50 percent of his passes and is averaging over 100 yards per contest.

Willie M. program fails violent juveniles

The real outrage with the mismanagement of the state-run \$48 million Willie M. program is not the inadequate training of the staff personnel, it's not the run-down buildings, it's not the incorrect psychiatric diagnoses, nor is it even the millions of hard-earned and ill-spent tax dollars that have been wasted.

The real outrage of the Willie M. program is that the "always forgiving" public is allowing this scandal to continue to be played out on those least able to help themselves - the 1,200 violent, emotionally disturbed children the program is failing. The program is named for a 1979 class action lawsuit that forced North Carolina to provide specialized treatment for disturbed and violent youths and, apparently, none of the officials running the program will be held accountable for its dismal failure.

After an eight-month evaluation, the Willie M. Review Panel criticized state officials, citing inadequate training of personnel, dilapidated buildings, high employee turnover rates, breakdowns in communications and staffing problems at the 41 Willie M. centers. When one considers that the \$-48 million program serves only 1,200 youths, simple math tells you that

GUEST COLUMN

THOMAS GOOLSBY
Carolina Syndicated
Columns



we are talking about a budget of \$40,000 per child. What's happening with our money? About all we really know is that it's being spent.

The panel's review, the first of the program since 1989, noted major gaps in psychiatric care that may have resulted in children receiving wrong diagnoses and improper treatment. Don't fret, however, "recommendations to the General Assembly" have been made by the staff.

In response to the panel's findings, Marcie White, Director of the Willie M. program, stated: "There were no surprises." Do you mean to tell us, Ms. White, that you have been and continue to preside over a program

that manages to spend \$40,000 per needy child and you can't even provide these kids with necessary services, proper diagnoses, and decent facilities? Even our bureaucratically top heavy and bloated corrections system doesn't come close to the costs of the Willie M. program. Why can't we see more for our money?

Ms. White does have an answer to the problem and it does not involve giving you more for your money. Her answer is simple - more money, more money, more money. Does this refrain sound familiar - "You (Joe Taxpayer) aren't paying enough?" Apparently, all we must do is increase the amount of money we are spending per child to maybe \$60,000 or even \$80,000, and the problem will be solved.

How long will we continue to pour money into the bottomless pit of government spending and hope, beyond hope and reason, that things will get better? When will we realize that our financial resources are limited and that more and more government is not the answer? When will we stop listening to the soothing tones of the Willie M. administrators, who have the audacity to tell us that \$40,000 per child is not enough? When will we stand up and start doing the work that needs to be done?

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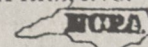
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