

Opinions

JIM HEFFNER

Columnist



She's better than new

We were told several weeks ago that Ann would need bypass surgery. When the doctor told us, she turned pale and began to shake slightly.

We had reservations at a beach condo, and the doctor told us to go ahead with our vacation, her situation was not an emergency.

Most of the women in Ann's family have had heart problems, some of the men too.

She developed a hiatus hernia in 1978 which was incorrectly diagnosed as a heart attack. That's when we first went to the Sanger Clinic and met Dr. Svenson.

The good doctor, who has become a friend over the years, performed a heart catheterization and told us Ann could resume her normal life. She had a hiatus hernia, not a heart attack.

About seven years back, she did have a heart attack, and Dr. Svenson has been keeping close tabs on her since then. He is the doctor who convinced her she needed bypass surgery.

We went on vacation and she was her usual bright, perky, drill-sergeant self. I did catch her staring out into the ocean on occasion. I knew where her mind was.

Several times in the past two weeks, she asked, "do you really think I should do this?" I remained silent, she knew the answer.

How do you tell someone you love and with whom you've lived for 36 years, "yes, go ahead and let them open your chest, saw through your breast bone and stop all your vital organs?"

The surgery was finally scheduled for last Thursday. We were to be at the hospital at 5 a.m. That meant we had to get up at 3:30 to get there in time, because the insurance company would not let her go into the hospital on Wednesday evening. They took her away from me at 6:30 a.m. She clung to me and cried softly. Her eyes were filled with fear. I couldn't find the words I needed to comfort her, and even if I had it's doubtful I'd have been able to say them.

Our children came to sit with me and wait, as did many members of her family. They are a close knit group, and when one is down and out, all are down and out. Ann is one of nine children, six of whom are girls.

At about 11:30, the doctor called for us. "She came through with flying colors," he said. "I was even able to repair the original damage she suffered when she had the heart attack. She will be better than new."

Thank you God, thank you Dr. Cook.

We were allowed to see her at 1:00, but our two boys were not prepared for the sight. Those of you, and there are many, know what the first visit with a bypass patient is like.

She was lying on her back, with a ventilator in her mouth, and her tongue lolling to the side. Her body was puffy. We were told that was normal.

Patti, our daughter, thought she looked pretty good. Our two boys were speechless and misty-eyed. Mike, the oldest, didn't say anything but oozed fear. Jeff talked about it. "I didn't think she looked good at all. I was definitely not prepared for that."

I was prepared, because I had been told what to expect. We both had been so busy, we forgot to tell our children.

As the day progressed, I saw her twice more. At four o'clock, she was awake, but unable to speak because of the ventilator. Mike went back in with me at four. He wanted to assure himself she was alright. At 8, I went in again, and the ventilator had been removed. I was told this was good, because they usually wait until the middle of the first night to take them out.

On Friday, Ann was moved to a private room, but she still had a lot of wires and tubes in her body. They removed some of the tubes on Saturday, and she was able to get up and sit in a chair. She even took a little stroll down the hall. I finally went home late Saturday night and slept soundly for the first time in many days.

She hasn't started giving orders yet, but Ann is well on the road to recovery. Our family is grateful for all the prayers and concern.

HERALD NEWS DEADLINES

The Kings Mountain Herald welcomes your news for publication in each Thursday's paper. We ask that you observe these deadlines:

Deadlines for social news, club news, birthdays, anniversaries, weddings, etc., is 5 p.m. Friday. Any items received after that time will be included in the current week's paper if time and space permit; if not, they will be withheld until the following week.

Deadlines for general news, community news, sports, church news, features, etc., is 5 p.m. Tuesday.

Pictorial Editorial



Spring has sprung in October at the Kings Mountain home of Charles Owens. Mr. Owens is shown looking at one of his dogwood trees, which is covered with buds and has several blooms on it. Mr. Owens said he has seen dogwood trees bud in the fall before, but this is the first time he has seen one bloom. Could it be a sign of a rough winter?

Your Right To Say It

Thanks, Comfort Inn, for honesty

To the editor:

On the night of Saturday, September 17, my father and I stayed at the Comfort Inn in Kings Mountain. We were in the area attending the 18th annual Pioneer Days and Muzzleloaders' Conclave at the state park just across the border in South Carolina. My father is a member of the Newberry Pistol Club who sponsors the Muzzleloader event each year. When departing the hotel on Sunday morning, I inadvertently left behind a bag which contained a variety of items including my birth certificate, passport, social security card, and several pieces of gold jewelry.

I discovered my error on Monday morning and phoned the hotel immediately. By 10:30 a.m., Ms. Terry Putnam at the Comfort Inn called to confirm that the hotel manager had my bag and that they would be happy to mail it to me since I lived over three hours away in Atlanta. I received my package on Tuesday and was relieved to find that all items were still in the bag, including a watch my parents had given to me for high school graduation and a pearl pendant my father had given to me when I was only two years old. I called Ms. Putnam back to thank her for all her help, and she told me the housekeeper who had found the bag in my room and turned it in was Ms. Florence Sipe. I have now written to Ms. Sipe to thank her for her honesty, and have also sent her a small reward as a token of my gratitude. Although the certificates were replaceable, the jewelry held great sentimental value and would be irreplaceable. I have also written to the hotel manager, Mr. Andy Shaw, commending Ms. Putnam and Ms. Sipe, as well as Ms. Alberta Thompson, the head housekeeper who Ms. Sipe initially informed about the found bag, on their honesty and a job well done.

My purpose in writing this letter is to inform the people of Kings Mountain about the honest efforts and good work performed by the Comfort Inn employees and to make them aware of some of the wonderful people who live and work in their community. They are to be commended because the unfortunate truth is that you do not always find that kind of honesty in the world we live in today.

Lisa Frady
Atlanta, Ga.

Thanks from Amvets

To the editor:

Our 1994 Amvets Post 995 golf tournament was held at Crowders Mountain Golf Club. The Captain's Choice competition was won by the team of Bill Van Dyke, Kenny Rhyne, Charlie Johnson and Chip Fulton. Second place were Robert Oates, Bob Chandler, Danny Wilson and K.G. Etters. Third place were Jim Payne, Gene McCulloch, Tom McIlwain and Fred Sisk.

Amvets Post 995 is very grateful for the cash donations and door prizes that were given. We also extend our thanks to all of the great people who played and helped to make it so successful. The proceeds will be

used to give an educational scholarship to a deserving student from Kings Mountain High School.

A special thanks goes to all of the following individuals and businesses:

Kings Mountain Country Club, Jim and Jean's Country Store, Scott Cloninger, Kings Mountain Herald, Warlick & Hamrick Associates, Redmon Pool & Spa, Carolina State Bank, Mike McDaniel, Howe Insurance, McGinnis Clothing, McGinnis Furniture, Crowders Mountain Golf Club, Trammel Surveying & Mapping, Kings Mountain Auto Parts, Kings Mountain Farm Center, American Legion Post 155, Kentucky Fried Chicken, Nan-Wan's Family Salon, Champion General Contracting, Phiher Hardware, First Union, Cox Dura-Pine, Sophisti-Cut, Amvets Post 995, Little Dan's, Republic, Camp Video, Rick's Flicks, Winn Dixie, Silver Express, McDonald's, Dr. David McDaniel, Lakewood Golf Club, Tom & Linda, Charlie's BP, Precision Golf, Cablevision, K&M Jewelry, Just Cruisin', Angie's Etceteras, C&C Heating Service, Center Service, J&J Knitting, Harper's Pharmacy, Andy Neisler, Little Ceasar's Pizza, Ledford Roofing, Tom's Family mart, BB&T, Bridges Auto Parts, Pizza Hut, LaPointe Honda, Pilgrim Enterprises Inc., Sub Factory, Woodbridge Golf Links, T&W Textiles, Clark Tire & Auto, and Linwood Restaurant.

Thanks again.

Jerry Ross, C.J. Holland, Tom Thomas

A heartless act

To the editor:

This is in reference to a solar light that was on my father's grave at Kings Mountain Cemetery. It hasn't even been on there long and some heartless person had to steal it.

I would really appreciate the person who stole it to put it where he or she got it. If that person wants one you can buy one at Lowes or HQ.

Please return it to Holland Eugene Gantt's grave. It would really mean a lot to his family.

Linda Gantt

HERALD LETTER POLICY

The Herald welcomes your letters to the editor for publication in each Thursday's paper. We ask that you follow these guidelines:

Keep the letters brief and to the point. Letters must be 600 words or less. 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 for verification purposes.

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

The drunk driving insanity in North Carolina

The insanity of the needless carnage, lifelong injuries and death on our state's highways continues to elude most of us as we carry on with our day-to-day lives. Nonetheless, drunk driving claimed the lives of 469 North Carolinians and injured over 12,000 others last year alone. Even after the state lowered the legal blood-alcohol limit from 0.10 percent to 0.08 on October 1, 1993, over 100 people were killed through the end of the year in alcohol-related accidents. Additionally, 3,058 people were injured in wrecks where alcohol was a contributing factor.

After we attempt to absorb such pain, suffering and loss, an analysis of the drunk driving problem presents one extremely disturbing fact - some 80 percent of drunk drivers are repeat offenders. Such shocking repeat offender rates prompted N.C. Patrol Commander Robert Barefoot to remark, "They're the same ones over and over again. They don't seem to ever quit driving."

Commander Barefoot is correct in his assessment. It appears that nothing seems to stop the repeat offender. We take their licenses and we send them to prison. However, appearances are not always what they seem. Unless a drunk driver is convicted of a class one or class two offense (these are the highest offense classi-

GUEST COLUMN

THOMAS GOOLSBY
Carolina Syndicated
Columns



fications requiring serious injury or death), they can many times apply for and receive limited driving permits. These permits allow them to get back on the road again, presumably to drive to work and perform other so-called "necessity" driving.

The North Carolina prison system has also gotten soft on drunk drivers. Of the over 2,500 convicted drunk drivers released from prison during 1993, the average criminal served just 10 percent of his/her sentence.

The result of such misguided policies? On average, the time served by convicted drunk drivers was only two months in 1993. Using the excuse of clogged courts and a packed prison system, the state has cut the

average time served by a drunk driver in half since 1987.

In response to the crisis, state officials have created yet another task force. This one is made up of 35 members and headed by Lt. Governor Dennis Wicker. The task force has a report due to the General Assembly in early January. The victims are demanding that something be done. So far, most of the ideas entertained by the task force are of the "preventative" variety involving more treatment of habitual offenders and a taxpayer-financed "Booze It and Lose It" campaign, similar to the "Click It or Ticket" campaign.

Little is being said about lengthy, mandatory prison sentences without parole, compulsory restitution for victims, or seizure of vehicles. While there are no simple solutions to the problem of drunk driving, slick ad campaigns and more treatment options for criminals cannot take the place of "hard time" for drunk driving.

Preventative measures are all well and good, but we cannot forget that in order for such measures to be effective, we must have a system with "teeth." Drunk drivers should be so scared of a tough criminal justice system that they will opt for taking a cab, sleeping in their cars or stumbling home, before turning the key and endangering innocent, law-abiding citizens.

BOB McRAE

Superintendent
Kings Mountain Schools



Facility needs of KM Schools

We are now settle din our new district office facility at 105 East Ridge Street. I hope you will feel free to visit us here at any time we can be of assistance to you. I think the facility project was very successful and appreciate the support of our community in this task. I believe you will be proud of what we have done. We will soon be announcing an open house date for the new office.

The task of keeping facilities in shape in a public school system is demanding. We are ahead of many systems due to the bond passed in the late 1980s and due to the commissioners' provision for our needs through their sales tax redistribution plan. However, we cannot think that we are finished with our work now that the Central project is complete. In today's column I want to give you an idea about some of the facility challenges we must face in the coming years.

A long term issue which must be monitored relates to the growth in the Bethware and Grover districts. If these schools continue to grow as has happened in recent years, we will eventually have to either add classroom space at them, permanent or temporary, or construct a new elementary school somewhere between the two schools. It is too early to make a definite forecast on this matter, but it must be reviewed frequently to make certain that we do not get surprised by a growth spurt.

More immediately there are many types of projects for which we need to plan. Some relate to the growth mentioned in the last paragraph. For instance, Bethware still has limited space for growth in terms of classrooms but other facilities at the school - such as the cafeteria - are being taxed. Cafeteria expansion

will have to be considered. Plans are currently being developed for the project which could cost in the neighborhood of \$100,000. As a system grows, a number of projects arise which can shrink resources.

Roofing needs seem to always be present. Several hundred thousand dollars of projects are already on our list of work which needs to be done. We normally complete at least one re-roofing project each year, sometimes more. We are also reaching the point where lighting and mechanical upgrades in several schools will be needed as the original systems wear out or become inefficient after lengthy use.

The issues we have addressed in recent years regarding school safety have facility implications. Each of our schools is currently assessing its campus and facilities to determine what needs to be done to enhance safety. In a number of cases we need to replace worn-out outer doors to buildings with doors and hardware which offer more security. The cost for each double-door entrance to a building is approximately \$1,500. It wouldn't take long to spend a significant portion of our regular capital outlay allotment to replace all of our doors which are in need.

There are also land needs for the system. Two of our campuses - East and West - are on sites with limited acreage. As land becomes available adjacent to those schools we must consider the possibility of expanding their holdings. This expansion is needed both in terms of being able to increase areas for parking, playground and building projects and in terms of protecting the campuses from commercial construction which would make the environment less safe for children.

Athletic facilities need upgrades. Lighting systems at both John Gamble Stadium and Lancaster Field are inadequate. So are the press box, rest room, and concession facilities at the football stadium. Over the next 5-10 years several hundred thousand dollars will be needed if these items are to be addressed.

A system such as ours has good facilities. They are not so by accident. We have developed good facilities through much planning and community support. It is our responsibility to keep them in good shape through an effective maintenance program with replacement projects scheduled as appropriate. It's the old Fram Oil Filter line - "pay me now or pay me later." Couple such a preventive maintenance program with new demands as caused by growth or by government regulation, as in the case of the asbestos removal requirements we faced a few years ago, and resources can be quickly depleted.

We cannot rest on our accomplishments now that we have a quality district office facility. Meeting capital outlay demands will be a yearly challenge which requires objective prioritizing and thorough planning. We invite you to monitor our progress.

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