

Opinions

Your Right To Say It

Cartoonitorial

Our View

Orphanages serve need

To the editor:
House Speaker-elect Newt Gingrich has been castigated for proposing that we reinvent our system of private and public orphanages.

The word "orphanage" brings to mind deceptive and simplistic images of ill-treated waifs, pleading like Oliver Twist for but one more ladle of thin gruel. The truth is that the modern welfare state, by throwing cash payments at households headed by crack addicted minors with revolving door boyfriends, has inflicted more criminal horror on children than the worst nightmares of Charles Dickens 19th century London slums. The real Scrooges are today's defenders of the status quo.

Orphanages, by contrast, have long served a noble and high minded purpose: the rescue of children from squalor. Their alumni include great citizens like Babe Ruth and Dave Thomas of Wendy's. In the period after World War II, the social service establishment implemented the policy of keeping families together at all cost, no matter how slim the likelihood of rehabilitation. Orphan homes were decried as engines of oppression by which class elite controlled the downtrodden by the threat of plundering their progeny.

The left never views wretchedness or poverty as the consequence of irresponsibility. In their view, it is a faux pas to distinguish between the deserving and undeserving poor. The underclass are merely the victims of capitalism and racism. In this misty eyed, romantic thinking system, every drug addict is a sympathetic character out of a John Steinbeck novel.

Can anyone seriously argue that the proper aim of public policy should be, for example, to reunite the 19 children found in an unheated, fecal strewn apartment in Chicago with their abusers? Could life with the Sister of Mercy or in the Illinois Children's Home be worse? Headlines from this paper suggest that we need not look as far as Chicago for supporting examples.

There is no painless way to reform welfare. It is easy to label conservatives as mean spirited when they offer tough love solutions. One thing is certain: rewarded behaviors will be repeated. We cannot afford a safety net that generates a surplus of vice.

Stephen R. Judge

Thanks, Holiday Inn

To the editor:
The Kings Mountain Senior Center would like to express its sincere appreciation to Mr. Cecil Parton, Manager of the Kings Mountain Holiday Inn, for providing Thanksgiving lunch for many area senior adults. Approximately 70 seniors enjoyed a delicious meal due to Mr. Parton's efforts. I would also like to thank Mr. Parton's family, the staff and management of the Inn, members of the Kings Mountain Police Department and the many volunteers who provided transportation.

The spirit of Thanksgiving was truly alive and well at the Holiday Inn Thursday. Such outrageous generosity is a rare commodity today. People like Mr. Parton and his group of volunteers help make the world a better place to live.

Thanks again for "adding life to the years" of our area senior adults. What you do does make a difference!

Monty Thornburg, Director
Kings Mountain Senior Center

Kellum thanks supporters

To the editor:
We wish to thank all the "Kellum for Sheriff" supporters. You are winners.

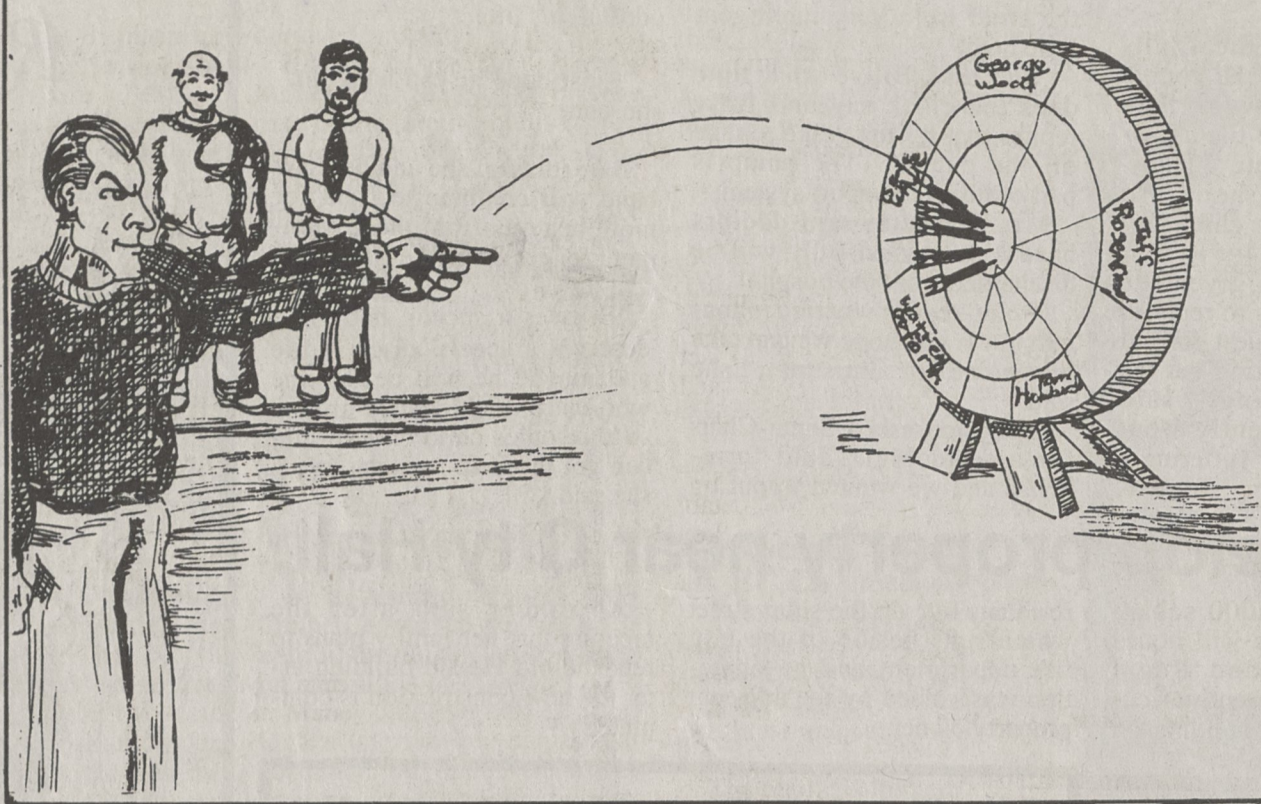
And in one way, this has been a great experience as we gained so many loyal and true friends. It was also another learning and growing process to be used at another time to help others.

We must have done something right as we did open the door for a two party system in Cleveland County Sheriff's race. And so it was not all in vain.

Many of you in our organization had never before taken part in an election process other than voting. So you did make a big difference in politics in Cleveland County, and be proud of that. As for me, I am tired of others deciding what is best for me without speaking out.

But you and I also know now who our true friends are.

Ward Kellum



We need to become doers

*"Now no joy but lacks salt
That is not dashed with pain
And weariness and fault;
I crave the strain*

*Of tears, the aftermath
Of almost too much love,
The sweet of bitter bark
And burning clove.*

Robert Frost, To Earthward

"Five, ten, fifteen," she counted, whipping bills around like a good short-order cook flipping pancakes. She worked with all the efficiency and pride of a seasoned worker. She was a bank teller and a fine one.

"Fifteen dollars," Mr. Newsome. "Thank you and happy holidays to you."

"Thanks," I said, and began to put my money away. But no sooner had I heard those words than she sighed a deep, exhausted sigh. It was the kind of sigh you don't hear everyday. It was the sign of a tiredness which even a good night sleep won't cure. It was the tape measure of her life.

In the moment after that sigh, I couldn't help but bring to mind her words just spoken: "happy holiday." Somehow it emptied those words and made them hollow. They were simply words to be spoken, not words from the heart. They were the tools of business exchange, not the tools of genuine well wishes. And somehow they were appropriate in that place. Because all around us in the bank were similar signs of the season - tissue bells hung from the ceiling, a picture of Santa Claus with the bank logo on his bag of goodies, a snow-covered sled with a snappy red checkbook.

It occurred to me then that during these special times, the truest words of the season are most often embedded in and surrounded by distant imitations. The genuine speech of compassion and

REFLECTIONS
on Religion and Life

Rev. Dick Newsome
Pastor
First Presbyterian Church

commitment is bathed in a litany of commercial politeness.

That fact alone would not be worth noting but for the realization that so many among us are in search of genuine love and care. So many of us are in search of something more substantial. Somehow the holidays remind us as no other time that in and among us are people who are lonely, tired and in need. And it is the very hollowness of the words meant to share love which betrays it.

And so with the great cloud of seasonal well wishes being passed to and fro, it may be that we will need to go one step beyond words to communicate to each other our genuine care. It may be that words alone are but window dressing around busy lives.

It seems to me that God has understood and still understands that fact about us. So God in great wisdom has shown His love for us in powerfully concrete, tangible ways. He has moved beyond saying to doing. And after all, the holidays are finally about God's actions much more than His words.

So we would do well to learn by that fact. We would all do well to become doers of hope and joy. Because if faithful action and concrete acts of love become the marks of our lives during this time, then surely these days will be holy days for us after all.

Students help S.A.V.E. schools

I mentioned in my previous column that students at our high school have begun a chapter of S.A.V.E., Students Against Violence Everywhere. This club was originally founded a few years ago at West Charlotte High School after the senseless killing of Alex Orange, a student at the school. Since that time similar clubs have begun at a number of high schools not only in North Carolina but across the country. I am very proud of our students for beginning such a club here.

The formation of the S.A.V.E. chapter at Kings Mountain High School addresses one of the recommendations of our Community Task Force Against School Violence, that "The Board of Education encourage student led involvement in violence prevention efforts through activities such as S.A.V.E. clubs and special projects." I believe this step is extremely important.

It is true that the Board of Education has introduced a number of violence prevention efforts in our school system. It is also true that, to this point, we have had no serious incidents this school year, a fact we can all celebrate. However, I do not believe that we will have lasting success until our students become involved in the efforts to rid our schools of all violence. I know most of our students are appalled by incidents of violence at schools. They must move beyond that concern to an active partnership with the community in an effort to have totally safe schools. The S.A.V.E. club is a great beginning.

What are these students doing to accept the challenge? In today's column I want to let you know what has happened thus far. I think you will easily see why I am so excited about and proud of this effort.

Students are being asked to sign a pledge to make our high school safe and violence free. They are also asked to donate a small amount of money when they do so. The school system will match the donation for each student who keeps the pledge. The money will be used for a club project. The money, however, is not as important as the pledge itself. Finally, we have students who are willing to step out and be counted for our effort at having safe schools. As we broke for the Thanksgiving holidays 223 students had signed the pledge. We cannot be satisfied until every student wants to sign and does so.

At our last home football game this year the S.A.V.E. club held a special presentation. It recognized former students at our school whose lives had been cut short by violence and released bal-

BOB McRAE

Superintendent
Kings Mountain Schools

loons in their memory. This ceremony helps focus the attention on the safe schools issue and reminds us of the potential tragedy that awaits each time violence enters one of our campuses.

The students are also prepared to make presentations at local civic clubs, PTO meetings, churches and other community gatherings. They have a very informative video to show such groups and a few comments to make about their efforts. Presentations which have already been made have been very well received.

While not a specific S.A.V.E. project, a number of students at the school have become trained as peer mediators and will assist willing students who are upset with something at school to work through their problems in a non-violent way. The same program will be offered at the middle school. Hopefully, this effort will not only cut down on violent disruptions at school but also reduce suspensions which result from such actions.

I have been pushing hard for this kind of student involvement. Long range, it is our only hope as these are the people who will soon be adults raising their own families. If we are to rid our schools of violence, it will in large part have to come because of the values children are taught by their parents. Students who learn now the importance of not sitting idly by while problems occur will be more attuned to teaching their own children to not tolerate such acts.

I want to publicly say again what I have said several times before. I am extremely proud of the young people who have committed themselves to this effort. You should be also. They deserve the support of every member of this school community. As you see them wearing their S.A.V.E. buttons and displaying their S.A.V.E. bumper stickers, salute them for accepting the challenge. Our system will prosper from your support, and you will be personally blessed by getting to know you people of such quality. Help us "save" our schools!

Chief will be missed

Former Chief of Police Warren Goforth's job attitude was strictly professional.

His record shows he ran a professional department supervising a \$1 million budget for seven years before his sudden resignation which surprised and saddened many.

Kings Mountain citizens liked and respected the Chief who built a professional public image of a 41-member staff with what he called "community-oriented policing."

Goforth sought and got more training for his officers. He put them on the streets to talk to people and he did the same thing, concentrating on the elderly who were alone or those with special needs.

But perhaps his biggest accomplishment was the automation of all police records and providing the best amount of training for the least amount of tax dollars for his officers.

Kings Mountain has probably one of the most sophisticated and updated communications systems in the state thanks to the leadership of Goforth.

After months of data gathering and entering, the new computer-aided dispatch system was finally operational in 1991. Thanks to the new system, police and fire officials know first hand what they are getting into before they arrive on the scene. The \$120,000 that the City of Kings Mountain spent on the communications center was well spent.

It took Records Secretary LuJuan Dover six months to build the data base, entering information essential to both fire and police officers.

The system, which includes a voice logger, replaced the outdated 22-year-old communications system damaged by lightning and patched up after Hurricane Hugo hit the area in September 1989.

The communications system - the life blood of an emergency - went live September 2, 1991. It ties in ideally with the new county-wide 911 system.

Although he is quick to give credit to the men and women on his staff, Goforth was a strong leader who gave praise when praise was due.

He led the successful efforts to create a DWI task force which resulted in 265 arrests the first year; a stepped up narcotics patrol and detective division that has jailed suspects and with assistance of a 27B Judicial Drug Force returned thousands of dollars in illegal drug revenue to the city plus one of the top D.A.R.E. programs in the state which takes drug education to fifth graders in the Kings Mountain Schools; and a first K-9 unit, another exciting approach by KM officers to deterring crime.

One of the first programs Goforth implemented, with the assistance of Captain Bob Hayes, was the change in color of police uniforms and police cars. He also took a look at outdated weapons and trained officers in the 9mm semi-automatic handguns.

Streamlining the squads by implementing a 12-hour shift reduced absenteeism and gave officers more time with their families.

He initiated the lunch buddy program at the high school and middle school where an officer eats lunch with a student, another method to show high visibility by police in the community.

His Special Enforcement Team of four officers responded to hot calls in the city and were responsible for cleaning up drug infested areas, cutting the number of drug calls from 13 to one a day.

Kings Mountain Police Department was the first agency to go to a different type reporting system and was a test site rated 91 percent for accuracy. Next year the state will implement the reporting system state-wide.

Believing that the men and women in his department were the future leaders of the department, he authorized them to take a year of special training in management development in the Criminal Justice Department at the FBI Academy in Salemburg.

The Department won a three-year state grant for its DWI program from the Governor's Highway Safety program to pay officers to work it and to buy police cars, a new radar system and a computer.

He was on the school's violence task force and drew up guidelines for gun issues.

Calls for service increased from 5,000 to 27,000 calls a year during his tenure. Goforth asked City Council for one more squad of five people, a supervisor for the dispatching office and another Criminal Investigation Division investigator but never got them.

A police report card distributed to the public asking how the individual citizen rates police gave him and the department an A.

Goforth personalized his department and built greater rapport between Kings Mountain and the public.

Goforth's dream of a new law enforcement center was not realized but hopefully in the future a much-needed new building will go up to house the police department.

He also was working with Schools Supt. Dr. Bob McRae on a grant to secure a full-time police officer in the school system.

Another program he hoped to begin this fall was a police volunteer program, recruiting his officers to give a Saturday morning a month to talk to shut-ins, run errands for them and assure them of their security.

In the waning months of his tenure, however, Goforth ran into problems with city fathers who had started questioning him "on any and everything," he told The Herald, and he said the resulting pressures for as long as two years forced his resignation.

The Kings Mountain community owes Warren Goforth a debt of gratitude for not only keeping them safe but being a servant of the people they could trust. The Chief's shoes will be hard to fill.

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