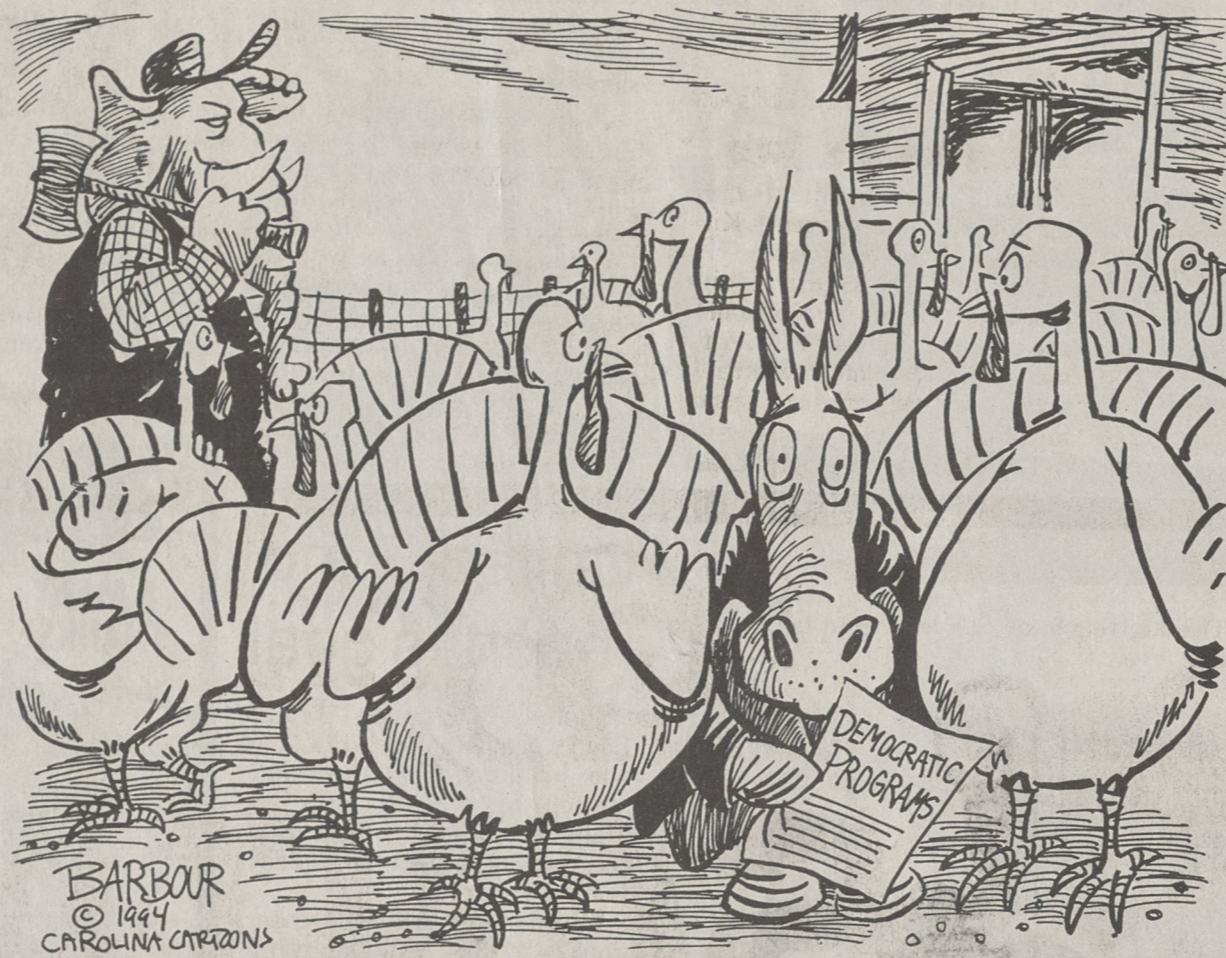


Opinions

Cartoonitorial



Your Right To Say It

Thanks for help

To the editor:
As director of the 1994 Kings Mountain Christmas parade, I would like to thank everyone who helped make this year's parade so successful. Each participant used their own special talents to entertain the crowd and spread the Christmas spirit. Thank you!

I would especially like to thank the entire staff of the Parks and Recreation Department: Mrs. Langston Byers, Delores Brossard, Nettie Surratt, Jean Martin, Jimmy Stadler, Gary Ashberry, Monty Deaton, and John Forrest. Your hard work and support are what made it possible for us to present Kings Mountain with one of the biggest and best parades ever. Few people realize that months of preparation go into the planning of a parade.

A special thank you to Ollie Harris for serving as the grand marshal. It was an honor having him lead the 130 unit parade through the streets of Kings Mountain.

Thank you to all of our float sponsors: Dicey Fabrics, Shelby Star, Personnel Services Unlimited, Century 21-Hometown Realty, Badcock Home Furnishings, CleveMont, Ray McKenney Chevrolet-Geo, Town and Country Barbecue, First Union, Home Savings Bank, First Carolina Federal Savings Bank, Belk-Cleveland Mall and Amity Finance. The increasing support of the business community allows us to have more beautiful floats each year.

Thanks to the Kings Mountain Police Department for its assistance before, during and after the parade. It could not be done without them.

Most importantly, thanks to the spectators. It was rewarding to see all the smiling faces.

As always, suggestions and comments are welcome.

David Dellinger

NAACP stops own

To the editor:
Blacks have not served on the Cleveland County Commission for over 100 years. That's history.

Over the years this, that and the other group always got blamed. Racism was always claimed.

Nobody ever proved anything. Nothing ever gets proved in this county. But 1994 was going to be different. Two well-qualified blacks were set to be sworn in office December 5.

Guess what group steps forward and puts a stop to blacks from taking office? The NAACP! It was the NAACP!

Toto, this ain't Kansas!

Danny Barkley
Lawndale

DSS does nothing

To the editor:
Imagine this.

You're discussing how the Cleveland County Substance Abuse Task Force says 80 percent of county crimes are drug related. Twenty-five thousand people are affected by drugs, they say.

Then you try to tie in how most of the serious child abuse cases and child murders were related to drug use. And that many reported cases of abuse and neglect are on a drug addicted parent on welfare. That Food stamps, child support and AFDC money buys drugs instead of providing for the children.

The DSS Board ought to pass a policy to remove children from drug addicted parents, you say.

You can't prove Food stamps and the other benefits are used to buy drugs, says the DSS Director. Then, you ask, where does the welfare recipient get money to buy those drugs?

You're out of order. Meeting adjourned. We've got to go, it's supper time, says the DSS Board Chairman. That's how they do things in California and England, shrieks the ad hoc crowd.

Imagine that and you've been to a DSS Board meeting. And you've seen how they know nothing-do nothing DSS Board operates.

Robert Williams
Fallston

Borrowed time

It isn't enough to say she will be missed, that's a given. A more appropriate comment is everyone who knew Lois Smith loved her, and will cherish her memory.

I didn't meet Lois until last October, but it seems as though she has been a part of my life forever. I've had almost daily contact with her over the past 13 months, and every minute I spent with her was pleasant. We talked every day, in her home or on the phone. She smiled and laughed a lot and was never down in the dumps when we were together.

Sometimes, when the news beat was slow. I'd go by and sit in the chair beside her desk, where she was usually working at her computer. We discussed everything. I sought her counsel and she was always willing to advise me. She asked about my family, including my grandchildren. Lois was devoted to her children and grandchildren.

When there was nothing happening in town, she would reel off several ideas for feature stories to include in the paper. She was a veritable storehouse of ideas. Once she got started, she never ran out of subjects to write about.

I can hear her now on the phone. If I asked her if she thought such and such would make a good story, her comment was, Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah. Lois didn't have much trouble working up enthusiasm.

Sometimes, before I went home in the evenings, I'd go by just to check on her. Those were good times, because we always sat and talked quietly on those occasions. Once in a while, she would tire of her wheelchair, and prop herself up in the bed to chat with me, and some of our conversations were hilarious.

She told me about the time she was awakened at 2 a.m. by a loud explosion. I thought the world was finally ended, she said. After I checked to see if all my body parts were intact, I turned on the light and pulled myself up in bed. What do you think I found? One of the tires on my wheelchair had exploded.

We both cackled for a long time over that one. Lois told me the entire story of the wreck that mangled her as a teenager. She said she had no idea why she didn't die, but suspected God had something else in mind for her. The experience left her with a high tolerance for pain, and not the slightest hint of any fear of death. I've been living on borrowed time for more than 50 years, she said.

She was kind, compassionate and courageous. Negativism was not a part of her existence. All her newspaper stories were positive. In fact, she was glad I came to town, because she knew there were some hard news stories that needed to be written, but she couldn't bring herself to do them.

As I was leaving her the day before she went to Pawleys Island, her last trip, she handed me a poem. You might want to print this sometime, she said.

I have no idea who wrote it, but here it is:

Blessed are they who understand
my faltering step and palsied hand.
Blessed are they who know that my ears today
must strain to catch the things they say.
Blessed are they who seem to know
that my eyes are dim and my wits are slow.
Blessed are they who looked away
when coffee spilled at the table today.
Blessed are they with a cheery smile
who stop to chat for a little while.
Blessed are they who never say
you've told that story twice today.
Blessed are they who know the ways
to bring back memories of yesterdays.
Blessed are they who make it known
that I'm loved, respected and not alone.
Blessed are they who know I'm at a loss
to find the strength to carry the cross.
Blessed are those who ease the days
on my journey Home in loving ways.
It is nice to think she left this little poem to
those who loved her. I have staked a claim to one
spot on the list.

Our View

Crest and Burns deserve support of all in county

There has probably never been a time when two Cleveland County athletic teams won - or even played for - state championships in the same sport, in the same year.

Burns and Crest high schools have a unique opportunity to make history this weekend at Kenan Stadium in Chapel Hill. Both are playing for the North Carolina High School Athletic Association football championship.

Burns, 12-2 and the champion of the Southwestern Conference, will battle East Randolph Friday at 7:30 p.m. for the 3-A championship.

Crest, 14-0 and two-time champion of the Northwestern Conference, will face a powerful Jacksonville team Saturday at 12 noon for the 4-A title.

And, while they're not from Cleveland County, the nearby Lincolnton Wolves, 13-1, will try to successfully defend their 2-A state title Saturday at 7:30 p.m. against Wallace-Rose Hill.

Not many teams have reached the pinnacle of success in such a short period as Burns and Crest. Both teams began their football programs in 1968, and like all young teams they took their

lumps for awhile. Throughout their history they have been natural arch-rivals, not only because they're the biggest schools in the county but because their consolidated high schools represent all the small schools that once were members of the Cleveland County School System.

Crest won five straight SWC 3-A titles in the early 1980s before moving to the 4-A ranks, and they made the state 4-A playoffs several years while competing in the regular season against one of the state's perennial powers, West Charlotte.

The Chargers have dominated the NWC 4-A since moving to that league last year. Burns, which is making its ninth straight state playoff appearance under Coach Ron Greene, won its first-ever conference football championship last year, and repeated this year.

Win or lose this weekend, the Bulldogs and Chargers deserve the support of all of Cleveland County. While they are each other's bitter rival during the regular season, there should be thousands of people from Cleveland County wearing the school colors of Burns, Crest, Shelby and Kings Mountain pulling for both teams to bring home the championship trophy.

Appearance committee did good job decorating city

It's beginning to look a lot like Christmas all over town and the city's appearance committee deserves the credit for the beautiful display in the downtown area.

Several months ago Mayor Scott Neisler appointed a committee to beef up the Christmas decorations. The committee headed by Sandra Murphrey, wife of Mayor pro tem Rick Murphrey, found they didn't have the funds to do the job properly.

Mrs. Murphrey and a large committee of citizens started knocking on doors and calling on local businesses and industries and came up with donations to get the ball rolling on the purchase of 4,000 lights to trim the holly trees. They also sold green Christmas wreaths to downtown busi-

nesses and industries and in early fall sold Mountaineer shirts to add to the treasury.

The group's goal is to add more decorations every year.

Mrs. Murphrey said citizens may purchase a light in memory or in honor of friends and loved ones. Each of the 40-plus holly trees cost from \$150-\$300 to decorate with white lights for the holidays.

Mrs. Murphrey said the lights will remain year-round and won't damage the holly trees. She said that the bulbs will actually help the tree limbs from breaking in event of an ice storm.

Hats off to all the committee for a job well done and much-needed downtown beautification.

Lois Smith left her mark on Bessemer City

Neighboring Bessemer City lost its best friend last week in the tragic death in an automobile accident of veteran Bessemer City Record Editor Lois Sexton Smith.

Smith loved the weekly newspaper in a fashion that most modern-day readers would not understand. She devoted the greater part of her adult life to being the eyes and ears of a small town which returned her affection 100 fold.

Our sister editor regarded The Record as more than an inanimate object that could be discarded at the whim of a reader. The Record was her life.

Ironically, Lois lived to tell about another accident in which she was said to be clinically dead. That accident left the high school student a paraplegic but Lois accepted the challenges of life in a wheelchair and went on to marry her high school sweetheart and have children and grandchildren.

The accident that claimed her life happened as she returned to Bessemer City after a Thanksgiving weekend with her family at the coast.

Lois Smith left her mark. We will remember Lois as a lady who taught us all how to live each day to the fullest.


Incarceration lowers crime rate

A recent study by the American Legislative Exchange Council (ALEC) concludes what victims' groups in the Tarheel state have been claiming for years - the N.C. General Assembly's steadfast refusal to build prison cells, in order to keep up with rising crime, has helped make North Carolina a high crime state.

Starting in the early 1980s, North Carolina lawmakers decided not to listen to the pleas for more prison space by law enforcement officers, district attorneys, judges and crime victims. Instead, state politicians listened to liberal criminologists, like Stevens Clarke of UNC-Chapel Hill, who pumped out statistical studies claiming that putting more people in prison failed to cut the crime rate. The answer Clarke and his supporters in the legislature put forward was that the state could prevent crime by spending more and more money on government programs.

While the grand liberal experiment of prevention, rather than incarceration, was played out on our cities' streets starting in the early 1980s, North Carolina went from a low crime state to a crime "hell." In the last decade and a half, our historically low violent crime rate has gone up over 50 percent, making us the 11th worst state in the

GUEST COLUMN
•
THOMAS GOOLSBY
Carolina Syndicated
Columns



union. As far as "total crime" goes, North Carolina ranks second highest in the nation. While our crime rate was growing out of hand, the Tarheel state had the dubious distinction of ranking last in the building of prisons in order to keep pace with rising crime.

The results of the ALEC study are clear. Since 1960, the states that have neglected prison construction have seen the largest increases in crime, while the states that have built prisons have had the smallest growth in crime rates. The study just confirms common sense. If you keep crime from paying by locking up the bad guys, things get better. If crime pays, things get worse. It's not rocket science, but why haven't these common sense ideas caught on?

Over the past decade and a half, our decidedly left-leaning state legislature has been too busy spending our tax money on preventative programs to listen to any tough law and order agenda dealing with building adequate prison space. Instead, they simply buried their heads in the sand, claiming that the state could not afford to lock up the criminals. They conveniently forgot that by not locking up the guilty, they would consign tens of thousands of their constituents to being victims of the criminals they attempted to ignore.

Now the political breeze has changed direction. All of the newly elected legislators ran as tough law and order candidates. They know first hand that the people of North Carolina are tired of business as usual. The voters want criminals to serve "real time for real crimes." Survey after survey shows that crime is the number one public concern. Making the right call on providing more prison space and keeping criminals off our streets should not be difficult to do since the problem is so very apparent. It's just a shame that tens of thousands of innocent people have had to suffer before common sense kicked in.

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