

Opinions

JIM HEFFNER
Columnist



Read this and learn

Once in a great while I will open up "Heffner's Bureau of Information that Nobody Wants," and share a little with both my readers. One of my relatives, I forget which, came up with the name when she told me I was a bureau of useless information.

Anyway, I like to collect oddball items. Here's one I got from a PBS special on an African desert.

There are depressions and indentations on the Serengeti Desert that fill with water and serve as lakes and reservoirs during the rainy season. All kinds of animals visit the waterholes to drink, but there comes a time of the year when they dry up and the animals must move on. Except for the lungfish, which stays put.

The lungfish is a type of fish that can breathe out of water by means of a lunglike organ called a swim bladder or gas bladder. It is one of the oldest fishes known to mankind. Scientists have found lungfish fossils that go back as far as 400 million years. Many scientists think that land dwelling animals with backbones, developed from the lungfish.

There are actually six species of lungfish. Some live in Australia, some in South America and some in Africa. The African lungfish can grow up to seven feet long, and is eel-shaped. They breathe exclusively with their lung and would drown if held under water.

When the dry season comes to the desert and the water holes dry up, the old lungfish just backs down into the mud and muck and stays there for months, feeding on body-stored food and muscle.

Sometimes the natives find them and dig them up for food. I wonder if anybody really cares about the lungfish?

Are you aware that the first traffic fatality occurred on September 13, 1899 (I wonder if it was Friday). The victim was Henry H. Bliss, a 68-year-old real estate broker, who was knocked down as he got off a streetcar at Central Park West and 74th St, New York City.

Bliss was struck down by an automobile driven by Arthur Smith (not the guitar picker). He was taken to Roosevelt Hospital where he died. Smith was held on \$1,000 bail.

Unfortunately, I don't know what kind of car Smith was driving, nor the disposition of the case.

I've often wondered if Smith got points charged against him and if his insurance rate went up.

Everybody talks about the weather but nobody does anything about it. I don't know who said that, but it wasn't Calvin Coolidge. I am saying everybody talks about Jefferson Davis as the first President of the Confederacy, but nobody talks about the vice president. I doubt there are 100 people in the entire USA who can name him.

For those of you who have been deprived for so long, the first, and only, vice president of the Confederacy was Alexander Hamilton Stephens, a Georgian. He was sworn in on Feb. 11, 1861, two days after Jeff Davis took over as the one true President.

Last week a Gastonia advertising agency presented a tape on AIDS to the school board for use in fifth grade classrooms. Several board members, after viewing the explicit tape, decided it was unfit for fifth grade students.

I don't think the tape should be shown to any Gaston County students. It isn't clear what the school board thinks. I hope they will turn thumbs down on the tape.

A spokesman for the advertising agency said publicly, AIDS is growing fastest among heterosexual couples.

That is not true. That's something the homosexuals and Hollywood types have put out in an effort to get even more funds for AIDS research.

In truth, according to a November, 1994 communicable disease report from the U.S. government, less than one percent of those contracting AIDS caught the disease through heterosexual sex.

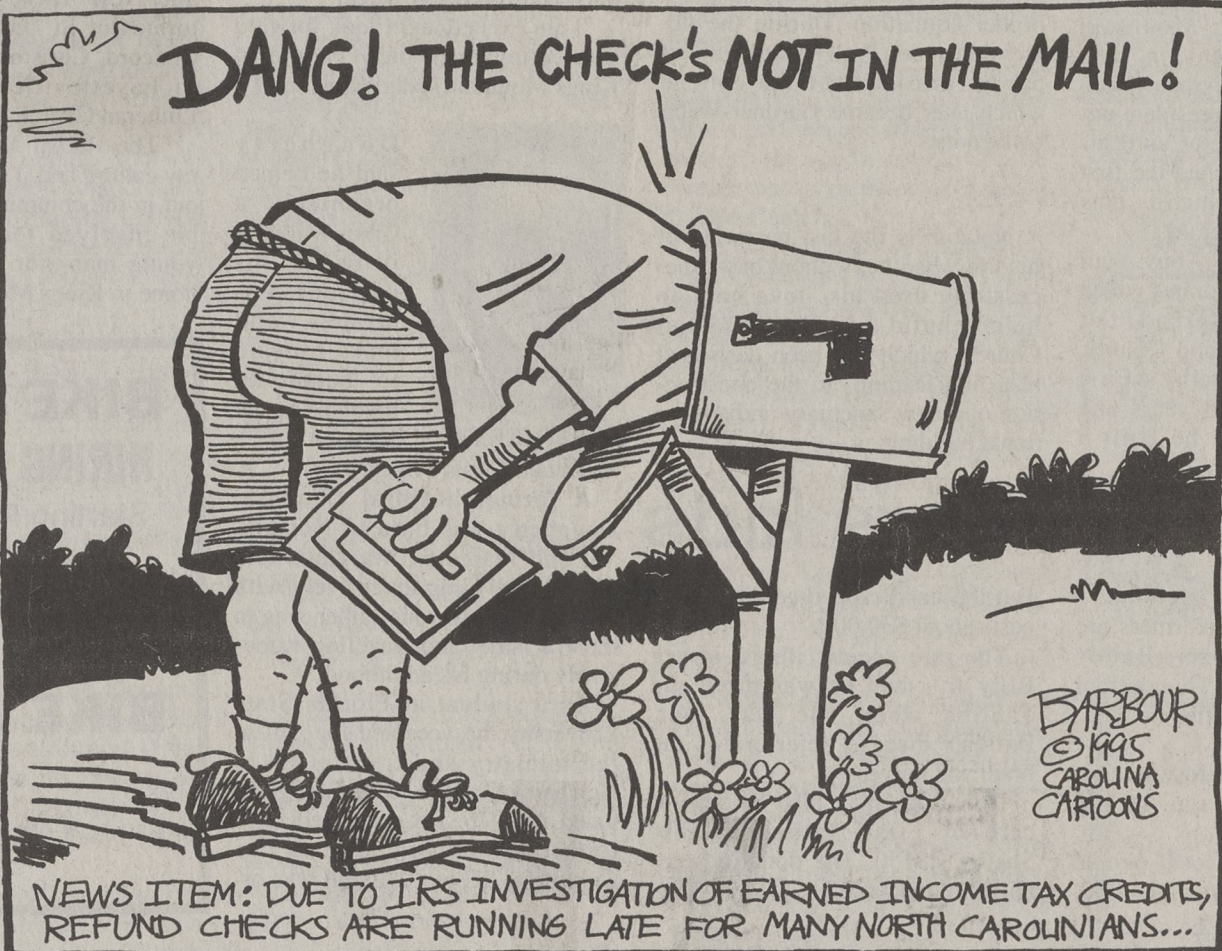
HERALD NEWS DEADLINES

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. Items received after that time will be published if time and space permit; if not, they will be withheld until the next week.

Cartoonitorial



Your Right To Say It

Don't be compassionate to lazy

To the editor:

I have heard lately of several "religious leaders" condemning the tiny little cuts being made in the spending increases in Washington, claiming that they will "hurt the poor." While I know that their hearts are in the right place, their insistence on government "charity" is both destructive and unbiblical.

We note in Deut. 14:28-29 that a tithe every third year (or, if annualized, 1/30th of one's income) is commanded in private charity for the poor. Are these religious leaders obeying this, along with their parishioners or denominational members? Or, by demanding government charity, have they conveniently shifted this burden to others? As was stated by Horatio Bunce to his congressman back in the early 1800s, "While you are contributing to relieve one, you are drawing it from thousands who are even worse off than he." Is this the right thing to do? The fact is that many prefer government charity, because it relieves them of the responsibility of raising charity privately or through their church. Again, as Horatio Bunce said to his congressman, "And the people about Washington, no doubt, applauded you for relieving them from the necessity of giving by giving what was not yours to give."

By insisting on government charity, particularly from the federal government, they are encouraging our federal government to continue to violate the Constitution, which contains no authorization for the redistribution of wealth. As was stated by Congressman Davey Crockett back in the early 1800s on the House floor, "We have the right, as individuals, to give away as much of our own money as we please in charity; but as members of Congress we have no right so to appropriate a dollar of the public money." Using the government to coerce money from others is, in fact, stealing, a violation of Exodus 20:15. As Frederic Bastiat pointed out, "When a portion of wealth is transferred from the person who owns it, without his consent and without compensation, and whether by force or by fraud, to anyone who does not own it, then I say that property is violated, that an act of plunder is committed."

We noted that for every "poor" person whom was found by the government to "help," 999 others came out of the woodwork to share in the government distributed plunder. Again, a clear violation of 2 Thess. 3:10 "If any would not work, neither let them eat." I have heard no call from these "religious leaders" for the able bodied to get off their duffs and get to work.

I am all in favor of compassion. Compassion is when you give your own money to help the needy. Laziness and greed is when an individual or group insists on the government taking other peoples' money to do what the individual or group won't do for themselves.

Richmond C. Beecher

Manor Road looks good

To the editor:

I live on Marigold Street, near Manor Road up from the high school. I just wanted the people who live on Manor Road to know just how much I truly love going up and down their street. All of the homes are absolutely beautiful.

They have made Manor Road one of the most beautiful streets that this town has! I feel the city should recognize all of them for having such a beautiful street. I've only owned my home for 2 1/2 years, but hope that someday my place will look only half as good as theirs.

Again, hats off to all of you, and thank you for such a lovely drive each day. You all inspire me.

Charlene Gardner

Thanks for support

To the editor:

Our musical "West Side Story" was a smashing success, and we broke all attendance records for plays here at Kings Mountain High School. We were so pleased by the response and support of the people within our community, and all this was enhanced by what you did for the performances. Our play would not have been so successful without your contribution and help. We sincerely appreciate all that you did, and we hope that we can count on your help in future dramatic performances.

Again, our sincere thanks for all that you did in the production of "West Side Story" and other drama activities.

Cast of West Side Story, Mrs. Betsy H. Wells, Director, and Eugene Bumgardner, Music Director

Smart start is just a dumb move

As state officials, bureaucrats and media pundits pat Governor Hunt's big government program, Smart Start, on the back and call for its expansion, serious and fundamental questions about the state's future role in our families remain unanswered. Does it make sense to tax working families to the point where both parents must work in order to make ends meet, thus requiring Big Brother to pay the day care bill so that our children can be raised by strangers?

It should surprise no one that State Auditor Ralph Campbell recently told the General Assembly's Joint Appropriations Committee of the "exemplary level of commitment to Smart Start by program participants." Campbell failed to mention that these "program participants" were receiving free cash from state taxpayers and would, of course, love to receive even more goodies. Most commentators failed to note Campbell's additional remarks to the Appropriations Committee and his many recommendations to "improve administration."

Far from being a model program, Smart Start has many shortcomings and Campbell identified several of them. He recommended "clarification" of the roles of the state and all public/private partnerships involved with the program. Is this a polite way, in bureaucrat double-speak, of saying that no one really knows what they're doing? Campbell also called for devising a different method for controlling Smart Start's assets. Is this another way of saying, "No one is watching the till?" An additional problem noted by Campbell was the potential for conflicts of interest involving local Smart Start board members. Is this another way of saying, "Watch out for local officials lining their pockets with state money?" The other problems cited by Campbell ranged from long delays in processing Smart Start contracts, to the need for improvement in accounting and cash management.

All such problems or "concerns" were quickly overlooked by the supporters of Smart Start who are found

GUEST COLUMN

THOMAS GOOLSBY
Carolina Syndicated Columnist



in the many state and local government bureaucracies and public/private partnerships all across North Carolina. Instead, they simply noted how gratifying it was that Campbell took special note of their "exemplary level of commitment" to the success of the Smart Start program. Could any of these folks have a vested interest in portraying the glorious successes of the Smart Start program and overlooking the numerous and varied shortcomings? Whenever we receive any message, isn't it always smart to consider "from whence the messenger comes," particularly when he or she will be spending our money and raising our children? In the end, Smart Start may just be another in a long line of dumb and expensive moves by free-spending and high-taxing Big Government.

Guess who is opposing Republican reform efforts in the General Assembly to require welfare recipients to work for food stamps? The state government welfare bureaucracy is howling the loudest and you won't believe the reason for their opposition. They claim that requiring work for benefits will cost too much.

Although the public (that group of uniformed rabble who pays all the bills) overwhelmingly believes that able-bodied adults should work for their government handouts, officials at the Department of Social Services oppose such ideas. The main reason cited by DSS officials is laughable, when the source is considered. The welfare bureaucrats claim that actually forcing food stamp recipients to work would be too expen-

BOB McRAE

Superintendent
Kings Mountain Schools



Public schools budget needs

The Board of Education will hold a public hearing on its county budget proposal as a part of its meeting on Monday, April 10. Each year at this time we must request from the county commissioners the funding we think is necessary from local resources to operate a quality school system. We certainly do not take this task lightly. In today's column I would like to highlight what we are requesting in this year's budget.

There are two parts to a budget request. The current expense budget requests funds for the operating expenses of the system. Items such as instructional supplies, teacher supplements, utility expenses, and teaching positions beyond what the state provides come from this fund.

In this year's current expense budget we are requesting an 8.4% increase over last year's county allocation. The county funds us on a per pupil allocation, and we received no per pupil increase for the current year. Therefore, we believe we are justified in requesting this year's amount, \$1,991,381.00. Last year's amount was \$1,837,350.00. As you can already see, school finance, even at the local level, is big business. Seventy-six percent of the requested increase for next year is simply for increase continuation costs - the amount needed to keep doing what we are currently doing. As an example, our letters now cost 32 cents to mail just as your's do at home.

The new items in the current expense budget are primarily for the classroom. We are requesting funds for two additional teachers to help us control class size. We are requesting funds to enable us to give each of our schools an additional \$5 per child for purchasing instructional supplies. We are also seeking funds for a 5% supplement raise for our employees. There was not an across-the-board supplement increase last year, only some added incentives for employees who had been with us for 20 years or longer.

Other new items in the budget are limited. Two one-time items which will help the high school prepare for its move to block scheduling - an additional month of employment for two assistant principals and additional funds for staff training - are included. An additional half-time clerical position for Bethware School which is our largest elementary school is the final new expenditure.

The capital outlay budget contains funding for the purchase and upkeep of buildings, equipment, land and the like. We currently receive \$281,551.00 per year and are requesting \$300,000.00 for 1995-96, a 6.6% increase. Let me be quick to add that we also receive additional fund for this purpose thanks to the Commissioners' generosity in its sales tax redistribution plan. However, we still face much more work than we have resources to do in this area.

Much of this budget will provide funds for projects such as roof and carpet replacements, mechanical system upgrades, and lighting improvements. Also, many of our schools need to replace worn out student desks and other classroom furniture. A set of desks for a 25-student classroom costs approximately \$2,000. At that rate it doesn't take long to use up available resources.

We have always tried to be frugal in our budget preparation. I believe we spend our dollars for the right purposes. In the current expense budget we focus on resources for the classroom and on expenditures we must pay such as insurance, utilities, and salaries. In the capital outlay budget we try to spend our money with an eye towards the long haul. In other words we want our investments to last. I think our track record is good. While we realize that resources from taxes are not unlimited, the demands of today's public school effort require additional funds. I hope this column helps you understand why. If you need further information, please feel free to contact me at our office.

sive to oversee and manage. When was the last time that you ever heard a social worker complain about the cost of a government program?

It is amazing to watch the cost estimates pile up whenever any liberal "sacred cow" is on its way to the slaughterhouse. When it comes to the free-spending, "Great Society" welfare programs, seemingly endless excuses are always made for giving away taxpayer money with no strings attached. Liberal rhetoric, such as "We must help those who can't help themselves" and "Let's give a chance to someone who's never been given one," rolls off the lips of government do-gooders, as long as they get the jobs, the titles and the power to disburse the goodies. But, try to ask for a little personal responsibility and, in particular, a reduction in the role of government welfare bureaucracy, and watch out!

Suddenly, the value of pushing people into a responsible work setting is quickly outweighed by "costs and administrative complications." What about the importance of curbing welfare dependency? What about sending a message to society that government assistance must be earned? Apparently, the welfare bureaucracy has little, if any, appreciation for hard work and ideals such as personal responsibility and "earned" self worth. These principles may have a dollar cost associated with them, but enforcing such standards is necessary, if we desire to reduce government dependency and to help the 630,000 North Carolinians currently on food stamps to make their own way in the world.

It's time we stopped listening to the welfare bureaucrats who, in an ill-disguised effort to feather their own beds, attempt to convince us that we cannot reform a bloated and broken system that discourages work and rewards irresponsibility. Are we such suckers that we actually believe we cannot afford to implement "workfare" programs because they will cost too much? How can we afford to do otherwise when, in the end, we are the ones left paying the bills?

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