

Opinions

JIM HEFFNER

Guest Columnist



Use and misuse of the English language

Some people call us wordsmiths. I think that's a bit pretentious, but words are a newsman's stock in trade. More exactly, the arrangement of words into readable sentences is what we strive for. Anyway, this morning I was watching one of the morning TV shows, and I caught myself being attentive to what was being said.

The two hosts, Bryant Gumble and Giselle something or other, both did interviews with Southern cooks from Atlanta. They were down there to do stories on the upcoming Olympic Games, a waste of time if you ask me. I mean the games as well as their trip to Atlanta, and don't you just hate to hear that town referred to as Hotlanta, but I veer from the subject.

Gumble asked a tall, Jethro-looking chef to describe Southern cooking, and the fellow replied, "I guess you could say it's comfortable."

Comfortable? A soft couch is comfortable, cooking is either good, bad, palatable, terrible or delicious. I didn't understand the chef's response at all.

Next Gumble asked the chairman of Atlanta's Olympic committee if it was true that all the prime seats to the games had gone to VIPs and celebrities.

The guy talked for several minutes about how there were 11 million tickets to the Games, "More than Los Angeles and Barcelona combined," but he never answered Gumble's question. His use of words took the heat off him.

Giselle whatever-her-name-is interviewed a lady who prepared several peach dishes.

After the woman expounded on several kinds of the fruits, she demonstrated to Giselle the proper way to peel a peach.

"First you boil it for two minutes, then put it in ice water, then peel it like this," she said, peeling the peach.

Giselle said, "isn't that terrific to know?"

Giselle's remark was less than scintillating to say the least.

By the time all this repartee was completed, I could have peeled a peck of peaches without getting near a pot of water.

My point is, do people pay attention to what they are saying on television? Listen to them sometimes, and you will see what I mean.

On the same subject, words that is, when Jimmy Carter was elected president, service stations and taffy stores all over Southern highways did a landslide business in books about how we in the South talk.

Frankly, I think the people North of the Mason-Dixon line talk funny. When Fuzzy was elected, I thought the language books would be back on the shelves, but so far I haven't seen them. Arkansas is a Southern state isn't it? Maybe not.

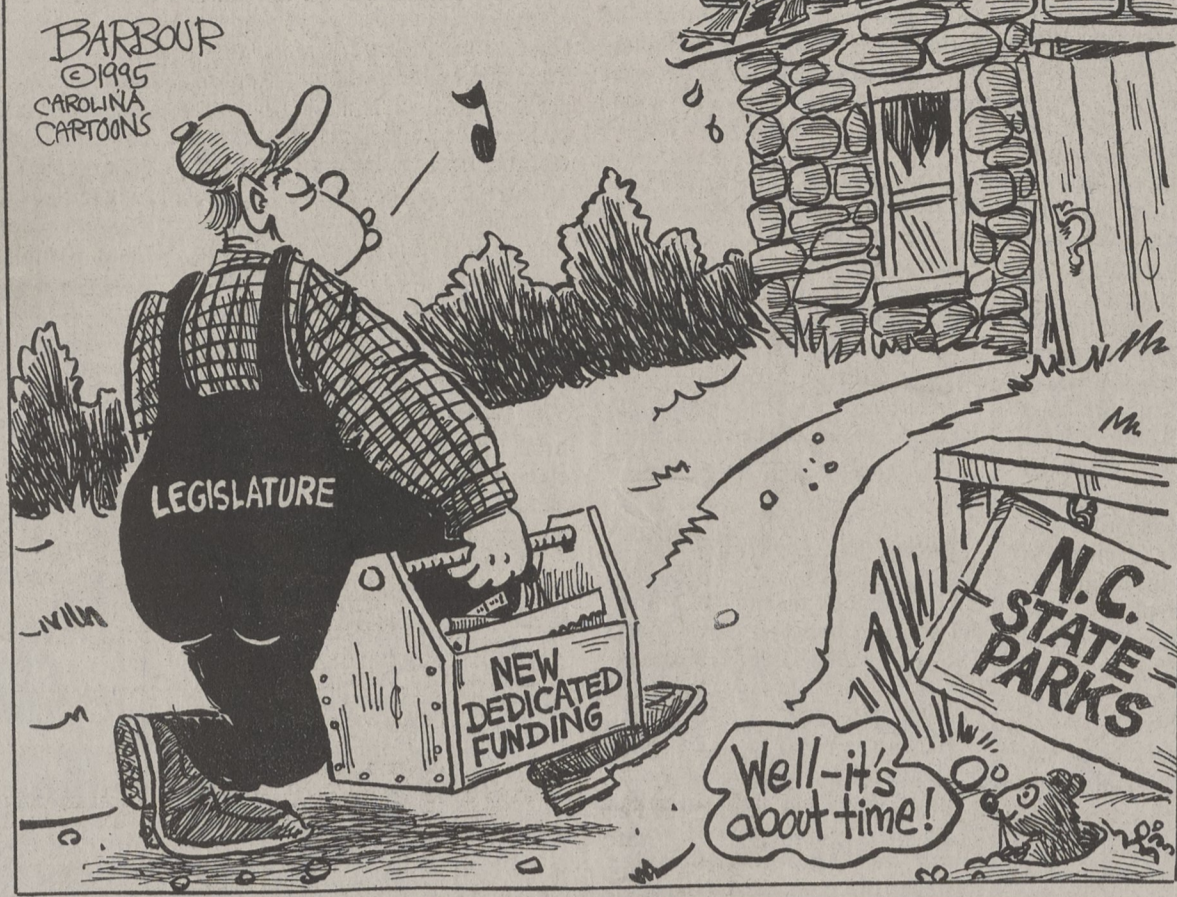
The books were an insult to any decent Southerner's intelligence, and I despised them all, but I admit I've picked up a couple of terms lately that are more Southern than Northern.

One of them is "Jawnya" (Jr.), as in "Get in this house Jawnya." Then there is "cane chew." That's really two words, and it means can't you, as in "Cane chew do anything right, Jawnya?" My final example, I just heard on the John Boy and Billy radio show this morning. The word is "airygo." It means there you go. John Boy made one of his usual unintelligible statements, and Billy said, "Airygo."

I seriously doubt that any language in the world is so misused as English, and why not? The language is sometimes so vague as to be misleading. Desert, for example, can be a large, sandy area, or it can mean to quit the military without discharge papers. Dessert is a sweet dish usually eaten after a meal, but it is pronounced just like desert, meaning leaving the military, etc., or something like that. See how confusing it is?

There are many such examples, but all in all our language is beautiful when used by an expert such as the poet who wrote:

I burn my candle at both ends,
It shall not last the night,
But oh my foes and oh my friends,
It sheds a wondrous light.



Our View

Hayes' experience will be good for KMPD

The recent appointment of Bob Hayes as Kings Mountain Police Chief was a good move by outgoing city manager Chuck Nance.

Hayes was not only one of the most qualified of all the applicants, but he has other attributes that many other applicants may not have had.

The most obvious, perhaps, is his experience. Hayes has spent 34 years with KMPD, working his way through the ranks from patrolman to Captain and assistant chief. Several times in the past he served as interim chief while the city searched outside the department for a permanent chief.

Through those years Hayes has not only gained work experience, but he has developed a rapport with other officers, city administrators and the general public that is second to none. He has seen first-hand things that have worked and things that have failed.

In this time when the city is going through so much turmoil - including the resignation of its police chief in the midst of an investigation into the purchase of a vehicle previously owned by the city - it is essential to have a man in charge who is highly-professional and well-respected by other officers and the public.

Bob Hayes is the ideal person to lead the department through the challenges that lie ahead. He has capable officers to assist him as attested to by the promotion of veteran officers Richard Reynolds, Houston Corn and Melvin Proctor to fill key positions of leadership in various divisions within the department.

We wish the chief and his department well. We know that by working together as a team and putting the citizens' safety and welfare as their number one objective they can give Kings Mountain a department that all can be proud of.

Your Right To Say It

Hendrick didn't consider City Manager position

To the editor:

It has been called to my attention that your newspaper has printed that I was in line for the Interim City Manager's position when George Wood left that position. I now find out that your newspaper, once again, is saying that I was edged out of that position by Gary Hicks. Please understand that I was contacted by the city and asked if I might help them, and in each case, I told them that I would sit down and talk with them about their problems. Such a meeting never took place. I was never interviewed by the City Council for the position.

Please do not use my name in articles which say that I considered the position. As far as I know, I was never considered, nor did I want to be.

I want the citizens of Kings Mountain to know that I wish them the very best. I hope Mr. Hicks gets the cooperation he needs in order to properly administer the affairs of the city, whereby he can follow the city charter, the Municipal Finance Act, which is overseen by the Local Government Commission in the Office of the State Treasurer, and the General Statutes of the State of North Carolina.

Joseph R. Hendrick Sr.

Ruling limiting inmate suits good

The North Carolina Court of Appeals recently ruled in a pair of lawsuits that inmates injured or killed in accidents while performing prison labor cannot sue the state for negligence. Up until these rulings, injured prisoners or their survivors could file lawsuits, while at the same time seeking claims under workers' compensation laws.

Much to the Court's credit, the judges held that convicted criminals employed within the Department of Correction can only file claims for losses with the state's Industrial Commission. Previously, prison inmates had the option of filing negligence suits, in addition to workers' compensation claims.

In one of the cases heard by the Court, an inmate's mother had been awarded \$73,685 in a wrongful death lawsuit when her son died in a work accident. The Court reversed the decision, only allowing the prisoner's estate to file a claim under workers' compensation.

Such legal wranglings, nonetheless, rub many North Carolinians the wrong way. Most taxpayers would be surprised to learn that any criminal who is unintentionally injured or killed while laboring to "pay his debt to society" should have a dual right to seek compensation from the state. Although constitutional scholars could

GUEST COLUMN

THOMAS GOOLSBY
Carolina Syndicated
Columns

argue for decades that inmates and their families have such rights, the Court did a good day's work in quashing negligence lawsuits by prisoners.

Not all of the judges agreed. Judge Edward Greene dissented in both cases. He postulated that convicted criminals should have both options, since the legislature had not specifically excluded inmates from the law governing negligence suits. Luckily, judges with a decidedly more conservative view on the issue prevailed. The result of their opinion will be tens of millions of taxpayer dollars saved by the state not having to fight lawsuits and pay out judgments to criminals. Don't ever let anyone tell you that electing a conservative judiciary is not important!

GUEST COLUMN

Rep. Sue Myrick
NC 9th District



Happy birthday Medicare

This Sunday marks the 30th birthday of Medicare. Unfortunately, at a time when we should be celebrating the world's premier healthcare system, we instead are faced with a crisis of no small proportion.

You may know that Medicare is governed by a board of trustees, with four of the six trustees being members of the Clinton Administration. Just a few months ago they released their report on the status of Medicare, and what they said was disturbing. In 1996, the Hospital - Insurance Trust fund, which pays Medicare beneficiaries' hospital bills, will begin to run a deficit. This fund, supported by a 2.9 percent payroll tax, will be exhausted in just seven years, and only two years later, will be \$126 billion in the hole.

President Clinton, who for months criticized the new congressional majority's efforts to preserve Medicare, has now admitted that Medicare growth must slow down if the system is to remain solvent.

Bolstered by this bi-partisan consensus on the need to save Medicare, I have been talking with you all, to get your input and ideas on how to preserve this vital program. My colleagues in the House have been doing the same thing back in their hometowns, and based on the feedback we have received, we have established six basic principles to guide our efforts to preserve and protect Medicare.

- We must act immediately to preserve Medicare for current retirees, and to protect the system for the next generation of beneficiaries. The President's trustees have reported that the Medicare Part A Trust Fund will be bankrupt in seven years. prompt, decisive action must be taken to save the system.
- Medicare spending must increase at a slower rate. The budget resolution that just passed in Congress guarantees that Medicare funding will increase from \$4,800 per beneficiary this year to \$6,700 per beneficiary in seven years. We are not cutting Medicare spending, but continuing to increase it. However, the program must increase at a slower, more responsible rate, if it is to continue.

Senior citizens deserve the same choices available to other Americans. Currently, Medicare beneficiaries are given only one option when they enroll in the program - a bureaucratic, outdated, one-size-fits-all program that has not really changed since Congress passed it 30 years ago. A Medicare system designed in the 1960s cannot adequately meet the needs of seniors in the 1990s and beyond. Our seniors should have the same opportunities as other Americans in selecting health care options that best meet their needs.

Government must interfere in the relationship between patients and their doctors. Burdensome Medicare regulations on patients and providers must be eased. Medicare beneficiaries must be able to continue their existing coverage - including their choice of doctors and hospitals.

Senior citizens should be rewarded for helping to root out waste, fraud and abuse. I receive hundreds of letters from senior citizens who see waste, fraud and abuse in their Medicare bills. I believe in rewarding these individuals as they make the Medicare system more efficient by exposing waste.

Strengthening Medicare is too important to be left to "politics as usual." Throughout the summer, House Republicans will stand ready to work with the President and House Democrats to save and preserve the Medicare system. I strongly believe that this should be a non-partisan endeavor that focuses on strengthening the program for current and future seniors.

Working together we can ensure that this birthday is not the last one for Medicare.

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 letters brief and to the point. Letters in excess of 600 words will not be published.
- Type and double-space if possible; if not, write legibly. Include your full name, address and phone number for verification purposes.
- The Herald reserves the right to edit letters for length, spelling, libelous and slanderous statements, good taste, or any other reason; and the Herald refuses to reject any letter for any reason.

Joe and Jimmie Phillips in need of a special angel



Joe and Jimmie Phillips put their faith in God as they face the trials of Jimmie's cancer and Joe's injuries from a service station accident.

When you meet Joe and Jimmie Phillips, the first thing that will probably come to mind is "Hey, they're just your regular couple. Nothin' fancy, just good Southern folk." And they're that. They live in a modest home out on St. Luke's Church Rd in Kings Mountain. They have a few kids who they are proud of (Your normal parents, right?). And just like everybody else, they have bills to pay. The problem is, they can't pay them. So what? So everybody meets up with hard luck?

A mechanic at Tony's Exxon on Virginia Avenue in Bessemer City, Joe is known around town for his work. You might have seen him. He's probably fixed your car.

Well, it's been a while since Joe has fixed a car, and for him, it seems like forever.

On June 17, just around a month ago, Joe was in an accident. He was directing a vehicle into the service bay, when all of a sudden he found himself pinned between the customer's car and his workbench which sat along the wall of the ser-

HILL SIDE

Michelle Hill

vice station. The customer, who had tried to brake his car, braked but then slipped only to hit the accelerator leaving Joe badly injured and unable to work.

Since the accident, Joe and his wife, Jimmie, have found themselves in dire straits, because they have another dilemma. Jimmie has not been able to work since December of 1992, because she has been battling Adenoid Cystic Carcinoma - a form of throat cancer.

Jimmie has been through numerous extensive radiation treatments, and although her cancer is in remission, she has suffered physical

damage from the treatments. Along with the regular house bills, grocery bills, and utilities bills that are piling up, the Phillips also have a heavy medical bill which includes regular hospital treatments and medicine prescriptions that total over \$400 dollars alone.

"He takes pain medication and aspirin to keep his blood from clotting. He also takes a stomach medication and a medication for his blood pressure," said Jimmie, who takes about five medications herself.

With no income coming in to take care of the bills, the Phillips have been thankful to receive numerous donations and words of inspiration from some gracious people in the community. It's a sad situation, but somehow, this couple manages to keep a smile on their faces. "I trust God. I have faith, and I know He's gonna take care of us. I don't know how, but I know He will," says Jimmie with all the confidence one person could bear.

She says, "The thing I like to do

is sitting right there in that cabinet." Shelved on her cabinet, her mantle, and in various nooks and crannies sat tiny, delicate figurines - a collection of angels. And if there should ever be a time when they most needed those angels, it would be now.

I remember something my father used to tell me when I was younger. He used to say, "Angels walk the earth everyday, and you never know when you might meet one." Joe and Jimmie Phillips need an angel.

If you would like to help, collection jars will be placed in various stores around the Bessemer City and Kings Mountain areas. There is also a Joe and Jimmie Phillips Fund set up at Central Carolina Bank. Donations will be received at any CCB location. Joe and Jimmie Phillips live at 528 St. Luke's Church Road in Kings Mountain. Any information that may be of help or any means of support may be sent to their address.