

Weather vane in memory of Grace Page

To the editor:
"Which way is the wind blowing" is a question which can now be answered by looking up on top of our new gazebo.

There you will see our new centennial weather vane, crafted by Crosswinds Gallery, Rhode Island.

This weather vane was given in loving memory of Grace Neisler Page by the Henry Neisler family.

It seemed appropriate to honor her memory in such a meaningful way, since she pointed the way to so many youths by her work in Girl Scouts and her love of all youth sports.

Sincerely,
Marilyn Neisler

Commandments should be posted in public schools

To the editor:

County commission boards across North Carolina should support a resolution that encourages the U.S. Supreme Court to rule in favor of placing the Ten Commandments in public schools.

Commissioners in some counties recently gave their support to the idea by passing a resolution. Our board should do likewise and support the resolution with one modification. It should not ask Congress to pass a law because the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution states: "Congress shall make no law respecting and establishment of religion or prohibiting the free exercise thereof." By making this change, the resolution would simply encourage the Supreme Court to rule favorably.

Supporting a non-binding resolution would not mean that the subject of the resolution has to be carried out. It would just show that politicians have courage and that they will stand up to the politically correct crowd on the extreme left.

Some argue that posting the Ten Commandments is unconstitutional because it violates the Establishment Clause of the U.S. Constitution.

In fact, lawyers on the far left, liberal law professors and the national media will support anyone who makes it their goal in life to rid society of Christianity.

Fortunately, God gave the founding fathers of this country the wisdom to grant the citizenry the mechanisms to fight back. We can elect conservative presidents so the right people are nominated to the Supreme Court and we can elect members to the U.S. Senate who will hold up hearings on judicial nominees and not confirm those who will not be good for the country. We can also challenge bad decisions in the court system. We can do many things to correct bad legal decisions and we don't have to hide behind a veil of bad legal advice.

Remember, it is not unconstitutional to stand up and fight against bad politicians and bad rulings made by the U.S. Supreme Court. When a president, with whom we do not agree, nominates the wrong person, we can elect members to the U.S. Senate who will hold up hearings and not confirm the nominee. The founding fathers gave the citizenry the elective franchise so that we can elect people who will carry out our will.

We can also use the court system to bring new cases that will give new justices on the Supreme Court the chance to rule differently. Just because former members of the Supreme Court made a bad decision does not mean that it is law forever.

Supreme Court justices aren't infallible or gods.

There are examples all around us that prove the Supreme Court members are not infallible. In some cases

See Letter, 5A

OPINION

Herald/Times

Editor: Gary Stewart 739-7496
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Santa Claus held court Monday evening at Mauney Memorial Library auditorium following the ninth annual Christmas tree

lighting ceremony on the lawn. Seated with Santa are, left to right; Kelton Stone, Alayna Pearson, Josh Barrett.

Boys will be boys...with fancier toys

Once upon a time there were Christmases when toys under the tree didn't have anything to do with computers or videos. Some of the best toys ever made came from the pre-cyberspace days when we baby boomers were young.

One of the top toys from the days of yore was known as Lincoln Logs. With a box of Lincoln Logs you could build a scaled down version of Dan'l Boone's cabin or a replica of the Cartwright mansion from the TV show "Bonanza." Lincoln Logs also made great chewing toys for puppies and could even be used as projectiles in a living room ruckus with siblings.

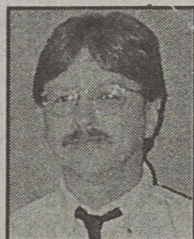
Next up on the list of favorite toys from the 1960s was the Erector Set. Consisting of miniature metal girders, nuts, and bolts, the Erector Set let you build things such as Ferris Wheels, skyscraper frameworks, and truss bridges. The only drawback to an Erector Set was the fact that your fingers would become raw from turning the nuts to put your feats of engineering together.

Another toy I recall fondly was the electric football field. Now, this amusement consisted of a sheetmetal football field a couple of feet long, and some little plastic football players with brushes on their feet. To play, you positioned your players on the field, then turned a knob which set the gridiron to buzzing. The more you twisted, the more frantic the plastic action became. Full bore had the players jumping like they were in the middle of an earthquake.

For Christmas culinary delights, Santa brought us kids a Suzy Baking Oven one year and a few seasons later a cotton candy machine. My goodness, I can still recall the little cakes that came out of that toy oven just like it was yesterday. Yes sir, there's something about a cake that's burned to a crisp on the outside and has the consistency of mush on the inside that makes for holiday memories. As for the cotton candy machine, we probably ran five pounds of Dixie Crystals sugar through that device in the first week.

Though some folks now say it might promote violence, a really neat Christmas gift my childhood pals Brutus and Terry Casey got was Rock em' Sock em' Robots. Throwing uppercuts and left hooks faster than Muhammad Ali, this toy really let you work out your aggressions in a controlled way. It was also neat to pretend your opponent's robot was someone who had been picking on you in school and wail away on them.

Every generation has favorite toys that are considered classics. Just watch one of those antique appraisal shows on TV to see the fortunes we have all tossed away. In a quarter century or so, Pokemon will be an antique collectible too, if that seems possible. Until then, let whatever Santa brings this year start building a storehouse of memories that will last long after the toy itself has vanished.



Alan Hodge

Staff Writer

Where are facts on entry level employment tests?

Since the talk of merger of Cleveland County school systems broke a couple weeks ago I've made it a point to contact every Cleveland County Commissioner on their thoughts on the issue.

All seem to be saying that it's premature to discuss the issue, because they haven't begun gathering facts yet.

That seems odd. This issue reportedly surfaced when a couple members of a Business Roundtable committee said a merger might be needed because potential employees couldn't pass entry level tests, and the county commissioners immediately signed a letter calling for a merger study.

It seems to me if county commissioners want to gather facts they should have first gathered facts on who took those tests and why they couldn't pass them.

To date, neither industry nor Cleveland Community College has produced data on who took the tests and whether they are recent graduates of any of the county high schools.

We tend to believe Kings Mountain School Board Chairman Ronnie Hawkins, who claims the merger issue is much more than a job-ready issue.

If it is a job issue, we see it more as an issue involving industry and Cleveland Community College rather than school merger.

The community college system in North Carolina began in the early 1960s partly as a means to prepare students who weren't going on to four-year colleges to enter the work force. In fact, they were called technical colleges (remember Cleveland Tech?)

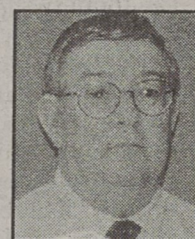
Industry should be working hand-in-hand with community colleges - even to the point of donating money and equipment to fund and set up training programs - to ensure the successful transition into the workforce.

This is not to say public school systems shouldn't be involved in training workers. Public schools for years have had vocational programs, and just a little better planning and communication between industry and school systems would probably solve this problem overnight...if it is a problem.

Deep down, I believe, like Ronnie Hawkins said, the basic issue here is the declining enrollment of Shelby schools.

According to Commissioner Willie McIntosh, attendance lines haven't been changed around Shelby since 1935 when much of the land was farm land. The people living in some of those areas are the ones who are often referred to as the students who drive past Shelby everyday to go to school at Crest. McIntosh further stated that any reassignment of students should not affect Kings Mountain.

It seems Hawkins and McIntosh are hitting at the crux of the matter. And it seems rather than merging school systems, the best idea might be a cooperative effort between Shelby and Cleveland County schools to redraw attendance lines.



Gary Stewart

Editor

Countdown to 2000



By Alan Hodge

Availability of medicine Y2K concern

For some folks, Y2K might be a hard pill to swallow, for others, they'll just be glad to have any pills to swallow at all. Along with all the other things people have put on the Y2K plate to worry about, the availability and quantity of prescription medicinals has been added to the heap.

To allay the fears of any computer problems that might slow up or even block the delivery of prescription drugs to those who need them, representatives of the American Pharmaceutical Association Foundation, government organizations, and insurers recently met with members of the President's Council on the Y2K Conversion.

After the prescription medicine powwow, participants came out to say that they are confident there will be plenty of medicine available during the last quarter of 1999 and the first quarter of 2000. The group also made some observations concerning the prescription drug scene overall.

One of the facts the APhA made clear was that on average, the pharmaceutical industry operates with a 90 day stockpile of medicines in the distribution system network. This means that drugstores should have plenty of medicine on hand come January 1 and on into the coming year.

Another thing the APhA wants to get across is that even though they do not anticipate any Y2K troubles, anything untoward that should come can be handled within five to seven days.

If a person still has nagging doubts about the availability of their particular medication on January 1, they should consult with their doctor or pharmacist now instead of waiting until the last minute.

Voicing the pharmaceutical industry's overall Y2K confidence was Ben Bluml, pharmacist and senior director for research at the APhA Foundation.

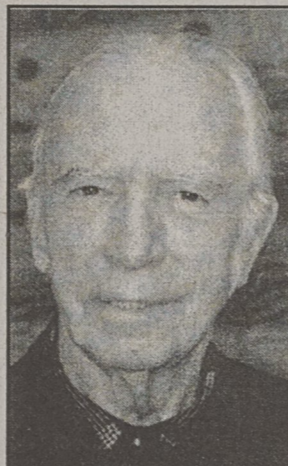
"Y2K computer problems may cause minor interruptions in normal services, but cannot alone cause medication supply shortages."

More information on how the pharmaceutical industry plans to address the Y2K event can be obtained by accessing their website at www.aphafoundation.org.

SIDEWALK SURVEY

By ALAN HODGE
Herald/Times

Should Kings Mountain, Shelby and Cleveland County merge their schools into one county-wide system?



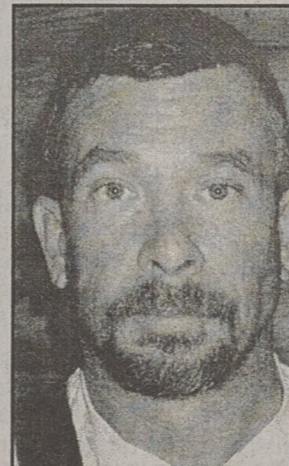
The basic responsibility of the public schools is to educate with equality of access and opportunity. This process can be best served through frank and open public deliberation. Deal with the questions and the issues, not with some political agenda.

Les Roark
former Shelby mayor



Keep the school systems the way they are now.

Ann Clark
Kings Mountain



I understand the financial reasons for some wanting to merge the school systems, but I don't think Kings Mountain should give up control of its excellent, community oriented schools for tax dollars.

Jeff Putnam
Bethlehem community



I don't like the ideas of merger. Each school system needs to stay like it is.

Joyce Williams
Kings Mountain



I need to know more facts about the idea of merger, but it sounds like Shelby wants to use us to bail them out of their problems.

Tim Plonk
Kings Mountain