

Heilig Meyers staying

BY ALAN HODGE
Staff Writer

Furniture retailer Heilig-Meyers has filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy. The company says it plans to close 302 stores and lay off 4,400 workers. The Kings Mountain store at 401 S. Battleground Avenue will apparently escape the axe.

"We will not be one of the stores to close," said manager Leonard Watts. "Our business has been okay."

Stores in Gastonia at 1392 E. Franklin Blvd. and the Town and Country Shopping Center in Lincolnton will also remain open.

Based in Richmond, Virginia, Heilig-Meyers will still have nearly 600 stores with 12,900 workers still in operation after the cuts. Most of the stores affected will be in the Deep South or on the West Coast.

Papers filed in the bankruptcy proceedings said the company had assets of \$1.35 billion and liabilities of \$868 million. A net loss of \$15 was posted for the quarter ending May 31.

A news release quoted Heilig-Meyers CEO Donald Shaffer as saying the filing was due to "continued disappointing operating results coupled with an inability to secure alternate financing sources."

In addition to closing stores, the company will also cease operations at distribution warehouses in Hesperia, California and Thomasville, Georgia. Heilig-Meyers will also stop offering in-house financing. A third party will be contracted to handle credit sales.

Founded in Goldsboro in 1913, Heilig-Meyers achieved a peak of 1,249 stores in 1998. In 1993, the company's stock had sold for nearly \$40 a share.

Six sentenced in Operation Meth-Ex

Six more Cleveland County residents were sentenced in U.S. Federal Court in Asheville on August 21 for their involvement in Operation Meth-Ex.

Operation Meth-Ex is an ongoing investigation being conducted by the Cleveland County Sheriff's Office, the Federal Bureau of Investigation, and the State Bureau of Investigation involving the trafficking of Methamphetamine in and around Cleveland County.

To date 22 people have been indicted. Eight of the 22 were sentenced March 29 in Federal Court in Asheville, receiving sentences ranging from two and one half to 12 years. The investigation began in the early spring of 1998 and has continued to this date.

The investigation has led officers to Methamphetamine traffickers not only in Cleveland County and surrounding counties, but to other states as far as Southern California. The investigation targets individuals who conspire to acquire, transport, and distribute Methamphetamine to Cleveland and surrounding counties.

Sentenced in Federal Court in Asheville on August 21 were: Eugene Turner, 53, 184 Clelo Dr.; Cesar, conspiracy to traffic Methamphetamine, sentenced to 25 years prison; William Anthony Chapman, 42, 304 Longbranch Road, Grover, conspiracy to traffic Methamphetamine, sentenced to 6 1/2 years prison; Barry William Lemmons, 41, 2320 Emerald Mine Road, Shelby, conspiracy to traffic Methamphetamine, sentenced to 7 1/2 years prison; Joe Dean Crotts, 33, 340 Double Shoals Road, Shelby, conspiracy to traffic Methamphetamine, sentenced to 4 years three months prison.

Barry Michael Engle, 31, 1505 Shelby Road, Kings Mountain, conspiracy to traffic Methamphetamine, sentenced to 7 1/2 years prison; Ramiro Nava Casas, 24, 9231 Juniper Avenue, Fontana, California, conspiracy to traffic Methamphetamine, sentenced to 6 1/2 years prison. Operation Meth-Ex is continuing and more indictments are expected in the near future.

OPINION

The Kings Mountain Herald

Editor: Gary Stewart 739-7496
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PICTORIAL EDITORIAL



GARY STEWART / THE HERALD
The Supreme Court has ruled that high schools across the nation cannot have organized prayer before football games. However, the Supreme Court cannot control what individuals do on their own, even at football games. Players at Kings Mountain and many other high schools have had a tradition for years of kneeling in prayer on the sidelines prior to their games. Here, Kings Mountain Mountaineers Steven Blanton, Brandon Houze and Cortney Smith, left to right, pray silently prior to a game with Freedom Saturday night at the First Charter Bank Jamboree at Crest High School.

Digging up memories

One of my friends and colleagues mentioned last week how he used to wash his hands in the branch. That's the first time I've heard that term in many a year.

These days nobody uses branch, they say creek or stream. But when we were kids on the mill village we played in the branch, and when we got wet and muddy, either our mother or grandmother would "cut the blood" out of us with a little keen "hickory".

I guess I'm giving away my age, but when you reach the autumn of your years it's sometimes pleasant to look back on your younger days. I'm always amazed at how 50 years ago seems like only yesterday. Recently, I ran into a friend I hadn't seen in 38 years and as we chatted those 38 years melted away, and it seemed we had played baseball together just last week.

We lived down behind the Travora Mill in York with my grandmother. It was just a five minute walk to the mill and I can remember both my parents heading for their jobs carrying a brown paper bag of sandwiches and a mason jar filled with coffee.

Remember bobbins and bands? Anybody who has been around a cotton mill remembers bobbins. They came in several different sizes and a kid could use them as all kinds of toys. Bands, to the uninitiated, were made of twine twisted tightly together, and I don't know what they were used for in the mill, but the neighborhood kids used them as reins for the stick horses we rode all over the place as we played cowboy.

My grandmother raised a good sized garden and we had a cow. One of us would have to take the cow to a different location around the neighborhood where it could graze all day. In the evening we'd bring the cow in for grandma to milk. As she squeezed the milk from the cow's udder into the galvanized water bucket, there was an almost melodious "ping" until milk collected in the bucket and then it was like rain dropping in a puddle.



Jim Heffner

Sometimes, if you tied the cow in the wrong place, the milk tasted like wild onions. I didn't like that. One of my fondest memories of those days was grandma sitting on the front porch churning butter. If I had that churn now I could probably get a small fortune for it.

I do have her old black wash pot. We used that wash pot for everything from rendering hog fat for lye soap to washing clothes. Does anybody remember the sticks of bluing people used when washing those clothes back then? How about the scrub board? Today's women worry about how their hands look. If they washed a load of overalls using a scrub board there wouldn't be enough hand cream in the drug store to make them soft.

My uncle Mose, who lived next door, had a pair of mules. One day one of them stepped on my foot and just stood there. I used every cuss word I knew and pounded that dang block head with both fists before I could get him to move off my foot. I was screaming like a panther and my grandmother came running. After she got that stubborn mule to get off my foot, she turned around and smacked me right up side of the head, saying: "Where did you learn such language?" She packed a mean punch.

Sometimes just a phrase, or even one word, makes memories flood into my head. I find that if I don't write them down, they are quickly gone back to their hiding place where they rest until somebody else mentions something like washing in the branch.

I'll bet the same thing happens to you.

Politicians and zebras come in a wide variety of stripes

During my rounds at ribbon cuttings, anti-mule scourger rallies, and other high class gatherings, I have met quite a few politicians. A friendlier bunch of folk one would be hard pressed to discover. Indeed, the presence of a politician at a get together can fairly light up a room or a cow field, depending on the occasion.

From time to time I have thought of running for political office. The main thing that keeps me from giving it a shot is my checkedy past. You see, I once spent three days in jail for gigging fish at Lake James. I've done some other stuff too, but when I once told someone about them, they said my deeds would only qualify me for President of the United States.

I think there are certain qualities that make a person a good politician. One of these is the ability to act. Not in a sense of being decisive, but like John Wayne or, yes, Ronald Reagan. This ability often comes into play when the politician has to be friendly to a rival in public that they say bad words about when they are in the privacy of their own home.

Another political skill is being able to say something false often enough so that you eventually believe it to be the truth. This is like when you were a kid and broke something and when your mom asked who did it you said "I don't know" so many times that it you came to believe it yourself.

Some politicians have real empathy for the people who elected them. Others think of the people in terms of a superior being looking down at a bunch of inferior twits. Just recently I saw a few guys whose actions over the past nine months fall into this latter category. My how they looked askance when they ventured down into the neck of the woods where they had run roughshod and got the snub.

It takes a politician of strong principles not to be swayed by lobbyists and other folks seeking favors. I'll bet a lot of deals have been brokered over the combination of an empty stomach, cheap white wine, vegetable spread sandwiches and a slick voice at some type of political soiree. The best politicians stick to cold soft drinks and peanuts on the porches of country stores where bib overalls are the garb.

Yes, if I ever run for politics, I'll hereby promise to remember the little man, keep a chicken or two in every coop, consume my fair share of barbecue, and even go so far as to buy myself a real suit and tie for the inauguration.

The way we were in 1978

Proof that technology and big city ways had come to Kings Mountain made the front page of the August 24, 1978 Mirror-Herald when it was reported that all local phone calls would soon have to be dialed using all seven numbers. Previously, local Kings Mountain calls could have been made by just dialing six digits.

Another big story on the front page of the August 24th Mirror-Herald concerned a water main break under S. Piedmont Avenue. A photo of the pipe, which city employee Red Blanton said was installed in the 1930s, showed workers installing a new section in a huge trench.

Sports news filled three full pages of the August 28, 1978 Mirror-Herald. Sports editor Gary Stewart predicted in his column that South Point would be the football team to beat in the upcoming gridiron season. Second on the prediction list was Shelby. Chase and Kings Mountain rounded out the top four of Stewart's picks. In other sports news, coach Ed Guy said that he expected the Kings Mountain High School girls tennis team to be much improved over the previous year. Guy said he had lost his best player in Pat Durham, but felt most of his returning players had gotten better.

The pages of the August 24, 1978 Mirror-Herald had several feature photo shots. One picture was that of beaming, eight-year-old Patrick Heavner shown with the new 12-inch portable TV he won by selling 21 subscriptions to the paper. Another shot featured Kings Mountain Jaycees president Alvin Moretz and N.C. Jaycees leader discussing upcoming club projects. Yet another photo feature framed 11-year-old Douglas Ramsey with the bicycle he won by selling 20 Herald-Mirror subscriptions.

The special "Living Today" section of the August 24, 1978 Mirror-Herald featured a full page story and photo layout of the home of John and Jeanine Major of Kings Mountain. The story focused on the unusual decorations that the Majors had acquired during their excursion to South America. As Lib Stewart reported, the Majors said that spending time in South America had given them a greater appreciation of life on Moss Lake.

Just in time for back to school, many advertisements in the August 24 Mirror-Herald featured clothing at low, low prices. TG&Y Family Center was offering bell-bottom, polyester slacks for just \$9.50 a pair.



SIDEWALK SURVEY

By ALAN HODGE
Kings Mountain Herald

What is the worst food you have ever eaten?



The worst for me is shrimp - I really hate shrimp.

Gloria Pauley
Kings Mountain



I was in Barcelona, Spain and ate some calamari.

Cecilia Wingfield
Virginia Beach, VA



Once I had some bad barbecued chicken at a restaurant.

Mike Riffle
Bessemer City



The worst food for me was some poorly cooked hamburger with too many onions.

Rhett Butler
Shelby



The worst thing I ever ate was a boiled snapping turtle.

Rich Parker
Kings Mountain