

## YOUR OPINION

### Program did not tell whole story of slavery

To the Editor:

Recently I had the opportunity to attend a children's planetarium program at the Schiele Museum.

Since I own property in the city of Gastonia, my taxes help to support the museum. This program was not about the stars and other heavenly bodies. It was a story about the slaves escaping the South to Canada by following the Big Dipper.

But, it was interesting, and showed the bravery and the determination of the run-aways to be free. It was very vivid, however, in portraying the Southerners as evil monsters who beat, starved and otherwise mistreated their slaves. This made me feel that I was being blamed for something that other white people did over 137 years ago.

Don't misunderstand. I feel, as do most Southern Christian white people, that slavery was a horrible blot on the humanity of the United States. I also feel that our young children, both black and white, should be taught what really happened in the days when slavery was practice. But, if we're going to teach history we can't edit out the parts that we don't like and embellish others to make it better suit popular views.

This program, entitled "Follow the Drinking Gourd," would have been an excellent teaching tool had it not been so one-sided. It was full of half-truths, but left out the much of the story. It began by telling the children that people in the South of the United States owned slaves. True, however, only one in 15 southerners ever owned slaves, and some of the people in the North also owned slaves. True, surely some of the slave owners were cruel to their slaves. But most realized that since they had paid around \$1,000 (usually to a Northern slave trader) for a worker, it would make sense to care for, rather than mistreat or starve their investment.

It was not mentioned that the slaves in the South were probably fed as well as, or better than any comparable class in other countries. (This fact was noted by a Northern student, Frederick L. Olmstead, in his "Journey in the Seaboard Slave States," published in 1856).

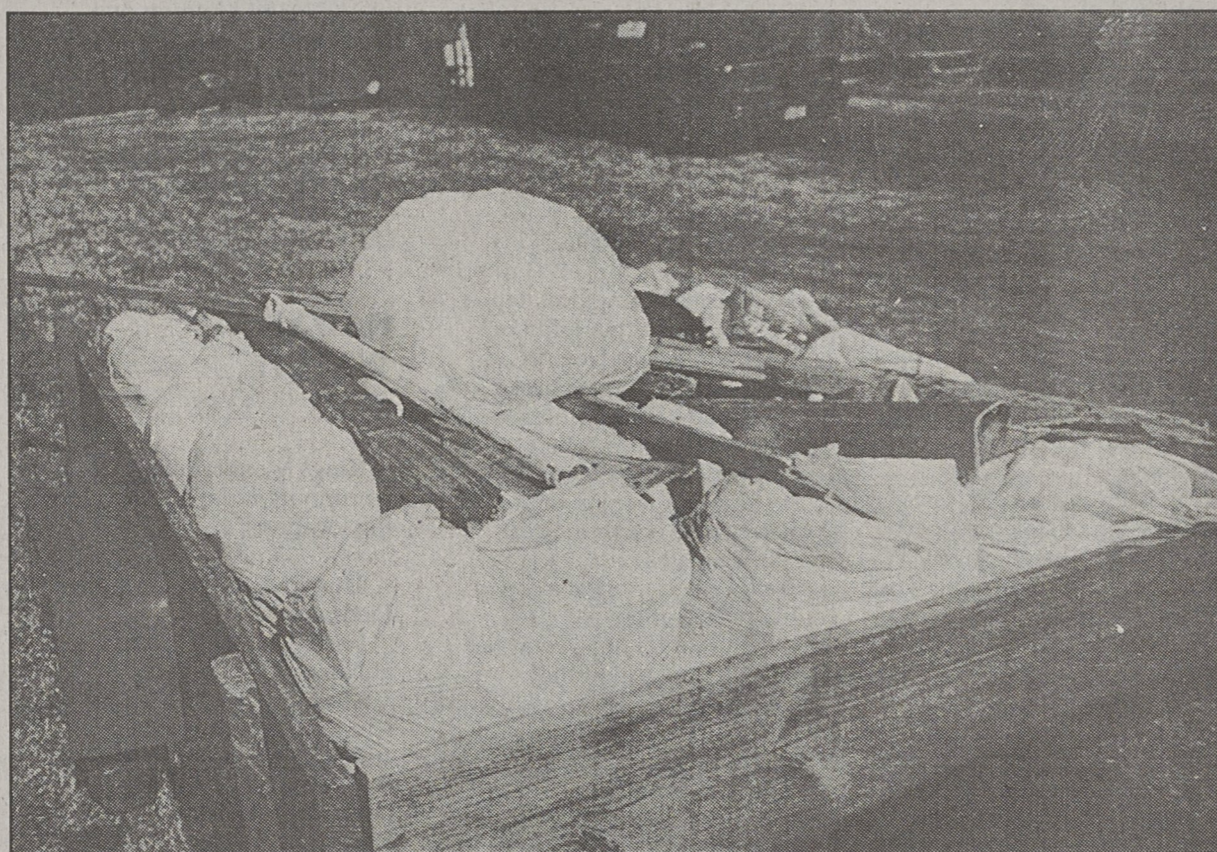
Neither was it mentioned that practically every one of the American ships engaged in the selling of human flesh was owned and operated by Northerners. And we all know of the horrible conditions about these slave vessels. The Puritans of Massachusetts, between 1755 and 1766, brought onto their shores at least 23,000 Africans to be sold as slaves. Abraham Lincoln, himself, admitted more than once that, in the matter of slavery, the North was as responsible as the South.

Neither was it mentioned that the warring tribes in Africa were the ones who sold their captives (their own race) to the slave traders into the horrible estate of slavery.

The point I'm trying to make, folks, is that if we are getting to place blame, let's be honest and tell all of the story. Little children are born free of hate. Why can we not strive to keep them that way, rather than fanning the flames of racism at every turn?

Elizabeth Champion  
Kings Mountain

## PICTORIAL EDITORIAL



GARY STEWART / THE HERALD  
Christine and Richard Wright did their part to keep North Carolina beautiful Tuesday by picking up a trailer load of trash along a 1/4-mile stretch of Bethlehem Road near Long Branch Road. Trash along roadways is common in rural areas of Cleveland County, and the Wrights said some of this came off the back of pickup trucks apparently on the way to trash dumps. If those folks had stopped and placed it back on their trucks, it would have made the Wrights' job much easier.

## Dale Earnhardt would tell us to dry our eyes and move on

It's hard to imagine the death of anyone else in North or South Carolina being mourned so openly by so many for so long as Dale Earnhardt.

His death has received worldwide attention and was even a front page story for the New York Times.

That's a surprising turn of events to many, including me. I know NASCAR drivers are popular, but I confess I didn't know how popular this man was. There have been other race drivers killed, "Fireball" Roberts, Jimmy Pardue, Joe Weatherly, Friday Hassler, Tiny Lund and Davey Allison, but none have stirred people like this.

I remember a time when you either loved Earnhardt or despised him. Those who didn't like him seem to have disappeared.

I've met a few sports figures in my day, but I don't think I ever saw Dale Earnhardt anywhere. I did know his father Ralph, briefly, back in the late fifties. I used to collect insurance from him, and he could always be found in a little garage beside his frame house in Kannapolis tinkering with a car. He was soft spoken, and a nice guy.

I've also met Derrike Cope and Kyle Petty, both very pleasant and attentive to fans.

Maybe that's part of the story. Dale Earnhardt always had time for his fans. He never seemed to turn his back on anyone who was seeking an autograph. Arnold Palmer is like that, too. For every sports figure like the NASCAR drivers and Palmer, there are dozens who wouldn't give a kid the time of day.

I remember taking my young son to see the Boston Celtics play the Carolina Cougars at the old Charlotte Coliseum when Tommy Heinsohn was their coach. After the game, my son asked Heinsohn for an autograph, and he walked away. But he must have thought better of it, because he turned and came back and signed for him. He also apologized.

I've thought a lot about Earnhardt since his death, and I've tried to figure out why he did what he did, why all the drivers do what they do.

The only thing I can come up with is, and this is especially true in Dale Earnhardt's case, they enjoy living their lives out on the edge.

There are probably few activities more danger-



Jim Heffner

ous than driving an automobile at 185 MPH. The slightest mishap could mean sudden death.

Rock climbing, bull-riding, test piloting, and there may be a few others, but these are pursuits which make adrenaline pump in some people.

I heard a radio commentator say that an astronaut's job is riskier, but I don't think so. An astronaut's life hinges on a multitude of functioning systems, but they all have back-ups. There are no back-up systems for race drivers.

When you think of the NFL and the NBA, you think drug use, rape and even murder. There's a smattering of that among some major league baseball players. How many times have you seen a NASCAR driver involved in any kind of illegal activity? Off the top of my head, I can't come up with anything.

They stand alone as a breed. Most are family men, and many are deeply religious. There have been so many of them born in the poor neighborhoods and on the mill hills of North and South Carolina. They would never forget their roots.

It's true, race drivers are just like all of us. They work, pay their bills and go to church when they can. They put on their pants one leg at a time, just like we do.

When they get them on, however, they climb into a powerful machine and go as fast as they can, trying to stay ahead of the pack. Sometimes they don't finish the race because of mechanical problems or wrecks. Dale Earnhardt was killed 200 yards from finishing his last race at Daytona.

He'd probably tell everybody to dry their tears and get on to the next race.

## We are all just birds of a feather flocking together

Birds are fascinating creatures. Not only can they fly through the air whenever they get a notion, they also come in a wide variety of sizes, shapes, and colors.

For many years I was an avid birdwatcher in the Audubon Society. No, we didn't all have thick horn-rimmed glasses and wear tan shorts, oxford shoes, or a safari helmet.

During my birding days I marked down 114 different species of birds that I personally saw. Most of these were right here in North Carolina, but a few such as the hoopoe and magpie were in England.

Bird species have been given some pretty interesting, unusual, and descriptive names. Just a few of these include long-billed curlew, pileated woodpecker, red-eyed vireo, and rose-breasted grosbeak.

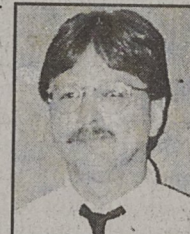
The other night I was at a get together and as I cast my eyes upon the glittering crowd the thought came to me- what if people were given bird names that matched their physical appearance. As it turned out, there were as many different types of birdfolk in that room than in the Amazon jungle.

One type I spotted hovering near the food bowls was the common round-bellied widebeak. Another similar species in evidence was the tight-belted gluttonbird. Yet another type seen stuffing their face was the great-gutted grubgrabber.

There were many female members of the various species there also. One that is commonly seen in these flocks is the yellow-headed chickybird. Another perched precariously on a wee chair was the overstuffed gaudybill. Several variants of the sag-faced spindlelegs were also milling about.

Every flock has its leader birds. On the night in question I personally added to my birding list the squinty-eyed bristlelip, the shifty-eyed doubletongue, and the sharp-nosed falsehood. The entire situation was a veritable birdwatching heaven.

Many people balk at the idea of people being in some way related to our animal friends. As someone once remarked "there are those that say man is descended from an ape, but who would say that Robert E. Lee is counted in that number?" As for myself, the more I observe of avians- especially chickens- the more I realize we are all just birds of a feather flocking together.



Alan Hodge

Staff Writer

## Way we were in '90

The March 8, 1990 version of the Herald feted long-time school teacher Mrs. W.T. Weir and her decades of exemplary service to the Kings Mountain School system. The accolades were part of a "Celebrate Central" event which looked back at the 85-year history of Central School.

Also on the front of the March 8, 1990 Herald was news from Grover that the town was planning to construct a \$54,000 addition to City Hall. The addition was going to add 3,250 square feet to the already existing 1,375 square foot building.

School news for the first week of March 1990 saw the Herald feature Heather Baker as winner of the Kings Mountain District Schools spelling bee. Baker correctly spelled "vaguely" and "heroic" to take the prize. Winners in the spelling bee elementary level competition included Bobbi Jo Morrow, Amy Deaver, Hiroki Nishiyama, Chris Jones, and Bo Walker.

On the church page of the March 8, 1990 Herald it was announced that Native American Rev. Quinton Mills was slated to preach at Wesleyan Church. A photo with the article showed Mills in full war bonnet. Up in Shelby, plans were underway for a visit from The Huddersfield Methodist Choir of England to sing at Malcolm Brown Auditorium. The group dated back to 1945 and it was their first trip to America.

The March 8, 1990 Herald also contained a story of historical interest. Citing the book "The Patriots of Kings Mountain," it was revealed that a number of free blacks had fought at the famous Revolutionary War battle. One such person, Essius Bowman, got credit for having fired one of the shots that killed Loyalist leader Patrick Ferguson. Dr. Bobby Moss of Limestone College was recognized in the story for having made the unique discovery.

Another bit of local history filled nearly an entire page of the March 8, 1990 Herald. In this article, historian David Neisler traced the entire story of the Kings Mountain Kiwanis Club. According to Neisler, the KM Kiwanis Club went all the way back to 1940.



## SIDEWALK SURVEY

By ALAN HODGE  
Kings Mountain Herald

If you could change anything about the current income tax law, what would it be?



I would have a straight 10-12 percent flat tax rate.

Don Cornwell  
Gastonia



I would make it so retirees would not have to pay any tax on their Social Security money.

Dot Hullender  
Kings Mountain



I would change the whole system and have a flat tax.

Brenda Hope  
Kings Mountain



The thing I would do would be to cut taxes and have a flat rate for everyone.

Paula Grant  
Kings Mountain



There needs to be a flat 10 percent tax rate for everyone.

Boyd Hayes  
Kings Mountain