

OPINION

Duck! Here comes that flying chicken again

If you really want an education, read the Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary. It is chock full of interesting information. It's a mystery to me where all that useless information comes from, but it's there in black and white.

For example, did you know that a cockroach can live several weeks with its head cut off? Do you care? I don't.

I'll bet you didn't know that in 1836 a pig in France was executed by public hanging for the murder of a child. There are other pigs in France right now who could do with a dose of the noose.

Right-handed people live, on

average, nine years longer than left-handed people. But they don't throw curve balls as well.

The elephant is the only mammal that can't jump. Now I wonder which genius figured that out. Maybe Dumbo can't jump, but he can sure fly. Everybody knows that.

It's against the law to burp or sneeze in a church in Nebraska. Passing gas is allowed without penalty.

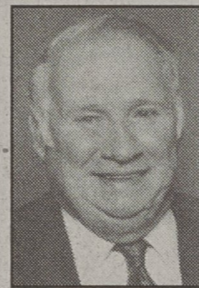
Are you aware that some worms, if they can't find food, will eat themselves. That's what happened to Jimmy Hoffa.

The longest recorded flight of a chicken is 13 seconds. The longest stay in a mental institu-

tion is 68 years. He was the man who used to make his living going around recording the flights of chickens.

A man named Charles Osborne had the hiccups for 69 years. Despite the advice from relatives and friends to drink 10 sips of water, breathe in a paper bag or hold your breath for two minutes, Osborne continued to hiccup. When he finally was able to stop, he forgot what he was trying to say.

A giraffe can clean its ears with its 21-inch tongue. So can Gene Simmons of the rock group KISS.



Jim Heffner
Guest Column

It is written that beetles taste like apples, wasps like pine nuts and worms like fried bacon. I will never know if that is true. I do know that flies definitely do not taste like raisins.

It is true that actor Charlie Chaplin once finished third in a Charlie Chaplin look-alike contest. It is not true that in 1843 a Parisian street mime got stuck in his imaginary box and died of starvation. A friend in California actually tried to convince me the mime story is true. I don't even think Californians are

true. The same guy sent me a few other items he swears are factual, but don't you believe it.

According to him, a Hungarian immigrant invented the typewriter and left his signature on the keyboard. His name was Querty Yuiop.

You can actually sharpen the blades on a pencil sharpener by wrapping your pencils in aluminum foil before inserting them. I ain't too sure I'd try that.

A dog's naked behind leaves absolutely no bacteria when pressed against carpet. I don't think I'd drag my dog across the living room to prove that.

A team of University of

Virginia researchers released a study promoting the practice of picking one's nose, claiming that the health benefits of keeping nasal passages free from infectious blockages far outweigh the negative social connotations. What social connotations? That one sounds almost gross enough to be true. Maybe that's why UVA calls its sports teams Wahoo's.

Every Labrador retriever dreams about bananas. Now that's the last straw.

Jim Heffner is a staff writer for the Belmont/Mount Holly bannernews and a longtime columnist for The Herald.

Opinion Page Policy

The Herald welcomes your letters to the editor for publication in each Thursday's paper. All letters must be signed, and for verification purposes include the address and phone number. Letters should be limited to 500 words.

Mail your letter to Editor, The Herald, P.O. Box 769, Kings Mountain, NC 28086; fax to (704) 739-0611; or e-mail to KMH Letters@kingsmountainherald.com. Letters sent by fax and e-mail must also include name, mailing address and phone number for verification purposes.

Letters may be edited.

Letters to the editor and columnists who appear on the editorial page do not necessarily represent the views of the Kings Mountain Herald.

Herald News Deadlines

The Herald welcomes your news for publication in each Thursday's paper.

We ask that you abide by the following deadlines:

Deadline for lifestyles news is 12 noon Monday. That includes weddings, engagements, anniversaries, birthdays, club news, church news, school news and community news. When holidays or other reasons make it necessary for the paper to publish a day early the deadline is Friday at 12 noon.

Deadline for all other news is 5 p.m. Tuesday. That includes city and county government news and sports. In cases of Tuesday night meetings and activities, items will be accepted until 8 a.m. Wednesday.

Items received after deadline will run if time and space permit. Otherwise, they will be withheld until the next week.

Advent a new beginning

In Grants Pass, Oregon, four six-week-old kittens were abandoned at Wildlife Images, a wildlife rehabilitation center. Volunteers caught and adopted three, but one kitten eluded them. A few days later, this kitten was seen squeezing through a hole in the fence that corralled "Griz," a 560-pound bear.

The little kitten slowly and cautiously approached the big bear while he was eating from his five-gallon bucket. "That cat was so hungry that he walked up to Griz and begged for food," reported Dave Siddon, founder of Wildlife Images. When I saw it, I thought, "Oh my, Griz is going to eat that kitten!" But to Siddon's surprise, Griz pulled a little piece of chicken out of the pail and dropped it on the ground, and the kitten walked up and ate it. Afterward, those two animals

became inseparable.

Not all Christians are strict observers of "Advent," but whenever this season of preparation for Christmas rolls around again, I think of how the birth of Jesus signals for us a new beginning. The prophet Isaiah once described this new beginning in this way: "The wolf will live with the lamb, the leopard will lie down with the goat, the calf and the lion and the yearling together; and a little child will lead them" (Isaiah 11:6).

Now I know that most of us think of the Christmas story as a sentimental story of a baby's birth, but it's really more than a collection of songs sung by the aging priest Zechariah and the young mother Mary. It's also a story of freedom and hope, of the

blessings of joy, salvation and a relationship with God.

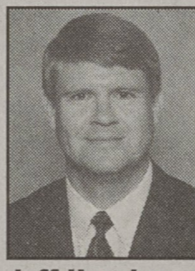
Indeed, Mary's canticle, which is known as the "Magnificat" (found in Luke 1:46-55), envisions the same sort of transformed social order that is foretold by the prophet Isaiah: "My soul glorifies the Lord and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior, for he has been mindful of the humble state of his servant . . . He has performed mighty deeds with his arm; he has scattered those who are proud in their inmost thoughts. He has brought down rulers from their thrones but has lifted up the humble. He has filled the hungry with good things but has sent the rich away empty."

In December of 1985, the apartheid government in

Pretoria, South Africa, banned the lighting of candles and the singing of Christmas carols in the vast ghetto of Soweto. The authorities there apparently knew that the proclamation of the birth of Jesus Christ represents much more than a sentimental story of a little baby being born; in fact, it is the story of a new beginning, and everyone who follows the way of Jesus Christ needs to be willing to embrace a new way of living.

As we observe Advent this year, my prayer is that we won't be so caught up with the sentimental qualities of the season that we forget the truly life transforming nature of the birth of Jesus.

Dr. Jeff Hensley is pastor of Kings Mountain Baptist Church. His column appears weekly in The Herald.



Jeff Hensley
Meditation



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