

press hardcopy's

case of the amazonian coin

perspectives

by jay ashley



editorials
Serving too many masters

People just don't understand redevelopment.

That statement was made in Tuesday's Kings Mountain Redevelopment Commission meeting and it had to be a low blow to Gene White, executive director, and his staff.

The statement was made by Redevelopment Commissioner Leroy Blanton and he was talking specifically about the residents in the Cansler St. area. His contention is these people's lives are being affected by a renewal project, something they know nothing about.

Blanton's suggestion is the commission staff must see these residents and explain in detail the program of renewal and its benefits.

This is exactly what has been and is being done.

After all, this is the basic philosophy of redevelopment; to aid people in acquiring standard housing, to help them upgrade themselves as individuals, to give them a shot at a style of living they might never, for any number of reasons, be able to acquire without assistance.

This philosophy is very noble, very idealistic.

It looks great on paper.

But individual human beings have a way of being predictably unpredictable. They do not react like figures on paper. This more than a non-understanding of what redevelopment can mean to them is the hang up in the Cansler St. program.

Commissioner Blanton said as much Tuesday when he told the redevelopers that the residents of Cansler St., a predominately black neighborhood, do not want to move from their homes, from their neighborhood.

Of course, Blanton was not referring to all Cansler St. residents. The majority are working with the program, even though not all of that group confesses to full understanding of the program.

Wanting to hold what they have, where they have it, is a form of segregation, self-imposed, but in this instance it creates a problem of housing. There are not enough standard housing in the Cansler area to relocate residents presently, so to keep the residents happy (which is the KMRC goal) more housing must be constructed.

However, more housing units cannot be built until all property in the area has been acquired.

Some of the parcels have been acquired. Several owners are not doing business with the KMRC.

Gene White was quizzed Tuesday as to why construction could not begin on parcels already acquired.

Two reasons come to mind immediately. First, you cannot toss people into the streets so standard housing can be built for them. They must have somewhere to relocate, if they are willing. Secondly, the plans for the new units have already been drawn and priced, as a whole, by the Kings Mountain Housing Authority. The contracts are let on all proposed units at the same time, not one at a time.

In this situation Gene White and his commission staff are between the proverbial rock and a hard place. They are forced to serve too many masters; the will of the people involved, the contractors working through the housing authority, the public health department and the Federal government.

So, what will White and associates do?

Go back with full details on redevelopment and what it will mean to the individual. And if this and all alternatives fail there is only one out remaining. Condemnation. And that is a bitter pill to swallow not only for the property owners involved, but for the redevelopment commission as well.

lights

Kings Mountain has suddenly become filled with traffic lights.

Travel Kings St. from end to end and you will lose count of the number of brand new traffic lights installed at the numerous intersections. (At least we think those things under the gray bags are traffic lights. Admittedly they could be homes for humming birds).

So, let's see if we can't have a first here. Let's see if we can't get all those traffic lights on Kings operational before someone is sent prematurely through the Pearly Gates.

The cops have searched high and low and the rare Amazonian nine cent coin dated 456 a.d. is no where to be found in this city.

The speaker was a bleary-eyed "Sauce" Pica, hard-working, hard-drinking rewrite man for the Bulletin-Dispatch.

"So I hear," interjected Wally Backshop, backshop composing room foreman who strolled by with a Nu-Grape in his ink-blackened hands, "if you ask me, that piece o' silver is in Mexico by now."

"I wouldn't say that."

Pica and Backshop quickly turned and saw Press Hardcopy, acereporter for the Bulletin-Dispatch, leaning against the doorway. He cut a demanding figure with his trademark, a snap-brim hat, pushed back on his head, tie loosened and a Lucky Green hanging precariously from his lip. The smoke curled up around his hard blue eyes. His shadow, Flash Strobe, stood behind him, 4 x 5 press camera in hand.

"O.K. Mr. Hotshot, tell us the why's and wherefores", Sauce demanded, "According to your copy I have to rewrite, the case is still strictly a BE&L and not some hotsy-totsy fraud."

"Bring some water here Wally, look's like our rewrite's getting a little hot under the collar," Press said with a grin.

Wally approached Hardcopy, "Come on Press, give us the lowdown."

"Sorry boys," Hardcopy said as he stepped on his cigarette, "that's inside info for now. You'll hear about it soon though."

Press motioned with his head and he and Strobe left the room with Backshop and Pica talking over the latest baseball game.

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Press studied the bourbon and branchwater in front of him. As he swirled the brew with his finger, he pondered the past week's events and where they might lead him.

On Monday, a 456 a.d. Amazonian nine cent coin had been stolen from the Snob Hill mansion of Joseph Aloysius Gotmarbles. Of course, a 456 a.d. Amazonian nine-cent coin would not ordinarily be rare except Gotmarble's treasure was struck with the likeness of a three-breasted Amazon wielding her war sword. The ordinary coin had the Amazon with a spear.

Gotmarble's empire stretched from coast to coast and included textiles, foundry's, tooling and die works, and a Quikee Bagle eatery.

Naturally Gotmarble's business concerns were insured to the hilt but ironically enough, his household goods were not. With the exception of the nine-cent coin carrying a "pay to the order" tag of \$2 million in cases of fire, theft or natural disasters.

"Interesting," Press mullied, "very interesting."

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Press swaggered into the city room and laid his hand on the pretty shoulder of Emma Matrix, private secretary and Girl Friday to hard-bitten city editor "Red" Bodoni.

"Hiya Sweethot", Press said with his best Bogart imitation.

"Back off Hardcopy. A Bogie you'll never be", Emma replied with a smile.

"O.K. Babe. What kinda line can you give me on this Gotmarbles guy?" Press asked sincerely.

Emma, known as Em to the boys of the

B-D, knew just about everyone in town and was often the source of some very fine copy.

"Gotmarbles is a rich one to be certain," she started, "he owns a string of fillies he races at Ageduct and putters around in his greenhouse in his spare time. Oh yeah, he also collects statuettes, if it's any help to you."

A smile crept across Hardcopy's face, "that's it he shrieked and ran from the office leaving a puzzled Emma Matrix in his wake."

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Sunday's edition of the Bulletin-Dispatch had a page count of 200 but nothing outshone the front page splash that declared in 72 point type, GOT-MARBLES UP ON FRAUD CHARGES with a kicker reading STANDS TO GET 20 YEARS IN JAIL.

"Red" Bodoni chewed on his cigar grudgingly mumbled, "good work, Hardcopy."

"Thanks boss," Press said non-committally as he brought the match to his Lucky Green and took a draw.

"Tell me one thing though, Hardcopy, the cops were stymied on this whole business and you come up with the solution. How did YOU know Gotmarbles was a fraud." That question came from Christopher J. Letterpress, wealthy publisher of the five edition B-D and nemesis of the newsmen.

Press reveled in the moment of glory, a moment he had enjoyed several times before when he broke major stories.

"Well Chief," (he enjoyed calling Letterpress Chief "cause it made the man's neck turn red with anger), "I got a line on this Gotmarbles' empire. You know, he owns several businesses, one of which is a foundry. Then I discovered that old moneybags also collected statuettes. On a hunch I hotfooted it down to the library to research Amazonian history. While thumbing through the books, I came across a statuette of an Amazon wielding a sword for battle."

"You mean..." stated Bodoni.

"Yep, the statuette bore an amazing resemblance to the Amazon on the famed nine-cent coin," Press said.

"I still don't understand", Letterpress said with an edge to his voice.

"Well Chief, it didn't to me until I checked a little further. What I finally came up with, you ain't gonna believe. Gotmarbles also owned a tool and die shop get it?" Press grinned.

"No. I don't get it", Letterpress mimicked.

"Wait", said Bodoni, "tool and die, foundry, statuette. Are you trying to tell me he minted the coin?"

"BINGO. Except you have it part right," Press said, "he minted every Amazonian nine-cent coin that exists in the explored world!"

"Whaaaaaat!?!?!?" Letterpress and Bodoni shouted in unison.

"Gotmarbles was a smart cookie. He came into the Amazonian statuette and hit on the idea of minting the coins. He started making the coins alike, about two thousand of them and then decided to make his own insurance by striking one odd. The last coin he struck, he filed down the spear to make a sword and insured it for a cool \$2 million. In other words, he literally made his own fortune."

With that, Press left the room as Letterpress and Bodoni looked on in astonishment.

It was time for another bourbon and branchwater Press decided.

dialogue

What is the best method for checking a community's pulse? Through an exchange of dialogue. Through a reader's dialogue within these columns his or her point of view will be made clear on whatever issue he or she chooses. The Mirror values your viewpoint. Address your letters to: Kings Mountain Mirror DIALOGUE, P.O. Box 6, Kings Mountain, N.C., 28086. All letters must be signed and include full address and phone number. Pens ready? Then begin.....

Letters

One Step From Death Row...

To the editor; If God permits, America will soon celebrate its two hundredth birthday. America has come a long way with pride and strides that forged the Atlantic to the Pacific; from fixed tent to log cabin shelter, hewing a wilderness of uncertainty, yet guided by a far greater desire to tear itself from chains and shackles of tyranny.

But somewhere along the way we took a detour. We allowed the shadows of despair and dismay creep over us and into us. Togetherness is now division, trust is distrust.

What happened to America? We've forgotten God.

We hear the church bells ring, but neglect to feed our souls.

America is losing its greatness and unless we turn back to the high principals and ideals of our founding fathers America will be one step from death row. It's something to think about. To pray about.

EVERETTE PEARSON Kings Mountain

P.O. BOX 6 PHONE 739-7496

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Kings Mountain Is...

FOLKS

Like Lilly Curry...

By JAY ASHLEY Mirror Staff Writer



GRANDMA, GRANDDAUGHTER - Lilly Curry smilingly poses with grandchild No. 56, Loretta Adams, while chatting with Mirror newsman-photographer Jay Ashley. Loretta doesn't appear too happy about the whole thing.

Born and raised in York County, S.C., Lilly Curry has seen a lot, done a lot, and in this process we call life, she has borne 10 children.

Her children now have children and their children have children and Lilly is now the proud grandmother of 56 and great-grandmother of eight.

Last Thurs., Mar. 28, Lilly celebrated her 72nd year on earth.

A stout woman, she hardly looks or seems her age. Her hair is still jet black, no grey, and her eyes and mind are as "strong as ever".

It was March 28, 1902 that Lilly Curry entered the world in Hickory Grove, S.C. She is the daughter of James and Marina McCluney.

As far as birth certificates and the like, Lilly says the family records were destroyed by a tornado.

"Daddy kept the children's birthdays and other dates in the family Bible," Lilly said, "when I was about 17 there was a big tornado and it tore down our house and blew the Bible away."

Lilly married Mason Curry and the couple moved to the Patterson Grove Church area to farm.

"My husband was a farmer", she said, "and we worked on the Hamrick's and Scism's place".

Mason has been dead around 20 years and Lilly now lives on her youngest son's place on the Lake Montonia Rd. She occupies a neat, well-kept mobile home and is always surrounded by her "pride and joy" grandchildren.

When I visited the home, Lilly was caring for two grandchildren, Marty Adams, aged four, and his sister Loretta, grandchild number 56.

Lilly's children are all

grown but are within "rabbit chase" distance of her. Gastonia and Bessemer City are as far as the Curry children cared to stray. Her children are Mason Jr., Lewis, Virginia Freeman, Robert, Mattie Adams, Jessie Moore, Evelyn Henderson, Raymond and Frances Curry (married a Curry).

Lilly keeps her grandchildren while her own children work. She has not lost that "motherly touch either". When I entered the home, my voice was a little loud and tiny Loretta stirred from her slumber on the couch. With experienced hands Lilly lifted the child to her arms, spoke in hushed tones, and Loretta became quiet and calm.

"I think I'm a very lucky person", Lilly said, "I have good health, my eyes are strong and I still have a good mind."

"I'm just thankful to the

Lord he has let me live as long as I have."

Lilly has been converted to the Lord for 63 years, joining the church at age nine. She presently attends the Shady Grove Baptist Church.

"I'm glad to be able to go to church and hear the word," Lilly said with a smile. "Lots of folks complain about this and that but if you trust in the Lord, everything will be alright."

When I approached the trailer and knocked, Lilly asked who it was. Afterwards she said "I don't open the door for just anybody. Lots of meanness around".

"Well," I said, "what do you think about the world and all the troubles we're having?"

"Like it says in the book," she quoted, "the just suffer as well as the unjust. The just suffer from the wrongs of the unjust but everything will work itself out up yonder."

