

The day The President didn't come to town

journal

by tom mcintyre



On Sept. 4 we announced President Gerald Ford was coming to Kings Mountain to deliver the principal address at the celebration of the 195th anniversary of The Battle of Kings Mountain.

Little did we know what was in store for this little community.

Dear citizens, Kings Mountain has been "rode hard and put away wet," "Shot at and missed, spit at and hit," and other well-worn clichés appropriate to the situation.

Not only has the city been accused of perpetrating a gigantic GOP political rally, but now we are embroiled in a controversy with a high school band.

Not only that, but Connie Chung phoned her CBS-TV news boss from Kings Mountain on Oct. 7 to simply say "There is no news here." And The Mirror-Herald now owns almost 300 black and white photo-

graphs of Nelson Rockefeller and various and sundry Secret Service agents and other law enforcement officials clearly visible in the foreground.

Yes, friends and neighbors, the day The President didn't visit Kings Mountain will long be remembered and discussed upon the numerous blank pages called tomorrow and tomorrow.

On Sept. 4 when Congressman James Broyhill's aide, Don Wilson, called he said the Congressman was delighted that President Ford had accepted Kings Mountain's second invitation and would accompany him here on Oct. 7.

With that encouragement plans were begun to make the Oct. 7 KM Battle celebration a rouser.

On Sept. 17 Jerry King, a local real estate broker and accountant, accepted the job of coordinator of The Presidential

visit. He was given a secretary, Sheila Green, and a storage room in the basement at city hall was cleaned out and a desk moved in for the coordinator's headquarters.

"When I accepted the job I hadn't the least idea what it entailed," Jerry said. "Now, in retrospect, I would be most happy to see someone else have the opportunity to handle the job. Once in a lifetime is enough. If we could have planned

the affair at the outset without changes it wouldn't have been difficult, but the way it was handled almost drove me nuts."

King's life was not his own after the phone was installed in the former storage room. There were calls from everyone imaginable, all wanting answers that King said he didn't have.

"Everything ran super for about a week," King said. "We were under the impression we had enough committees working on the various assignments, then we found out different. At the last minute a program was hastily prepared for the printers complete with letters from the Governor, The President and the mayor and pictures, too. Boom, that project was off to the printers with an order for 10,000 copies."

That's because certain estimates of the crowd expected ranged up to 150,000. The sanitary committee ordered 50 portajohns to be placed at key points about the city to give the guests relief.

The parade committee sent out countless letters to bands and arrangements were made to have seven floats redecorated to be in the parade.

A deal was struck for expensive sound equipment to be used inside and outside Gamble Stadium.

Preparations were made for a speaker's platform and decorations for that platform and the downtown parade route buildings and all along the parade route.

An order was placed for 5,000 folding chairs for the stadium to supplement the standing seats.

Another committee began booking entertainment acts to play and sing from 9 a. m. until noon in the stadium for the early arrivals on Oct. 7.

The Governors of five states were invited as well as Great Britain's Ambassador to the United States. And there were dozens of national and state selectmen invited along with countless VIPS from North and South Carolina.

The bite was put on contributors for funds to help pay for the Oct. 7 shindig. Arrangements were made to feed the VIPS and various other guests at both the junior and senior high schools.

In other words, everything was speeding along like The Roadrunner.

On Sept. 24 there was another meeting of committeemen at city hall. King presided.

"Next Monday the pre-advance team from The White House will be in town to

advise us on the various aspects of the program," King said. "And next Wednesday the advance crew will be in. They will remain here in town until after Oct. 7. We are now in a position to where I'm gonna have to pipeline phone calls to the proper committee chairmen. The calls are more than we can handle. Just keep me informed."

Zeb Plonk said there were "49 units in the works for the parade. Ten have not been confirmed. We really have a problem in an oversupply of bands."

The committee at large advised the parade committee to begin chopping off the bands, a move which we now know was not to go unchallenged.

Col. Arthur Bouchard of Raleigh, military support to civil authority, spoke. "I think you ought to stick the press up in the press box and forget about them..."

The Colonel also supplied a list for protocol in recognizing the various dignitaries according to their ranks and titles.

Then a quiet, pipe-smoking gentleman was called to the podium. His name was Talmadge Bailey and he is in charge of the Secret Service office in Charlotte. He told us exactly how the press would be handled. And it made me feel good because the day before I had been shot down for informing certain committee members of the same things that Bailey said.

It was during that meeting that one member of the committee was very blunt in his opinions of how certain of the VIPS should be handled. Bailey made note of this and later asked the mayor the name of the person making the comments and said he wanted to know all about that committee member.

At the time the above meeting took place there was already speculation in the press that President Ford was not coming to Kings Mountain. See, this lady who claims the FBI used her to spy on the radical element, then leaked the information that she was a spy to the same element, therefore placing her squarely without a camp, had fired her pistol in the presence of The President out in San Francisco.

However, The President steadfastly maintained that he would not cancel his commitments. At the same time The White House press corps had begun to be very non-committal about things.

They wouldn't say yes and they wouldn't say no.

That's when the best laid plans, etc. began going astray.

Howard Jackson said, "With the rumors in the press that Ford is not coming to Kings Mountain, the flow of contributions have suddenly stopped. I'm afraid to answer the phone for fear the ones who have contributed will want it back."

At a meeting the following Tuesday Mayor John Moss told the committeemen

that there was no pre-advance party in town Monday and "thus far today there is no advance party."

"I did get a call from Robin Martin of The President's staff that the advance party was not coming in," the mayor continued. "He said Congressman Broyhill's office would be informed."

Well, Congressman Broyhill's office was not informed and the Congressman reportedly, was angry enough to chew nails and spit bullets.

The mayor had been on the phone with Broyhill several times that day and still no one was being given any information from The White House. Numerous calls from newsmen ended without a scrap of new information.

The tone of the Wednesday (prior to Oct. 7) meeting took a decided change. The mayor continued, "Pressure is being applied from different camps in Washington. Sen. Jesse Helms is pushing The President to come to Kings Mountain. We've even asked that an offer be made the Vice President to stand in if The President is not coming."

Lyn Nofziger, campaign manager for Ronald Reagan, was contacted about the possibility of the former California Governor coming in to speak.

Reagan was interested, but his schedule would not permit it. He was in Cleveland, Ohio on Oct. 7 with a late afternoon trip to Houston, Texas.

Jerry King said "We're still 99 percent sure we'll have an answer by today."

Howard Jackson said, "I think we have reached a point where we have to stop being sweet little boys like we have been. I think we ought to call a news conference with newspapers and TV and tell the whole world the story. It'll be embarrassing to The President, I'm sure, but he's brought this on himself by letting his aides work this deal."

Some other committee member said "It looks as if The White House is..."

(Please Turn To Page 3A)



"This is America at its best...."

How to beat high cost of college

(EDITOR'S NOTE — This is the last of four articles of great importance to high school students concerning continuing education especially geared toward specific career fields. The information contained in the article was compiled by the U. S. Department of Labor.)

Proving that what goes up doesn't necessarily come down, college costs are expected to rise six - 12 percent to all-time highs for the 1975-76 school year. A four-year private university now costs a hefty \$4,391 in tuition, board and room, and other fees, according to the College Entrance Examination Board. A public university carries a price tag of \$2,679 for one year of attendance.

The total cost of college or university training can be even more staggering. One recent B.A. graduate estimated the four years he spent at a Midwestern university cost over \$30,000 including tuition, living expenses, interest on educational loans, and foregone income (salary he could have earned if he were working). Graduate school might easily have tacked on another \$17,000 since by then foregone income would have increased through raises.

Even with new government programs of assistance, many students are finding it difficult or impossible to finance college. Along with the escalating costs, a growing belief that college no longer is the passport to a secure, good paying job makes it a questionable investment for many. As a result, students are searching for alternatives to the traditional college route. One increasingly popular solution to the high cost of college is the "no frills" vocational education offered in a variety of public and private institutions.

Vocational education offers the benefits of postsecondary education without the high costs of college. It

concentrates training in a specialized career such as computer programming, commercial piloting, fashion merchandising, advertising, commercial art, even wastewater technology. There are hundreds of careers requiring only vocational training (and not a college degree). Shorn of "extras" such as expensive student centers, sports teams, and liberal arts courses, vocational schools are able to offer high quality education at a lower cost.

For example, a student interested in commercial art may attend a college or university for four years, taking a total of 96 credits. Less than half of those credits will have been earned in commercial art subjects, with the majority in such courses as English lit, science, phys ed, and other non-related, but required courses. A career school student only pays for courses he or she needs to enter the job market.

The savings can be substantial, in this case two years of tuition. An average year at a vocational school costs \$1,500 to \$2,000. But, not only does the commercial art student at a vocational school pay a lower cost, he is out in the job market earlier and earning an extra two years of salary.

Unlike college, vocational training is unabashedly employment-oriented. In addition to being taught only those skills needed for entry into the job market, career students are given "hands on" training which places them in actual work environments either with cooperating employers or in the school's own shop. There, students learn by doing and as a result get practical work experience which often gives them the edge over academically-trained students.

With all the emphasis on employment, placement is high in accredited vocational schools. According to the National Association of Trade and Techni-

cal Schools, an organization of accredited vocational schools, over 70 percent of graduates find employment in their fields shortly after graduation but the figure is probably higher since many grads leave the school area for jobs and cannot be reached. By comparison the Department of Labor estimates only 60 percent of college grads obtain employment in their field.

In fact, the job market is increasingly becoming glutted with teachers, history majors, psychologists and others. Recent reports from the Labor Department indicate the number of grads threatens to exceed demand by 800,000.

While 15.3 million students will graduate from a college or university between 1972 and 1985, the labor force need is pegged at only 14.5 million. Less than a quarter of the 61.2 million job openings during that time will require college, and only a third of all white-collar job openings will be filled with degree holders.

According to Herbert Bienstock, Assistant Regional Director for the U. S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, college graduates will be increasingly forced into fields not related to their training, such as sales, clerical and service jobs. The result will be underemployment and job dissatisfaction as grads, out of economic necessity, seek employment in areas where their training is not fully utilized.

Employment growth through 1985 is predicted to center on the service-producing areas with a 55 percent increase in the need for craftsmen, repairmen, auto mechanics, technicians, paramedics, and others.

The major factors contributing to this demand are the growing population accompanied by increasing urbanization with its emphasis on the need for more city services and, finally, a rising standard of living has accelerated the demand for all types of services.

For a listing of vocational schools, consult the U. S. Office of Education's "Directory of Postsecondary Schools With Occupational Programs" which is available from the Government Printing Office, Washington, D. C. 20402 for \$3.95.

A free 104-page Directory of Accredited Trade and Technical Schools is available from NATTS, 2021 L St., N. W., Washington, D. C. 20036.

The U. S. Office of Education offers five major programs to help students finance their education beyond high school. If you have been accepted or are

enrolled in a vocational school, technical school, college or university, you may be eligible for assistance under one or more of the programs below.

(1) Basic Educational Opportunity Grant Program: This program offers outright grants to eligible students attending an approved vocational school or other postsecondary educational institution.

Last year \$135 million went begging because students didn't know about this new program of student assistance. This year over \$783 million is available for those wishing to pursue a degree or a career at a vocational school.

Who's Eligible? If you are accepted by or enrolled in a postsecondary educational institution on at least a half-time basis and if you did not attend a post-secondary school before Apr. 1, 1973, you may be entitled to a grant amounting to not less than \$200 and not more than \$1,400.

How To Apply — To find out if you are eligible, complete a form called "Application for Determination of Basic Grant Eligibility" which is usually available from high schools, accredited vocational schools, colleges, and your public library. If you still cannot obtain this form, write Basic Grants, P. O. Box 84, Washington, D. C. 20044.

(2) National Direct Student Loan Program: This year a total of \$321 million has been appropriated for the program, which enables needy students to borrow up to \$10,000 depending on their year of study. There is a \$2,500 ceiling for the first two years of study, with an additional \$2,500 allowed for the second two years.

Repayment begins nine months after you graduate or leave school. A three percent interest rate is the only charge and you have up to 10 years to repay the loan.

Who's Eligible? Any student who is enrolled at least half-time at an eligible institution and who has financial need.

How to Apply — Applications may be obtained at the financial aid office of eligible colleges and vocational schools.

(3) Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grant Program: For the 1975-76 school year, \$240 million has been provided for SEOGs. Like the Basic Grant Program, this offers outright

grants ranging from \$200 to \$1,500 a year to students. However, under SEOG, the school must provide you with additional financial assistance equal to the amount of the grant.

Who is Eligible? This program is for students of exceptional financial need and who would have to discontinue their education without added financial help. They must be enrolled at least on a half-time basis.

How to Apply — Forms may be obtained through the financial aid officer of eligible vocational schools and colleges.

(4) College Work Study Program: This "earn while you learn" assistance program provides students with jobs while in school. The jobs are arranged with participating non-profit employers, often in positions relevant to training. The salaries paid are equal to the current minimum wage and may earn qualified students as much as \$3.50 an hour.

Who's eligible? Students enrolled at least half-time and whose financial need is determined by the school's financial aid officer.

How to Apply — Apply for Work-Study through the financial aid officers of eligible school.

(5) Guaranteed Student Loan Program: This major loan program enables students to borrow money for school through banks, credit unions, savings and loan associations and other participating institutions. If you meet the qualifications of the lender, you may borrow up to \$2,500 a year at 7 percent interest. The loan is guaranteed by either participating states or the federal government. Repayment of the loan begins nine to 12 months after you leave school. Students are allowed up to 10 years to repay.

Who's eligible? If you are enrolled at least half-time in a vocational or trade school or other higher educational institution participating in the program, and if you have financial need, you may be eligible for the loan. The federal government may, in some cases, pay the interest for you while you are in school.

How to Apply — Information on the details of the program and application forms may be obtained from schools, banks and other lenders, your State Guarantee Agency, and regional offices of the U. S. Office of Education.

Reader dialogue

Apology Due Ashbrook Band

To The Editor,

This season you are celebrating the anniversary of a revolutionary war battle. Where would this country be today if all those who fought in the revolutionary war would have been required wear uniforms (to use your words) "into the scheme of things!!!"

You have denied the members of Ashbrook High School Band the right to participate in the celebration of our national heritage. How unAmerican can you get!

Do you really believe the President of the United States would have been upset to see an un-uniform band marching in his honor? We doubt it.

"All men are created equal..." so let us as they are in uniform." That's not an idea of Americanism. We're wondering what your idea of Americanism is. We feel you owe not only the members of the Ashbrook High School band an apology, but also those Americans who truly believe in the principles upon which our constitution was based.

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Not At Expense Of My City

To The Editor,

I just read the article, "No uniforms No March." When I read the headline of this article and saw the pictures of the five students, my heart went out to them because I said here is five young ladies that were done an injustice. But, when I read on down and found out that four of the five were boys, I changed my mind.

As far as Kings Mountain owing Ashbrook an apology, it should be the other way around. Here is a school wanting to play on the sympathy of the people to get new uniforms for its band at a cost of \$20,000. The school knew weeks in advance that this parade was coming up and had time to appeal to the public for uniforms. It should also have had the decency to have declined the invitation because it had no uniforms.

Who wants to see a band dressed in blue jeans, white shirts, and green and white sneakers. You can see kids dressed like this on every street corner and in every drug store.

People come to a parade to see a band not to hear a band. If they want to hear a band, they go to a band concert. People want to see the bright colors of the uniforms and watch the kids march. They are not really interested in what song the band is playing or even if they are in tune.

I don't care how much publicity Ashbrook gets because the band has no uniforms, but not at the expense of my mayor or my city.

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