

## EDITORIALS & OPINIONS

# HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO U.S.-AMERICANS

Traditionally, Americans have long been classified as "joiners", a label many citizens are proud of.

Voluntarism is a typical USA characteristic that has helped shape the image of U.S. citizens in many countries. Americans are frequently pictured as friendly, outgoing and self-reliant.

Such a flattering concept probably dates back to the Revolutionary War era when our fledgling nation was struggling to survive. Self-reliance was then an essential quality.

These facts take on renewed significance as the nation prepares to celebrate the 203rd birthday of the United States of America. The American Historic and Cultural Society, Inc., has vigorously promoted patriotic community programs through the preceding 21 days extending to Flag Day. The 21-day Honor America concept is a parallel to the 21-gun salute to honor a head of state.

This period was officially created by a joint resolution of the Congress and signed into law by the President in June 1975. Members of Congress, governors and mayors have actively joined in supporting this campaign and have called on their constituents to participate.

A Census Bureau survey in recent years produced the estimate that 37 million people in the United States above the age of 13 years are engaged in volunteer work in the spirit of helping others.

Such a figure reflects a wholesome, generous attitude that has helped this nation become the leader of the world's democracies.

This total denotes a substantial bloc of Americans that by its example invites others to enter the field of voluntarism. To a casual observer it might seem that so many willing hands could dispose of the bulk of the country's social problems. Unfortunately, emergencies of assorted types, adversities and personal hardships continue to multiply.

Other circumstances call for different approaches. In Oregon, a 100,000-acre site formerly used as a rocket test range was turned over to farming by an aerospace company. The land lies in an arid region and the belief prevailed that "Nothing will grow here." But new methods of cultivation have produced rewarding crops and helped to revive the area economically.

In another corner of the country, Robert Sanchez, 29, worked with two scientists of the University of New Mexico to develop a program to produce nuclear drugs. This breakthrough enables hospitals to use the drugs as tracing agents for locating tumors.

Such undertakings contribute to the health and wealth of the nation. But these events are large and complex and beyond the scope of the average American.

But much can be accomplished at the local level to Honor America. You and your neighbors can arrange for appropriate patriotic decorations, centering around the American flag. Remind your club, your union or other organization to lend impetus to such observances, possibly of a financial nature.

Remember John Adams' note to his wife Abigail: "... this great anniversary festival ought to be commemorated as the day of deliverance, by solemn acts of devotion to God Almighty ..."

Plan a parade, whip up a picnic, promote a sports contest, schedule a band concert, put on a pageant, touch off a fireworks display, honoring America in an appropriate manner.

One point, at any rate is clear: no manner of organizational gadgetry can make a great society. It takes people to make a society great—righteous, justice-loving, idealistic, freedom-loving people.

Join us in giving America a Happy Birthday this Fourth of July.

# The eighth wonder of world



**TOM MCINTYRE**

You may not be able to rattle off the Seven Wonders of The World, but surely you have heard of them.

Now, add an eighth wonder to them.

The wonder is why wives insist on packing enough clothing to last a tribe of Harmsen hermits a slap year for a day and a half at the beach.

Friend of mine calls, see...

"Wanna go to the beach for the weekend?"

Well, affectionate for wave concerts as I am, I said "Yea and verily!"

This was the game plan:

We were to leave at 8:30 p.m. on a Friday for the four hour drive. That meant we would have Saturday's sunshine and Calabash catfish by moonlight. We were to check out at 11 a.m. Sunday and return to Tar Heel territory.

My wife and children packed the following for the trip:

For me, four pairs of pants, six pairs of shorts and an equal number of sock-pairs. I was limited to three shirts and three pair of shoes. Then, one razor, shave cream, deodorant, toothbrush, one hairbrush.

## Expresses his gratitude

To the editor:

Please allow me this opportunity to express my sincere gratitude to Mr. Major W. Lofton, and the Kings Mountain Police Department (esp. Ms. Linda Hamm) for their efficiency and concern in returning two bicycles, and two baseball gloves which were stolen from our residence (parsonage of the Macedonia Baptist Church) sometime between 9 p.m. June 28, and 10:15 a.m. June 29, 1979.

Mr. Lofton discovered the two bikes and gloves in a ditch at the corner of East Gold and Deal Streets. He reported them to the Kings Mountain Police Department who in turn notified us that they had been located. We are fortunate to have this type of concerned people in our town, and I did not wish for their concern to go unnoticed.

Secondly, I would like to offer a reward to

any person who might reveal information leading to the apprehension and conviction of those responsible for coming on Church property and stealing the two bikes and ball gloves. It is tragic when anyone would steal from a child; however, I believe this to be just one more plight of our land.

Anyone with information concerning this theft please contact me (789-9227), or Bob Fortenberry of the Cleveland County Sheriffs Department.

Thank you for the opportunity of speaking for my two sons who are still too young to understand why anyone would want to steal from them. Not only do they not understand this, but neither do they know how to speak for themselves in a sick situation like this.

**TOM PATTERSON**  
Route 4  
Kings Mountain

## A condition of society

letter to editor

Ed. note—the following letter is addressed to the Cleveland County sheriff's department and to the police departments in Shelby, Kings Mountain, Belling Springs and Lenoir.

The recent tragedy in Rutherford County has made us more acutely aware of the dangers you face each day. As Protective Service workers, we empathize with your responsibilities; our work gives us some insights into the danger and stress that you experience.

Family violence is more than a sociological phrase, it is a condition of our society exhibited by hostility, brutality, mental anguish, and even death. Any helping profession that deals with the risks of domestic violence can attest to this phenomenon.

You, as law enforcement officials, put your lives on the line daily, in actual confrontations or implied threats. We take this opportunity to commend you as well as to let you know that we understand the realities.

We also take this opportunity to express our appreciation for the support that you offer to us when we conduct investigations of child neglect and abuse. Your willingness to accompany us into explosive situations is appreciated and your presence offers us security.

The citizens in our county and communities should feel fortunate to have a group of professionals so willing to serve and so dedicated to our protection.

**JANE SHOOTER**  
for the  
Protective Services Unit  
Cleveland County Dept.  
Social Services

For the wife, two pantsuits, five pairs of shorts and blouses, two bathing suits, three pairs of shoes, a dozen change of unmentionables and something nice to wear in case we went out at night."

For the two daughters, six changes of everything.

Incidentals included, a hair dryer, three hairbrushes, (no razor, because they all seem to enjoy using mine, then watching me try to shave afterwards), toothpaste, soap, an assortment of suntan lotion, lipstick, powder and paint, four pillows, pillowcases, sheets, blankets and two dozen towels and washcloths.

And all that does not include the clothes we wore for the drive down on Friday night.

My friend, Paul Holman, said he would take us all in his Cadillac. Us included the four Holmans and the four McIntyres. Incidentally, Paul weighs 370 pounds.

That means while five people could sit comfortably in back, three of us were wedged in like sardines in the front.

We stuffed the Caddie trunk full and while Paul sat on the lid, we locked it - and we were off.

It was raining canines and felines when we arrived at the beach.

Saturday, it was still raining - plus the wind was blowing a force five. The tide never went out. An old lady lashed to the flagpole where we stayed said, "There's a hurricane headed this way."

So, we stayed in the room sat around the table and played Acquire.

Saturday night Paul began making noises about staying one more day. We did. It still rained. The wind still blew.

Monday when we were checking out, the wind stopped and the rain ceased and the sun came out. The temperature shot into the 90s so we could have a nice hot ride home.

And all that clothing we took along?

Well, the children managed to get every article of clothing they took - right into the ocean (they ignored the rain and wind), and used every towel. I could not find a dry towel to use after taking a shower.

O yeah, I took along a camera and color film.

I took pictures.  
People sitting around a table playing Acquire.

## Thanks for your help

Dear Editor,

I will be retiring on June 30 after 35 years with the N.C. Extension Service here in Cleveland County. Before I leave, however, I want to thank you for all of the things that you have done to help me with our extension program.

The Dixon 4-H Club in Kings Mountain was the first community 4-H club organized after we left the schools. I appreciate your interest, too, in covering our programs that are of interest to the Kings Mountain area. You have given our extension program good coverage. This we appreciate very much.

So, let me say thanks again for your help and cooperation. I appreciate you very much.

**H.W. DAMERON**  
County Extension Chairman

To the editor:

I read with interest the article "Parents will aid in Sex Education Decisions," and Feel Some Questions need to be answered by Supt. Davis and the School Board.

(1) How are the Parents to be Selected who will aid in the decision making? (Will it be those favorable to the School Board and teachers teaching Sex Education?)

(2) Why was the Meeting Held without the knowledge of at least all the parent's present at the meeting with the Health Dept.?

(3) Where does Supt. Davis get his information from when he made the statement "There are probably more citizens concerned over the lack of Sex Education than those who think there is too Much". This is an irresponsible statement coming from one of his responsibility.

(4) Why has it taken the School Board two years to reach the decision to allow parents in on the decision making?

(5) Why was nothing done about the methods used in teaching Sex Education until the parents complained?

(6) Will there be any guidelines set as to what can be taught and who will do the teaching? Such as will it be taught that sex before marriage is wrong? Will it be taught that Abortion is right if a pregnant girl chooses so or will they be told this is murder? Will there be moral responsible normal people teaching the class?

These I think are some questions the parents need to have answered I personally believe Sex Education is not needed and will work to that end.

I thought it rather a God send that just a few days ago in Dear Abby, two women

wrote almost the same letter, saying we were virgins when we married and our husbands were surprised at our sexual ability being virgins, but Abby all we did was abide by our natural sex instincts, on the wedding night.

Supt. Davis said Sex Education is taught as low as the fifth grade and that is true. In the State of Kentucky they are given material diagramming the sex organs and sex act in the fifth grade and in the State of California nine year old girls went to the Health Dept. to get the pill and they decided not to tell their parents. Parents if you care about the morals of your children you had better wake up.

**FLOYD N. SEAY**  
Kings Mountain

## Parents had better wake up

# Fathers as competent as mothers

By **BOB CAVIN**  
Special to Mirror-Herald

It's long been thought that fathers lack the parental competence of mothers when it comes to the business of rearing children in single-parent homes.

That's not the case, though, according to the research findings of Dr. Dennis Orthner, an assistant professor of child development and family relations at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro.

The study, conducted jointly with Dr. Ken Lewis of New Haven, Conn., was an effort to determine whether fathers are competent in their roles as single parents—a consideration that often is heavily weighed in custody hearings during divorce proceedings.

"The legal and social presumptions that mothers are more capable as custodians of minor children than fathers were found to be unsupported," said Orthner.

"Our findings indicate that fathers are as hooked into parental responsibilities as their wives are," he said.

The project, funded by the UNC-G Family Research Center and a grant from the William T. Grant Foundation, included studies of 153 single-parent fathers in North Carolina, Arizona, California, Missouri and Ohio. Their findings were published in the spring issue of Family Law Quarterly.

Orthner and Lewis examined the evidence of single-father competency against the

legal and social presumptions of the father's motives in seeking child custody, his inability to rear daughters and his inability to manage an adequate home life for his children.

One of the main concerns pointed out in the studies is that fathers may seek custody of their children to deliberately hurt their former wives.

However, the research showed that those fathers who sought single parenthood were more successful in their parenting roles than men who gained the status by death or desertion of the mother.

"In one study, fathers specifically cautioned against using children to gain power over their wives since this in one way could compensate for the total commitment of time and energy required of the single parent," Orthner noted.

About one-third of the fathers in the studies were rearing daughters ranging from infants to teenagers, but these fathers did not appear to exhibit any more insecurity or general anxiety about their parental capabilities than fathers who were raising sons.

"Fathers with daughters were more likely to note the need for a difference in the socialization of boys and girls," Orthner pointed out. "Issues such as dress needs, hair styles and sex education were their primary areas of concern."

"It is important to realize that these concerns are not limited to single fathers,"

he noted. "In a comparative study of single mothers, it was found that they share these same concerns."

The studies also showed fathers going out of their way to spend time with their children, countering the common assumption that father custody merely means a shifting of the childrearing responsibilities from mothers to mother substitutes.

"If anything, the fathers become more self-reliant and depend on their children to share more of the family responsibilities," Orthner pointed out. "In a comparative study of single mothers and fathers, the fathers were not found to depend more on substitute child care than mothers."

He added that the men who were willing to re-allocate their time in favor of their children often felt more competent in their childrearing roles.

"The amount of time spent alone with the children is not the critical point," Orthner explained. "Rather, it is the degree to which the father and children have shared experiences and have a comfortable relationship with each other."

"Fathers who have regularly interacted with their children and have not depended upon their wives to be the sole nurturing parent are able to adjust more readily to the single-parent role," he added.

Regardless of fathers' parental competencies, Orthner said they are discouraged

from seeking custody of their children in the courts by their wives, friends, lawyers and counselors.

"In one out of 10 divorce cases involving children, the parents decide to place the children with their mothers without contesting the custody—a decision supported by legal and social precedent," he explained.

"Nearly all courts make it difficult for fathers to realize their legal rights in custody cases. Despite the fact that some 30 states, including North Carolina, view the father and mother to be equal in terms of parental ability, fathers are discouraged from taking their cases to court."

"Prior to the no-fault divorce laws and non-sexist laws, it was difficult for a father to find a lawyer willing to plead his custody case because of the courts' presumption of maternal preference," he pointed out.

"However, a growing number of fathers are now challenging these presumptions. Nearly half of those fathers have won who have sought custody of their children in the courts since 1978," he added.

"Some men may not make competent single fathers and some women may not make competent single-parent mothers," Orthner concluded. "But in many cases, both parents are quite capable of being single parents which makes contested custody cases the most difficult cases before a judge."

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