

'New' Ku Klux Klan denounces hate, still refuses to trust

Until Saturday I hadn't listened to "When the Saints Go Marching In" since a jazz band played it at my 21st birthday party in New Orleans. Then I heard it again at a rally of the Knights of the Ku Klux Klan.

JAY ROBBINS

Opinion Editor



My faith in society's progress received a boost when only 25 people showed up to watch. The Klan members marched out to "When the Saints..." and other traditional tunes. Four Klansmen stood in a semicircle behind the microphone and held the American, Confederate Texas and Christian flags. Uniform shirts embroidered with those three flags and a Klan symbol replaced the hooded white cloaks. They recited the Pledge of Allegiance and then the show started.

How ironic that such a song could connect the French Quarter's cosmopolitan, laid-back revelry with the ignorant intolerance that stereotypes the KKK. The Klansmen looked like any mix of people, except they all were white. A couple of teenage boys and about 10 men and women made up the group. They met at the town square in Athens, Texas, where a massive brown brick courthouse with columned porches sits among oak, magnolia and sycamore trees which shade the entire lawn. The place was no different from a hundred others. This event could have happened anywhere. On the morning before the rally, police barricaded the street and put up crowd control fences around the building's front steps, where the Klansmen would stand. A helicopter circled overhead. Law officers carried tear gas and night sticks and a dozen sheriff's deputies on horseback inspected the area. As "high noon" approached, the town prepared for the worst and I got ready to see the Klan bring out the worst in the town.

This "new" Klan calls itself a "white civil rights organization." It invites all white Christians to join. Some of the comments during Saturdays speeches supported that claim. Bobbie Smith, an Exalted Cyclops of the Klan, said, "Everyone should be proud of their race, proud of their land," and, "No matter what the color of your skin, to be judged by the colorblind would leave us all better off." The Grand Dragon of Texas, Michael Douglas Lowe, spoke of the need for the "helping hand" of temporary welfare and set a goal for this nation to provide everyone with some kind of work. All the speakers repeated the line, "We hate no one," until it became a refrain at each pause. But not hating is only half the task of creating social harmony and strength. The other half is trust, which the Klan still lacks. The Klan's philosophy includes beliefs that generate racial conflict, public fear and national isolationism. These problems can lead to violence and even war. The speeches were spiked with comments like: "If you were born here, you belong here." "Immigrants are invading America. This is our homeland! How much longer will it be a homeland we can call our own?" "Immigrants come in to steal your jobs, steal your homes." "Let's do for OUR people — to Hell with other countries." Lowe also outlined an idea for controlling the spread of AIDS. All HIV carriers would be interned in "AIDS hospitals," to receive care from AIDS victims — much like "lepers were separated from

the rest of the population" in Biblical accounts. Apparently their rights die when they get infected. True civil rights groups work to gain and protect the freedoms guaranteed by the Constitution. Those liberties include the right to freedom of speech, religion and assembly; the right to bear arms; the right to due process of law. The Klan doesn't advocate civil rights. It preaches a doctrine of social change. It condemns modern political changes and wrongly turns to group isolation as a solution for problems faced by every race and nation. At the end of the rally I met Lowe and some of the other members. They invited everyone attending or observing the rally to a "cross-lighting," as it's now called, which symbolizes the Klan "bringing truth and light to the country." If the present Klan's "truth" is the light that's coming to shine on America, I'd much rather live in the dark.

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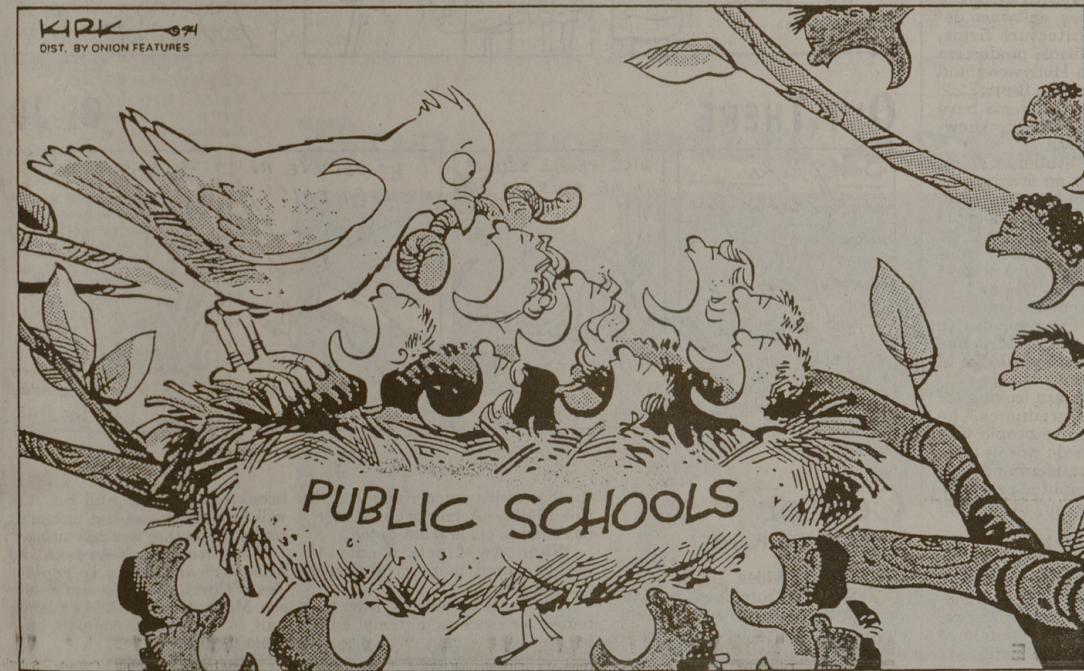
EDITORIAL

NUCLEAR DANGER

North Korea poses intolerable threat

North Korea's withdrawal Monday from the International Atomic Energy Agency alarmed the world and showed the need for strong economic and military action to prevent North Korea's development of nuclear weapons power. Allowing North Korea to develop a nuclear weapons program would spell disaster. North Korea quit the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty in March 1993 and does not abide by its mandates or safety requirements. Nuclear weapons on the Korean Peninsula would destabilize the region. Japan and South Korea would live under the threat of a hostile nuclear neighbor, which would encourage their desires for atomic bombs. The United States, along with other U.N. members, has threatened an economic embargo against North Korea in response to its actions. Kim Il Sung, the aging North Korean dictator, proclaimed that sanctions are an act of war and threatened to respond in kind if they are imposed, but Kim has already fired the first shots. Ignoring the mandates of the nonproliferation treaty is a serious threat to the international community that the United States must confront. The CIA claims that the odds are

"better than even" that North Korea has already produced at least one atomic bomb. Evidence indicates that the Korean government may be gathering enough plutonium to build more. By barring inspections, the North Koreans leave the international community with no option but to assume the worst. As an outlaw among the community of nations, North Korea will be willing to sell its weapons to any nation that could pay, including other international aggressors like Libya and Iran. In the words of former Secretary of State Lawrence Eagleburger, "[North Korea's policies] ought to scare the pants off everybody." The risk of nuclear weapons spreading to these nations justifies a stern response from the United States, including preparations for war. Hopefully, North Korea will abide by the treaty and stop its nuclear weapons program even before sanctions are needed. Any weapons they already have must be destroyed. Kim Il Sung's rough, aggressive behavior resembles Saddam Hussein before Iraq's armies rolled into Kuwait in 1990. If North Korea's pro-nuclear behavior continues, it must be dealt with firmly.



Time's quick passage hides aging

High school classmates at reunion look different but remain same

As I attended my high school 10-year reunion last weekend, I realized how much can happen in a decade. Yowwww! What a shock. Although it must be natural to revert to the adolescent tendency of always noticing your peers' appearance, I managed to sidestep immature and shallow attitudes and see only the inner beauty:

FRANK STANFORD

Columnist



and conversation that trailed off at graduation only to be picked right up again. The time passed so quickly - and now I'm old as the Appalachians. My 10-year reunion may not mean much to any of you, but it should. As I was returning to College Station my mind was full of all that's associated with the passage of time and aging. Since getting older is something we all experience but rarely notice or understand, it's important to realize that aging - or LIFE - is happening right now. Don't just think of being in school as an obstacle to graduation, or a menial job as a stairstep to a better one... to a better one... Even though these desires are normal and natural, the present is an enormous part of your life - your aging (even flipping burgers). Aging is something different for each one of us. It is Polident and nursing homes, weakness and power. But it's never the age we are at the present.

Remember how mature college boys used to seem to teenage girls? And how college girls were REAL women?

We used to say the sixth-graders were the "older kids" and college students were ancient. Receiving a driver's license was a longed-for rite of passage into adulthood, but now it's for high school babies. Remember how mature college boys used to seem to teenage girls? And how college girls were REAL women? Hah! (regarding the men only, of course) Because time is passing every moment, we don't have the opportunity to really notice what is happening to us. We move from our parents' homes to school, school to our own homes, and tax bracket to tax bracket. These gradations are easy to mark. A person however, is a very difficult movement to measure, especially when you're moving right along with them through time. Just look at a picture of a parent or relative from five or 10 years ago. They don't really seem different at all do they? Aging doesn't seem to change people that much. Oh, sure, a little morphological differences here and there (mostly there), but it's certainly likely that those individuals you know now will be the same people 10, 20 or even 60 years from now.

Frank Stanford is a graduate philosophy student

EVERYONE was fat. Of course that was not entirely true - some looked even better - but the "10-year spare tire" makes the "freshman 15" seem like nothing more than padded clothing. The Slim-Fast company could have stocked up on "before" pictures for sure. Everyone was bald, too - even the former cheerleaders. OK, so I'm on the road to bald-city and holding a little grudge against those who will keep hair as thick as carpet their whole lives. As you might notice in the mug shot, I used to have hair and even own a comb. At the reunion, however, it was obvious that I wasn't the only one of my classmates to be ankle deep in shower water during the last 10 years. It used to look like a dead blond mouse was stuck in my drain all the time. Thanks to seeing many bald school chums and the ridiculously high price of Rogaine, I'm now prouder than ever to be a member of the hair-impaired. Speaking of impaired... Everyone had kids. Kids! Now that might not seem like a big deal to some. You might know couples in their late twenties or even younger who have babies. But I'm speaking of children who are old enough to add and subtract. However, these "parents" who I was seeing again after 10 years were the same individuals I shot spitballs with and at. Some of them cut class regularly to drink beer at the beach. Or filled the main air conditioning unit with detergent. Or blew up newspaper stands, not to mention many other illegal and immoral activities. Now they're family men and women trying to teach junior how to behave. How necessarily hypocritical. It really makes you wonder how your own parents acted in high school. Some of you might be stunned (unless your parents are major goobers). After being hit with the way everyone looks a decade later, I was surprised how easily I slipped back into the memories



Buddhism, Christianity teach different forms of salvation

In regard to Julia Stavenhagen's June 14 column: I do not want to comment on the validity of the statements concerning Buddhism; however, I would like to help the columnist and the readers understand more about Christianity.

Many aspects of the views given pertaining to Christianity are true, but there is a lot which has been left out. Jesus Christ taught compassion way before Buddha was born. Jesus Christ, as the incarnate son of God, performed many miracles in the presence of hundreds of witnesses (Buddha did not). God does advocate love in all circumstances, however the Bible includes several stories about many killings initiated by God for the purposes of fulfilling his promises and to bring glory to himself. The "lost through thousands of translations" idea is a fallacy - I am not denying that the Bible has been translated into many different languages, but there are over 60,000 original copies of the Bible - 25,000 of those are in the original Greek. Jesus was not sent "to help people gain happiness and enlightenment," but was rather sent to pay the penalty for the sin of mankind. The fact that some "televangelists" have been

labeled as hypocritical does appear bad - however, I myself, as a Bible-believing Christian, am a hypocrite for the simple fact that I as a mere sinful human being cannot go a day without sinning, and if there are any Christians who believe they can go a day without sinning I believe they have been deceived. I especially like Stavenhagen's reference to the "good ideas" advocated by Jesus Christ. He did have some good ideas. Some of his ideas were salvation, eternal life, pure love, complete comfort, complete security, absolute truth, and pure joy, all of which could only be found by trusting in him. I wonder what readers would say if they knew that the teaching of salvation according to the Buddhist religion is by self-effort only. And the definitions of heaven and hell given by Buddhism are far from the definitions given within Christianity. Hell, from the Christian point of view, is a place replete with eternal suf-

fering, eternal damnation, eternal fire, continual anguish and constant darkness, while heaven is a place without any suffering, anguish, or darkness; its occupants are in complete communion with God. Please do not let this column discourage you from looking into Christianity.

Brian Schneider Class of '95

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