



March 2006

Coin Toss



Congressman Robin Hayes

Enclosures:

- Press articles
- Best Practices document providing additional information

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A great year to be editor in Cabarrus County

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What a great year to be editor of the local newspaper in Cabarrus County. A lot of good things have happened in the almost eight months I have sat in this seat.

Saturday's victory by Concord High School over Hunt Wilson to become state champs in football ranks right up there.

Despite the early morning rain and cooler than I would have liked temperatures (since I was hoping to drive my VW Beetle convertible), the game was all it was billed to be. The final score, 27-0, was good for the team and the fans. Not to mention Coach E.Z. Smith who has been unselfish and more than a coach to most of the youngsters who couldn't help but applaud every time his name was called by the announcer at Saturday's game. You could feel the admiration for the coach throughout the stadium.

As I stood with all the other fans who made the trek to Groves Stadium, I wished I had gone to more games during the season. I meant to, but didn't make it a priority. But to be at the final game that gave CHS a state title was something words can't describe.

For those who were there, you know what I am talking about. The fans for CHS far outnumbered the fans on the other side of the stadium.

Concord has a lot of pride. And rightfully so.

Congressman Robin Hayes was on hand for the coin toss. They used a coin from a local soldier who is currently deployed in Iraq — protecting you and I during the holidays.

Hayes also took part in the trophy presentation after the game. Besides the congressman, it was good to see other local elected officials or managers from the city, county and school administration there supporting the

hometown team.

Teamwork is what it's all about. Back this summer when Concord was named an All-America City, it took a team effort and those efforts and hard work are still paying off.

Cabarrus County has a lot to be proud of these days.

Regardless of the textile mill closing and loss of jobs for so many people in Kannapolis, there are brighter days ahead for all of us.

The redevelopment of former Pillowtex Plants 1 and 6 is good news.

All eyes will be on David Murdock and his plans.

I'm encouraged by the obvious signs of communication and cooperation in Cabarrus County. Our business and community leaders and elected officials all know what they need to do. And we're making progress, each and every day.

Winning a state title in high school football just puts an ex-

clamation point on what I have been happy to be part of the last several months.

The newspaper is no different than most other businesses in Cabarrus County. We have a vested interest and we want to be part of a growing community with a plan for the future that takes a close look at managing that growth. We're here to help.

With new blood and leadership on the County Commission and a strong school board in Cabarrus County, I'm sure we're on the right track.

But it sure is nice to be able to say I'm the editor of the local paper where one of the high schools just won the state championship in football.

Thanks, CHS and coach Smith, for making my job just a little bit easier.

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The Charlotte Observer

Charlotte Observer

July 4, 2005

Metal Tributes Paid to Those with Mettle

http://www.charlotte.com/mld/charlotte/news/breaking_news/12050804.htm

Metal tributes paid to those with mettle

N.C.'s Rep. Hayes among collectors of coins honoring fighting forces

TIM FUNK

Observer Washington Bureau

WASHINGTON - Coins, hundreds of them, decorate the Capitol Hill office of Rep. Robin Hayes. They're framed on the wall, displayed in a glass-topped table.

The Concord Republican tossed one of them in December to decide which high school football team -- Concord or Wilson -- would kick off at the state championship in Winston-Salem.

And last week, as Hayes prepared to return home for a series of parades celebrating the Fourth of July, the coins reminded him of the cost of freedom.

They're military coins. In 2 inches of metal, they salute the branch of service, the military unit and sometimes the fields of battle. For those in the military and those who support the troops, carrying and collecting them have become signs of solidarity.

The image of an arrow propelled by flames adorns one side of the coin minted for the 4th Fighter Wing at Seymour Johnson Air Force Base in Goldsboro. Just below the insignia is the unit's proud slogan: "Fourth But First."

The newest coin for the 82nd Airborne -- headquartered at Fort Bragg in Fayetteville -- traces the Army's victory marches since World War II:

"Sicily ... Salerno ... Normandy ... Holland ... Grenada ... Panama ... Desert Storm ... Desert Shield ... OEF (Operation Enduring Freedom, Afghanistan) ... OIF (Operation Iraqi Freedom)."

Hayes, a member of the House Armed Services Committee whose district includes Fort Bragg, has collected about 200 coins in his travels to military bases and to Iraq. As America celebrates its birthday, Hayes sees the coins as tributes to the troops who've put their lives on the line to keep America free.

"Without soldiers, there'd be no Independence Day," he says. "They are the heart and soul of July the Fourth. They're also the key to our freedom in the future. There is no better time ... to appreciate and acknowledge what they've done."

Stories about the beginnings of military coins -- also called unit challenge coins and commander's coins -- abound on the Internet. One popular legend traces them to World War I and a wealthy American lieutenant who ordered bronze medallions embossed with his squadron's emblem for every member of his outfit. He wore his in a small leather sack around his neck.

As the story goes, the unnamed lieutenant was shot down behind enemy lines. To discourage him from escaping, the Germans took all his IDs -- except for that leather pouch. He escaped anyway and stumbled into a French outpost. He was accused of being a German saboteur, until he showed them his medallion. Instead of shooting him, the French gave him a bottle of wine.

Roxanne Merritt, director of the JFK Special Warfare Museum at Fort Bragg, says metal military coins actually date to 1968, during the Vietnam War. The military coins became tokens of a commanding officer's appreciation.

In 1968, Merritt says, a Col. Vernon Greene at Fort Devins in Massachusetts established the first official coin, to be given to soldiers for a job well done.

Today, Merritt says, generals often hand out the coins, with many of them bearing the image of a red or blue flag -- the symbol of a general. One star means on the flag means it came from a brigadier general; two stars, a major general; three stars, a lieutenant general.

"The coins really foster esprit de corps," Merritt says. "I know of some people (in the military) who wouldn't get married unless they had their group coin in their pocket during the ceremony. ... They wouldn't feel dressed without it."

The coins are even part of a bar challenge. By slapping down a Special Forces coin at the bar, she says, a member can bring out others who serve -- or have served -- in that elite unit. If those challenged forgot their coin, they buy; if they produce it, the challenger pays.

The JFK warfare museum gift shop at Bragg sells 100 different coins, mailing them all over the world, says clerk Lois Rainey.

Hayes, who handed out coins from his collection to soldiers during his recent visit to Iraq, has coins of all colors, shapes and service branches in his collection. One commemorating Operation Red Dawn in 2003 has Saddam Hussein as the Ace of Spades on one side and a map of Iraq -- with dots for Tikrit and Adwar -- on the other.

Another spells out a quote from the Book of Joshua in the Bible: "I will be strong and courageous. I will not be terrified, or discouraged, for the Lord my God is with me wherever I go."

Hayes' favorite?

"That's like asking me if I like Western or Eastern North Carolina barbecue better," he jokes.

But, in fact, Hayes does have a special coin.

It's the one he flipped at last year's football championship, which Concord won.

Hayes got that coin from Col. Mike Regner, who had left the Office of Congressional Liaison to take command of the 13th Marine Expeditionary Unit in Iraq.

During the game, Hayes kept Regner up to date by sending e-mail on his BlackBerry.

Says Hayes: "It was a great morale booster for a Marine."

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The Charlotte Observer

Charlotte Observer
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Hayes Takes Game to New Division

Hayes Takes Game to New Division

Don Hudson

It's a muggy Friday night in mid-September in this small textile town 35 miles east of Charlotte. A balding man in a baseball cap, a short-sleeve shirt and khakis limps out to midfield to flip the coin for the game between Concord and Mount Pleasant.

Then he wanders over to the sidelines for Concord High, where he once played, and starts shaking hands. The avuncular man works the crowd. It seems he knows everybody on both sidelines.

He's been here all his life.

U.S. Rep. Robin Hayes, R-N.C., is up for re-election Nov. 5, running against Charlotte lawyer and Democratic candidate Chris Kouri to hold his seat in the 8th District.

The limp? It's not an old football injury but from a replacement hip. Hayes did play two years at Duke University, however, where he wore Sonny Jurgenson's No. 9.

"I didn't play much," Hayes said, laughing at any comparison to the NFL great.

The grandson of Charles Cannon, who built Cannon Mills, Hayes has been a businessman for 35 years, while serving on the Concord City Council and in the state legislature. Some criticize him, saying he started with a lot, being born to wealth.

"They look at his grandfather's last name," said Elmer Spratt, 57, who grew up with Hayes. "That's real unfair. That man has worked."

Hayes worked in the mill for two years, then coached small-college football. Hayes, 57, helped start a nationwide airplane rental business, built a commercial construction firm, owned a Mack truck dealership and ran a hosiery mill.

Hayes' district was reshaped this year. It still is 51 percent Democratic, but now includes east Charlotte. Gone from the two-term incumbent's district are most of Union County and other rural areas where Democrats are more likely to vote Republican.

Hayes will make two campaign stops in Charlotte today, playing off his football and conservative Christian ties.

U.S. Rep. Tom Osborne, R-Neb., the former University of Nebraska football coach, will be with Hayes and Christian author David Barton at a dinner at Hickory Grove Baptist Church in east Charlotte at 5:30 p.m. today.

Then Hayes and Osborne will be honored at an invitation-only fund-raiser at McIntosh's restaurant. Former WBT radio personality Danny Fontana will host with Carolina Panthers Mike Minter, John Kasay and Wesley Walls.

Hayes said his main issues are homeland security and jobs, an issue here with manufacturing jobs going overseas.

Not everyone at the game was pro-Hayes. James Reid, 45, a black bricklayer from Concord, won't vote for Hayes.

"Two years ago, everything was plentiful," he said. "When the Republicans are in control, we (minorities) are in trouble."

Come November, Hayes will find out whether the small-town themes of football and conservative Christianity play well in Charlotte, and in Concord, now that the economy isn't as strong as it was in 2000.

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“HEADS OR TAILS” COIN TOSS

MEMBER: ROBIN HAYES (NC-08)

STAFF CONTACT: CAROLYN HERN, COMM. DIRECTOR

PREPARATION

Who is involved? (District staff, DC staff, etc.)

Rep. Hayes has had great success tossing the coin at high school football games across our district. To set up the event, our District Director will call the school and arrange for Hayes to participate in the coin toss.

Are any outside groups involved? (Schools, Local Business, Law Enforcement, etc.)

School officials are the only outside participants involved in this event.

Timeframe for preparation: (How long does it take to plan this event?)

Once the high school game schedule is available, we check to see when any big games occur and call the schools to see if Rep. Hayes can toss the coin at the beginning of the game, then schedule the event. Hayes will stay during the football game to talk with fans in the stands. Special guests have accompanied Hayes to past games including Speaker Hastert and Rep. Tom Osborne.

Press Component

What press did you invite:

For any of the big high school games, local sports reporters and photographers will already be covering the event. We put out a media advisory and make press calls to alert the media of Rep. Hayes’ roll in the game. If Hayes is using a special coin, we give press that background as well. Calls and media advisories go out to local sports reporters and political reporters.

After the toss, press can get any quotes or background they may need for game stories or other stories they may be working on.

What went into your press plan for the event? (Media Advisory, Calls to the local media to invite them, op-ed leading up to the event, advertising the event if it was open to the public...)

A media advisory goes out a few days before the game and reporters are called to schedule any interview or picture time.

Other Important Information:

How often do you hold this event?

This event can be held across a district during high school football season. Games usually occur on Friday or Saturday nights.

Other important tips for someone planning an event like this:

Hayes uses military coins at all high school game coin tosses that he has collected from soldiers he has met (see articles). This background can be given to reporters to be included in their stories.