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Our View

Thumbs up, thumbs down

THUMBS UP to the Hickory Public Library for archiving high school yearbooks. The project is coordinated with the N.C. Digital Heritage Center that has been cataloging college yearbooks. Both efforts are commendable. Although school annuals seem indestructible — and there are hundreds printed at a time — they can be lost, or have pages missing, or rendered unreadable by time and storage conditions. Even though Catawba County is one of the few counties in the state to have multiple public school systems, there has been consolidation over the years and new schools built. Fortunately, Patrick Beaver Memorial Library and Ridgeview Library have past issues of Claremont and Ridgeview yearbooks. There will be many more in the archive. These yearbooks are pearls of local history, heritage and culture. They are among the clearest windows into the past we have. They contain a photographic record of adults and children. They are accurate in showing how we thought, how we played, our attitudes, our attire and what our world looked like. They remind us of our past aspirations, inspirations and promises — promises we made and were made to us. Yearbooks tend to be overlooked as treasures. We must not lose them and we must not hide them. Yes, we really looked like that. Yes, that was our music, our dancing, our cheers and our classrooms. Yearbooks are important parts of our history. The initiatives taken by the Hickory library and the Heritage Center deserve our gratitude.