

Opinions

Letter to the Editor

We must stand up for children

To the editor:

As a parent and concerned citizen of this community, I, along with hundreds of others, am shocked and outraged at what has taken place since January of this year in regard to the new sex education curriculum now being taught our fifth, sixth and seventh grade boys and girls. The subject matter includes the following: Anal sex, oral sex, birth control and contraceptives, abortion, condoms, and much, much more. Is this what the parents and citizens of this community want our children to learn? I certainly hope not.

We have been misled by Health Coordinator Cindy Borders, Middle School Principal John Goforth, the Health Council members, and by our elected members of the Board of Education.

At the last Board of Education meeting held on April 19, 1994, four out of the five Board of Education members openly admitted that even though they voted on the new curriculum and even though they approved the curriculum to be taught to our children, they in fact never even read the curriculum. It was extremely disturbing to me and many, many others to listen to our Board tell us how much their concern is for the children, yet not even read the curriculum they approved.

We have been misled, we have had the truth held from us, we have been kept in the dark, etc., all done by the people we elected and who we are paying to serve us.

The school wants you to believe the sex education program is mandated by the State of North Carolina. This is an outright lie. I have copies of the school curriculum (which anyone can get from the KM Superintendent's office) and copies of the State Law. I will send them to anyone who wants them.

Health Coordinator Cindy Borders was asked in January if there were any statistics available to show whether or not sex education was good or bad. She had no statistics, and when asked why then was the school going to teach a course that it didn't know was good or bad she did not respond. We were told we would have three meetings in March to discuss the curriculum. We were told we would have 60 days to review the curriculum before it was started. We had only eight days. When told in January of other abstinence based curriculums which were proven to decrease teen pregnancy, sexual activity, and sexually transmitted diseases, she was not interested in any of these. The State of North Carolina Department of Education says that before the new curriculum was started there was to be held public meetings so the public could be shown the curriculum, have a chance to see what was to be taught and voice their opinion about it. Yet there were no meetings held? Why? At a meeting that was held on April 12th at the KM Middle School, Cindy Borders said that even though we are taxpaying citizens that unless we had a child in the Middle School that the meeting was not for us. The school has done all it can to keep the parents and citizens in the dark.

At the Board of Education meeting on April 19th, I produced reports that showed study after study by psychologists, experts in the medical field, universities and even our own government that sex education taught in the schools has a detrimental effect on children.

Stand up now for our children. Please attend the next Board of Education meeting at Grover Elementary School on May 9th at 7:00 p.m. Our children's lives depend on you.

Write to me for more information: Tom Sees, PO Box 370, Grover, NC 28073.

Tom Sees

HERALD LETTER POLICY

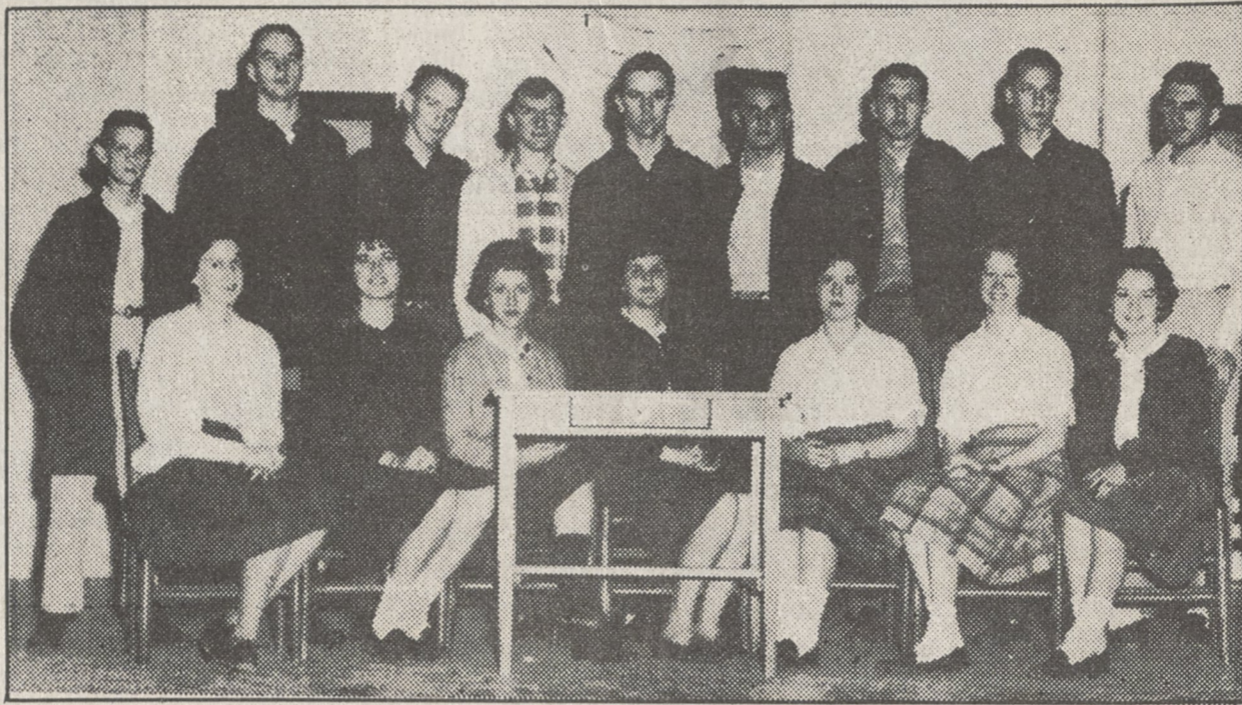
The Herald welcomes your letters to the editor for publication in each Thursday's paper. We ask that you use the following guidelines:

Keep your letter brief and to the point. Type and double-space them, if possible; if not, write legibly. All letters must be signed in ink and include the full name, address and telephone number of the author for verification purposes.

The Herald reserves the right to edit letters for length, spelling, good taste, clarity, libel, slander or any other reason; and reserves the right to reject any letter for any reason.

Mail your letters to The Editor, P.O. Box 769, Kings Mountain, N.C. 28086.

Nostalgia Corner



1963 SENIOR PLAY CAST - This is the cast of "And Came The Spring," which was presented by the senior class of Kings Mountain High School in 1963. Front row, left to right, Diane Roberts, Marilyn Dixon, Norma Spearman, Brenda Lovelace, Laura Page, Barbara Cable and Jewel Robbs. Back row, left to right, Ronnie Blackburn, Wendell Phifer, Freddie Foster, Kenneth Barnes, David Adams, Gary Wilson, Tommy Hope, Robert Plonk and Junior Davenport.

Your Right To Say It

81 students, 9 percent, opt out of sex ed class

To the editor:

With all of the discussion concerning the "Healthful Living" curriculum, I contacted Mr. John Goforth, Principal, Kings Mountain Middle School, to find out the number of students who have opted out of this class. As of Tuesday, May 3, 81 students have been excluded. This is nine percent of the students. There were 942 students enrolled as of April 28.

I feel that it is very important for all children to learn about living healthy. Realistically, we would be wishful thinkers if we thought we could shelter them from AIDS and sexually-transmitted diseases. It is very important for them to receive the facts.

However, I strongly feel that the students should be separated by gender. This would not take away from the class but would allow the boys and girls to be more open in their questions without remarks or snickering from the opposite sex. I also feel the material should be age appropriate.

For those of you who have not done so, I encourage you to read all of the curriculum and view all of the resource material. I also encourage each of you to contact the Kings Mountain School Board members because ultimately they make major decisions which affect our children's education. Whether you agree with all of the curriculum or feel as I do, that there are a few things we could change to make it better for all students, your elected school board members need to hear from you.

In speaking with each school board members as well as Dr. Jane King and Dr. Bob McRae, Superintendent, Kings Mountain District Schools, I was assured that over the summer the Healthful Living curriculum will be looked at closely. With over 7 percent being excluded from the class, it may be in those students' best interest to establish another curriculum such as the sex respect course being taught in several counties in North Carolina. New Hanover County offers two courses and the parents choose which course their child attends. I am confident that as parents we feel it is important for all children to learn about acne, menstruation, AIDS/sexually transmitted diseases, hygiene, etc. Since there is a teacher having to sit with these classes that have opted out, this would not involve another salary. This may be something the Kings Mountain School Board will consider.

I, as a parent of three, am very concerned about all children in Kings Mountain District Schools. In public education I feel parents' and citizens' input is only helpful. Hopefully in future decisions concerning curriculum the input could be received prior to the approval of such curriculum. That way, the Kings Mountain School Board could consider what would be best for all children, and make an appropriate decision based on all information received.

To all graduates: well done

Pete McElroy was not a particularly unusual fellow. Not by my standards at least. But every May, Pete McElroy performed a ritual which even the strangest of all of God's creatures would find odd.

Pete McElroy was one of the smartest students in my college class. I think. I never actually looked at his report card. But he seemed to have all the signs. While the rest of us thought that the big building on the edge of campus was a Ramada Inn whose interior decorator had a flair for books, Pete knew it to be the library. While the rest of us carried basketballs, magazines and yo-yos, Pete carried a calculator which looked like a piece of the space shuttle "Explorer." But the tell-tale sign of Pete's academic efforts was his annual, end-of-year book-dropping ritual. Every May, after final exams were finished but before everyone left campus, this bright young man would ride the elevator to the roof of the highest dormitory. And from that perch, Pete McElroy would let out his college frustrations with a little help from gravity itself. Every textbook which he had accumulated during the year was hoisted to the edge. And when the time seemed right, Pete would unload his vast accumulation of printed knowledge onto the sidewalk below. Thud!

Those of us who stood at the bottom to watch this circus act giggled and laughed at the thought of such a feat. What silliness. What nonsense. But even as we

giggled, we realized that something of Pete's ritual made us feel better about the end of the year, too. Though most of us hadn't been the kind of students Pete had, we had worked hard and had looked forward to "the end" as well. And something of his gesture touched a button of relief in us.

Years later, here in Kings Mountain, the end of the school year is rolling around as surely as it did for Pete McElroy during those college years in Nashville, Tennessee. And many a Mountaineer is looking forward to that final day. Though I would be surprised if I found that anyone here engages in book-dropping, I am sure that little celebrations of "the end" will go forward in our town, to. So like a member of the crowd on a Nashville sidewalk, I will offer some thoughts for those who are finishing.

We Americans are a people whose appetite for education is almost insatiable. We believe in its impor-

My children mean the world to me, as I am sure yours do to you. My concerns are from my heart! Along with all of the information I have received from Raleigh, I have given much thought as I reviewed this curriculum, and keeping our children's best interest in mind while doing so.

Sincerely,  
Melany Clark Bolin

Thanks for writing

To the editor:  
Mail for Our Military, successor to the original nationwide military morale mail program, wishes to express appreciation to all the outstanding folks who helped make the most recent mail campaigns so successful. The wonderful support of so many caring people all across the country enabled this program to send packages of that morale-boosting mail to more than a thousand units, bases and support locations such as USOs, Armed Services YMCAs and hospitals.

Thanks are extended to all who wrote the cards and letters as well as to those who assisted by distributing the mail to our military personnel.

Readers interested in learning how to help boost the morale of our servicemen and women at more than a thousand places across the U.S. and around the world should send a first-class stamp for return postage (no

self-addressed envelopes, please, just the stamp): Mail For Our Military, P.O. Box 415, Fort Campbell, KY 42223-0415. Thank you.

Rodney Butts, Chairman

(ED. NOTE - North Carolina coordinator for Mail for Our Military is Renee Jones, Disabled American Veterans Auxiliary Unit #18, Shelby).

Thanks for support

To the editor:  
The players and coaches and parents of Patrick Yarns would like to thank the following for their kindness and support. To the sponsor of the team, Patrick Yarns, for providing the barbecue lunch. To Sgt. Mark Simpson of the Kings Mountain City Police for coming out to talk to the players, and to Midview Baptist Church, and the Rev. Bob Hope of Midpines, where the picnic was held. Once again, thank you for every-

Phyllis Weaver

thing.

BOB McRAE

Superintendent  
Kings Mountain Schools



School System promotes morals

In recent weeks several questions have been raised about the school system's family life education curriculum, often referred to as sex education. In today's column I want to clarify the system's involvement in this issue and reaffirm our belief that it is the individual student's parents who should have the right to choose whether or not he or she participates in the program.

First of all, we try to correlate our program with the state's Standard Course of Study and with the Teacher Handbook for Health Education. I expect that there are many different curriculum units, often locally developed, being used to teach family life education in North Carolina. Some systems may not teach it at all. We have tried to use available resources, including our health department, to develop a curriculum which is factual and comprehensive.

While family life education has been taught in this system for many years, the program was formalized in the mid-eighties. The Board of Education appointed a community health council in 1983 to consider this matter and other health education related issues. In November of 1984 the council recommended a formal family life curriculum for the system, and the board approved a policy to require such. Since that time the council, which consists of both employees and community representatives including doctors, ministers, and parents, has overseen all curriculum changes and approved instructional materials for the program.

The recently revised curriculum is not considerably different from what we have used for the past ten years. Even so we have tried in this revision to be particularly sensitive to matters which might be considered objectionable for their crudeness or potentially prurient for adolescents. What we now have has been approved by our health council and is a thorough but factual effort to reach our children.

Our system has chosen to go beyond an abstinence only curriculum. Our curriculum is abstinence based and promotes abstinence as the correct choice for students to make. It also teaches refusal skills to our students to use when pressured to have pre-marital sex. We do recognize, however, that not all students choose to abstain. Even though we wish that were not the case, it is our belief that these students need proper information concerning the possible consequences of such behavior. If a student ignores advice to abstain - and some certainly do - is it not better that he or she has information on effective habits for protection against both pregnancy and sexually transmitted disease?

As stated before, parents may opt to keep their children from participating in the curriculum. Approximately 6% of our middle school students, 56 out of 943, are not enrolled this year. That is a decision parents need to make, and we salute those who choose to handle this matter at home. However, we must realize that many parents do not and that some who do not are very good parents who just are not comfortable with discussing sexual issues with their children. Those children who do not participate in the curriculum are given an alternative assignment.

A great deal of information has been disseminated in the last few weeks about our program. Some of it is incorrect. Here is the truth: We do encourage students to talk to their parents about sex. We do not promote unhealthy or illegal sexual activity. We do not tell our students that it is appropriate to have sex before marriage if they use a contraceptive. We do teach accurate information in an objective manner. Our teachers are well trained in the material and handle it with sensitivity and concern for the students. Our students do have questions which they will not ask their parents.

For many years the Kings Mountain District Schools has promoted high morals and values among our students and has supported the efforts of our religious community in many ways. The same is still true. What you must realize is that the challenges in this regard are greater than ever. As much as some might like otherwise, we must be open to new strategies to deal with our challenges. The fact that we are open to new strategies does not mean that we do not still value the principles which this community expects its school system to value and promote them vigorously.

If you need additional information regarding this program please feel welcome to contact our offices.

REFLECTIONS on Religion and Life

Rev. Dick Newsome  
Pastor  
First Presbyterian Church



giggled, we realized that something of Pete's ritual made us feel better about the end of the year, too. Though most of us hadn't been the kind of students Pete had, we had worked hard and had looked forward to "the end" as well. And something of his gesture touched a button of relief in us.

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We Americans are a people whose appetite for education is almost insatiable. We believe in its impor-

tance because it helps to sustain and refashion a just and humane society. We believe in its importance because it helps us achieve personal and societal goals. But we believe in it also for deeply theological reasons. God created each of us with the capacity to learn and to grow through learning. No one is without that power. And God wills for each of us to use the minds we have been given to search for new truth and to explore new avenues for living. By doing so, we are able to serve God better as well as each other. No less than any other gifts, our minds are gifts from a loving and challenging God.

Most of us will have a chance to congratulate a young man or woman at the end of the year for working hard and learning well. It will be an honor for us to do so. Most of us will search for the right thing to say - the appropriate phrase, the catching remark. "I am proud of you." "You will go a long way." "Congratulations." But this year, as we search for ways to express our feelings of gratitude, let us not forget that the education of our citizens begins with a God who created us as people with a yearning for knowledge and for faith.

To all who have endured another year of the trials and joys of school, the rest of us who have watched you and thought about you give thanks to God for you. Well done!

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