

**Opinions**

**Our View**

**1996 can be a better year**

Like any small town, Kings Mountain had its ups and downs - its good news and bad - in 1995. Progress was made in many areas, and citizens who had a hand in bringing about progressive changes and programs are to be commended.

Kings Mountain took a giant step toward assuring quality health care for its citizens by recruiting a host of new doctors and surgeons and merging Kings Mountain Hospital with Charlotte-Mecklenburg Hospital Authority, thus assuring that KMH will be operated for many more years to come.

Kings Mountain citizens reached out to their fellow man in many ways, including another successful United Fund campaign, funding a Crisis Ministry which helped over 1,000 families, and conducting numerous fund-raising efforts to help families and individuals who were going through traumatic experiences.

Citizens groups, churches, civic clubs and individuals made a positive impact on many lives due to their generosity and humanitarian efforts.

Kings Mountain Schools were fortunate in that there were few, if any, of the controversies of a year earlier, especially in the area of sex education curriculum. Administrators and teachers were able to focus their efforts on providing quality education for our children.

But Kings Mountain also took a step backward in some areas in 1995, and that's something that needs to be worked on in 1996. City politics was filled with controversy and finger-pointing from January through December.

A financial mess which carried over from the year before continued to dominate discussion at City Council meetings and eventually led to the resignation of City Manager Chuck Nance and a threat by former City Manager George Wood to sue two city officials for alleged defamation of character.

"Gag" orders at City Council meetings, a dispute over the length of council terms which led to a successful vote for two-year terms, bickering over whether or not to raise tax and utility rates to help the financial woes, and controversy over the purchase of a car by the former Police Chief Warren Goforth were other issues that divided the community.

The City did take a big step toward solving its problems late in the year when it hired retired Gastonia City Manager Gary Hicks as interim city manager - and we hope 1996 will bring about a continuation of that arrangement or else the appointment of another experienced City Manager who will carry on what Mr. Hicks has started, rule with an iron hand if necessary and restore credibility to Kings Mountain city government.

Elevating Acting Chief Bob Hayes to Police Chief and Tripp Hord as Recreation-Director helped the morale problems in those departments, and as the year closed new department heads in the Planning Department and Personnel Department gave us hope that the City is back on the right track.

We hope 1996 will be a year when the controversies will come to an end, and everybody will work together to cast Kings Mountain in a more positive light. It is necessary because there are many areas that need to be addressed.

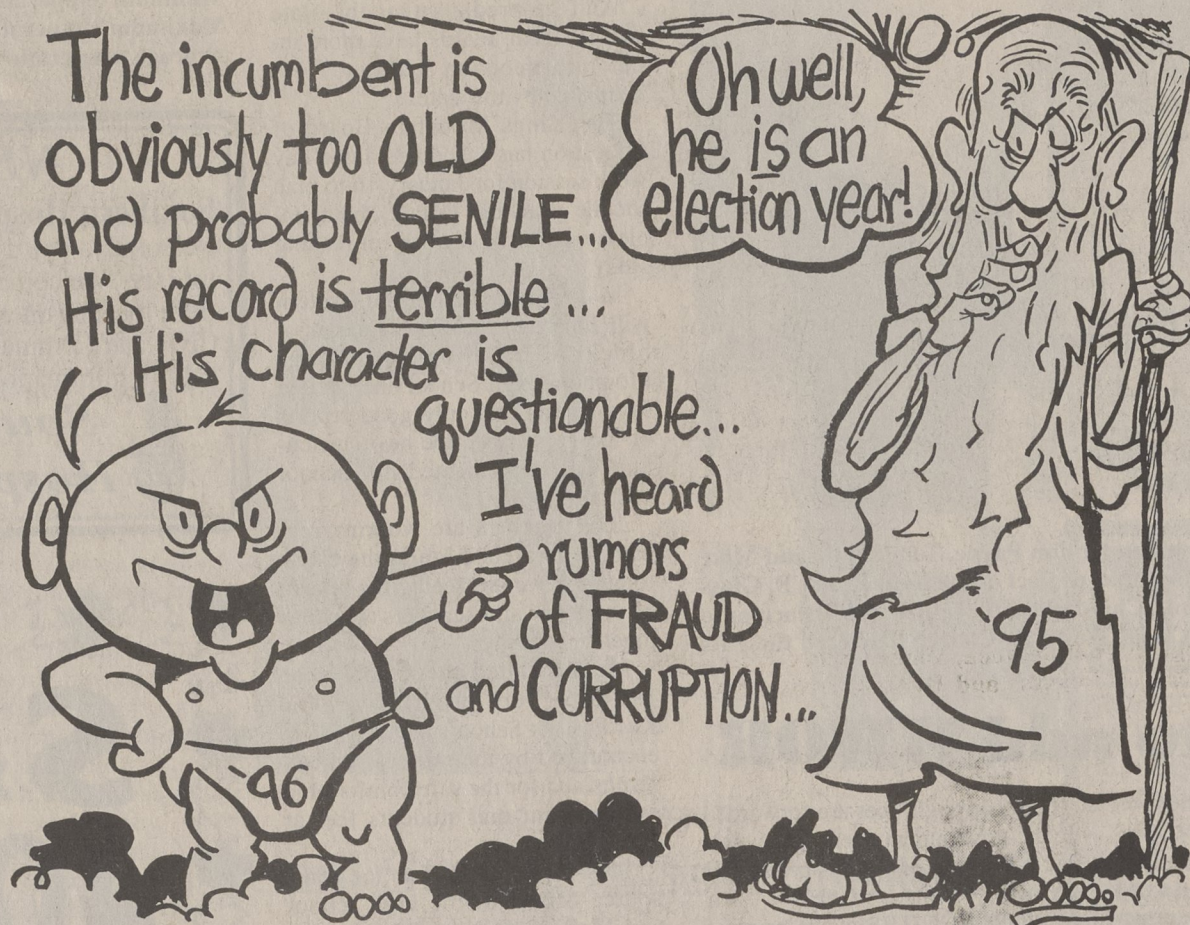
Kings Mountain, either through cooperation with the Cleveland County Chamber of Commerce and Economic Development Commission, or through reviving its own Economic Development Office, needs to work hard to attract new business and industry in 1996. Over 400 local people lost their jobs with the closing of Clevefont Mills, and other local citizens were affected by the closing and/or cut-backs at plants in nearby Bessemer City, Cherryville and Shelby.

The City needs to take a serious look at annexation. Both Shelby and Gastonia have aggressive annexation programs and if Kings Mountain does not get an annexation plan in place very soon we may find ourselves sandwiched between Shelby and Gastonia someday.

The City also needs to look seriously at installing back-up water lines from Moss Lake to the City. On at least two occasions during the year, some downtown areas resembled small lakes because of breaks in the water line - and on one of those occasions it threatened evacuation of Kings Mountain Hospital.

City leaders will face these and many other issues in 1996. We hope this will be the year that everybody forgets the past and works together for the good of Kings Mountain. It's amazing how much can be accomplished when no one cares who gets the credit.

**Cartoonitorial**



**'Top' people of 1995**

As 1995 draws rapidly to a close, we'll see and hear many stories on everything from the top ten stories of the year to the best and worst mannered people of the year.

There's enough bad news in the world - even in the Kings Mountain area - and I'm not even going to mention any of that. Instead, in this last column of the year I would like to mention just a few people around town who are tops in my book. I appreciate them because of what they do for me, the paper or the community.

Thanks to: Carl Champion and Scott Neisler for their contributions to the sports teams in the community and school system. They have contributed countless hours of work and generous amounts of money so our athletes can enjoy some special things that many other programs don't have. They don't want any recognition for what they do (and they wouldn't want me to even mention them) but they deserve a big thank you from us all.

The parents of ball players and other members of the Booster's Club who work so hard behind the scenes so the players' and coaches' load can be made just a little lighter. I think we all saw this fall what can be accomplished when everybody works together.

John Dilling of Dilling Heating, who in my almost 30 years at this paper and for many years before that has faithfully brought in bowling scores every week. If a week goes by without John bringing in scores, you know he is very sick - and even then he makes sure someone else brings them.

Dwight Tessner, Ronnie Hawkins, Eric Wright and Ollie Harris of Harris Funeral Home who have faithfully called and faxed obituaries for many, many years, and also go the extra mile to locate pictures or re-send obituaries that were smudged or "eaten" by our fax machine.

Kenneth Kitzmiller, who compiles weather statistics for us and can always be counted on to call them in the first thing Wednesday morning...

All of my fellow workers at the Herald - and especially my sister, Lib - who let things go in one ear and out the other when the pressures of deadline and other circumstances put me in a bad mood.

Kings Mountain area merchants who are hit almost weekly by groups and individuals from churches, schools and organizations wanting a contribution for some fund-raising effort. Even though they have to say no sometimes, it seems they say yes most of the time.

Bob Hayes, a great Police Chief and a good friend of this paper for many years, and to all of his officers who put their lives on the line every day to make Kings Mountain a better place to live.

Numerous volunteers who give of their time and talents to rescue squads, fire departments, youth sports



GARY STEWART  
Editor

and other organizations, and very often spend time away from their own families so they can help their fellow man.

Sarah Mayse, who never misses a week bringing in the Kings Mountain High swimming results - and they're always neatly typed so these old blind eyes don't have to squint so much.

Every coach who calls or sends in their game results. The ones who have gotten into this habit over the years recognize the fact that even in defeat, they have at least one player who does such a good job that he deserves his name in the paper.

Rev. Dick Newsome of First Presbyterian and Rev. Hal Schwantes of Central United Methodist, who alternate writing religious columns for our editorial page; Supt. Bob McRae, KMHS principal Phil Weathers, and others, who keep us informed of school happenings; and countless others who contribute guest columns, letters to the editor and opinions from time to time...

All the churches who send us copies of their newsletters and bulletins. Sometimes we pick up news items from them, but even more important than that many of the pastors' messages serve as a much-needed midweek meditation for me. I'm a born and bred Presbyterian, but I especially like the devotionals from Rev. Chip Sloan of First Baptist and the "funnies" from Rev. Eugene Land of Second Baptist.

Our own pastor, Allan Sinclair, who packs a powerful message and a laugh or two into his allotted 10 minutes, and who has been a very special friend to our family during the three-year illness of our granddaughter, Kayla.

Two very special nurses, Betty Welch and Carol Champion, who have stuck with Kayla and the family every step of the way...all the doctors, nurses and staff in the PICU at Presbyterian Hospital, and to all of the special people, some of whom we don't even know personally, who have done or said something along the way to bring comfort or encouragement to our lives.

All of our readers and advertisers. We wouldn't be here if it weren't for you. We welcome your constructive criticism and suggestions as we strive to make the Herald a better paper in 1996.



**Wrapping up again**

The end of the year has sneaked up on me again, and it's time to clean out the old notebook. I keep these little snippets and clips during the year hoping they'll inspire me to write a Pulitzer Prize column. So far those Pulitzer people have ignored me. I guess there's no accounting for taste.

One of the things I have noticed during this holiday season is a radio commercial for a jewelry store over in the world class city.

They keep saying they have a selection of antique men's watches for sale. The problem now is they don't have any antique men to buy the watches. I think they really mean they have a selection of men's antique watches, but what do I know.

I found a list of definitions in my notebook, and I have no idea where I was going with them. Anyway, here they are:

- Gardener - Plant Manager
- Barber - Bushwhacker
- Mickey's Lawyer - Mousepiece
- Recycle - Buy a new Harley
- Satellite - A lantern carried by cowboys
- So far, Readers Digest hasn't placed a bid on these "Daffy-nitions."

I ran across a clipping where officials of the AARP had been called on the carpet by the U.S. Senate a couple of years ago for soliciting health insurance sales via non-profit postal rates.

The organization denied it of course, saying: "AARP is all about service, not making money."

Last week, the AARP was in the news again. It seems the medigap insurance it pushes to its members is hiking premiums 30 percent.

Back last spring, a TV reporter in Kennewick, Wash. was doing a story on beekkeeping when a swarm of honeybees took a liking to his hair tonic. They left the hive and swarmed to the reporter's head, injecting 24 stingers and hospitalizing the poor guy.

That isn't funny, but it causes me to reflect on what might have happened if the reporter had been using a deodorant the bees liked.

The other day, when President Fuzzy was signing a veto against yet another spending cut bill, he had a double row of school kids lined up behind him. I wonder if that was supposed to impress anyone, because I thought the entire charade was a little silly. Who does he think he's kidding?

Every time the Clintons are called on anything, they fall back on the kids, as if to indicate that everything they do is for the sake of children.

Sending young Americans to a foreign country, and putting them in danger is not what I call helping children.

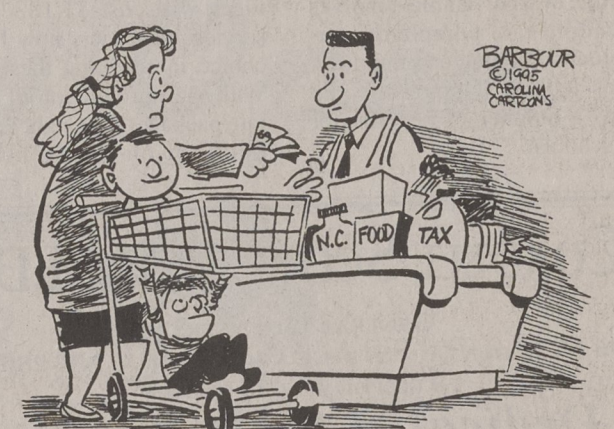
There's a note here that says the new glamor word in America's lexicon is "Closure." Nobody seeks to end a project or a task anymore. What they strive for is closure.

When a murderer is convicted of his crime, the media likes to say it gives the victim's family closure.

I guess that's a good way to end this column and this year; to bring closure, I mean.

Is anybody from the Pulitzer Foundation listening?

**Cartoonitorial**



**Sidewalk Survey**

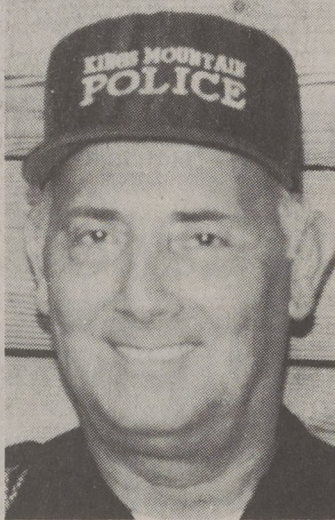
**What is your New Year's resolution?**

• By Elizabeth Stewart



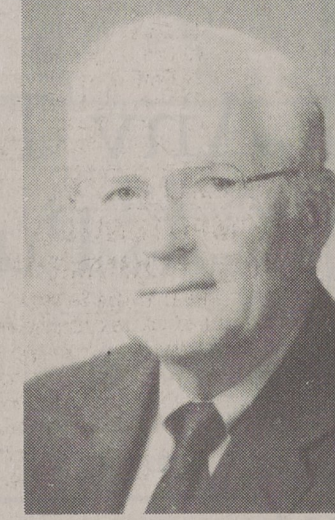
CHARLIE HARRY  
Executive Grover Industries

You probably can't tell it from this picture that it's working but my resolution has been the same for the last 10 years - to shed a few pounds.



SGT. BOB MYERS  
Kings Mountain Police Department

Personally, I'm resolving to lose some weight but for my whole Squad we pledge to continue our dedication to the people of Kings Mountain.



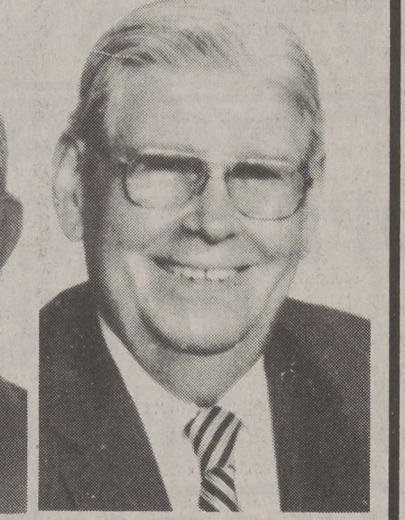
JOHN WEATHERLY  
N. C. Representative

After the holidays I'm going on a diet and get into an exercise program. I've become too sedentary in Raleigh and I plan to take care of myself better and exercise.



GRADY HOWARD  
Retired KM Hospital administrator

My New Year wish is to regain my good health and return to normal activities. I'm doing fine after surgery in November and anxious to get back to regular activities.



J. OLLIE HARRIS SR.  
Former State Senator

If I make a resolution I'll break it but I hope that Congress resolves to get together on the budget. My New Year's wish for all of Kings Mountain is to have a great 1996.

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