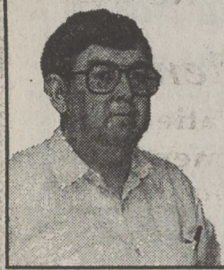


Opinion



Gary Stewart
Editor

Make your plans now to attend Hall of Fame

Sports shorts:

The Kings Mountain Sports Hall of Fame committee is gearing up for what could be its best banquet and induction ceremony ever.

This year the Hall of Fame will celebrate its 10th anniversary. Four deserving people who have already been chosen but have not yet notified, will be inducted and a deserving individual and team will be honored for their special achievement during the 1996 calendar year.

In addition, the Hall of Fame will award scholarships to two deserving KMHS athletes. The committee hopes to be able to make this an annual practice.

A video highlighting parts of each of the first 10 banquets and induction ceremonies is being produced and will be made available to the public, and all former inductees are being invited as special guests at this year's fete which will be held in April at Kings Mountain High School.

One of Kings Mountain's all-time great athletes, the late Jake Early, will be inducted into the Cleveland County Sports Hall of Fame April 9 at Aldersgate United Methodist Church in Shelby. Early was an all-star catcher for the Washington Senators in the late thirties and forties.

Also to be inducted is Don Patrick a former Shelby High star athlete and longtime head football coach at Newton-Conover High School.

Two area coaches have been selected to coach in all-star games this year. Tommy Pruett of Burns, who got his coaching start in Kings Mountain, will serve as head coach of the West team in the East-West girls basketball all-star game in July in Greensboro, and Bill Eccles of Ashbrook will be an assistant coach for the North Carolina Shrine Bowl football team in December in Charlotte.

Several area football standouts inked college scholarships on national signing day last Wednesday. Kings Mountain lineman Johnny Surratt signed to play for North Carolina A&T, Shelby kicker Tyler Ashe inked with Wake Forest, and three members of Crest's state championship team signed commitments, including end Elliott Hartgrove with East Carolina, linebacker Jimmy Freeman with Appalachian State, and quarterback Jamie Smith with Gardner-Webb.

Shane Logan, Kings Mountain High's leading rusher and SWC Player of the Year in 1995, has signed a full scholarship with Liberty University in Lynchburg, Va. Logan entered Liberty last fall as a nonqualifier. He will be eligible for three years of varsity play.

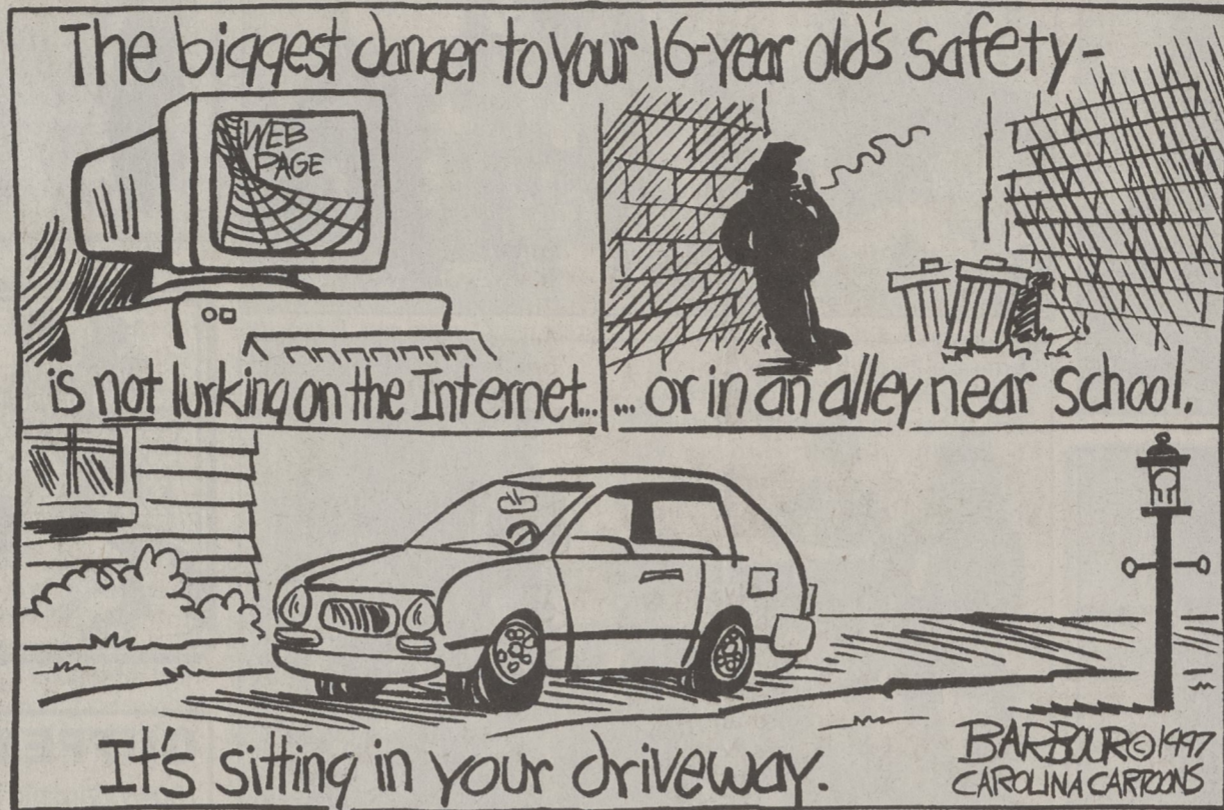
Phillip Crosby, a bruising runner and linebacker on Bessemer City's outstanding football team of two years ago, has signed with the University of Tennessee. He spent the past year at Coffeyville Junior College in Kansas.

Kings Mountain High's swimmers will go into Saturday's State Championship meet minus one of their better swimmers. Elise Maye, who qualified in the 500-yard freestyle and with the 200 and 400-freestyle relay teams, is in Kings Mountain Hospital recovering from a ruptured appendix.

TODAY'S BIBLE VERSE

"...I say to you, inasmuch as you did it to one of the least of these My brethren, you did it to Me."
Matthew 25:40

Cartoonitorial



Balanced budget is common sense

Could you imagine not balancing your personal checkbook for a month? What about a few months? What about a year? Could you imagine not balancing your checkbook for 27 years? Well, that's just what your federal government has done.

In fact, our federal government has not had a balanced budget since 1969. To put this in simple terms, the last time our federal government balanced its budget, we had just put a man on the moon, the New York Jets won the Super Bowl, the Smothers Brothers and the Mod Squad were still on television, and Richard Nixon was not in the White House.

Did you know that because of the government's deficit spending, a child born today will owe nearly \$200,000 in taxes over their lifetime just to pay their share of the interest on the national debt? How can we expect our children to succeed in life, saddled with this mountain of debt? Interest on the debt eats up more and more of our federal budget, crowding out spending on our priorities and keeping taxes and interest rates high.

It has been estimated that if we balance the federal budget, interest rates could drop as much as two points. While that may not sound like a big decrease, the savings to a family could be as high as \$37,000 on the life of a 30-year mortgage, \$2,200 on a student loan, and \$900 over an average priced car loan. That's real savings and a lower cost of living for all Americans.

That's why over the next couple of years, Congress will again take up the drive to pass a constitutional amendment to balance the federal budget. The Balanced Budget Amendment will not be a miracle cure for our country's budget troubles, but it will hold elected officials' feet to the fire by establishing accountability for their actions. The Balanced Budget Amendment would mandate that Congress live within its means and not gorge itself on the spending of taxpayers' money. In fact, it is estimated that had the Balanced Budget Amendment passed when Congress first voted on it in 1982, a typical family's income would be \$15,000 higher today (source: House Budget Committee).

As this debate intensifies, opponents of the Balanced Budget Amendment are likely to pull out one of their favorite arguments. They will probably say that a Balanced Budget Amendment will endanger our Social Security system. This strategy is very effective in scaring a large portion of our population into believing that a balanced budget is a bad thing.

For the record, I believe in Social Security. I believe it is the people's money and we should keep our hands off of it. My mother and other family members depend on Social Security and I would

GUEST COLUMN
Rep. Sue Myrick
NC 9th District



never do anything to jeopardize its existence. That's why I would be remiss if I did not point out that the greatest threat to Social Security is the debt itself. The national debt is about \$5.3 trillion, with about \$600 billion owned to the Social Security trust funds. If we do nothing, the debt will double, and seniors will justly wonder whether we can repay those debts to the trust funds. In the long run, a bankrupt federal government cannot send out checks of any kind - including Social Security checks. Former Social Security Commissioners back up this point, in their recognition that the best thing we can do to preserve the program is to balance the budget.

Opponents of the Balanced Budget Amendment say it requires drastic cuts in other vital services. That's simply untrue. Washington's current lack of discipline means our interest payments on the debt, the second largest item of the government spending, crowds out needed spending on our truly vital services. A Balanced Budget Amendment means we balance the budget, keep it balanced, begin to pay down our debt, and allow us to have enough money to fund vital services like Social Security.

Operating on a balanced budget is just plain common sense. American families have to balance their checkbooks and so should the federal government.

KM 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 letters brief and to the point. Letters in excess of 600 words will not be published. Type and double space them, if possible; if not, write legibly. Letters must be signed in ink and include the full name, address and telephone number of the author.

Mail letters to the Editor, P.O. Box 769, Kings Mountain, NC 28086; fax them to (704) 739-0611; or bring them by the Herald office on East King Street at Canterbury Road.

Your Right to Say It

Revoke airbag mandate

By ANDREW CLINE

The most touching commercials on television these days, to me, are the ones showing home movie clips of cute, smiling children who were later killed by drunk drivers. Such commercials are moving and, presumably, very effective. They are the culmination of years of public relations campaigns that have helped stigmatize drunk driving nationwide.

It's time someone produced similar ads featuring victims of the federal airbag mandate. Auto makers could create ads with images of a particularly cute victim and a voiceover of an auto executive saying, "Twenty years ago we warned the government about the dangers that airbags posed to women and children. But they didn't listen. Now little Suzie is dead."

According to the latest government data, the number of Americans who benefit from airbags is greater than the number who are harmed by them. The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration reports that airbags have saved 1,136 lives between 1986 and 1995. However, airbags also have killed at least 60 people, 40 of them children.

Csaba Csere, editor of Car & Driver magazine, reported in February's issue that 38 of the 40 children killed by airbags were improperly restrained - 19 of them were entirely unrestrained, 14 sat in rear-facing child seats (not to be used with airbags), four wore only lapbelts and one was in a booster set with undetermined restraint mechanism.

Of the 19 adult drivers killed by airbags, Csere reported that 10 wore no seatbelt and one wore the seatbelt incorrectly. Seat belt use for two cases is not known. Six drivers wore their seat belts correctly. Two of them had passed out from medical conditions and "were slumped over the wheel prior to the accident." Thus, four properly restrained drivers were killed by airbags. Each of the four was a woman shorter than 5 feet 4 inches who was killed in an accident occurring at 7 to 15 miles per hour. Only one passenger was killed by an airbag. She was a 98-year-old woman riding with her seatbelt on. "How ironic that a woman born in the last century would fail to see the next one because of a government-ordered safety device," Csere wrote.

Airbags originally were intended to protect drivers not wearing seat belts. We now know that it is exactly these people who are being killed by the airbag's explosive force. What this tells us is that airbags kill people whose heads are within the inflation zone at the time of deployment. This means that short people, who must sit with their heads in the impact zone so their hands can reach the steering wheel, are in constant danger of being injured or killed by airbags.

By mandating that airbags be placed in all cars, the government has inadvertently placed a higher value on the lives of the careful and the tall than on those of the careless and the short. Of course, that was not the intention, but it is the consequence of the airbag mandate, which says that all new cars must contain working airbags by September of this year.

The only solution is to revoke the mandate and let the market determine airbag use. At the moment, thanks to the mandate, it is unsafe for any person shorter than 5 feet 4 to drive a new car. In a free market, manufacturers would design different types of airbags so that consumers could purchase those that best suited their physical characteristics and driving habits. And those consumers who wanted no airbags at all would be free to choose that option. Now, a consumer's only option is to purchase a new car with an airbag or an old car without.

The government's latest proposals to reduce airbag injuries demonstrate the root of the problem. The NHTSA has proposed allowing auto manufacturers to install airbags that inflate 20 to 35 percent more slowly than the current 200-mph standard, allowing installation of cutoff switches for passenger-side airbags in cars that have no

See Airbag, 5-A

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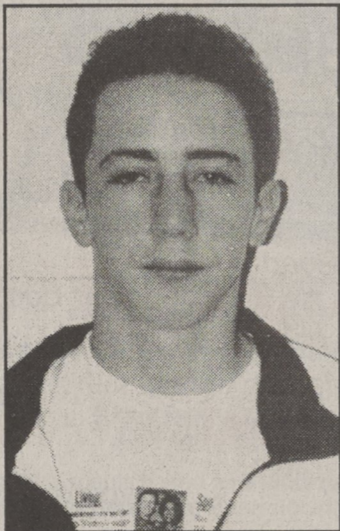
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Sidewalk Survey

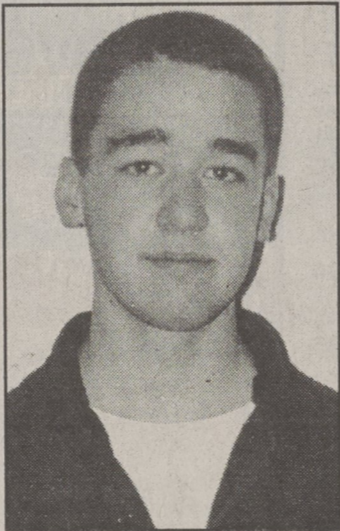
• By Lib Stewart

Do you think teenage drivers should be supervised before they are licensed?



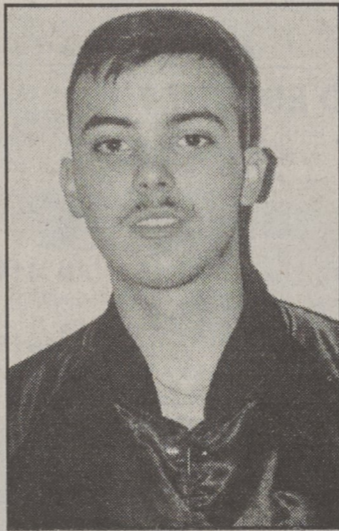
CHARLIE EVANS
KMHS Junior

"Yes. I think more supervision would cut down on the number of accidents involving teenage drivers."




MIKE BUMGARDNER
KMHS Senior

"No. Because if they are able to hold down a job they should be able to drive a car."




JOSH TURBYFILL
KMHS Senior

"Yes. Kids are not responsible enough at age 16 and more parent supervision would help them to become better drivers."



DAWN DAVIS
KMHS Senior

"Yes. South Carolina has restricted licensing and that's how I got my license. However, I think if North Carolina made the tests harder that it would lead to better drivers."



AMY THOMPSON
KMHS Sophomore

"No. I think I am responsible enough to drive a car and I know other students are."