

OPINION

Andy Dedmon



NC House
of Representatives

General Assembly's 'unofficial' rules can trip up lawmakers

Two of the most important rules in passing legislation are unofficial ones. They are not written down anywhere. But they can trip an unsuspecting lawmaker just as easily as the official rules that govern the General Assembly.

The first rule: the devil is, indeed, in the details. The second is the Law of Unlimited Consequences. In plain terms, even the best-intentioned law can have unforeseeable effects.

Governor Jim Hunt's proposed overhaul of the juvenile justice system is a prime example of how the devil is in the details. Almost everyone agrees that juvenile courts and training schools are straining to handle today's problems. There is no agreement, yet, on what exactly should be done.

Basically, Hunt's plan would hold parents accountable when their children break the law. They could be required to attend court hearings with their child, pay court costs and make sure their child complies with court orders or probably requirements.

Parents also could be required to attend family counseling or parenting classes.

Other goals of the governor's package are holding violent juvenile criminals accountable with swift, sure punishment and making sure all offenders who break the law face consequences.

Finally, Hunt proposed overhauling the juvenile justice system to give courts and law enforcement officials the tools they need.

Those are reasonable - and even worthy - goals. To accomplish them, Hunt recommended statewide guidelines and standards to make punishment of juvenile offenders more consistent. The governor also called for additional space in training schools and detention centers and grants to community groups.

Translating those broad ideas into workable legislation is difficult.

Committees in both the House and Senate have been grinding away for several weeks, through several meetings a day, on the juvenile justice bill. Working line-by-line and section-by-section, the committees have combed through the 206-page bill looking for problems.

They uncovered several sticky details. For example, the bill contained no clear consequences for juveniles who broke probation. The measure called for a minimum six-month stay for juveniles sent to training schools and three months' probation when they were released. But it did not spell out what would happen if they broke probation. Several lawmakers said the law should include a minimum punishment.

Another detail that must be worked out is the amount that lawmakers will allocate for juvenile justice reform. Hunt proposed \$40 million.

While the House and Senate committees were being reminded the details can bedevil the best intentions, the full House got a lesson in the Law of Unintended Consequences. On a 92-15 vote, the House narrowed a law passed last year that was designed to make it easier to collect taxes on money earned by out-of-state sports stars and entertainers in North Carolina. The measure required all companies that contracted with out-of-state workers making \$600 or more to withhold 4 percent of their income.

The problem was that large, multi-state building contractors found the law burdensome. In short, a law that was supposed to make it easier to collect taxes was more trouble than it was worth.

So the House limited the withholding requirement to athletes and entertainers who made more than \$5,000. With that, lawmakers hoped they had taken care of the Law of Unintended Consequences - at least this time.



JUDGING HOGS - Chris Johnson is an expert at barbecuing but also as a judge for whole hog contests. His team, the All Niters, is a consistent winner in barbecuing events.

Elizabeth Stewart



Kings Mountain Herald

Like Hog Heaven for Chris Johnson

Ask Kings Mountain's Chris Johnson how it feels to be a winner in barbecuing, judging whole hogs or whipping up barbecue fixings and he'll tell you it's like being in hog heaven.

Last weekend Johnson and his All Niters defended their 1996-97 state barbecuing showmanship championship in Tryon, goodnaturally lost to another Kings Mountain team, King's Cooking, but finished in second place in showmanship and sauce, fourth in barbecue and third in the pretty pig N. C. queen hog contest.

He can also tell you the judges' criteria for the North Carolina Queen Hog Contest. He was one of the judges and he said it was tough picking the winner but it was fun.

Other Kings Mountain teams also came home with prizes from the state championships at Tryon where 20,000 people looked on and 67 teams of chefs from all over the United States were on hand to compete in various categories.

Johnson didn't always like to cook but he got the barbecuing fever about five years ago when he volunteered to cook for a Chamber of Commerce charity fundraiser for Hospice.

He and his team, including two brothers and their families, took the championship with their showmanship house designed of scrapwood complete with a white picket fence and colorful neon signs.

Johnson has worked in the purchasing department at Eaton Corporation for 15 years. After work he practices his winning recipes in the kitchen, preparing delectable sauces to try out at the next cooking events is coming up July 4th in Greenville, S. C., at the Red, White and Que celebration, in Jonesboro, Ga. at the Beaux Arts Beach Festival and in September at the 1998 Bubblefest in Woodruff, SC where AllNiters won the whole hog event and placed fourth among 30 teams in barbecue contests.

It's family fun for the All Niters. Johnson's two brothers, Mike and Isabel and daughter, Lindy, and John Johnson are his team mates and it isn't unusual to watch them at some events performing with line dancers and the Gastonia Hog Chapter of Harley Davidson bikers.

Churches, schools, leaders and friends make Kings Mountain great community

The greatest treasures we have in life are not the things that we accumulate around us, but rather the relationships we enjoy. I have thought a lot about that truth as I near the end of my ministry in Kings Mountain on June 30. My family and I have spent five wonderful years of our lives sharing, not only with a great church family, but with a great community family as well. Were you to look at our checking and savings account balances right now, you might conclude we didn't get much being in Kings Mountain. But when we measure by the friends we have and the experiences we have shared together, my family is leaving with immeasurable riches. Would you indulge me and allow me to share a few?

Kings Mountain is blessed with an unusual spirit of ecumenism among its churches. Never have I served a community where the pastors of all denominations support one another and cooperate with each other as I have seen in Kings Mountain. And because of that respect and trust, this community is able to have a strong crisis assistance ministry, an excellent community wide evangelistic crusade, Lenten and Thanksgiving worship experiences together, and more. I pray these relationships will not only be maintained, but will grow and become more and more inclusive as pastors and churches recognize the power of a united witness for Christ.

Kings Mountain is also blessed with an excellent public school system. Of all the school systems I have been associated with in my 26 years of ministry, Kings Mountain is the best by far. Not only is there a genuine pursuit of excellence in education by the administration, faculty, and staff, but there is a real effort to build character and include the church and other institutions in the process of building well-rounded lives among our youth. I am personally thankful for the opportunities the schools have offered my son and for the preparation they have helped provide for his future. This community takes pride in its schools, and I think that comes partly because it is a community, not county, system. It is something worth affording as long as you are allowed.

Kings Mountain has a good resource of community leaders. Through civic club experiences and

Hal Schwantes



Pastor, Central United
Methodist Church

other opportunities, I have come to know a lot of these leaders personally. Some are truly unsung heroes as they labor tirelessly for the well-being of our current and future citizens. There will always be politics, and there will always be more than one opinion on some subjects, but the overwhelming experience I have had is that community leaders are giving their best effort for what they hope is best for Kings Mountain. That is not a political endorsement, but I would encourage you to pray for these servants of your community as they work on your behalf.

Out of all these church, school, and community relationships comes the greatest blessing of this community: friends and neighbors. I dare not try to name all the persons in this community who have been friends and mentors over these five years. They have been there with their help and their resources when I needed them. Perhaps most meaningful of all is the encouragement and trust I have been given that have allowed me to contribute, not only as a pastor, but as a citizen of the community. Being allowed this forum once a month over the past four years is but one example of such a trust.

In all these things I recognize that the touch of our Heavenly Father's hand has had a big part in it all. It was His leading that led to my coming here in the first place and His presence in the hearts of so many here that have touched my life while I have been here. And I leave with the assurance that God will lead and bless in my new assignment as well. I just wanted you all to know that you have made a difference in my life, and I am a better person for having dwelt among you.

From the bottom of my heart, thanks...

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.

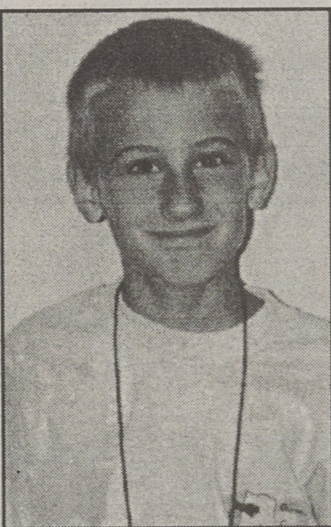
The Herald reserves the right to edit letters for spelling, good taste, libelous or slanderous statements or any other reason; and the Herald reserves the right to reject letters for any reason.

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.

SIDEWALK SURVEY

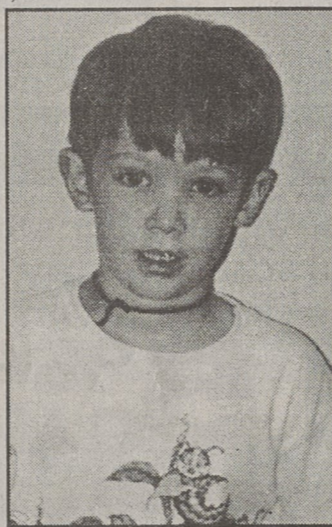
By Elizabeth Stewart

What do you like best about Bible School?



Boone McDaniel
age 7

I like to sing and I like to play outside with new friends from four churches.



Jacob Bridges
age 6

Art is my favorite thing about Bible School.



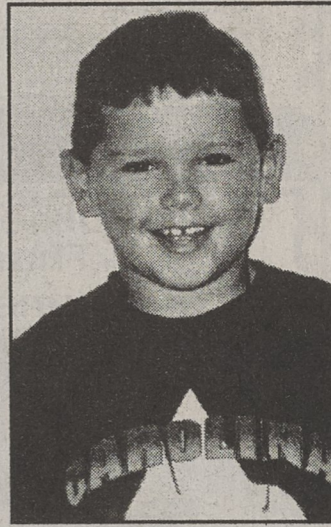
Alex Edwards
age 7

Music and art are my favorite things to do this week.



Hope Phongsa
age 7

I like everything about Bible School this week.



Rai Robinson
age 7

We work, read Bible stories, have snacks and fun.



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