

New senior center must be a priority

At last week's meeting, Kings Mountain City Council gave City Manager Jimmy Maney the green light to proceed with making plans for a proposed new senior citizens center which could cost between \$1 million and \$1.5 million.

It is a project worth pursuing, and one that Kings Mountain must be committed to complete if it is to adequately address the needs of its elderly population in the next century.

Kings Mountain has had an active senior citizens program since 1974, beginning in the lunch room of the Kings Mountain Community Center and then moving to the renovated Kings Mountain Depot in 1977.

Since that time the program has grown to serve the needs of over 1,000 people a year in the greater Kings Mountain area, with a daily attendance of from 60 to 80 persons in the various programs offered at the building.

But the 4,000-square foot facility is no longer adequate to serve the present needs of senior citizens, and there is no room for expansion at the present site. A much-larger building on a much-larger site is essential.

The senior population is the fastest growing age group in the world. At present, there are over 32 million senior citizens in the U.S., and in the next 15 to 20 years that figure will increase to about 72 million. In the not-too-distant future there will be more people in the U.S. age 65 and over than there are under the age of 65. The senior population of Kings Mountain alone is 3,400 - and the city program is serving less than one-third of that number.

Kings Mountain's senior citizens program now offers a large number of services, including transportation, nutrition, health fairs, blood pressure clinics, clubs, free income tax filing and other legal services, and socials.

But with a growing aging population, the program must look seriously at providing more health-related services - possibly even an on-site nurse - and more social/recreational and educational activities to keep senior citizens more active in the community.

The Senior Center recently received word that it is one of 15 programs out of the 130 in the state slated to receive a \$100,000 aging grant from the \$1.5 million allocated by the State. A stipulation to that offering is that the City of Kings Mountain match it with a \$33,000 grant - which the Council approved last week - and that the new building be occupied by September 2001.

That means the city has slightly more than two years to make its plans, secure the land and financing, and build the new center.

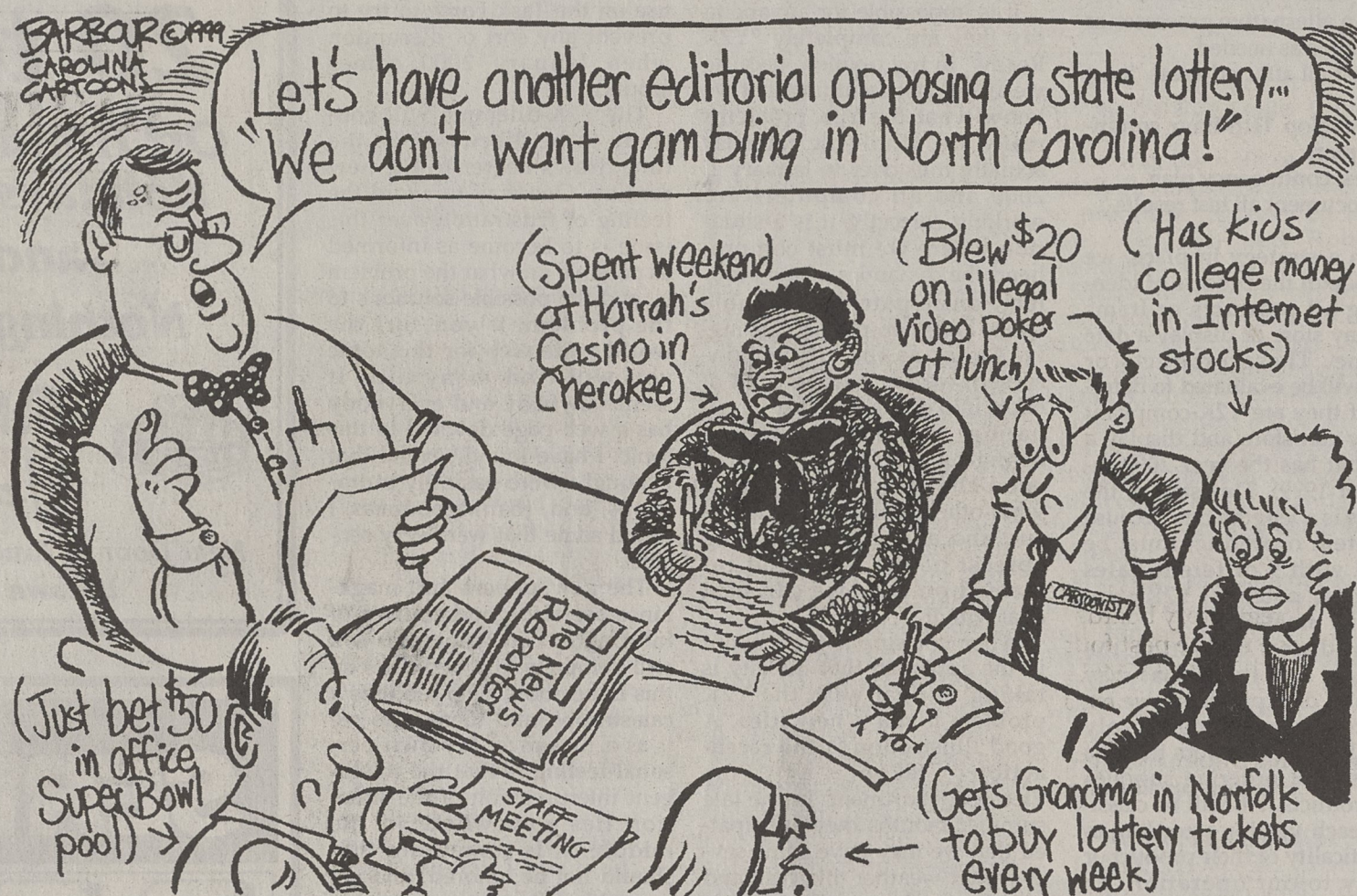
A tract of five or more acres is desired, and perhaps \$100,000 or more of the proposed cost could be saved if the land is donated.

The current administration has shown its commitment to providing well-rounded services to the citizens, recently completing several high-dollar projects such as the new Deal Street Recreation Complex, and currently building a new police station.

Another project of this magnitude will not only require the continued support of the city and other governing agencies, but also the general public. Donations from individuals, small businesses and large corporations may be needed to make this dream a reality.

If the city can fully fund the project, great! But, if it cannot, the general public must be willing to help through individual, small business and corporate donations.

This is a project that we cannot afford to lose.



Some of our greatest heroes are underpaid



Alan Hodge
Staff Writer

No one ever said that things in this old world had to be fair. Back in my idealistic days I thought everything had to be fair, but after a few decades of seeing that they weren't I tempered my idealism with reality.

Paychecks are one area where inequality seems to glare out with an especially irritating light. I read the other day that the CEO of a major bank had his salary reduced from \$4 million down to a measly \$3 million. I'm sure all the tellers who slave for that company for around twenty grand a year were heartbroken. The same principle applies to pro athletes who think they deserve millions to chase a ball.

There are a lot of people who do jobs that really go a long way towards making our communities better places. Some of these jobs require quite a bit of schooling and all of them - especially the ones working with the public - require the patience of Job. I call these folks underpaid, unsung heroes.

Schoolteachers are under paid heroes and heroines. North Carolina ranks near the bottom of the heap in teacher pay. The things teachers have to put up with in many classrooms borders on the criminal. Sometimes it is criminal. Teachers are expected to be educators, guidance counselors, referees, and surrogate parents. Teachers should get paid a minimum of \$35,000 a year.

Police officers, firefighters, and EMTs are also often overstressed and underpaid. All of these people literally put their lives on the line for us everyday. In addition to the danger involved, more and more jobs of this type require college degrees and advanced training. Even with a degree, many of these jobs start out at less than \$20 thousand a year.

Have you ever seen a library worker (except in Charlotte) drive a BMW? Probably not since these too are jobs that ask much and generally pay relatively little. Telling people they owe overdue fines is one of the crosses these folks must bear. So is babysitting kids after school while they wait on their parents to come pick them up.

Last but not least on my list of underpaid, unsung heroes are sanitation workers. Did you think that garbage just disappears? I used to ride with my father in law Irvin Brendle to the Gaston County dump with our trash. Anyone who hasn't made that jaunt in the middle of summer is in for the olfactory experience of a lifetime. Bless the garbagemen and the job they do.

There are lots of other people who could go on my list of the underpaid and unsung. Just a few are nurses, ministers, animal control officers, and many types of administrative assistants. If nothing else, the next time you get a chance, tell them how much you appreciate the job they do, because that's the type of reward you can't put a figure on.

You usually get what you pay for



Gary Stewart
Herald Editor

Recently while channel hopping I came across the new Speed channel being offered locally on cable.

An auction of collector cars was being held, with prices ranging anywhere from thirty thousand to three hundred thousand dollars. It was interesting, not only because of the high prices but also because the cars were ones that you just don't see everyday.

Many of the vehicles had been owned by famous persons such as Elvis, Dean Martin and Frank Sinatra. Many celebrities were there, including some sports stars, and even though I didn't see him someone told me that Kings Mountain's own Speedy Ramsey was shown purchasing a classic for Charlotte Hornets owner, and his boss, George Shinn.

With a nickname like Speedy, you know they'd have to put him on the air!

I've had a few experiences with auctions in my day, although none as fancy and with such astronomical prices as a classic car auction. My experience is such that I've learned to stay away from auctions.

I was never into vintage cars. Although I love to look at them, I don't have any mechanical sense whatsoever, and I would never be able to recoup my investment.

But I attended a few local auctions as a young man and made a few purchases of what turned out to be junk; and I swore off auctions altogether when I went to a cattle barn as a spectator, scratched my ear and bought a calf and had to bring it home in the back seat of the car!

A friend of mine, though, decided once that he would go to used car auction and buy a car for his wife.

He arrived early and inspected a lot of difference machines - even cranked a few and listened to the sweet sound of that engine - and finally decided on the one he'd bid on.

He out-lasted all the other bidders and bought the car, but like myself at the cattle auction, he wasn't prepared to take his purchase home. He had no tag and no insurance, but did have a desire to take the prize possession home to his wife.

He talked another buddy into following him home - and staying so close on his tail that any Highway Patrolman that happened to be out that night couldn't get close enough to see that he didn't have a tag.

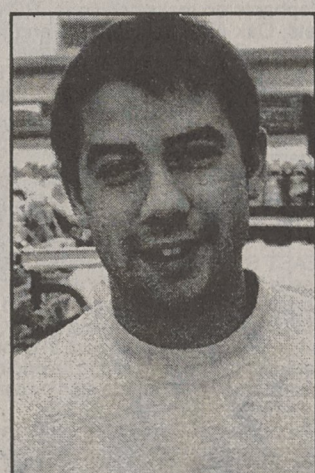
As his would-be tailgater was waiting for him to drive his new purchase off the auction floor, the now not-so-proud new car owner came running around the corner of the building with the steering wheel in his hand.

It just goes to show you, whether it's high-classed or bordering on a junk yard, at an auction, and in most of life's arenas, you usually get what you pay for.

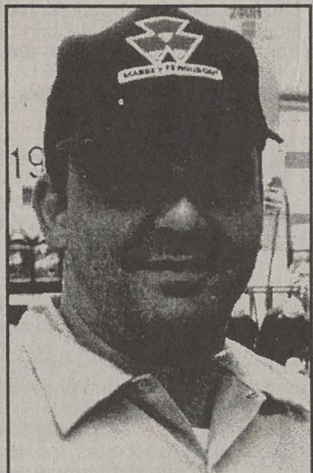
By Alan Hodge

SIDEWALK SURVEY

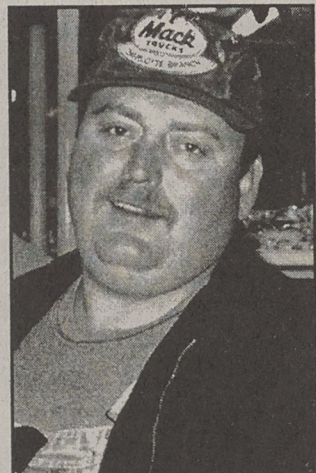
Will the Year 2000 computer bug cause major problems?



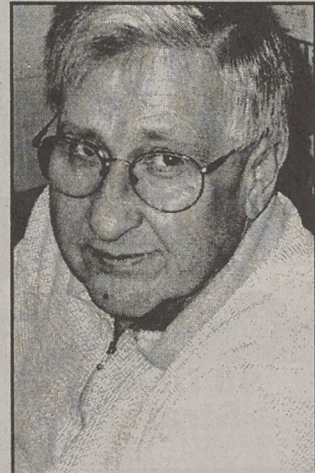
Greg Poynton
Tree Surgeon
I don't see any catastrophes coming from it.



Ken Bumgardner
Carolina Tree Service
There won't be many problems.



Chris Bumgardner
Saw Operator
It's not a big deal. They've got it figured out.



Clyde Huffstetter
Retired
I gave up worrying about computers when I retired.



Dana Sharpe
Waitress
I think it's a lot of worry over nothing.

YOUR VIEW

Support Relay for Life

To The Editor:
It's time again for the citizens, churches, business leaders and past participants of the Relay For Life to gear up and help fight cancer! The twenty-four event will take place at the Kings Mountain Parks and Recreation Walking Track on Friday, April 16th and Saturday, April 17th.

This year's twenty four hour long event will include entertainment from local musical groups, Karaoke, dancing and a bar-b-que cook-off sponsored by the Kings Mountain Fire Department. The evening will bring the very emotional luminary service and the cancer survivors walk. Please make this part of your week-end. Local business, civic, and church groups will be raising money throughout the event. You may also get involved by purchasing a luminary in someone's honor or memory.

Last year's event raised over \$27,000 to help fight cancer. The Community event was a success and we hope to raise much more awareness as well as money. It was one of the most supported events this City has seen in several years. We need local business, community leaders, churches, students and civic leaders to support this year's Relay For Life. For more information on how you can get involved contact me at 739-4952 or leave a message at 481-4901.

Come join us at City Hall on February 8 at 7 pm to kick-off this year's Relay!

Sincerely,
Mike Neely, Chairman

Lest we forget

To the editor:
On January 20, 1999 a memorial service was held at the Cleveland County Courthouse by the Sons of Confederate Veterans Camp #1663 of Kings Mountain, Camp #1768 of Fallston, the Kings Mountain Chapter of the North Carolina Order of Confederate Rose, and the Kings Mountain Chapter of the Black Rose.

The battle flag proudly flew over the courthouse during the ceremony. Commander Jim Proffitt of the SCV Camp #1663 presented a speech honoring Robert E. Lee and Stonewall Jackson. Adjutant Freddie Ritch and Leonard Varner of Camp #1768 dressed out in uniform for the occasion. Widow weeds were worn by Catherine Camp.

Many others turned out to honor these great generals of the Confederacy, remembering also their ancestors who fought under these great heroes.

Jean Varner
Kings Mountain