

How ya gonna keep 'em on farm in this age?

The backbone of America is slowly disappearing. No, this piece is not about the recent debauchery in Washington, it's about the decline in the number of family farms in our state and nation.



Alan Hodge
Staff
Writer

This problem goes beyond mere dollars and cents. Some of the most memorable times of my life were the days spent on my grandfather's farm in Catawba Heights. Scant few are the children these days who have had the pleasure of exporing a loft full of hay, or simply roaming field and forest in search of nothing in particular.

A farm is a cornucopia of sights, sensations, and even smells that everyone should experience. There's something mysterious and slightly scary about the dim interior of a horse stable or cow barn that can carry you back to a simpler time when the relationship between man and animal was more profound than a piece of meat on a plastic tray.

Though farmers who crawl out of the bed at 4 am to tend their flocks and herds might laugh at my notion, I am also of the opinion that farming is a more noble type of work than say, fiddling with computers. Who can deny that seeing the sun come up and watching the earth come alive with its light is not akin to a religious experience. The miracle of vegetable and animal life is at the fingertips of farmers everyday, for the rest of us it seems to be slipping away with ever-increasing speed.

Parents can do their children, and themselves, a great service by visiting a farm. There are lots of places right here in Cleveland County where folks can let their kids see how a farm works and where our food really comes from. Killdeer Farms on Goforth Road near Kings Mountain will soon be planting for the spring season. Across the street from Killdeer, Ed Goforth has an ostrich farm that is a sight to behold. Up in Fallston, McMurray Farms is also a thriving operation. Give the Cleveland County Cooperative Extension Service a call at 482-4365 for some other suggestions.

Before the world becomes completely computerized, remember that we started out as an agricultural nation. As southerners, our agricultural roots go especially deep. With spring just around the corner, let's renew our bond with the land and those who still work it.

OPINION

Editor: Gary Stewart • 739-7496

LOOKING BACK



GARY STEWART / THE HERALD
Tom Trott, right, tries to bribe the judge (C.A. Allison) with a buckeye to keep from going to jail at "Jail-A-Thon" at 200th anniversary celebration of the Battle of Kings Mountain in 1980

YOUR VIEW

Board member says she didn't spark merger talk in county

To the editor:

Truthfully, I do not believe that I sparked the debate over merging Kings Mountain, Shelby City, and Cleveland County Schools. This has been discussed for many years. The bottom line to merging is control and who has it. The question we should ask is, what is best for the students? It was never my intention to have a "mega" school system or to take away from the individuality of any of the respective schools. Nor did I want students from Kings Mountain riding buses all across Cleveland County. For me it was simply a matter of putting all three systems under one administrative unit, "trimming the fat," having more funds for the classroom and saving taxpayers money. Certainly, I was elected by the people to serve the people and I will continue to listen. I am not above reproach and I do make mistakes. Please know this, in all my decisions I put the children first. Each of us as North Carolinians should be concerned about public education and hold school systems accountable. Recently (February 21) the *Charlotte Observer* printed the latest School Report Card. Talking about merging is just that, talk. I believe our attention should be focused on the 21st century and where N.C. Public Schools (Kings Mountain District Schools) are headed. Academics must come first and

educating all students must be our number one priority. I encourage each of you to get involved in our future, our children.

Respectfully,
Melony C. Bolin

Please note: I am not speaking on behalf of the Kings Mountain Board of Education, it's views or policies.

Writer agrees schools should be merged

To the editor:

Merging the school systems is back in the news again thanks in part to Melony Bolin who had the courage to speak up in favor of merging. I have great respect for her in doing what she has done. A large portion of Kings Mountain is against merger including the Kings Mountain Herald. On the surface everybody would probably be against it but its when you start thinking about it that questions start to arise. First let's discuss some of the questions that the Kings Mountain Herald thinks they have answered. From a geographical perspective the Kings Mountain Herald was right that merging would have no benefits to Kings Mountain. No one was talking about Kings Mountain in this case so there was no reason for the Kings Mountain Herald to bring this up.

Now lets talk about the superintendents and their assistants. If you merge the school systems you eliminate two superintendents and their assis-

tants right away and that automatically will save money. Unfortunately, we have some contracts that may stop that from happening because of the way they were written up. We need to question the wisdom of our school board for allowing this, knowing that the commissioners can make the schools systems merge at any time. The local supplement given to teachers to keep from losing them from one school to another will in time be the same anyway. In the case of taxes being raised, the Kings Mountain School Board has already asked to raise taxes.

The Kings Mountain Herald and anybody else who says that there is a high level of parental involvement in the schools are living in a fantasy world and need to come back to reality. I have been to school board meetings, open house, fall festivals and other meetings and I have yet to see that high level of involvement. As far as contact goes, the only one we may have a little problem talking with, is the superintendent. Teachers, principals or any other employees won't change because the schools are not changing. So in "bigger is not always better" may not be as true as the Kings Mountain Herald thinks.

County unity to me is a non-issue, but the Kings Mountain Herald makes a case for non-merger by saying that the three school systems cooperate better than any other agencies. If that is the case then they might as well merge.

Now in other issues such as the school board, that's up to the state to decide. The multi-million dollar facility is already built in Kings Mountain. As for ill feelings goes, who cares.

Educating children should be out top concern, not feelings. I would urge that all school board members and citizens at least think about it. As far as agenda goes, the Kings Mountain Herald needs to look inside first.

Freddy Wall
Kings Mountain

Writer says Bolin stands for beliefs

To the editor:

The Kings Mountain Herald gave their opinion on the school merger issue that they are not in favor of it. As my husband points out, Melony stands up for what she believes in. This earns her a great deal of respect from both my husband and I. I feel that she is doing a great job on our school board. For instance, on the October 12, 1998 school board meeting the vote was 4 to 1, Melony being the 1, to give the district office personnel a bonus, which came from unbudgeted revenues. At our elementary, the children share glue and other supplies and our PTO pays for the school's copying supplies. In my opinion this bonus money should have been used toward the shortfalls in our schools. Melony knows this and made her decision accordingly. So when people accuse her of having her own agenda I tend to get a little defensive.

When you look at your check each week and see the taxes taken out do you not get a little mad? What I believe Melony to be doing is what is best for our

LETTER POLICY

We appreciate your letters to the editor and encourage you to write.

We limit the number of letters than any one person may have published to one a month. We ask that you keep your letters short, no more than two pages double-spaced or one page single spaced. Handwritten letters must be legible.

We will not publish letters from anonymous writers; names, addresses, and phone numbers must be included. We reserve the right to edit letters for grammar, punctuation, clarity, brevity and content.

Letters must be received no later than 5 p.m. on Monday of the week they are to be published. Mail letters to The Editor, P.O. Box 769, Kings Mountain, NC 28086 or fax them to (704) 739-0611.

children and protecting the taxpayers. She might not believe as I do on every issue. Just because you don't agree on every issue does not mean that she does not have your best interest at heart. We need more conscientious people in our public offices like Melony Bolin to help reassure people like me that we are not being taken advantage of.

As for the merger, I can't say what is best for Kings Mountain, although I can see a big benefit in the consolidation of salaries. I don't know what all is involved. I'll wait to see what a study might suggest. The Herald suggested that the savings would be to the state and not the taxpayers of Cleveland County. Wouldn't any savings help us taxpayers than none? We do pay state taxes as well as county taxes. As far as the local supplements to the teachers and salaries of non-certified personnel what about those unbudgeted revenues that we take in. We shouldn't have to increase taxes locally if we use those revenues accordingly.

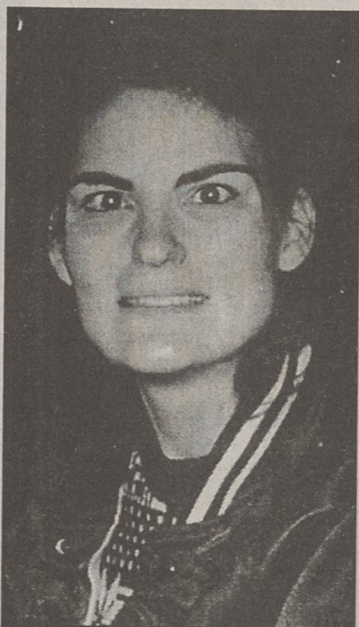
You as the citizens of Kings Mountain don't have to take my word or the Herald's word on any of this. Call Melony Bolin yourself or attend the school board meetings and listen to what she has to say and then decide for you. That is the only way you will know the truth. I have prayed and prayed about this and know it is past time for us to start making those responsible for spending our tax dollars accountable. We need a voice and locally to me Melony is that voice.

Robin Wall
Kings Mountain

SIDEWALK SURVEY

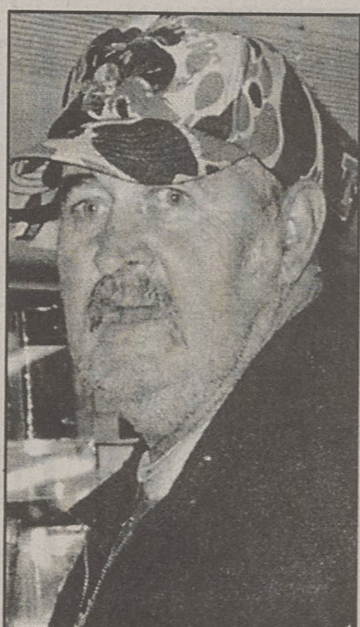
By ALAN HODGE
Kings Mountain Herald

What is your favorite stock car driver, and why?



I like Mark Martin, he's got class.

Martha Shank
Homemaker



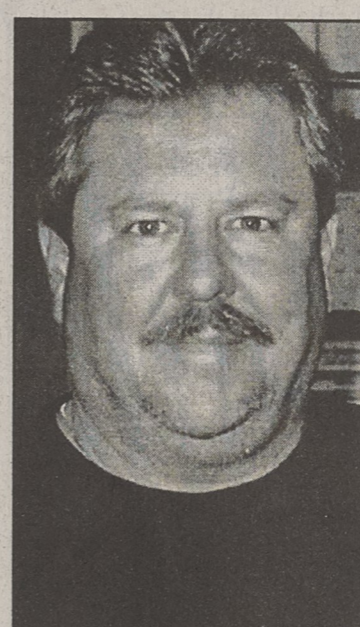
I'm for Dale Earnhardt. I've got his poster at home.

Earl Postell
Retired



I like Dale Earnhardt. My husband pulls for him too.

Debbie Dover
Clerk at Lil' Dan's



My favorite is Mark Martin because he drives a Ford.

Bill Parker
Store Owner



I'm for Rusty Wallace. Anybody but Jeff Gordon.

Tim Hinson
Computer Consultant