

Looking Back

AT KINGS MOUNTAIN
By Alan Hodge

February 12, 1980

Snow and ice was in the Kings Mountain news during the week of February 12, 1980. The Herald reported that plenty of both had fallen the previous Wednesday, Friday, Saturday and Sunday. At least four inches of the white stuff had turned the surrounding landscape into a winter wonderland as the special photo section by Katrena McCall illustrated.

Rally Week was also a big news item in the February 12 edition of the Herald. Kicking off the celebration, State Senator Ollie Harris gave a speech at City Hall. Making the occasion a festive one, local citizens cut a cake commemorating Kings Mountain's 106th birthday. Entertainment for the event was provided by the Kings Mountain High School band and Shirley's Shriners vocal group.

Love was in the air in Kings Mountain on February 12, 1980. With Valentine's Day just two days off, the Herald had several advertisements from local merchants offering deals on candy and flowers. Publisher Garland Atkins devoted his column in that week's Herald to Valentine's Day thoughts. Guest writer Tom McIntyre rendered his opinion in the Valentine's Day issue of the Herald that love stories had ruined cowboy movies.

On the school scene for February 12, 1980, the Herald reported on the results of Central School's essay contest. Winners included Jerry Tucker, Jr., Leigh Anne Odell, and Tracy Bess. The subject was "Why I Like Living in Kings Mountain." Also in school news, it was reported that the Kings Mountain High School Class of 1950 was planning its reunion.

The Herald sports section for February 12 featured a column on college basketball by Dwight Frady. Frady's story revolved around his belief that teams in the NCAA were very close in talent and that anywhere from 30 to 40 teams had a shot at winning the NCAA Tournament.

With winter in full swing, folks in Kings Mountain no doubt gave a close look at the warm clothes offered on sale at Plonk Brothers store in the February 12 Herald. Turtleneck shirts just like James Bond would have worn were going for just \$4.88. Sweaters at Plonk Brothers were half price, as were winter coats.

Letters

We appreciate your letters to the editor and encourage you to write. Because we receive so many letters, however, we must impose guidelines to ensure that as many readers as possible are able to share their views. We therefore limit the number of letters that any one person may have published to one a month. Also, we ask that you keep your letters short, no more than two pages double-spaced or one page single-spaced. Handwritten letters are accepted, but must be legible.

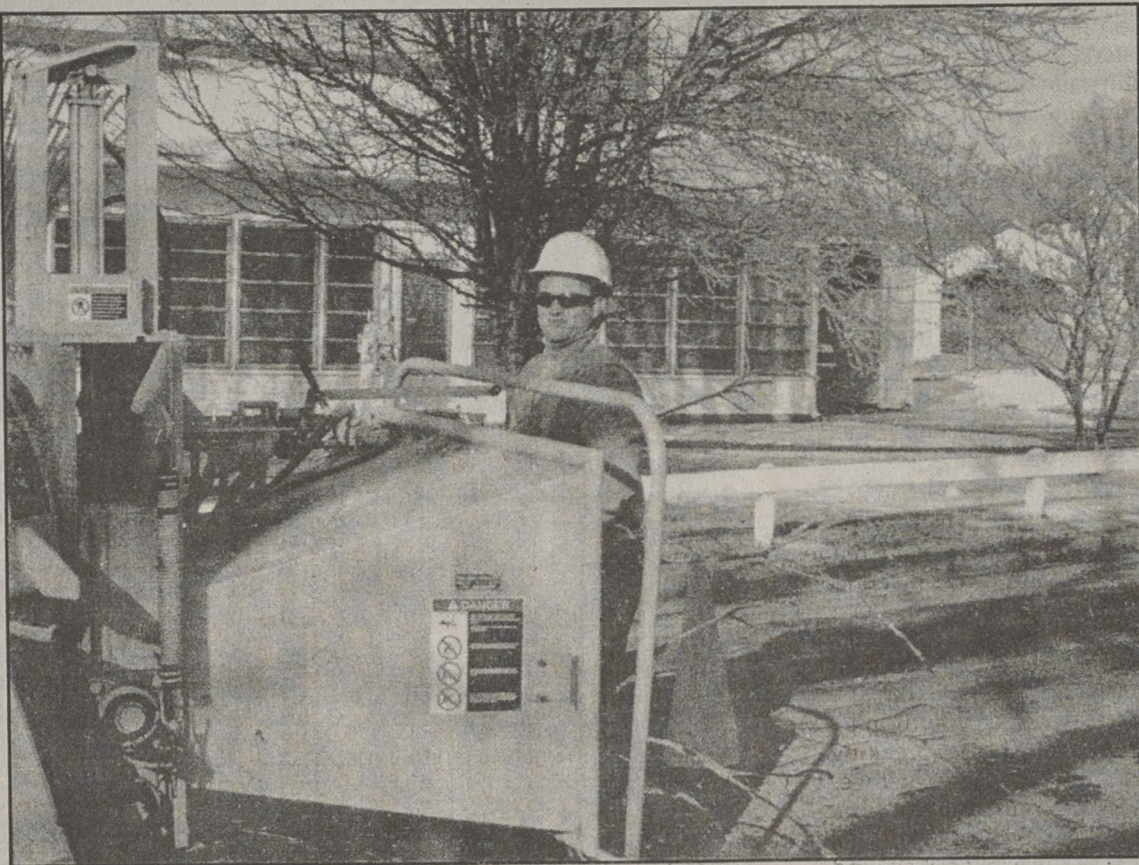
We will not publish letters from anonymous writers; names, addresses, and phone numbers must be included. We reserve the right to edit letters for grammar, punctuation, clarity, brevity and content.

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.

Corrections

We will correct any substantial errors that appear in the newspaper or clarify any statements that are unclear.

PICTORIAL EDITORIAL



ALAN HODGE / THE HERALD
OUNCE OF PREVENTION - One of the reasons Kings Mountain was spared any major power outages during the recent snow and ice storms is that the city contracts year-round tree-trimming services to keep limbs away from power lines. Jason Bailey of Ingie's Tree Service feeds limbs that were recently cut into a chipper on Sims Street.

Same old political eggshell

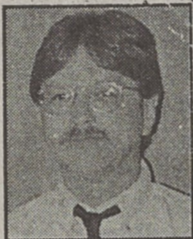
The race for the White House has started up in earnest, and the candidates are taking off their gloves for the fight. The only problem is that their punches have all the sting of a kindergarten sissy. Recent straw elections in states like New Hampshire and Iowa have brought a few surprises, but generally a lot of the same old political eggshell walking.

Maybe it's just me, but there's something about the current crop of presidential contenders that leaves me cold. There's no need to name names here, but the word charisma can no more be applied to those seeking the highest office in the land than it can to a bowl of beanie-weenies.

What ever happened to folks like Winston Churchill, Teddy Roosevelt, Robert E. Lee, and George Washington? Where is the dynamism and the noble, chin-up attitude that these guys and other leaders in the past possessed? Part of the answer may be in the fact that fear of being branded as politically incorrect has made candidates scared to death to say what they really think.

Wouldn't it be bully if someone like Teddy came back on the political scene and spoke his mind on some pressing current issues? What politician today has the nerve to say something like "carry a big stick." And what about Marse Robert? I think that Lee's character and qualities would have made him one of America's best presidents ever, but of course he's way too politically incorrect.

What America needs is a leader who will speak his mind without fear of the political correctness police. How long has it been since anyone heard a really rabble-rousing, straight from the heart speech delivered with passion and soul? As long as the politicians have to measure every word that comes out of their mouths, the voters will keep getting cold oatmeal speeches instead of the fire and brimstone, stump-top, down home, tirades that used to make political campaigns such fun.



Alan Hodge
Staff Writer

It's time to put end to merger

It is time for the Cleveland County Board of Commissioners to call a halt to the assessment of merger of the county's three school systems.

We offer two good reasons: Already, the expense is great, and climbing. Commissioners and the Kings Mountain School Board have hired lawyers to represent them in the merger debate and lawyers bring with them high price tags, footed by the taxpayers. It has already been said in a meeting of the Kings Mountain School Board that if this issue goes to litigation it could cost KMDS "in the six figures."

At one of their recent public meetings, one of the commissioners noted that the first year of a merger would cost approximately \$2.7 million. He said the county would raise \$3 million extra in the next budget year through the recent revaluation of property. If that's the case, commissioners should either lower the tax rate so everyone's actual tax dollar amount will stay the same that it has been, or divide that \$3 million among the existing three school systems to be used in the classroom.

But, money aside, commissioners should halt the merger idea simply because the vast majority of Cleveland County citizens are against it. A recent poll by a Shelby TV station resulted in 400 of 472 callers stating their opposition to merger.

At a meeting called by Commissioner Willie McIntosh Tuesday in Shelby, almost all of the people who spoke told him they were against merger. He has another meeting slated for 6 p.m. Saturday at Kings Mountain High School, and he'll hear the same response there.

On many occasions during this merger debate commissioners have stated that they represent all of Cleveland County. If that's the case there is no reason to continue to pursue this matter, because the people of Cleveland County have spoken.

Can commissioners hear?



Gary Stewart
Editor

YOUR VIEW

Do we have five little Hitlers at helm of county government?

To the editor:

As my husband and I left the merger meeting Tuesday night, I thought of a striking parallel between what I had just heard and an event that took place in Europe over 50 years ago.

A fanatical dictator named Hitler had convinced the German people that his plan to "swallow up" neighboring countries would add to the glory of his beloved Germany and was the right thing to do. The results are history and created death, destruction, and anguish to millions of innocent, powerless people. His actions eventually resulted in World War II.

Your reaction may be that this was a man who had built up his own regime and amassed power through military might. Only a dictator could get by with this sort of thing. Is it possible that a board of five men, elected by the people in a democratic America could use its power to achieve its goal of elevating one segment of its constituency?

Cleveland County Commissioners, the destiny of all of our children and future generations is in your hands. Listen carefully to the will of the majority of your electorate and resist the temptation to "play God."

Carolyn N. Finger
Kings Mountain

Make sure commissioners hear your opinion on merger

To the editor:

I am writing to you concerning the possible school merger here in Cleveland County. As a mother, my main concern is the depersonalization of our schools. We cherish the hands-on educational experience we have with our superintendent, our school board, our teachers and school leaders. They are our neighbors, we worship with them, and more often than not, they are our friends. We are proud of our community and our schools are part of what defines this community. We want our children to be known by their names, not their social security numbers. That is what they deserve, nothing less.

We are not alone in experiencing this push for school merger. Across our state there has been a movement to have only one school system per county. In fact, we are one of the few counties left with multiple systems. What is wrong with being different? Just because every other county is pushing for merger does not mean it is the right thing for us here in Cleveland County. We are proud of our uniqueness. We live in a diverse county.

Our community may have snow when the rest of the county has none. During our last snow storm, on Tuesday, January 25, the county operated on three different schedules. If the commissioners force this merger, we will operate on one schedule, whether we have bad weather in our community or not.

Merger has created problems in some counties to such a degree that some towns have been forced to charter their own schools to maintain some control over the education of their children. Commissioner Harry used Guilford County as his example for school merger. He said after merger three of the schools in Guilford County had increased their scores but what he didn't say was there are 100 schools in that district. Doesn't it stand to reason that 3 out of 100 schools would have scores go up? What about the other 97 schools? The scores remained the same or they went down.

Dr. McRae (Superintendent, KMDS), Ronnie Wilson (Personnel, KMDS), and Dr. Allen (chairman, KM School Board) were my principals when I was in school. Dr. King (KMDS), Stella Putnam (KM School Board) and Ronnie Hawkins (KM School Board) attend church with my family. What will happen to this type of personal touch if they merge these school systems? As in banking and big business, the confidence we feel by someone simply knowing our name will cease to exist.

The people of Cleveland County need to be heard. There are 5 men who ultimately have the power to merge these schools. Once they vote to merge, it is a permanent decision. They are only men. Do not be intimidated by them or their position. They were given this power by us. Our votes put them in that position just as our votes can replace them at the next election. If you have concerns or questions, it is their job to listen and understand.

Commissioner McIntosh is to be commended for making the time to go to each city and listen to the citizens of Cleveland County. Go meet with him, make it worth his time and effort. Remember, whether you are for or against this issue, once they vote to merge these schools, we cannot undo that decision. Make sure the commissioners hear you now.

Holly Robinson
Kings Mountain

SIDEWALK SURVEY

By ALAN HODGE
Herald/Times

Will it snow again before the end of this winter?



I don't believe it will because the groundhog didn't see his shadow.

Vunsella Partlow
Bessemer City



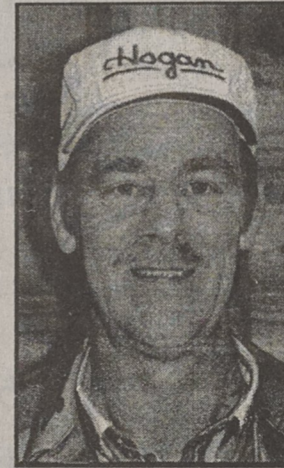
We'll have another snow in March.

Janet Edwards
Shelby



Since it's been so cold, we'll probably get another snow.

Dot Hullender
Kings Mountain



Sure, we'll have more flakes.

Bobby Ernst
Kings Mountain



I don't think we'll get any more big accumulations.

Jason Hughes
Kings Mountain