

**GUEST COLUMN**

## N.C. toll roads hit roadblock

The N.C. House sent a bill that would authorize toll roads in North Carolina on a detour one that will probably end up as a dead-end road.

After an hour of questions, the House voted overwhelmingly to send the bill back to committee. With the session winding down, it's unlikely that the measure will wind its way back to the floor.



Andy Dedmon

North Carolina has traditionally frowned on motorists paying tolls to travel on the state's highways. But supporters of toll roads believe the climate may be changing as more citizens find themselves stuck in traffic, and the state struggles to build roads and public transportation fast enough.

Supporters believe a private developer can design and build a road in months, rather than the years required by the state. Speeding up construction would help relieve some of the traffic jams.

A private toll-road developer in Alabama has raised interest in toll roads by making several presentations to legislative committees and study commissions. Officials from the state Department of Transportation, who have been cool to the idea of privately-built toll roads, acknowledge that they have become interested.

The bill that the House sent back to committee would have allowed up to three privately-developed toll roads in North Carolina. A bridge crossing the Catawba River between Gaston and Mecklenburg counties is a prime contender for one of the three roads.

House members spent an hour of debate asking dozens of questions about the impact of the measure.

Some did not like the idea of effectively giving a private company the power to condemn land. Under the bill, the Department of Transportation would use the state's power of eminent domain in cases where property owners did not want to sell. The developer would then reimburse the state.

Others questioned whether there was a limit on the toll road that could be charged, whether to toll would come off when the road was paid for and what would happen if a private toll-road developer abandoned a project halfway through construction.

The chairs of the powerful budget- and tax-writing committees also waded into the debate and said provisions of the bill needed review by their committees.

The House decided to send the bill to the Finance Committee, which considers bills dealing with taxes and fees. If it emerges from there, it will likely go to the budget-writing Appropriations Committee. With the session winding down, the chances are not good that the bill will come up for a vote of the full House.

By sending the bill off to committee, the House didn't ban toll roads. Some argue that a developer could build a private toll road in North Carolina now.

But it is not clear that a private toll-road builder could tap into the existing highway system. So the apparent death of the bill put a big roadblock in front of toll roads in North Carolina.

(Andy Dedmon represents Cleveland County in the North Carolina House of Representatives).

**PICTORIAL EDITORIAL**



ALAN HODGE/THE HERALD  
A regular T-ball scorer, eight-year-old Jake Allen gets ready to sock another run. Allen was taking part in a recent baseball camp at Kings Mountain High School.

**YOUR OPINION**

## Opposes relocating graves

To the editor:

This is an open letter to Fairview Baptist Church, its pastor, trustees and members:

It's hard to imagine the cruelty of the decision to relocate the old graves that are one hundred or more years old - the landmark of our old ancestors who so graciously struggled to have a place of worship - working in cotton fields, corn fields, potato patches, etc., hands sore and scarred, trying to prepare for the future. I write this as a plea from the heart.

Wouldn't it be a cruel thing to tear down what God gave them strength to do? Whatever God forbids us to do are the very things Satan will entice you to do. We have to be very careful to feel God's heart, so as not to

be enticed by the devil. Stop! Disregard all of Satan's reasoning and know that God will always be faithful to impress in the right way. Think about it, I'm sure God would not lead you to disrespect the pioneers who were laid in their final earthly resting places. Think how cruel it would be to the loved ones who are still living. Think about how it affects their thoughts and frustrations, to harbor anything so bizarre.

I am greatly disturbed to the extent of sleepless nights so I asked the Holy Spirit to speak to my heart and illuminate my path. As I sat here in silent reverie the still small voice said, "Pick up your pen and write what I'm saying to you. Tell the people it's fine to go to the

house of worship with godly people, just don't go out of habit or because you have a position. Go to worship and depart to serve."

Expanding the building will not save souls; it is mostly to boost ego. What a cruel way to exalt yourselves, and God is not pleased. May the words of this letter pierce your conscience and heart as an arrow, tearing it to shreds.

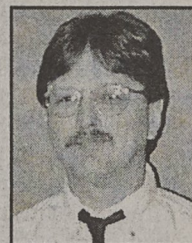
I am no longer a member of Fairview Baptist Church. I was raised up, and baptized in a creek. I am proud of my culture and spiritual heritage. I'm not a member, but I have a lot of ancestors buried at Fairview Baptist Church Cemetery, and

See Letter, 12A

## Summer reading is a sure bet to take you places in your mind

One of the best things a kid can do this summer is visit a library and get some books. Books procured, then go home, turn off the TV, curl up somewhere cool, and read, read, read.

Having worked in libraries for 13 years, I am somewhat familiar with how important reading is to minds young and old. Every summer for over 10 years I put on the library summer reading mascot suit and made visits to schools, day cares, other libraries and parks to encourage kids to read. During the course of these adventures I was costumed as a monkey, dinosaur, pink cat, shark, robot and a coupe of other characters that have slipped my mind.



Alan Hodge

The effect that books have on kids is enormous. Not only do they offer reading material, books can take children on journey's in their imagination that older folks fail to appreciate. What child has not ridden in the crow's nest of a pirate ship, been a fairy princess, won the West, or gone into outer space through the pages of a book?

A good local library like Mauney Memorial in Kings Mountain can plant the seed of books in a child that can grow into something wonderful. When I was a chap growing up in Charlotte, I used to walk to the East Branch library, sit in its cool and somewhat musty environs and read anything I could get my hands on. Well, almost anything. Once I was looking at a National Geographic with some natives in it and the librarian took it away.

Parents owe reading time to their kids. Again, turn off the TV, sit with your child in a comfortable chair or even under a shady tree, and read together. Not only will this form a bond between parent and child, it will also form a bond between the child's mind and books. If parents read stories to their kids as often as they did in the days before TV, it would go a long way to creating a kinder, gentler world.

Besides the written word, another aspect of children's books these days that has seen marked development is artwork. Gone are the days when pictures in a kid's book were cartoon-like in their simplicity. Now, with rich and imaginative illustrations by top artists filling their pages, even elementary children's books offer a treat to the eyes.

Summer will be over before you know it, so now is the time to take your kids to the library. Who knows, a love of books started now could last forever.

## Letters to the editor

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 & Clarifications

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

To request a correction or clarification, call the editor at (704) 739-7469 between 8:30 a.m. and 5 p.m. Monday through Friday or fax (704) 739-0611.

## News Deadlines

The following deadlines apply for news items.

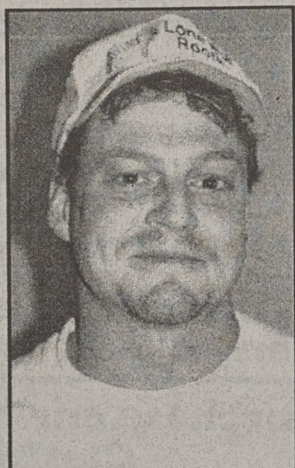
Deadline for B Section news is 12 noon Monday. This includes lifestyles news, people stories, weddings, engagements, anniversaries, reunions, club news, church news, business news, school news and community news. Items received past the deadline will run in other parts of the paper if time and space permit. Otherwise, they will be held until the following week.

Deadline for A Section news is 5 p.m. Tuesday. This includes city and county news, sports, opinions, and miscellaneous items. In cases of Tuesday night meetings and ball games, items will be taken up to 9:30 a.m. Wednesday. Items received past the deadline will be withheld until the following week.

## SIDEWALK SURVEY

By ALAN HODGE  
Kings Mountain Herald

### What do you think about the closing of the video poker parlors?



They haven't had an effect on me one way or the other.

Frank Shaw Grover



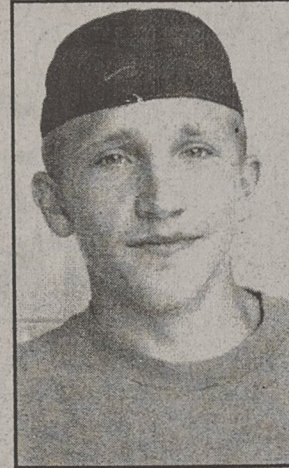
I'm glad they are going to close down.

Charlotte Shields Grover



I'm glad to see them going away.

Tracy Stewart  
Kings Mountain



If people want to spend their money at the casinos, then that's their right.

Kenneth Clark Grover



It doesn't matter to me one way or the other if they close them.

Amy Lail Shelby