



**GARY STEWART / THE HERALD**  
Charlotte attorney Kenneth Davies, left, questions his client Don Johnson about his video game businesses during Tuesday morning's Board of Adjustment meeting at Kings Mountain City Hall.

# Don't drive an ugly truck



**Jim Heffner**

Before the month is out President Fuzzy, Al Bore and all the Arkansas Bandits, save one, will be giving up the power of the White House. Hillary Clinton, of course, will begin a four year term in the U.S. Senate, courtesy of the majority of bumblers from the state of New York who voted for her. I say a four year term, because everybody knows she really wants to become the first American woman president, and is sure to run for that office in 2004.

On January 20, the almost laughable Bush administration takes over. I say laughable not just to lend balance to this column, but to point out that he appears to be more interested in catering to different segments of society as opposed to the American people as a whole.

Bush has completed his cabinet selections now. The only thing he hasn't done is name a Secretary of Hanging Chads.

It appears to me that he followed a Bill Clinton outline in assembling his group. I sincerely hope they don't fall flat on their faces. As far as I can tell, people from all walks of life will be represented except Southern rednecks.

I suggest Richard Petty as Secretary of Chads to correct that situation.

The Shrub selected more women and people of foreign extraction than any five past presidents combined ever did. I guess that's all right. I certainly like women and I don't have anything against Latinos, but I wonder if he chose them on their ability or because they "look like America," a Clinton phrase? We'll find out as time passes.

It will certainly be better than the last cabinet, but a senior citizen track team would also be better.

At least we won't have to listen to stories about stained dresses, no controlling legal authority, Buddhist temples, recounts, James Carville, Ken Starr or tax increases (hopefully).

Jesse Jackson is having a fit about John Ashcroft as Attorney General. Personally, I don't see how he can keep a straight face considering the antics of Janet Reno.

Reno has made it known that she will tour the country in her newly purchased pickup truck. So as not to give the appearance of elitism, she

bought a used, red truck.

After Reno leaves office, everybody in the country needs to be on the lookout for an old woman tooling along the backroads in a dusty, red pickup. She'll probably be mumbling a lot.

Over in the world class city, the daily newspaper is also unhappy with Ashcroft, but the fact is that all liberals would be unhappy with the choice of any conservative as Attorney General.

As far as I'm concerned that particular post has been vacant for the last eight years.

Alec Baldwin, Kim Basinger, Tom Hanks, Barbara Streisand, Martin Sheen, Susan Sarandon, Whoopie Goldberg, Ron "Opie" Howard, Rosie O'Donnell and Geraldo Rivera, of course, are not happy about the turn of events. Although he now denies he said it, Baldwin swore he would leave the country if Bush was elected. Maybe he simply meant he'd spend a drunken weekend in Tijuana. I don't see how the country can possibly survive the loss of these national treasures.

Celebrities! wow! you just can't get enough of them.

What will we do if they all just go back to Hollywood and give up trying to run the country? Who will tell us what to wear, or monitor gun owners? How will we know who the president should appoint to the U.S. Supreme Court?

I sincerely hope that when President Fuzzy gets out of jail he will buy him a good pair of overalls and a straw hat, and go back to Hope Arkansas to sit in the sun and dip snuff.

I, for one, could then begin to develop some respect for our latest ex-president.

## ARCADE

From 1A

Myers said this is the first time the Board has heard requests on conditional use permits. It usually deals with setback ordinances for mobile homes and outbuildings.

Monday's hearing was lengthy, because as a quasi-judicial board the Board of Adjustments must swear in every person who wishes to speak, or give testimony, and that testimony is recorded and can be used in a court of law if the matter goes that far.

By law, the Board had to give Attorney Davies the opportunity to not only ask questions of his clients, but also to cross-examine any citizen who spoke against the issue.

Johnson, owner of Bessemer City Express, has requested conditional use permits for property at 200 Waco Road, 411 and 413 North Piedmont, 301 East King Street, 113 East King, 501 East King and 314 North Piedmont. Heath, owner of Lynn's Game Room and Mike's Food Store, has asked for conditional use permits for property at 910 A and 910 B Battleground Avenue.

Codes Director Holly Galloway pointed out that she discovered code violations during recent inspections of Johnson's property at 411 and 413 North Piedmont, and Planning Director Steve Killian pointed out that Johnson's request for a conditional use permit for property at 112 E. King St. did not include the signature of the property owner. He said it may not be legal for the Board of Adjustment to consider a request if it is not signed by the property owner. Galloway also noted that Johnson had not paid fees for the rezoning requests, but Johnson said he had not received a bill for them until last Saturday. Galloway also said she could find no record of Johnson ever having a city privilege license to operate video game establishments at 411 and 413 N. Piedmont.

Killian pointed out that the establishments did not meet the city's criteria for the required distance from residences, churches and other video gaming establishments.

It wasn't the distance, but the moral side of the issue that concerned citizens.

Oliver Tate, who lives at 200 Waco Road which is two blocks from one of Johnson's businesses, said parking is also an issue and that there are "at least six widows" and teenagers who live in close proximity.

"We don't know what impact this would have on our neighbors," he said. "No matter what you call it, this is gambling. I know a fellow who has lost everything he has to gambling. There are two types of people who gamble. One who is wealthy and is gullible and wants more money, or one who has nothing and wants some. I can see no moral value to gambling. It's our obligation to not only look at the legal aspect of these things, but also the moral consequences."

Johnson said he had been in business at that location for "nine or ten" years and had never had any problems. He said he does not allow anyone under age 18 in the area of the buildings where the gaming machines are located.

However, several persons, including Chairman Myers pointed out that there has been trouble there in the past. Myers said he was a part of the police team that investigated a murder there several years ago. Johnson said he was not the owner of the business at that time, and that the murder took place across the street from the business.

"The confrontation began inside and escalated to the outside," Myers claimed.

Johnson said he was told "someone came to the door and asked to use the phone. They were told no, words were exchanged and they went outside to the other side of the road, where the shooting occurred."

Dr. Robert Eng, pastor of New Life Family Worship Center and owner of Eng's School of Self Defense which is just down the street from Pete's Game Room, said he is concerned about the moral aspect of allowing game rooms inside the city. He said he has counseled numerous persons who have become addicted to gambling and many have been customers of the nearby game rooms.

Rebecca Lineberger, director of the Kings Mountain Crisis Ministry, made similar statements.

Libby Blanton of Oak Grove objected to game rooms on King Street near her late parents' home.

"We need to put a stop to this," she said. "Gambling addiction creates other crimes such as drugs and alcohol. Being a victim of a violent crime, I think it's time to put a stop to it."

Mrs. Blanton was shot in May 1999 during an attempted bank robbery at First Charter Bank.

Mary Neisler, chairman of the Kings Mountain Historical Landmark Committee, addressed the issue of the gaming operation at the former Pete's Gulf Station across the street from First Presbyterian Church.

She said her committee expects a decision on whether or not the Central School Historical District will be approved in February, and they have amended their request to include the south side of King Street, where Pete's Gulf is located.

"If this permit is allowed it will definitely jeopardize our chances of having this area included in this historical district," she said. "We're trying very hard to do some positive things in regard to our historical background."

She also spoke on behalf of the Session of First Presbyterian, which Sunday passed a resolution opposing the conditional use permit.

While the locations of their businesses are not in compliance with the city's new zoning ordinances, both Johnson and Heath contend that they have been in business at the same locations for several years and should receive "grandfather" exemptions.

Although his requests were not discussed Tuesday because of the time constraints, Heath pointed out during a brief recess that no one came to speak against his requests.

"I bought the building (Mike's Food Store and Lynn's Game room across from Timms Furniture) in 1994," he noted. "The city rezoned me General Business, sold me a privilege li-

cense and put me in the city limits. Now they're trying to take my business away."

Heath said his machines have been listed for tax purposes since 1993 and he has held up-to-date privilege licenses since that time.

Heath was previous owner of Pete's Game Room, which he sold to Johnson in 1992, and said he operated it as a game room and had privilege licenses there since 1985.

"They changed the zoning in 1995," he said of that property. "The machines were already there. I sold him everything."

Heath said his property on Battleground is zoned properly for arcades; the only thing standing in his way of being in full compliance is one residence within 200 feet of the former Welch TV building.

"The other side of the road is zoned GB," he noted. "One trailer beside me may cause me to go out of business. I bought the Welch property for this purpose and a game room is the only thing that's ever been in it."

The new city ordinance prohibits gaming establishments from having more than three machines. The business must also be at least 200 feet from residences, churches or any other gaming establishment, and 300 feet from a school.

"There's never been a neighbor complain about us," Heath said. "If these complaints had been by neighbors they would have called long before now. Most people don't even know we're there."

## FLU

From 1A

of lesser severity. Flu can often be accompanied by abdominal symptoms such as stomach ache, nausea and vomiting. Muscle aches can be so severe that even walking is difficult.

When it comes to flu and colds, the best way to help protect yourself is by keeping your hands washed and avoid touching your face, eyes, nose or

mouth. The viruses that cause flus and colds are not only airborne, but can also be found on places such as telephones, door-knobs, and computer keyboards.

If you get the flu or a cold, face the fact that it has to run its course. This time can vary from a few days to over one week. To help your body, drink plenty of fluids and rest. Take acetaminophen for body aches and headache. To control runny noses and congestion, try an antihistamine or decongestant.

If your symptoms persist for more than a week, and include nasal congestion accompanied by discharge of thick, yellow mucus, cough, sore throat, fever or facial pain, see your physician.

According to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), current strains of the flu for 2000-2001 season are A/Moscow/1099, A/New Caledonia/20/99, and B/Beijing/184/93. The prefix "A" or "B" refers to the virus, the geographical name for the place it was first isolated, the

year of isolation and the strain number.

Proving that the flu virus is no respecter of persons, it can even hit animals such as chickens or hogs. Such was the case in the mid-1970s when the "swine flu" was first seen in pigs and in 1998 when millions of Chinese chickens had to be destroyed to control the "Hong Kong" flu.

Supply of flu vaccine has been an issue this winter. This past summer, the CDC said that production of the 2000-2001 season flu vaccine would be troubled because of problems growing the necessary viruses in culture. The vaccine itself is made of killed virus.

Another factor in the supply equation is the fact that there are just three firms in the U.S. market that make the medicine. All in all, however, there will eventually be enough to go around, though some places may get their's a little late.

On the health map, outbreaks of flu have been hitting different areas of the nation with varying degrees of severity.

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