

YOUR OPINION

Chamber is not taking position on lake issue

(Ed. Note: This is a response to a letter in last week's paper from City Councilman Gene White).

To the editor:

Thank you for sharing your views and questions in the letter dated January 22, 2001. In response to your questions:

The Chamber does not have an official (nor unofficial) position on the sale of the two formerly city-owned water lakes in Kings Mountain. The Chamber's Kings Mountain Advisory Council did discuss the issue (as information without action) at its January 2001 meeting, after the issue was brought forward by one of the Advisory Council members.

The Chamber does not have an official (nor unofficial) position regarding the Kings Mountain Land Use Plan. Furthermore, The Chamber has not issued an opinion concerning the use of the property to which you referred. I am not sure if the above-mentioned Plan addresses annexation and ETJ expansion; but the Chamber has officially supported recent city efforts on these issues.

The Chamber Board and the Kings Mountain Advisory Council is not aware of any effort on behalf of the Chamber to use its space at City Hall to "mobilize special interest against taxpayers and the duly elected representatives of Kings Mountain." The Chamber would not tolerate such action from its staff or volunteers. I agree with you that the Chamber office in City Hall is excellent space, and we are quite grateful for that arrangement.

In the background information you provided to correspond to your first question, you referred to Shirley Brutko. As administrative assistant in the Kings Mountain office, Shirley is a part-time staff member of the Cleveland County Chamber who is not a designated spokesperson for the Chamber. I understand that Shirley is a member of the Save the Lakes Committee. While she is restricted to the tasks outlined in her Chamber job description while in the Chamber offices, she (as any other staff member) does have the right to become involved in various causes and community activities during hours other than those assigned by the Chamber.

Chamber president Rob Youngblood and I would welcome the opportunity to further discuss your views and questions. We would also gladly discuss the organization's 2000 Action Report and Accomplishments with you at any time. We would also invite you to contact any members of the Chamber's Kings Mountain Advisory Council, since it is the group that reviewed, approved and recommended the items in both the report and accomplishments. Furthermore, I invite you to attend the next Advisory Council meeting, which is 12 noon Tuesday, February 6, at Wendell's Barbecue. We would gladly add your name to our agenda, if you would like to address the group.

We appreciate your efforts on behalf of the citizens of Kings Mountain and your interest in the Cleveland County Chamber.

Sincerely,
Adelaide Craver,
Chamber Board Chairperson

PICTORIAL EDITORIAL



A 'JOY'OUS OCCASION - These folks' smiles reflect the enthusiasm that will soon turn the former Joy Theater in downtown Kings Mountain into a Performing Arts Center. Members of the Kings Mountain Little Theatre are making plans to raise funds to purchase the building and return it to its glory days and more. Left to right are Susan Champion, Jim Champion, Mary Neisler, Clenon Tackett, and Scott Neisler.

ALAN HODGE / THE HERALD

Kings Mountain could become cultural capital of Cleveland

If there's one thing that can be said about the people of Kings Mountain, it's that they never seem to run out of Causes. From school merger, to the proposed sale of Davidson and City lakes, there's always a group that fights tooth and nail in what they think is right.

The Kings Mountain Little Theater is one group that is carrying on a campaign for something they believe in. That belief is the purchase of the old Joy Theater building downtown and its conversion into a performing arts center. I think this is one project that deserves attention.

I have a movie theater in my past. My grandfather Leroy Willeford operated the movie house in Mount Holly during the World War II era. I have heard tales from my aunt about how my father Roy Willeford and his identical twin Roland used to invite the other kids over for movies-on the house. Grandfather was also said to have never turned a soldier or sailor away from the theater if their money was running short.

Old movie theaters are houses of dreams. After all, what are movies but someone's fantasy come to life? A red brick building on the outside, the Joy Theater has seen wars, romance, murder, comedy, and mystery within its walls. The building is therefore a place where worlds have been created, tears shed, revelations achieved, and lessons learned.

By renovating the Joy Theater, Kings Mountain can have a physical center for its cultural heart. Besides the Little Theater productions that will be held there, just think of the opportunity for piano or dance recitals, art shows, and other events. Business folks could also use the space for meetings and seminars. I don't think there is another place in town with the same potential for such a wide variety of use.

Hey, why stop with local talent when it comes to recitals. What a first it would be if Kings Mountain had visiting string quartets or pianists come and fill the Joy with the sounds of Brahms, Beethoven, or Mozart.

In addition to its interior capabilities, the Joy Theater could also become an architectural gem in downtown Kings Mountain. I looked at the building the other day and in my mind I saw a large, fully restored marquee with lots of cool red and green neon trim glowing on the corner of Railroad Avenue and Mountain Street. Maybe the sidewalk out front could be painted green like it was originally, or some sort of after-show coffee shop opened up inside.

Renovation of the Joy Theater should be a top priority of the city and community as a whole. Just ask Jim Champion his opinion on the subject. Also roll this catchy title I dreamed up around in your head for a while- "Kings Mountain, the Cultural Capital of Cleveland County". Sounds pretty good doesn't it?



Alan Hodge

Way we were January 31, 1952

Celebrating its 62nd year, the Kings Mountain Herald for January 31, 1952 headlined the urgent need the city and Red Cross had for blood donations. According to the story, the Red Cross Bloodmobile was coming to town with the goal of collecting 150 pints of blood.

Other front page stories for January 31, 1952 looked at plans to install more parking meters in downtown Kings Mountain, an appearance by the Sauline Players in their production of "Tom Sawyer", and approval of a city taxi franchise to Forrest Dover.

News in the January 31, 1952 Herald from Grover was reported by Lola Hardin. In her stories, Hardin mentioned that the Grover School polio drive had netted \$163.15. Mrs. W.F. Powell's room raised the most money with contributions totaling \$32. Other goings on in Grover included a meeting by the 4-H Club and their viewing of a film on reforestation, and a field trip to Boiling Springs for seed judging.

According to the Herald, Boy Scouts were active in Kings Mountain in January 1952. It was reported that Troop 2 at St. Matthew's Lutheran Church had just conducted a big planning session. Leaders of the pack included Hyena Patrol head Douglas Falls and Andrell Summitt of the Eagle Patrol. Scout Master was Donald Blanton.

Starting off the 1952 auto buying season, the January 31 edition of the Herald had many ads from local car dealers. Dean Buick said their new Fireball Engine could make a screaming 170 horsepower. Plonk Motor Company advertised that the 1952 Ford was the "greatest car ever built." In the used car market, C.L. Putnam and Sons dealership had a 1948 two-door Chevy with heater and radio for \$930.

Getting a jump on the Spring fashion scene, Myers' Dress Shop had an advertisement featuring some of the latest fashions for women. Suits in gabardine and sharkskin were selling for prices ranging from \$22.95 to \$59.95. Spring coats in lovely pastels were on sale for prices as low as \$16.95. At the men's department in Myers', Porto-Ped brand dress shoes were \$12.50 a pair.

According to the January 31, 1952 Herald, food was also cheap in Kings Mountain. At Blalock's Park-Inn, flour was only \$1.99 for a 25 pound bag. Bread was just 15 cents a loaf and dressed hens were selling for 49 cents each.

The Joy Theater was making a splash on the Kings Mountain entertainment scene. Shows screening at the Joy during the week of January 31, 1952 included "The Mob" with Broderick Crawford, "The Wild Blue Yonder" with Wendell Corey, and "I'll Never Forget You" with Tyrone Power.



SIDEWALK SURVEY

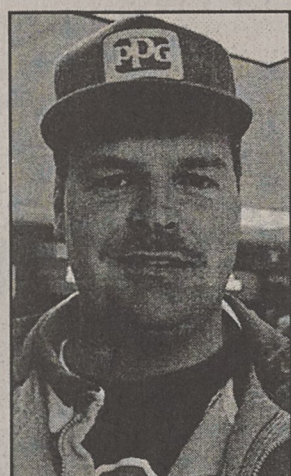
By ALAN HODGE
Kings Mountain Herald

Do you think that the federal government should give money to religious organizations to help down and out folks?



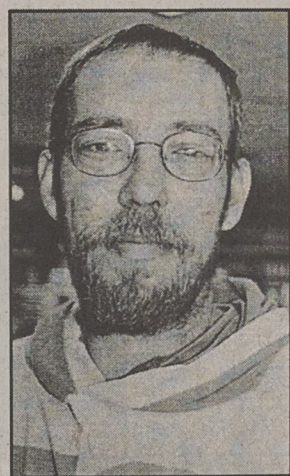
Don't abuse religion, but still help people who need help.

Ester Wingo
Kings Mountain



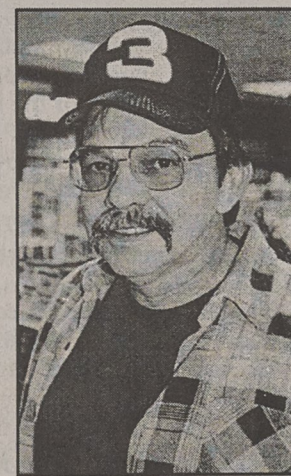
It's a legitimate cause to help people who are trying to help themselves.

Dwayne King
Kings Mountain



I think it's all right to give those groups government money to help others.

Reeves Hetherington
Kings Mountain



It's all right to give the money - the government wastes a lot more on other things.

Sonny Huntsinger
Kings Mountain



Don't give the money to religious groups, give it directly to the people.

Mike Drake Ranlo

Taxpayer Protection Act's time has come

By THOMAS PAUL DE WITT
Whenever a new governor comes into office, it is incumbent on all state citizens to be optimistic and wish the man our best. And so we should do for Gov. Mike Easley. In that spirit, I offer the new governor some advice to make his administration more fruitful.

There is much in the political winds to which Easley should pay heed. One must first stipulate that the North Carolina electorate is a rather conservative one. The people like their state government to do things so long as it does them in a limited fashion. In broad, theoretical terms, they want less government to do more and to do it better.

An Agenda 2000 poll conducted for the John Locke Foundation just before the November election found that fully 69 percent of likely North Carolina voters favored the Taxpayer Protection Act, which would limit state spending growth to a combination of inflation and population growth. They also favored, by 55 percent to 31 percent, across-the-board tax cuts rather than targeted tax breaks used as incentives to attract companies to the state. Finally, likely voters in the 2000 election favored, by 54 percent to 41 percent, the idea that government should do less rather than more.

Given the state's fiscal problems, the Taxpayer Protection Act looks more appealing than ever. With a current fiscal-year deficit surpassing \$300 million, and the next fiscal year's deficit already projected at \$450 million, legislators will be inclined to pay their usual shell games by shuffling money rather than actually cutting spending.

They will be further tempted to find some tricky ways to raise taxes to avoid "punishing" their particular constituencies. Keeping in mind that widespread tax increases are easily defused, while specific spending restrictions are focused and vulnerable to particular attack by organized interests, the temptation is for

the General Assembly to raise taxes rather than cut spending.

Gov. Easley could show some real statesmanship by offering an agenda of fiscal discipline and accountability. Knowing that he must tend to his own constituency, his balancing act will be difficult because of the extensive and expensive promises he made during the campaign.

The question is whether the new governor has the political agility to balance the desires of the interests to whom he is indebted against those of the general population of the state.

(DeWitt is senior editor of Carolina Journal, the magazine of the John Locke Foundation).