

YOUR OPINION

Durham will be missed

To the editor:

Kings Mountain has lost a wonderful man and an excellent doctor. One of the ministers at Dr. Durham's service said, "He loved his patients." Well, his patients loved him!

Dr. Durham has been my family's doctor since 1963. On April 22, 1964 he delivered my oldest daughter three months premature. She weighed one pound, 12 1/2 ounces. The Lord and Dr. Durham saved her life. For this I will be forever grateful.

His calm manner and friendly smile always made you feel comfortable around him. I always appreciated his medical opinion on questions I would ask. Dr. Durham will truly be missed!

To his wife Casey and the rest of his family, you have my prayers and deepest sympathy.

Jeannine E. Fisher
Kings Mountain

Letter Policy

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

We limit the number of letters that any one person may have published to one a month. Letters must be brief and to the point, and contain 600 words or less (approximately two pages double-spaced or one page single-spaced).

Handwritten letters will be 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 on later than 5 p.m. on Monday of the week they are to be published. Mail letters to The Publisher, 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.

To request a correction or clarification, call the editor at (704) 739-7496 between 8:30 a.m. and 5 p.m. Monday through Friday or fax (704) 739-0611.

YOUR CALL

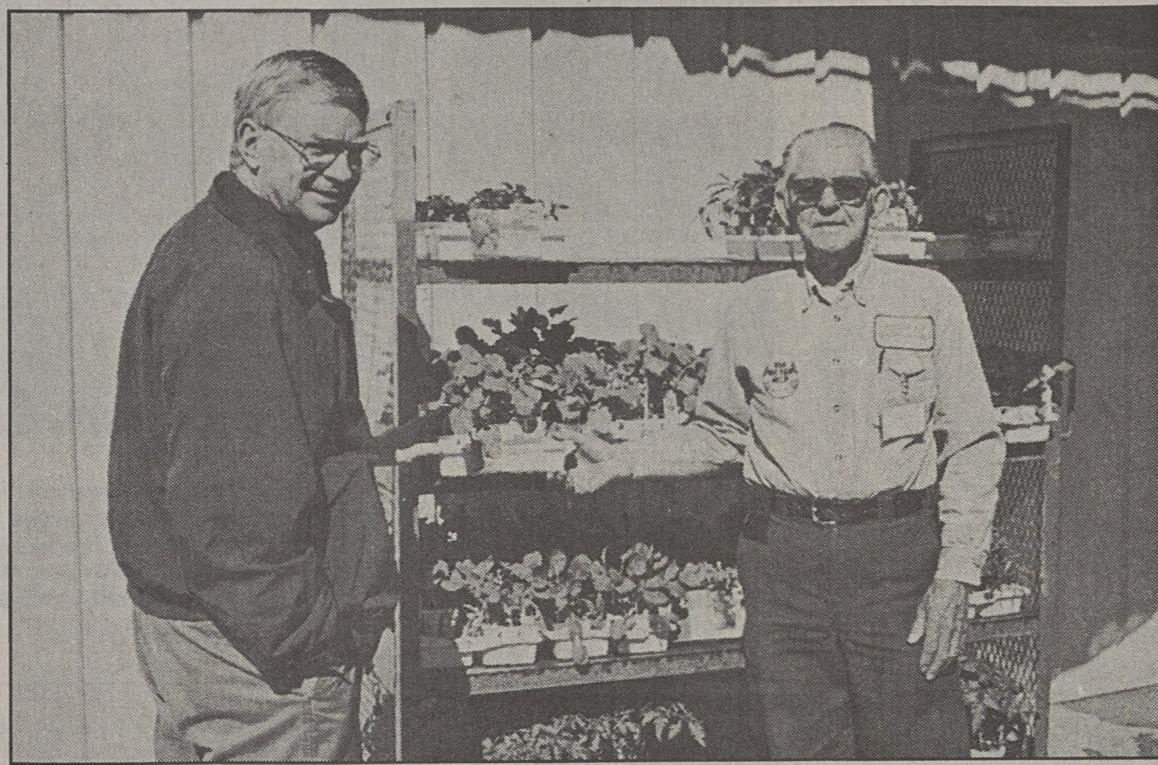
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ALAN HODGE/THE HERALD
Rev. Doug Petersen (left) and Jack Hutchins were checking out some cool season garden plants at Bridges Hardware recently. Even though nights are still chilly, warmer days are just around the corner.

The Good Lord helped her

Everybody said she was so little and frail. If you saw her the last several years of her life you would assume she was.

On the outside, maybe. Inside, no way.

Letha Stewart was a fighter. She had more faith and determination in her little finger than most of us will ever know.

By human understanding she should have left this earth years ago.

In the second year of her marriage she survived the typhoid fever that took several other members of the Stewart family. The fever caused her first child, Lib, to be born three months premature, so small that she could fit in the palm of a grown adult's hand and sleep on a pillow.

Doctors and others who diagnosed and observed her condition couldn't measure the faith inside her. That seed was planted by an old grandfather, Ephraim Jackson, who raised Letha Bell and her younger sister Alma (Sellers) on practically nothing. Their mother had died when they were six and three years old, respectively, and their young father, though a godly man himself, was not mature enough to raise two young girls on his own. When he remarried the girls were getting bigger and they looked upon their grandpa as their father, so they stayed with him.

They never had much money. But they had a lot of faith and love, and that's priceless. Everybody called Mr. Jackson Eaf (rhymes with leaf). He died just a few weeks after I was born on May 6, 1946. They say he was hanging on till I was born.

In those days, momma often said, doctors advised women not to take a newborn outside for at least a month. "If I'd known then what I know now I'd have taken you for him to see," she said.

Frail? No.

I learned as a young lad that my momma, though she never weighed more than 135 pounds, was tough. She kept a big Hickory switch on the back porch to prove it and if a spanking was needed before she could make it to the back porch she could apply a pretty stout open right hand to your backside.

Despite what others, particularly my sister Linda, tell you I didn't have to be punished often. But I was always the type that when I erred it was in a big way!

Tough? You bet.

Momma never worked at a regular job, but I don't know of any profession more noble than raising a family. That, which included strong spiritual guidance, was her role.

On the farm, part of that included a lot of hard work in the fields. I was the youngest of five children and farming was on its way out by the time

I got big enough to do any real work.

But I got my love of gardening from momma. I still know that you "plant taters with the eyes up." I also know that even in times of drought you keep on plowing and hoeing. "You do your part, and when the Good Lord's ready He'll do His," she said. That was a quote handed down from Eaf Jackson, and as I matured I realized it doesn't just apply to farming.

Frail?

The last ten years of momma's life were tough. In July 1991 a dedicated doctor, Scott Mayse, and some specialists in Charlotte discovered that her arteries were severely clogged. One was clogged right at the wall of the heart and there was no way to bypass it. They said at her age, 75, and her frail condition, she would never survive surgery.

Take her home, they told us. If she lives til Christmas it will be a miracle.

She lived not only til that Christmas, but nine more. Most of them were good, but she survived some more tough times including the death of a great-granddaughter, Kayla Newton; a granddaughter, Kathy Brown; and a son, Herman "Buck Stewart." We were sure that would kill her.

By that 10th Christmas, though, we could see it would be her last one here. Instead of the usual routine of everyone coming to my house, we had to go to her's because even getting one foot in front of the other without assistance was becoming very difficult for her.

"Lord, help me."

In my older years I've come to know more fully what the writer in Ecclesiastes was talking about when he advised us to remember Our Creator in the days of our youth.

That's not just about coming to Christ at an early age. If we're blessed enough to live a long life there may come a time when the silver cord will break and if memory is not completely gone it certainly won't be what it used to be.

Ten years earlier when those doctors diagnosed congestive heart failure and told us to take her home, they said one day she might just be sitting in a chair and stop breathing.

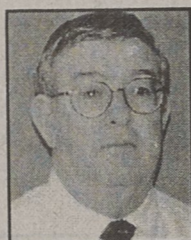
The last several weeks were tough. Yes, the body was frail outside. Maybe inside too. Breathing, even with oxygen, was a harder task than any she'd ever experienced on the farm.

"Lord, help me. Lord, help me," she said over and over. The memory was almost gone, but deep down inside she knew the Lord was the only One that could help.

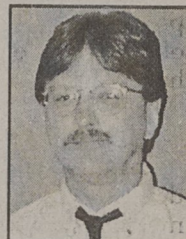
She fell out of bed two days in a row. On the second day, Thursday, March 22, when my wife and I went over to her house at 5 a.m. to help Lib put her back in bed, she said, "I'm just going to leave this old world."

About six hours later, the Lord granted that persistent plea for help.

The greatest miracle - eternal healing - happened.



Gary Stewart



Alan Hodge

Staff Writer

Ray Hicks lives like a prince on next to nothing

The other night I saw a man on TV that had his act together literally and figuratively.

The story was a documentary film about a guy named Ray Hicks who lived on the side of Beech Mountain with his wife. Now, that might not sound too unusual until you examine the lifestyle the Hicks family enjoys.

The house that Ray lives in has neither electricity or running water. Heating in the winter time is provided by chopped wood. Water for washing and cooking has to be carried from a creek. The majority of the Hicks' food comes from vegetables they have grown and canned or that they eat fresh out of a little garden.

For clothes, Ray favors bib overalls and an old slouch hat. At the time the film was made a few years ago, he was getting up in years and trekked the hillsides with the aid of a cane. Taking a movie crew along, Hicks could name every plant in the fields and woods and tell what use they could be put to.

Besides his knowledge of what it takes to get along in the hills, Ray is also a genius at storytelling. His sing-song renditions of "Jack tales" have endeared him to thousands of folk fans at festivals all over the mountains.

The thing that impressed me most about Ray Hicks and his wife from watching the PBS special was their utter lack of pretense or "airs." They were as open and honest in their way of life, and as simple and yet profound in everything they said and did as to be on a plane of existence equal to what the Romantic poets worshipped as the "natural man."

This past week I envied Ray Hicks. Like everyone else, I had to start 10-digit dialing. Sunday afternoon while trying to have some peace I was aggravated by a telemarketer. My car got hit in a parking lot and had to be taken to the body shop, my computers both at work and at home acted up. Surely you can add these and other irksome occurrences to your own list.

In my opinion, Ray Hicks and those like him such as the Amish people who live close to the land and are not encumbered with "stuff" know true freedom. Though practicality and obligation prevent me and most other folks from taking the plunge to live a lifestyle of this nature, it's still nice to see someone who is content to live the simple life of our forefathers.

Way we were in 1961

Herald headline news for March 30, 1961 announced that the town of Grover was planning a \$125,000 water bond election. The system was supposed to upgrade Grover's facilities and included a 100,000 gallon storage tank. Other front page news for that issue of the Herald included word that Foote Mineral Co. was getting set to give their workers a five cents an hour raise. The raises boosted Foote's annual payroll to \$400,000.

Martin Harmon's column in the March 30, 1961 Herald had several interesting tidbits and thoughts. With the 100th anniversary of the Civil War at hand, Harmon told of the 28th North Carolina Regiment and specifically about Co. B "The Gaston Invincibles." According to Harmon, there were several Cleveland County lads in the group including Pvt. John Blalock who lost an arm, Cpl. John Falls wounded at Chancellorsville, and Cpl. Frank Thompson said to be "too thin for the Yankees to hit."

Society news in the March 30, 1961 Herald as reported by editor Lib Stewart featured a piano recital by students of Mrs. L.E. Hinnant. The concert was performed at West School by talents that included Judy Barham, Helen Goforth, Debbie Timms, and Brenda Garmon. Other social activities included installation of Mrs. Addie Bridges as Worthy Matron of the Eastern Star and Boyce Memorial ARP's annual egg hunt.

Sports writer Neale Patrick had several interesting stories in his section of the March 30, 1961 Herald. One feature revolved around Jake Early and his attempt to organize a local softball league. Another story took a look at the upcoming baseball brawl between Kings Mountain and Cherryville. Getting praise from Patrick was John Gamble and his pioneering work in getting a junior high conference established within the scope of the Southwest Conference.

The Easter fashion parade brought out a spate of ads in the March 1961 Herald. For m'lady, shoes at Plonk Bros. were in the latest styles and priced as low as \$2.99 a pair. For the crowning glory, McGinnis had hats ranging in price from \$1.98 to \$5.98. Gents could be outfitted at Page's Men's Store with suits starting at \$39.95. Rounding out the Easter offerings were candy-filled baskets from Rose's at \$3.98.



SIDEWALK SURVEY

By ALAN HODGE
Kings Mountain Herald

What do you think is the most dangerous highway in the Kings Mountain area?



A very dangerous place is the intersection of Highway 216 and St. Luke's Church Road.

Michelle Leigh
Cleveland County



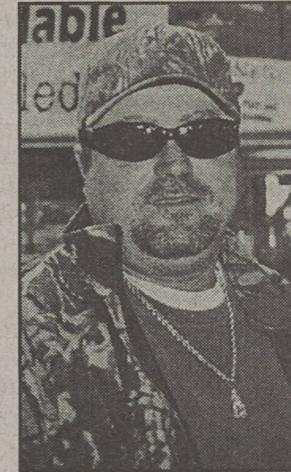
I think Highway 216 is dangerous. People fly on that road.

Kevin Bennett
Cherryville



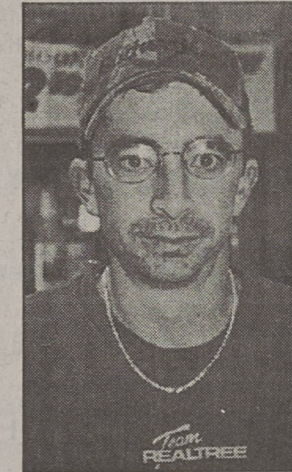
People go pretty fast on Highway 216.

Keith Robinson
Kings Mountain



Any road around here is dangerous - especially Highway 216.

Jeff Moss
Kings Mountain



Highway 74 Business where it comes off of I-85 is dangerous because the speed limit has been lowered recently.

Chip Hambricht
Kings Mountain