

## YOUR CALL

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129 Candlewood Dr.  
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482-2747

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739-7078

Charlie Harry  
P.O. Box 79  
Grover, NC 28073  
937-7434

Mary S. Accor  
944 Dixon School Road  
Kings Mountain, NC 28086  
937-7508

### Cleveland Co. Sheriff:

Dan Crawford  
Cleveland County Courthouse  
100 Justice Place  
Shelby, NC 28150  
484-4817

### Clerk of Superior Court:

Linda B. Thrift  
Cleveland County Courthouse  
100 Justice Place  
Shelby, NC 28150  
484-4852

### Register of Deeds:

Bonnie Reece  
Cleveland Co. Administrative Bldg.  
311 E. Marion St.  
Shelby, NC 28150  
484-4834

### County Coroner:

Ralph Mitchem  
708 N. Washington St.  
Shelby, NC 28150  
482-1938

### Kings Mountain City Council:

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402 Garrison Dr.  
Kings Mountain, NC 28086  
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739-3704

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739-2480

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739-2184

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Howard B. Shipp  
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### State of North Carolina:

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Cleveland County office:  
Chamber Building  
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Sue Myrick, Representative  
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### Members of the Kings Mountain Board of Adjustment:

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## YOUR OPINION

### Ad Litem program protects area children

#### To the Editor:

Every year in Cleveland County hundreds of children are abused and neglected by their parents and as a result end up in foster care without a home to call their own. In May 2001, the North Carolina Child Advocacy Institute Report compared the well being of our state's children by county and found, while the national abuse and neglect rates fell in the past decade, North Carolina's rate rose. The report specifically identified Alexander, Catawba, Gaston, Iredell, Cleveland, and Lincoln County as a "concern" because the child abuse and/or child death rates are above average and rising in comparison to the rest of the state.

This is heartbreaking and should be shocking information. These facts are not merely statistics...they are our children! Fortunately, the Guardian Ad Litem Program cares and wants to make a difference in the life of an abused or neglected child.

The Guardian Ad Litem Program recruits and trains concerned community citizens to speak for the best interests of children who have been removed from their abusive and neglectful homes. The fate of these children is decided by a Juvenile Court Judge. As the child's volunteer advocate, the Guardian Ad Litem makes sure that the child's needs are addressed in the court hearings so that every child can grow up in a safe, permanent home.

Currently in Cleveland County the situation is critical with more than 184 children in foster care and only 24 Guardian Ad Litem volunteers. Every child deserves an advocate, a Guardian Ad Litem volunteer, to be its voice in court. With your help, we will be able to ensure these youngsters are in safe, loving and permanent homes.

I'm asking that you promote the Guardian Ad Litem Program and encourage your readers to learn more about becoming a volunteer. The Cleveland County program has additional material, including PSAs. Joanne Cranke, the program's

District Administrator, will be contacting you within the next few weeks to share that information with you.

Once the readers of Kings Mountain Herald know about the impact, the difference, they could make in the life of an abused or neglected child, they can change those statistics for Gaston County from a concern to a celebration. Together we can give every child the chance to look forward to a positive future.

Thank you for your time and your cooperation. The local

GAL office will contact you soon.

Jean B. Harwell  
Guardian Ad Litem Volunteer  
Recruiter

### Questions still remain on the new playground

#### To the citizens of Kings Mountain

In the past I would never imagine myself writing a letter to the paper, but this issue has raised some thoughts I think need to be expressed. I don't think the citizens of Kings Mountain have been informed of the plans to dismantle the softball/baseball field named Jake Early Field. There is a plan to remove the existing fencing and lighting to provide room for a playground for children. The plans also call for a gazebo and new Tee Ball field. On the surface this sounds like a great idea, but let's look at it under the surface.

1. The field could be updated and utilized not only by adults but any age league the YMCA oversees.
2. Parking is already a problem at the YMCA during the summer months, where are we going to put the extra vehicles.
3. Will the gazebo be another place for after hours activity such as drinking and maybe drugs. This next to a children's playground.
4. Where is the money coming from? Private donations? If people haven't noticed, the economy in this area has slowed to the point where business can't stand another handout.

With this project scheduled to be constructed in September, it seems to me the City will have to pay for equipment cost and hope volunteers show up to build structure. First cost estimates are over \$100,000.00.

I don't have an answer for the money situation but I do have an idea for relocation of the site. If the playground becomes reality, build it at the walking track. There is a small playground already there along with ample parking for everyone who uses the track. Lighting is already in place so the only security measures would be a fence if it is desired. Also with the many activities already using the grassy area of the track a gazebo could be used as a staging area for large groups or activities such as The Relay For Life Cancer fund raiser.

In closing let me say, "Let's congratulate the YMCA on their use of the building and inside facilities but don't be so eager to dismiss the use of this field because of the lack of leadership in forming new adult leagues or the lack of interest in using the facilities already on hand."

James N. Childers (Chip)  
Kings Mountain



**NEW BOOK - Above, Diane Johnson shows off her new book, 'Faith Through Life's Struggles.' Johnson got the inspiration for the publication after recording in a journal her personal experience of dealing with her late husband's battle with cancer.**

## Johnson hopes book can help people through life's struggles

By TODD HAGANS  
Special to The Herald

Diane Johnson can now add the title of author to her many career-oriented endeavors. Johnson, who currently serves as director of the Bessemer City chamber of commerce, recently published the book titled, 'Faith Through Life's Struggles,' that tells of her personal struggles and how faith in God got her through life's tough times. The book stems from a journal she kept while her late husband battled cancer. "When my husband had cancer in the last three or four months, I wrote everything down," said Johnson, who said she had no reason to record that time in her life on paper.

About a year after his death, Johnson said she picked up the journal, began reading and later realized that the pages showed the hurt and grief experienced by her and her family and how their faith helped them cope with death.

Johnson said it seemed almost logical to share experiences recorded in the journal with others who may face similar circumstances.

"I said, 'If I can take this journal and have some good come from it, I know it will be worthwhile,'" said Johnson. "I wish I could afford to give a copy to people who are going through a struggle."

Johnson said her late husband's ordeal with cancer and eventual death often caused her to ask why bad things happen to good people. Living in Myrtle Beach at the time, the former television personality said her life seemed perfect, then she got the news of her husband's cancer.

"He had never been sick a day in his life," she said. "Within two years, he went from being a

healthy person to being buried." The loss left grief-stricken Johnson feeling empty and alone.

"After the loss, I was just devastated," she said.

Then, Johnson said, she turned to God.

"As long as we live on this earth, we are going to have bad things happen to us," said Johnson. "The only way we are going to survive those things is to have a strong faith in God. That's the only way I survived it."

In addition to her personal stories, the book also includes testimony of others who held close to their faith in times of desperation.

She mentions a local woman who lost her husband to a heart attack and two children to swimming and automobile accidents all within only a few years.

"The only way that lady survived is with God's help," said Johnson. "She turned to God."

In addition to publishing the book, Johnson recently started 'Ministries of Faith' and will host the program, 'A Night of Song and Inspiration,' on June 29 at the Lincoln Citizens Center in Lincolnton.

The 7 p.m. event will feature testimony and song from Johnson, the Melody Masters, Leslie Faith Hips, the Rick Webb Trio and Tracy and Kevin Bolin.

Tickets are \$10 and can be purchased by contacting Johnson at (704) 869-0955.

Johnson, who plans to do both her chamber and ministry work, said the book and her ministry is one way she can share how God changed her life.

"God has been so good to me," she said. "I feel if I'm giving my time adequately for God, He provides the time for everything else."

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