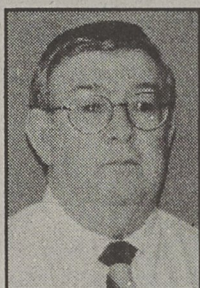


Tax-Hike Mike loves his chopper

Isn't it amazing how in tough economic times politicians still find the money they need for their own personal gain?



Gary Stewart
Editor

In a year that has been billed as a State budget facing a \$1.5 to \$2 billion shortfall, Governor Mike Easley has misused the governor's office's helicopter to the tune of about \$20,000.

It was recently disclosed that Easley has made frequent trips to his home in Southport at taxpayer expense - more than \$2,000 every time he uses the helicopter for the trip.

Of course, now that it's public, the governor says he will reimburse the State.

The governor should not only reimburse the State, he should be criminally charged with unauthorized use of government property and levied an enormous fine. Get about a half-million out of him to help ease that budget shortfall.

All the while Easley has been flying home - well, really, ever since he's been in office - he has been whining about budget shortfalls and the need to raise taxes. He is fast becoming known as "Tax-Hike Mike" and before he's through will become more notorious than Terry Sanford for his taxing philosophy.

For the past two years, the governor has held onto intangibles taxes collected on behalf of cities while pushing through tax increases at both the State and local levels. If he can't get everything he wants from the State level he urges legislation to allow county commissioners to increase sales tax by a half-cent.

In fact, as this is being written a bill to allow local governments to have another half-cent sales tax was being sent to the State Senate. Then, it will be on to the House, and then right to your pocketbook.

We need to make Tax-Hike Mike a one-term governor and let him have one last trip to Southport.

MADE IN THE SHADE



GARY STEWART / THE HERALD

Former City Commissioner Jerry Mullinax, left, and current Commissioner Jim Guyton were having a deep conversation in the cool shade of a tree at the Kings Mountain Walking Track during Friday night's Joseph R. Smith Relay for Life.

County schools' new dress code is reasonable



Ben Ledbetter
Staff Writer

While dress codes have been discussed in Kings Mountain, drastic action was taken during the last Cleveland County Board of Education meeting.

For the next school year, the district restricted such things as short skirts, see-through shirts and clothing that promotes alcohol and drugs.

One board member said the policy is similar to the workplace and he's right.

I don't know many employers that would allow someone to work in baggy jeans, regardless of whether they work at a desk or get their hands dirty.

Imagine if a dentist or lawyer wore a shirt with their favorite racing team or a skirt that didn't end at the knees, business might suffer for the day.

Even a lot of outside workers wear a uniform or similar blank shirts.

Although the dress code seems reasonable, it brings up another issue.

Should the school board mandate what students wear to school?

To a degree, no, but most of the things discussed during the last Cleveland County Schools meeting were also found in music videos, where the performers are only one segment of the population.

Hopefully more restrictive revisions, such as uniforms, will not make it to the agenda of the county or other area school boards.

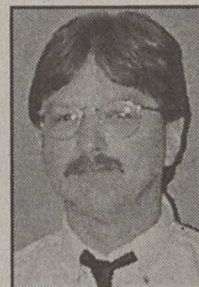
The new code still does allow for some freedom of expression, but if not watched carefully more restrictive measures could be implemented.

Other notes from the previous week:

- Carolina has made the finals, unfortunately for the Tar Heel faithful, it's the NHL's Hurricanes - not the college basketball team. While the state's professional teams have had a mostly bad year with the Hornets leaving on a jet plane and the Panthers winning only one game, the Hurricanes made the Stanley Cup Playoffs - the finals for a sport that's second to basketball.
- It looks like the elections will go on. A judge's map of legislative districts will stand until after the elections. It's about time we have them and get on with political life in

See Ben, 6A

Some folks should leave their shoes on



Alan Hodge
Guest Column

Hot weather is here and many folks are eschewing their shoes. Some taste better than others.

Walking around barefoot is an act as old as humanity. Not many babies are born wearing brogans. Cave folk, natives, hill folk and others are renowned for being barefoot most of the time. A book I once read that contained the memoirs of a Reb soldier from South Carolina named Berry Benson gave his description of the proudest thing he ever saw - a youthful Southern infantryman standing in the snow, outlined against a split rail fence with his musket-barefoot.

There is a time and a place for going barefoot. I recall the days of yore when many roads in this area were dirt with oil spread on top to keep the dust down. Walking those roads barefoot in summer, not only did the rich aroma of hot petroleum fill the nostrils, the same black goo also coated the bottom of your feet like Japalac paint.

Feet and toes are interesting things to ponder. Nearly everyone has watched a tot stare at its toes in unbridled fascination. I used to be acquainted with some hippies that did the same thing. Some folks find the feet and toes a suitable subject for attention when they are in the mood for some lovin'. Not everyone is so included. I once saw a TV comedian declare that even if his girlfriend put BBQ sauce on her feet, he wasn't going there.

As a keen observer of people, I have been getting an eye-full of feet lately. I saw a man in a certain North Belmont food store that was wearing sandals and bless Pat if his toenails didn't look as if they could groove concrete. By the way, there actually is a machine that grooves concrete on airport runways and such. Maybe he could just let himself be pulled along behind a pickup truck and do the job and make some good money too.

Another set of "diggers" that caught my eye the other day looked like pieces of oyster shell stuck on top of some sausage-like toes. These nails had obviously had the misfortune of having something heavy dropped from a

See Alan, 6A

SIDEWALK SURVEY

BY BEN LEDBETTER
THE HERALD

How far should school systems go to enforce dress policies?

Got a question you'd like to submit to Sidewalk Survey? Send your question by mail to us here at The Herald. If we use your question, we'll give you the credit.



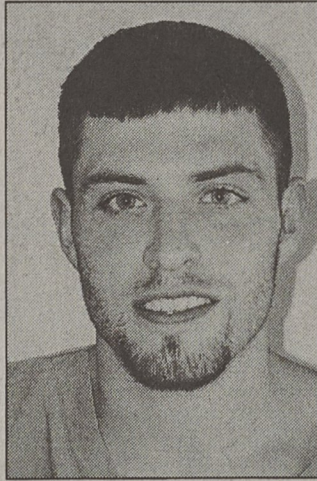
I think it would be good to have a dress code.

Ann Carroll,
Kings Mountain



I think that they need to tighten up around here. I think they should go toward a basic dress uniform.

Marcia Greene,
Kings Mountain



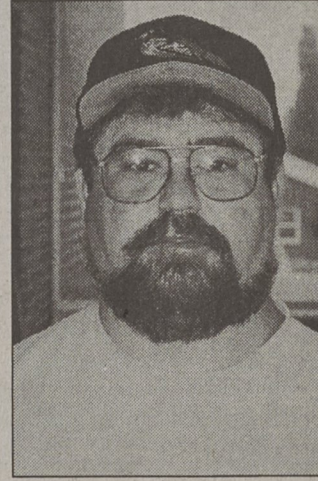
Not as far as they were in that paper.

Mike Dickson,
Kings Mountain



I do believe there should be a dress code.

Betty Jenkins,
Kings Mountain



Yeah they should push it a little bit.

Ronnie Moss,
Kings Mountain

YOUR VIEW

Apartment complex is subsidized

To the editor:

I'm writing this letter in response to the article you wrote on May 9, 2002 in the Herald referring to the new apartment complex being built on Kings Mountain Boulevard across from the new intermediate school. You stated that Mr. Egan of Egan Construction stated that the complex was not going to be low income or subsidized in anyway. According to a statement at the City Council meeting held on March 26, 2002, Mr. Egan stated that he will receive a grant from the government of more than \$425,000. If there are not stipulations attached why would he receive this type of grant to build these apartments?

The guidelines for the apartments fall under Rural Development 515 (F) Tax Credit Program requirements operating under Section 42 of the Internal Revenue Code. The guidelines state that a person renting the apartments must have a gross annual income of less than 60 percent of the median income, adjusted for family size, as published annually by the US Department of Housing and Urban Development. To remain eligible to rent, the family's adjusted annual income may not exceed the maximum income limit as defined by the USDA Rural Development. The guidelines also state that eligible applicants will be selected on a first come first serve basis with priority given according to income level. People with the very lowest income are given first choice, people with low income are given second choice and people with a moderate income are given last choice.

I ask you, how can Mr. Egan say these will not be low-income apartments or subsidized in some way? It looks like Mr. Egan is not telling the truth according to the guidelines published by the government.

This project will affect the safety of our children attending the new intermediate school and cause vandalism at our new schools along with traffic problems. Our mayor and City Council of Kings Mountain do not represent the public view with their vote to rezone so this project could be built. They were pre-

See Letter, 5A