

City Council should require petition drive on term length

Next week, politicians - or public servants if you will - will be coming out of the woodwork.



Gary Stewart
Editor

Filing for city council and school board seats begins next Monday for the November elections. There are six council and the mayor's seat, and two inside city school board seats available.

What the issues will be is unclear at this point, but you can bet they'll surface pretty soon.

In Kings Mountain's council race, one item of discussion may be a four-versus two-year term of office.

City Council last week held a public hearing to receive citizen input on the idea of changing the term to four years, which appears to have the blessing of most members of council. Only two citizens showed up to speak - both of them against - and that may indicate that most citizens don't really care.

Don't be surprised if council calls for a referendum on the matter. By law, the change in term lengths must be voted on by the citizens. But council should not call for a referendum, and here's why:

Kings Mountain changed from a four- to two-year term just eight years ago after retired city planner (and current councilman) Gene White circulated a petition and got the necessary names to require that the matter be placed before the voters.

White lobbied for two-year terms because there was turmoil in the city at the time caused partly because of tough economic times and perhaps aided by inexperienced city managers who may not have adequately addressed some personnel problems and council requests in a timely fashion.

White secured a whole lot more than the 10% of registered voter signatures required to call a referendum, and it passed by 115 votes (485-340) with only 18% of the city's 4,500 registered voters participating.

Now some council members are saying that two years is not long enough to learn the job, and that four-year staggered terms would provide continuity and

See Gary, 5A

THRILL OF A LIFETIME



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Billie Hicklin, right, of Kings Mountain recently sang with country music legend Billy Walker on the stage of the Grand Ole Opry.

Oh, if I could create a garden like Stowes'



Andie Brymer
Staff Writer

After two straight weeks of heat, Saturday's overcast day was perfect for a long awaited trip to Daniel Stowe Botanical Garden.

Having been raised in a farm family, it only makes sense the Belmont garden would appeal to me. I grew up hearing about trees, frost, fertilizers and harvests. When my father wasn't working in the apple orchard, he was busy in his vegetable garden or helping my mother in the yard.

Almost before my husband and I could make it out of the parking lot, a cardoon plant caught my eye. I had heard about the plant from volunteers at the Schiele Museum's Backcountry Farm but had never seen the actual bloom. Standing head high, the thistle top sported a fluorescent blue bloom. Nearby, basil plants stood knee high. I was tempted to steal a few leaves to perk up dinner.

Once inside the gardens, I was ready to wander. Seeing the lacy, white flowers on Queen's Anne Lace was a welcome sight. I know some folks consider it a weed, but I never have. At home, I recently dug a few up that were growing near the edge of the woods and transplanted them around the mailbox.

There must be thousands of varieties of plants growing at Stowe but only a small fraction have name tags. I was particularly glad clematis was identified. A few weeks ago, I dug some of out of my mother-in-law's yard.

We joked about the plant with its five, fan style leaves looking like another plant that can get one in a heap of trouble. I felt a little uneasy when I set them out in my yard, fearing a neighbor would suspect I was growing contraband. Seeing the clematis, already in bloom, at Stowe reassured me we had not misidentified the plant.

I can remember years ago my father hanging yellow and green traps for Japanese beetles near his grape vines. At a tender age, I learned the flying bug was to be destroyed. When I saw the pests making a rose vine into their own buffet, I could not contain myself. Despite thorns, I plucked the bugs off the leaves and squashed them.

My husband, evidently not raised to hate the beetle, complained about my killing spree. Defending the

See Andie, 5A

Don't throw anything away, it may be useful



Jim Heffner
Guest Column

I'm one of those people who cannot throw anything away that might be useful. I'm not talking about old clothes, tools or other non-descript items. I mean anything.

One gallon plastic milk jugs, for example. I've found so many uses for those things you wouldn't believe it.

They make good bird feeders, if you cut the sides out and leave the bottom to hold seeds. Of course you have to take measures to make sure those thieving squirrels can't get to the seeds.

If you have small children, you can make scoops for playing in the sand box, and if you're creative enough, some toys can be fashioned from the empty containers. In an old country store in the mountains I once saw a mobile some budding artist had created using the jugs. He had painted beautiful mountain scenes on the sides, and the piece was hanging from the ceiling. It was impressive.

You could take a vacation on the money you'd save by dropping all your spare change each day into an empty milk jug.

I use several to mix liquid fertilizer, but I haven't come up with anything out of the ordinary for them lately. I will, though.

All those plastic containers have other uses. I use peanut butter jars to store different sizes of nails, screws, washers, nuts and bolts.

The Japanese reuse plastic soft drink bottles and jars in many different ways. An enterprising firm in Okinawa, packs roasted peanuts in them for resale.

The peanut butter jars are also good for storing odds and ends such as buttons and small items which tend to accumulate in cabinets and drawers.

I would say, youngsters can keep their marbles in them, but I think I'm going back too far. I haven't seen a sack of marbles in years, and if they could be found they would probably be accompanied by a squad of do-gooders yelling about the danger of swallowing one of them. I wish there was a plastic bottle big enough to store some of

See Jim, 5A

SIDEWALK SURVEY

BY ANDIE L. BRYMER
THE HERALD

What does the July 4 holiday mean to you?



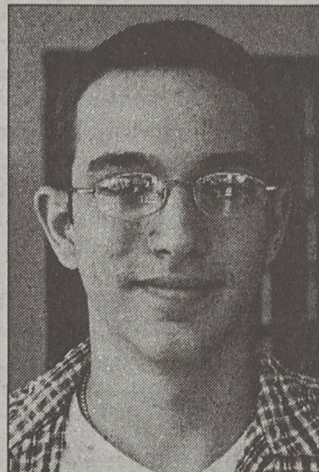
"A time of celebration of the independence of our country, family, friends."

Jeff Hargrove
Kings Mountain



"Freedom, getting together with family."

Jennifer Dockery
Kings Mountain



"It's a big part of our nation's history, makes me proud to be an American."

Jon Wheeler
Kings Mountain



"It reminds me how lucky I am to live in a free country."

Meagan Noell
Kings Mountain



"Liberation, that's what it means to me."

Regina Sellars
Kings Mountain