

OPINION

From 1A

inclusive, think about it. One squad year round gives about 18 girls an opportunity whereas two squads open up the possibility of some other girls getting a chance. The cheerleaders do not have a fleet of buses at their disposal. They travel on the mini bus during football and with the basketball teams during that season. Also, consider the availability of cheerleading uniforms. The school only has enough for a limited squad. Sure there may be one or two girls that didn't make the squad of their choice, but they did have the opportunity to specify and work to make the squad of choice.

I'm sorry if someone's daughter didn't make it because a freshman took the slot. You need to look at the level of coaches we have at the middle school up to varsity. These girls are getting excellent training at middle school due to Pat Regan putting in extra time and bringing in varsity girls to help train them. When they get to high school, they are ready. My daughter was good enough as a freshman to cheer varsity but at that time it wasn't allowed. I see nothing wrong with that change; you wouldn't hold back an outstanding football player because he was a freshman. Crest sure didn't when they used a freshman quarterback to finish their season. You can't hold someone back if they deserve a chance.

As for the competition squad, that team is based strictly on talent, grades and their willingness to put in extra time. When you put a squad like that together you want the best you can get. If you don't believe it come with us to the state cheerleading competition in Winston-Salem.

And yes, believe it or not, they had a choice of where to try out. Maybe you should look at this year's Homecoming Queen, Tiffany Williams. She is a fine young lady and an excellent cheerleader. She could have been on any squad she wanted but chose basketball and competition. Believe me, it had nothing to do with racism or favoritism. She is one of the best and one of my daughter's closest friends on the squad.

The racism card needs to quit being used, especially where this group is concerned. If you spend any time around these girls at all you will see that they are concerned about each other's well being. When one of them was hurt at practice last year and had to be taken to the ER, there was a group of girls that waited at that hospital until she came around and was ok. Notice I said a group of girls, not black or white but a group of girls concerned about their friend and the group was mixed. Anytime you put a group of ladies together, there are going to be differences but it's not racial all the time. They're just girls. So if one parent wants to cry because their daughter didn't make a particular squad, find something besides the racism card. That's bull.

These girls spent a week preparing for tryouts and when the time came, they were judged by people they didn't know and that didn't know them. They were identified by number, not name, so none of the judges knew whose girl was whose. How can that be unfair? Everybody wants to be a part of something and this is no different. Unfortunately, sometimes we get beat by someone better than we are or someone with more talent. That just means you have to try harder or find something you are better at than someone else.

Another issue you have to consider is these girls' academic and behavioral records at school, and the image they uphold. A student that gets sent to the alternative room or is in trouble at school may not deserve a spot on the squad. These girls are all fine upstanding young ladies who do well in school. Coach Bell will bench and, if necessary dismiss any one of her girls that does not meet standards both grade wise and conduct wise. Attend the sporting events (not just homecoming) and get to know the students or take part in some of their activities and find out what makes them tick.

You mentioned that you couldn't get answers to your questions. Maybe some of your questions were so unfounded they didn't deserve answers. I have never had a problem getting an answer to one of my questions at KM District Schools. I may not have liked the answer, but I got one so I don't feel that Mr. Yarbrow or Ms. Bell owe anyone any apologies. Coach Bell has put in untold hours over the last three years working with these squads.

In closing I would like to address everyone who attends sporting events and school activities. I am as guilty as anyone when it comes to expressing opinions about our various sports programs. There have been some things that have gone on with our football team behind the scenes and I for one would like to express my pride in the way these players handled these situations. We all seem to get in the stands and be armchair coaches (me included). Let's all try to remember that our athletes are school students, not professional athletes, and they want to win every game more than we do. It doesn't matter what sport it is and I won't go on to list them all because I would probably leave one out. We have good kids in Kings Mountain. After all that's what this merger fight has been about. When I was substitute teaching on a regular basis, I saw a sign in the Bethware School gym. It said "If you had fun, you won." Let's not take the fun out of it for our teams. Let's make sure all our kids are winners.

Mark Blanton
Kings Mountain

LETTERS

Citizens calls for clean house

This article is in reference to our Kings Mountain mayor and City Council. It never ceases to amaze me at the gall our present mayor and City Councilmen have toward the citizens of Kings Mountain. They all undoubtedly feel that we as citizens are dumb and do not understand anything.

Our mayor, Rick Murphrey, called my house last Saturday and asked me to vote for him. He also asked if our neighborhood would meet with our council representative Dean Spears on matters we needed to address.

The gall of Mr. Murphrey to request this after our whole City Council, with the exception of Gene White, voted against the citizens who requested that the low income apartments not be built across from the new Intermediate School. Mr. Murphrey said on the phone that the apartments were not a done deal, because water and sewer lines had not been approved. It has been stated in the newspaper that construction is to start in the fall.

Mr. Spears, who is our council representative, also voted against his district with a petition of 248 names on it and a whole council room full of people opposing this apartment complex.

I personally called Mr. Rick Moore on the day the city council was to vote on the apartment complex but he voted against our wishes.

All of our city council members were for the people until they were elected to office and then after they are in office our voices do not count and are not heard.

Also, about the water situation in the Country Club, ask yourself, did the council listen to public opinion? Mr. Murphrey said this decision was for economic reasons. Let me ask Mr. Murphrey this: Just how much added revenue did this water discount add to our economy in Kings Mountain? We the other citizens paid for this with increased water rates.

We need to vote out all present council members and write in a candidate such as Gene White for mayor. We need representatives that listen to the citizens who voted them into office, not ignore our opinions until it is time for reelection.

We need to elect a whole new group of leaders for our city.

Eddie Payne
Kings Mountain

Citizen unhappy with Sunday sales

An element has invaded KM elected officials, some department heads and downtown business owners who have no concern or respect for local community traditions or church community. This was apparent at the Gateway Antique and Art Festival when a downtown event was scheduled at the same time as the local homecoming football game. The game was booked for

over a year. Any person who's native to KM knows this is the largest community school event that takes place each year and where all of the family is involved: parents, children and grandparents. Where old friends that attended local schools meet.

I was glad to see that the KM paper did an article on the downtown event being scheduled on the same Friday night as the homecoming game. The KM public relations director, who scheduled the event, showed no concern for local tradition and knew nothing of community pride or school events or didn't bother to check.

The Public Relations Dept. was formed in 2001 and the director hired by the currently elected administration at the urging of downtown people who are pushing for liquor by the drink to help make KM a tourist attraction. The director has used several hundred thousand dollars of city money hiring bands and supposedly promoting KM. The director receives a salary of \$47,127 a year. He was hired by the former city manager. Was the job created for him? The city will not release his educational and work qualifications.

The department and director should be cut from the city budget. All this city money has disappeared with the only tangible thing to show for it is the director's \$5,000 video camera and new office furniture. A detailed article by local reporter showed the public no other town in the area (all larger than KM) has a Public Relations Director. Why do we need one? The PR department is a rip off to KM taxpayers.

The event Saturday night drew few people to the gazebo for the musical event. By 9:30 pm. the area was almost empty with only a few city employees and the people in the band around. Sunday morning during church services was when the real blight appeared on KM. The antique stores, Business Association Office and vendors were open for business. At the last city council meeting, Councilman Guyton questioned the Public Relations Director about when did we start holding events on Sunday during church time. The Mayor, a professional salesman, quickly replied "Bluegrass gospel music and a service for vendors, people who come into town need a place to worship." Did the mayor forget there are Baptist and Methodist churches downtown, and a service is held in the Joy Performance Center. (Vendors were selling in front during their services). I was disappointed that no other council member spoke up to support Guyton when other council members say they are Christians and attend church.

Actions speak louder than words and this quote entered my mind: "Wolves in sheeps' clothing." No mention was made of stores and vendors being open for business during church services. Less than 10 people sat at the gazebo. The events that were cen-

tered around the museum on Saturday felt more community oriented. They brought some history of the area, local crafts for sale and 4th grade minuet was enjoyed by proud parents and all.

During the three day event the Public Relations Director openly drove a vehicle without a tag or insurance. Ignorance of the law is no excuse. If this man has a degree that qualifies him for his position, he should be aware that you don't drive an uninsured vehicle on city streets and state highways. This man is supposed to project as positive image of himself. He showed a disrespect for the law.

Sunday afternoon he was forced by law enforcement officers to park the vehicle but was not given a citation as other drivers would have received.

The church community should be alarmed that elected officials allowed the event to be open on Sunday morning, disrespecting the Christian community and using city funds to do so. The event on the lower side of the railroad track was all about making money. Selling antiques will do nothing to enrich the lives of the children in the community. Let the merchants pay for their own events, keep city funds out of it like the town of Shelby does.

KM has been a small oasis in an area surrounded by alcohol by the drink. When the church community kept alcohol by the drink out of downtown, that was one accomplishment the Christians of KM can be proud of. The new element to KM who support alcohol pretend they can get thousands of tourists into KM with alcohol by the drink. A Christian's duty is not only to just his family but to help the community. That includes being aware of what happens in the local government. It's a Christian's job to speak out against bad leadership and misuse of city funds for personal projects that don't benefit the whole community.

As a native resident I welcome all newcomers to KM but please don't come into town and try to take over, ignoring local people and their traditions. We Southerners seem to sit back and take the attitude that all will work out. Time is running out in KM for the Christian community. It's up to them to find out and stop the unsavory element in KM before it's too late. KM has a new city manager who seems to respect the views of the residents. Our elected officials have failed the Christian community. It's

time for a new beginning.

Jane Martin
Kings Mountain

Domestic violence affects many people

After reading some of the statements in the Kings Mountain Herald dated September 25, 2003 about domestic violence, I became very heavy hearted over some of the information that was shared with the public.


First of all, there was a statement which read, "Family violence is typically associated with lower income families." This statement is far from the truth. The fact is domestic violence is not typically associated with any type of income. Abusers can be lawyers, doctors, politicians, policemen, preachers, news casters, etc. Money has nothing to do with tempers flaring when associated with domestic violence. Abuse is a learned behavior. I have had so many to say that I've never experienced abuse in my family. Take time to review the types of television programs children are viewing today, and the activities taking place in the communities and schools. All of these are the foundation of learned behavior, I am reminded of the scripture: Bring up a child in the way it shall go, and it shall not depart.

The 911 system is a blessing to so many men, women and children who are in the midst of violence. It is true that not all abusers will change simply because they have been arrested, but it does mean that eyes are beginning to open to the fact that this behavior is not normal.

The information that was given by Detective Proctor needs to be updated. The private shelter for battered women has been closed since the end of May. They have combined the battered women's shelter with the homeless shelter. The same compassion for the women has not changed. They have excellent counseling to those who want it. Just a reminder to everyone that the homeless and abuse shelter is not funded by the state so please support them with prayers, works, and deeds.

If by chance you wonder who I am, I am one concerned voice. I have worked with domestic violence on a part-time basis for four years. I am a member of the board of APC (Abuse Prevention Council) and Coalition for the Homeless.

Sincerely,
Gerald C. Wray
Kings Mountain

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