

Make sure charities are legit

By ROY COOPER

As we gather with friends and family to give thanks for our good fortune during this holiday season, many of



us will feel inspired to help those who are less fortunate. Making a donation to charity can be an important part of celebrating the holidays and a way to contribute to our communities.

Unfortunately, some of the people who solicit us for charities may try to take advantage of our generosity. Some shameless scammers will even try to use the real victims of recent disasters, such as Hurricane Isabel or textile plant closings, to make their pleas for phony charities sound more plausible.

You may also be surprised to learn that, in many cases, much of the money that is collected goes to the telemarketers rather than to the non-profit organizations. On average, charities get only around 40 percent of the money that is collected on their behalf, according to the North Carolina Secretary of State's Office, which monitors charitable solicitations. Some solicitors keep even more of the money they raise, as much as 90 percent in some cases.

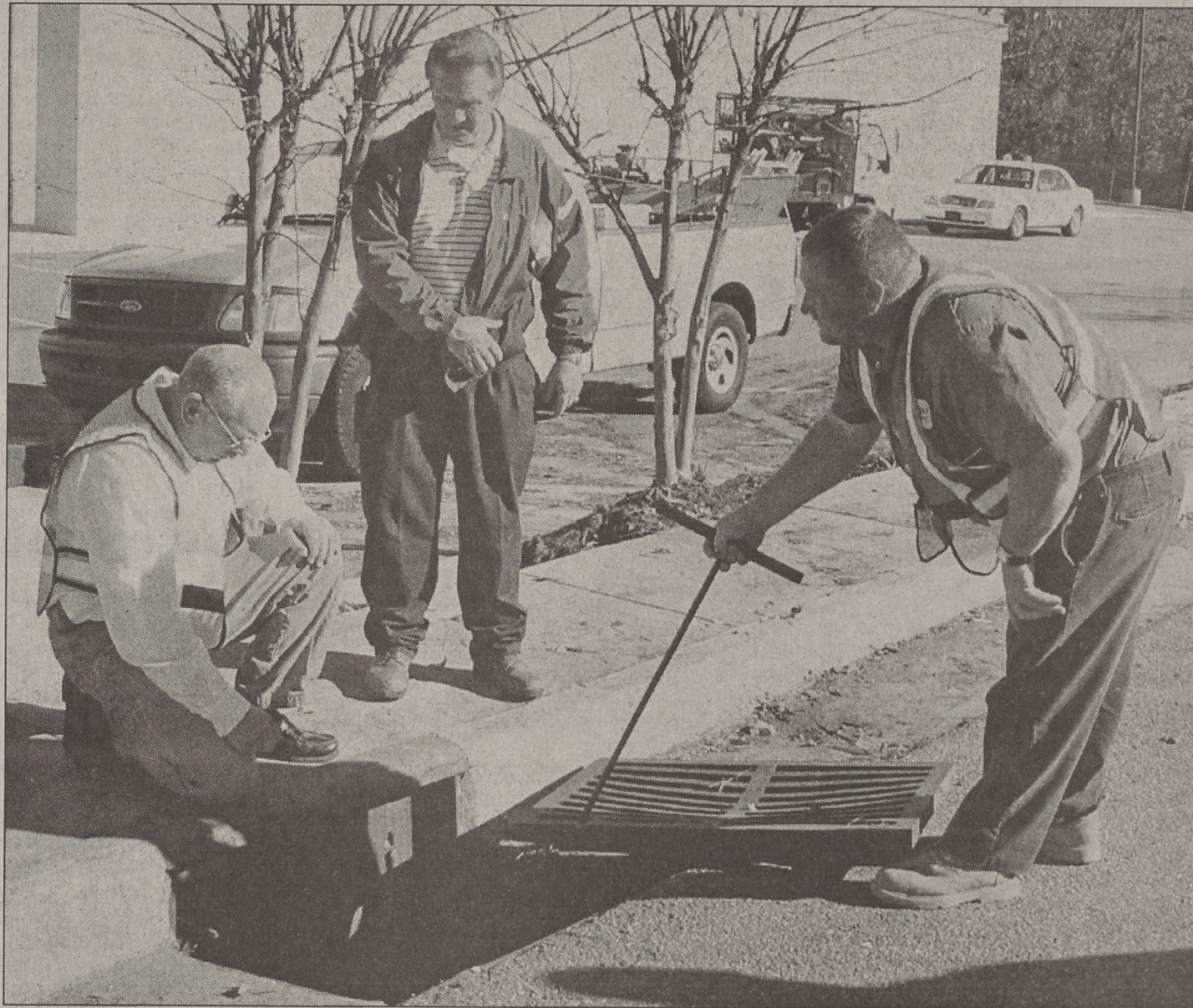
Before you decide to give to a particular charity, take the time to learn where your money will go and how it will help. Under North Carolina law, you have a right to ask what percentage of your donation will benefit the charity and the telemarketer has 14 days to provide you with that information in writing. To get more detailed financial information, you can call the Secretary of State's office toll-free at (888) 830-4989 or take a look at a charity's financial statement by visiting website www.guidestar.org. You can also find out whether nationally soliciting charities meet the standards set by the Better Business Bureau's Wise Giving Alliance by visiting website www.give.org.

Also, give some thought to these tips before you give to charity:

- "Don't call us, we'll call you." Rather than donating to a solicitor who calls you, protect yourself from possibly misleading telemarketers by researching charities and then contacting the organizations to which you want to contribute. For example, if you wish to support your local police, sheriff

See Cooper, 5A

WATER WOES



ANDIE BRYMER / HERALD
A sinkhole on King Street near the intersection with Cleveland Avenue at Eckerd Drug slowed traffic Friday morning. State crews put 45 tons of gravel beneath the asphalt roadway. Water apparently washed away dirt beneath the street. The state Department of Transportation is investigating.

LOOK BACK

Family Dollar came to KM in Nov. '77

From the Wednesday, November 23 and Tuesday, November 29, 1977 editions of the Kings Mountain Mirror-Herald:

The Class of 1927 of Kings Mountain High School had a nostalgic evening Saturday as 11 of the graduates returned for a first-time reunion.

Lewis Levine, president of Family Dollar Stores, Inc., has announced that the company will open a new store at 108-110 East King Street. Grand opening is scheduled for December 1.

Bruce Valentine, Chuck Gordon and Kelly Land represented Kings Mountain High School on the 23-man All-Southwestern 3A Conference football team. It was the second year the trio has received the honor.

Dennis Dukes has resigned his teaching and coaching duties at Kings Mountain High School to go into Naval aviation training.

The Council on Aging of Cleveland County, a new non-profit organization to assist the aged and aging programs in the county, met at the Kings Mountain Depot last week.

The annual Kings Mountain Christmas parade will begin at 4 p.m. today on East Gold Street.

Corbet Nicholson, District Three city commissioner, remains in the Intensive Care Unit of Charlotte memorial Hospital where he was admitted last Wednesday after suffering a severe heart attack.

Rev. and Mrs. Maurice Hannagan have returned to Kings Mountain and assumed pastorate duties at Four Square Gospel Church. The Hannagans have lived in Macon, GA for the past two years, serving a church there.

Kings Mountain High placed three girls on fall sports All-Southwestern 3A Conference teams. Priscilla Rickenbacker made the All-SWC volleyball team and Roxanne Tate and Pat Durham made the All-SWC tennis team.

Rick Moore has joined the sales staff of Nation Chevrolet.

A time to be thankful for the blessings we enjoy



Andie Brymer
Staff Writer

Your mother probably told you to "count your blessings" when you complained about your old car or outdated wardrobe.

Therapists and other personal growth experts often advise making a list of all you are thankful for. Sarah Ban Breathnach recommends creating a gratitude journal in her book "Simple Abundance."

I agree with mom, the shrinks and Breathnach. A few weeks ago I was lamenting all the things I could not afford on my journalist salary. I was getting more upset by the minute.

I wanted to grab the credit card and max it out on new linens, spiffy winter clothes and a matching sofa and chair for the living room. Unfortunately, even a spree with the plastic would not have gotten me the two-story historic house I've been eyeing.

Amidst my despair over what I lacked, I remembered to be thankful. I refocused my attention on what I do have. Namely a loving husband, a home after years as a renter, good health, two adorable cats and a full time job which allows me to meet and write about interesting people.

Putting my life in that perspective, my mood shifted. I realized how well off I am. How truly fortunate I may consider myself.

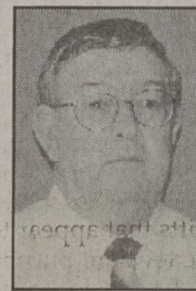
With Thanksgiving coming tomorrow, I'm prompted to review that list and make additions.

Many of the things I'm thankful for are accidents of birth. Being born into a family which could afford to feed, clothe and educate me. Being an American with all the subsequent freedoms guaranteed by the bill of rights.

Recognizing that helps me understand why a steady stream of immigrants will leave their families and risk

See Andie, 5A

Be thankful for the things we usually take for granted



Gary Stewart
Editor

Every day should be a day of thanksgiving, but this week, along with Christmas and Easter, seems to be the time that we put special emphasis on it.

As far as I know, the United States is the only country in the world that sets aside a day to give thanks for our blessings.

On this day, we should reflect on the things we usually take for granted.

Here are just a few that come to mind. First, and most important, I'm thankful for salvation. The older I get the more I appreciate that that has already been taken care of - not from anything I've done but for what was done for me over 2,000 years ago.

I'm thankful that the Good Lord let me be born in a family that was blessed with two wonderful parents who were committed to each other for life. And that He also allowed me to marry a woman whose parents were just as godly as my own. And, I'm thankful that of those four, one (my wife's mother) is still with us and the other three abide in Heaven.

I'm thankful for good health. I had a scare earlier this year but, thank God, it didn't turn out to be anything serious. I'm fortunate, because a lot of folks are suffering health problems today.

I'm thankful for freedom and for the sacrifice that the military and others make on a daily basis to guarantee that we will continue to have it.

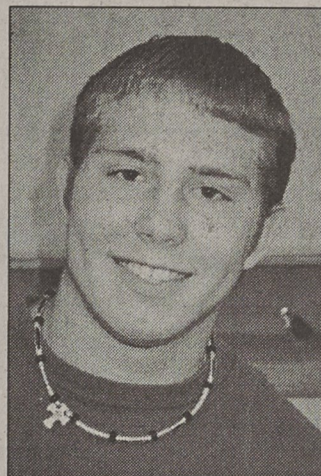
Although I'm looking forward to retirement someday in the future, I am thankful that in a poor economy I still have a job to come to every day. A lot of folks in this area of the country have lost theirs and are depending on what they had saved for retirement to get them by for another

See Gary, 5A

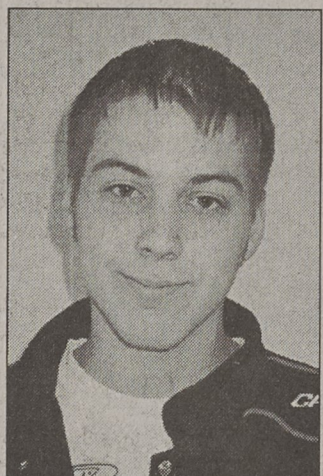
SIDEWALK SURVEY

BY ANDIE L. BRYMER
THE HERALD

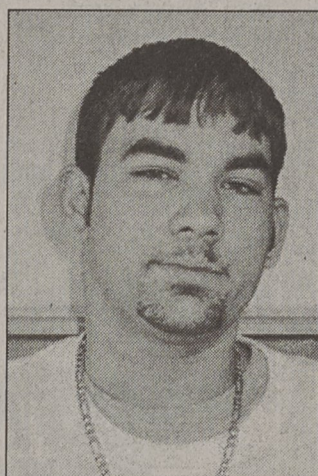
What are you most thankful for?



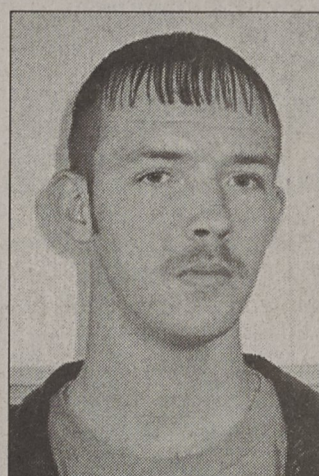
"I'm saved."
Randy Short



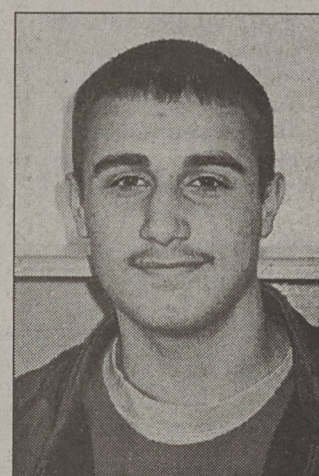
"My family."
Josh Robbins



"For my family."
Brandon Howell



"Family."
Dustin Roper



"My dad."
Kyle Buckner