

A family that's putting the past behind them

A week ago I spent several hours reading Christmas cards. Many of those were mailed to family members. I know that's not really remarkable, certainly not worth a mention in the paper except we're talking about my family.



Andie Brymer
Staff Writer

Over a decade ago, the Leatherman family was torn apart. My father and his siblings had a good, old fashion feud. It happened over what most feuds do, a last will and testament. I won't go into the whole messy thing but suffice to say, all of the brothers and sisters including my daddy thought his or her own perspective was correct.

The Leatherman DNA contains a gene for stubbornness. Daddy and one of his siblings were in their corner, the other five on the opposing side. I was a senior in high school when the whole ugly thing happened. I didn't want to be disloyal to my father so I stopped going to family reunions. I lost touch with cousins, aunts, uncles and the like. I lost touch with a part of myself.

As the years went by I had my own apartment and address. I could have visited the "other side" of the family without daddy's knowledge. I didn't though. It seemed awkward to just show up at a gathering even when an aunt had invited me. The longer you stay away the harder it is to return.

My dad died in 2000. He and his siblings never made up. They came to our home bringing food, cards, hugs and tears. It was too late for them and daddy but not for me.

Now, I attend reunions. Yes, I'm still a little stressed but I'm not letting that get in the way. I finally realized no one expected me to take a side in their argument.

I'm bringing my covered dish with a smile on my face.

One of the cousins I reconnected with turns out to be a genealogy buff. Sometimes over fried chicken and potato salad, he tells me about my great-great-grandparents. My husband's eyes glaze over but I'm enthralled. Those are my people he is talking about. My roots. My history. It's precious to me.

It's so incredibly precious to me and apparently the rest of the family that none of us are letting our genetic predisposition to be stubborn or be right take that away from us again.

See Andie, 5A

GATEWAY TRAIL

JOSEPH BRYMER / HERALD

The proposed Gateway Trails connecting Crowders Mountain and Kings Mountain State parks, and the Kings Mountain national Military Park, would begin at the Barber Cabin behind the Kings Mountain Historical Museum.

Thanks to all who help us put the news together



Gary Stewart
Editor

Well, another year is winding down. I don't have the money to buy everyone a Christmas present, but I'd like to say a special thank you to some folks around town that make my job easier.

-Kenneth Kitzmiller, who has been faithfully calling in the weather report for probably 15 to 20 years.

-All of the folks at Harris Funeral Home for faxing in the obituaries and for all of the other good things their company does for Kings Mountain. And a special thanks to Ronnie Hawkins for always being willing to listen to my gripes about county and school issues.

-The coaches who faithfully report their scores, win or lose. Most coaches are hard to find when they lose, but some of the ones I deal with recognize that even in defeat someone played a good game and deserves recognition. At KMHS, football coach Dave Farquharson, basketball coaches Kevin Moss (also the golf coach) and Danny McDowell, baseball coach Stephen Fisher, volleyball/softball coach Suzanne Grayson, and women's soccer coach Dan Potter do a tremendous job reporting their scores and always return phone calls. Ditto for Monty Deaton, football and baseball coach, and wrestling coach Jeff Putnam at KM Middle.

-John Dilling and his staff at Dilling Heating. I've been here almost 40 years now and they've been bringing in the bowling scores every Wednesday morning for that entire time (and for many years before that). By the way, John recently noted his 80th birthday. Happy birthday!

-Jim Paysour, manager of Kings Mountain Country Club, who reports every tournament at the club and lets us know anytime a golfer scores a hole-in-one.

-Andie Brymer, one of the best reporters I've ever had. And her husband, Joey, who covers picture assignments sometimes when we've committed to something else and who always brings back superb pictures.

-Kings Mountain Police Department Records Clerk Penny Fulton, who always supplies police reports with a smile and kind word.

-Mayor Rick Murphrey, who is the most cooperative mayor I've worked with in my time here, and they've all been good. And, to other department heads in the city who work with us on stories and special requests.

See Gary, 5A

People celebrate Christmas in many different ways



Alan Hodge
Columnist

Well, it's that time of year again.

Actually it's been that time of year since the first of November if you judge the approach of Christmas by the decorations and offerings in the stores. A lot of retailers no sooner had the Halloween stuff put up than they grabbed the stuffed Santas and tinsel and lights and balls and fake snow etc. & etc. and got it all placed store-front-wise. Thanksgiving seems to be looked upon as a sort of bump in the road between Halloween and Christmas. I guess because it's hard to sell turkey and dressing alongside bedroom slippers, neckties, loud perfume, even louder cologne and a million other Yuletide potential purchases.

Christmas means a lot of things to a lot of different people. To some people like hee-thens it might not mean much at all. But it's no accident it's called Christ-mas as most of you already know.

There are a lot of different ways to celebrate Christmas. Some by choice and others by circumstance. Some people have seen Christmas come and go as they crouched in a foxhole with bullets flying around. Others have observed the holiday in a homeless shelter with a bunch of mugs who share that facial expression which is a mixture of defeat, defiance, and degeneration. Others sit at home alone and just wish it was December 26.

A Civil War movie came out this year called 'Gods and Generals.' In one scene a group of Rebs sit around a fire on a dreary day beside a river somewhere in Virginia. They are spending their Christmas day cold, hungry, and thinking about their friends who have been killed. On the opposite shore is a lone Yankee picket. He too is cold and in a contemplative mood. From his pocket he pulls a harmonica and soon the haunting strains of 'Silent Night' begin drifting across the river that symbolically and geographically separates the two camps.

When the Rebs hear the music, one gets up and walks down to the river with a pouch of tobacco in his hand. He and the Yank, who has a cup of hot coffee, wade into the river and standing there on rocks in the cold they exchange what they have. The Reb sips the precious coffee while Billy Yank takes several soothing pulls on the pipe. They look at each other in an appraising and uneasy way.

See Alan, 5A

SIDEWALK SURVEY

BY ANDIE L. BRYMER
THE HERALD

Who should handle Saddam Hussein's trial?



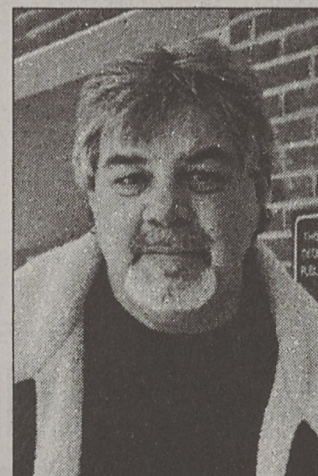
"The U.S."
Cpl. Chris Hogue,
U.S.M.C.
Kings Mountain



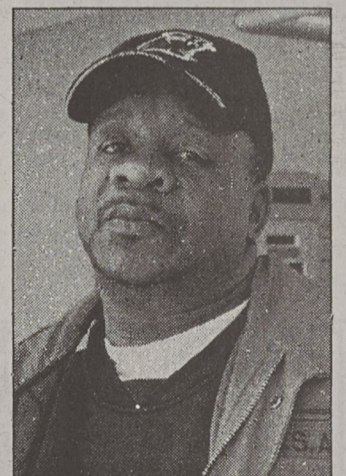
"Iraq because they received the most harm from him."
Katie Champion
Kings Mountain



"I think they should give him back to the people he deceived. Husbands whose wives he raped, killed their children."
June Phifer
Kings Mountain



"U.S. He's a terrorist. We're dealing with terrorists right now."
Tony Davidson
Kings Mountain



"I think Iraq. He did more damage to them than the U.S. They should have that right."
Willie Smith
Kings Mountain

LOOK BACK

John Gladden 'Mr. Legionnaire' in December '72

From the December 28, 1972 edition of the Kings Mountain Herald:

The City of Kings Mountain is apparently "home" on property acquisition for the Buffalo Creek water project. The city deposited a check for \$97,000 to Mr. and Mrs. Ambrose Cline with Mrs. Ruth S. Dedmon, clerk of Superior Court, Wednesday. The amount represents the amount of the three-member commission award and confirmed by Mrs. Dedmon.

Doubling of the capacity of the Buffalo Creek water treatment plant to eight-million gallons is among a dozen goals for the city for calendar year 1973.

John W. Gladden was honored by the American Legion Auxiliary as "Mr. Legionnaire of 1972" at the Christmas dinner-dance of the American Legion Saturday night.

Deborah Crockett scored 29 points as the Kings Mountain girls basketball team closed their 1972 schedule with a 54-39 win over Lincolnton. The Lincolnton boys won 78-72. Mike Thombs led the Mounties with 27 points.

Kings Mountain's Otis Cole is averaging 4.2 points and three assists per game for Florida State's nationally-ranked Seminoles.

Frances Sullivan McGill, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. J.C. McGill of Kings Mountain, will participate in a 30-day Erskine College study tour of Europe.

Walter "Butch" Boyd, son of Mr. and Mrs. Bob Boyd, was listed on the dean's list for the winter quarter at Western Carolina University.

Pine Manor, Kings Mountain's newest apartments, is now leasing 100 beautiful units.

Patricia McGinnis of Kings Mountain is student-teaching at Windsor High School in Central Missouri.

Darrell L. Austin, Manley Hayes Jr., B.F. Maner and J.A. Neisler Jr. were installed as deacons of First Presbyterian Church Sunday.

Mr. and Mrs. Lamar Herndon received five extra Christmas presents on Christmas Eve. Herndon's black angus cow gave birth to twin calves and his nanny goat gave birth to three billies. Herndon named the three newly arrived goats Dancer, Prancer and Rudolph after Santa's reindeer friends.