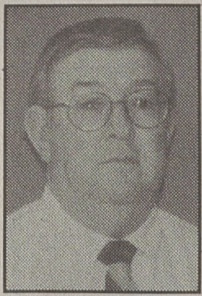


## Hey, Santa, don't forget these extras

Dear Santa,

Well, Big Guy, it's about that time again. And, as has been the case for about the 40th year in a row I'm late with my requests. I know



**Gary Stewart**  
Editor

you've been hard at work packing Dora bicycles and basketball goals and jumpy things and guitars for all the little boys and

girls, but see if you can find just a little extra space in that big sleigh for these:

A happy, carefree retirement for Kings Mountain High basketball coach Danny McDowell, who has done a superb job with the Mountaineer program over the past five years and with the Boys Club program for many years before that. As for getting the most out of his talent, he's probably one of the best coaches we've ever had here...

A better economy. There are too many empty buildings around town, and even though the unemployment rate has dropped overall it's still too high in Cleveland County...

A General Assembly with the guts to ban video poker. It's amazing how some of our leaders are so adamant in their opposition to one form of gambling (lottery) and not willing to do away with another...

A quick finish to the construction projects on I-85 at 161 and Dixon School Road Extension. They've dug into the pavement so much on Dixon School Road and haven't done such a good job of patching it that the bumps jar you to death. There's probably not a vehicle in Dixon that's not out of alignment...

A successful tenure for Greg McGinnis as Kings Mountain's city manager. Kings Mountain had to be the laughing stock of the state last year with its revolving door administration. Phil Ponder left - or was he terminated? - after only about six months on the job and the newly hired city engineer left less than two months on the job. You can't get anyone to admit it was small town politics, but it probably was...

A good year for Todd Hagans, Cherryville Eagle editor who is leaving us December 31 to go back to school to earn his teacher's certification. I feel somewhat responsible for Todd's newspaper career because he served as my summer intern one summer when he was a student at UNC Asheville and I had a hand in recruiting him for the Cherryville job after he graduated. He does a superb job and I hate to see him go, but I know he'll be an outstanding school teacher...

A great year for the new Cleveland County School System. It appears that the leaders of the new system are not planning any major overhaul and merger might not be all that bad after all. The only difference I've seen in the school system since merger has been the change of name...

An abundance of flu vaccines for next year. There's no excuse for a country as medically advanced as the U.S. to run short of any kind of medicine...

Mud-free political campaigns. For once we need an entire slate of candidates who focus on their strengths instead of their opponent's weaknesses...

A playoff berth for the Carolina Panthers. Wouldn't it be something if a team that started the season 1-7 would win the Super Bowl?... A return to power for the Kings Mountain High football team. If the Mountaineers can't win the state championship, make it

See Gary, 5A

# OPINION

## PEEP INTO THE PAST



Mayor Garland E. Still presents L.C. Parsons with a plaque honoring his retirement as public works superintendent a testimonial dinner in December 1952. Left to right are Commissioner Olland Pearson, Mr. Parsons, Commissioner C.P. Barry, Commissioner B.T. Wright Sr., Mayor Still, Commissioner Lloyd E. Davis and Commissioner James G. Layton, who served as master of ceremonies at the event.

## I always tried to be an angel at Christmas



**Andie Brymer**  
Staff Writer

As a child it took me about one minute after Thanksgiving dinner to ask my Mama if it was time to "get the Christmas tree out."

Being the good hearted type, she would consent. I would climb into the crawl space beneath the den and drag out pieces of the artificial tree and boxes of ornaments. After pulling all this up the stairs, we would assemble the tree matching the color coded branches up with the base.

Next came the tiny, multicolored lights, the silver garland and red and white satiny balls and bells. Handmade ornaments I created in Girl Scouts and other assorted what-nots also went on the tree. One year we attached hangers to my glass animal figurine collection and hung the menagerie from the branches. Later we added artificial apples.

The tree's most interesting decoration had to be the powder blue Campbell's Soup ornaments. A friend from my mom's church choir gave the ornaments away at grocery stores as a soup promotion. The poor man could never unload all the ornaments so he resorted to giving the remaining baubles away at choir practice. My sister and I laughed every year. We never came around to seeing pastel blue as a Christmas color.

Despite my objections to the Campbell's Soup ornaments, some of my favorite decorations were the blue "candles." Glitter covered, deep blue light bulbs rested atop off-white plastic candlesticks. Tiny drops of pretend wax were even molded into the sides.

Christmas was the one time of a year I was really an angel, literally. I was part of the heavenly host in our annual church plays. Mama would sew a white tent dress for me and would attach wings. I'm not sure what these were made from, probably something she found at Mary Jo's Cloth Store. Regardless, she would trim the wings in garland, the same stuff we wrapped around the tree. Ever the stylish angel, my halo was trimmed in matching garland.

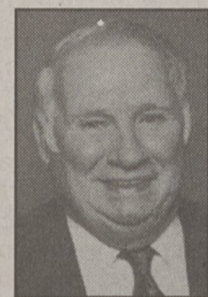
Girls typically got the part of angels and boys played shepherds and wise men. This meant they wore bathrobes in the play. The wise men even got to wrap towels around their heads.

Much to my disappointment I was never cast as Mary. If memory serves me right, by the time I reached the appropriate age churches had gone to contemporary plays.

Today's scripts are more complicated, costumes more

See Andie, 5A

## Just lather it up and scrape it off



**Jim Heffner**  
Columnist

A Wal-Mart clerk recently made me realize I'm no spring chicken anymore. I went there to buy shaving mug soap. The brand I've used for years is hard to find, and when I do stumble across it I buy all they have.

When I checked out, the clerk looked at the little round bars of soap and laughed.

"I've never seen that before," she said. "That's neat. I've seen men shave on TV using this stuff, but never in real life. That's so cute!"

I almost invited her to the house to watch me shave.

This young lady has probably never known a world without color TV, personal computers, CD's, the Internet or cordless telephones. I'd be willing to bet she's never seen a vinyl record, and certainly not a 78 RPM record.

As I was leaving the store, one of the greeters, an elderly lady, was doubled over with laughter, having overheard the entire conversation.

"I can remember a time when my husband shaved in cold water using a straight razor," she said.

Ouch! I have shaved in cold water in the Navy, and it was no fun. In fact, shaving isn't a whole lot of fun. Sometimes I think those guys who just let it grow have the best idea.

All of us who are forced to scrape the whiskers off our faces sometimes want to give up the habit I'm sure.

Most of us have experienced days when we just can't seem to get a close shave. I have devised a method which works for me most of the time.

I lather with my shaving brush and soap, cover that with shaving cream, and go to work. I do that twice, then again on the neck and throat. Most of the time I get a close shave.

Isn't that interesting? Yuck.

There have been times, however, when even that didn't work. On those occasions, I sometimes cover my face with some kind of cream, whatever happens to be available, and let it dry, then go through my shaving routine. That usually works.

Once, I switched to an electric razor, but that didn't last very long. I had two bad experiences with electric razors. Somehow, I got a small hole in the screen which covers the blades, and my razor plowed a path from my neck to the middle of my right cheek. I tossed it.

Later, when I was based in Memphis with the good old USN, I was in a hurry to get to town one Friday evening,

See Heffner, 5A

## Santa's beginning in Child of Bethlehem

BY REV. JEFF HENSLEY

Many of our contemporary traditions about Santa Claus go back ultimately to Jesus Christ, because they are based on the life of a fellow named St.



**Jeff Hensley**  
Meditation

Nicholas.

St. Nicholas was born around the year 280 in a small town located in what is today Turkey. Shortly after the year 300 he became Bishop in Myra. It wasn't an easy task at the time, because the church was facing two kinds of struggle. On the one hand,

Emperor Diocletian brought struggle from without because of his persecution of Christians. On the other hand, a fellow named Arius brought struggle from within when his beliefs brought about a doctrinal controversy.

One of the most famous stories about St. Nicholas has to do with a poor man, who had three lovely daughters. Because he was so poor, this man wasn't able to provide a dowry for his daughters, which meant that they wouldn't be able to marry. In those days poor young women were often sold into slavery or had to become prostitutes, and St. Nicholas helped to prevent that from happening to this particular family.

He placed a large number of gold pieces in a small bag and tossed it through an open window. He did this on three separate occasions, once for each young woman. And though he wanted his gifts to remain anonymous, he was discovered on his third trip. Many people think this is one of the origins of gift giving at Christmas.

Traditions about St. Nicholas developed in European countries under different names. In Germany, he was called Weihnachtsmann. He was Pere Noel in France, Father Christmas in England and Sinter Klaas in Holland. The Dutch tradition reports that St. Nicholas traveled to Holland from

Myra, dressed in his red bishop's robes, riding on a white horse and accompanied by his servant.

As Nicholas rode in the streets, he carried a sack full of gifts and toys for the children. Whenever he saw a child, he asked the parents, "Has your child been good?" If the answer was yes the child received a gift, but if it was no the servant shook a stick at the child, who then ran to hide behind his or her mother.

One day Nicholas and his servant came to a small home where the windows and doors were sealed.

"How shall we deliver our gifts," Nicholas asked. Looking up at the roof, his servant suggested that they drop the gifts through the chimney.

"That's a great idea,"

replied Nicholas, so they climbed up to the roof and dropped the gifts down through the chimney.

Though there are many legends that surround the gentle bishop from Myra, there is a profound truth preserved in his story. For from these legends there has come down to us a noble tradition of generosity and kindness, which most certainly speaks of the character and nature of Jesus Christ. Though today there seems to be a great divide between Santa and Jesus, it was not always so. For even Santa Claus found his beginning in the Christ child of Bethlehem.

Rev. Jeff Hensley is pastor of Kings Mountain Baptist Church.

## LOOK BACK

### Public works director honored in December '53

From the Tuesday, December 23, 1952 edition of the Kings Mountain Herald:

Almost 100 persons attended a testimonial dinner at the Woman's Club last Friday night honoring L.C. Parsons, who retires as city superintendent of public works January 1 after over 33 years of service.

Thomas W. Strickland of the Cleveland County Health Department reminded Kings Mountain citizens of the new city sanitation ordinance enacted several months ago, calling particular attention to the prohibition against maintaining hogs within the city limits.

Yule elegance was the keynote in the Christmas decorations in the home of Mrs. Harold Crawford Wednesday afternoon when she, Mrs. Wilson Crawford and Mrs. Yates Harbison entertained with rook.

Plans have been completed for the wedding of Miss Sarah Mae Kincaid, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. L. Arnold Kincaid, and Bobby Ray Bush, son of Mr. and Mrs. E.J. Bush of Summerville, GA.

Grover downed Bethware in a Cleveland County Basketball League doubleheader Friday at Grover, the girls winning 61-19 and the boys coping the nightcap 50-22. Peggy Keeter rimmed 34 points to pace the undefeated Grover sextet. Treva Ponder tossed in 12 and Betty Watterson 8. Joe Plumley paced the Grover boys with 12, while Tommy Keeter and Eddie Tucker had 10 apiece.

A crowd which virtually filled Central School auditorium Sunday attended the Christmas party for its employees given by Craftspun Yarns. H.O. "Toby" Williams served as master of ceremonies.

Annual tax listing will begin Friday, January 2, according to announcement by Clarence E. Carpenter, city tax lister, and Conrad Hughes, Number 4 Township tax lister.

According to our calendar, one would assume that between the year 1 B.C. and the year 1 A.D. there would be a year called zero. As a matter of fact, no such year exists, as far as historians are concerned and the year 1 A.D. follows directly after the year 1 B.C.