

Eminent Domain ruling bad

One of the worst decisions of our time was recently handed down by the U.S. Supreme Court in the Kelo et al v. City of New London suit.

The ruling will allow governing agencies to seize people's personal property for economic development under the Eminent Domain law.

Eminent Domain certainly has its place in today's society, but we believe its purpose is for projects such as major highways, schools and other projects which are necessary for the good of all people.

The purpose of this latest ruling doesn't benefit everyone, just a few. It's purpose is to allow any "economic development" project that a governing agency thinks would broaden its tax base.

There is a move in the U.S. House to pass a law that would eliminate federal funds for any city or county that allows this type of seizure under Eminent Domain.

We certainly applaud such a move, and hope that if any local politicians ever take such action that a go-zillionaire developer who has the funds and determination to do it targets every one of their homes and turns them into a hotel.

No action best action

A possible alcohol referendum was discussed again last week at a Grover Town Council work session.

Councilor Jackie Bennett spoke out in favor of a referendum during this fall's elections, stating that "the people are the ones who elected us (and) we should let them decide."

We don't disagree that the people of Grover should be the ones to decide this issue, if it is one, but we strongly disagree with the Town Council calling for the vote.

By law, town council can call for a referendum; or the people who favor alcohol sales in town can circulate a petition and obtain the signatures of 35 percent of the town's registered voters. If those signatures are valid, council has to call for a referendum.

Only recently, such a petition was circulated and fell short of the required number of signatures.

Alcohol is one of those issues that splits a community about in half. Should Town Council call for a referendum it would only be making life easier for the pro forces who maybe should have worked a little harder on the petition drive.

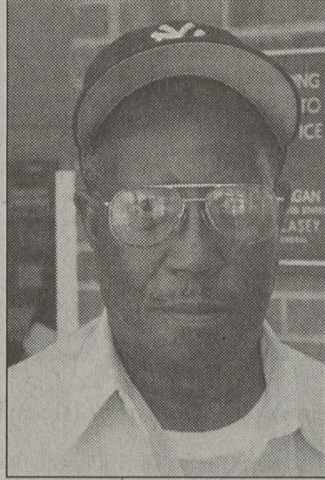
While council members are certainly in office to represent all of the citizens, whether they're registered voters or not, we believe they are also in office to vote their own conscience. We feel like they've already spoken by not taking action.

OPINION

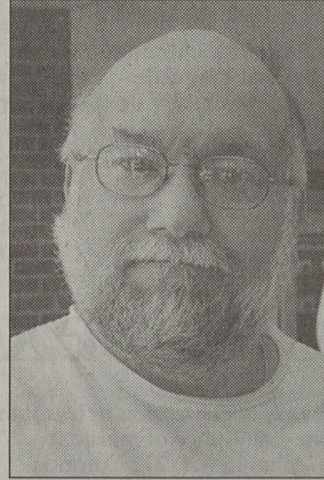
SIDEWALK SURVEY

BY ANDIE L. BRYMER
THE HERALD

Do you think city council members should serve two or four year terms?



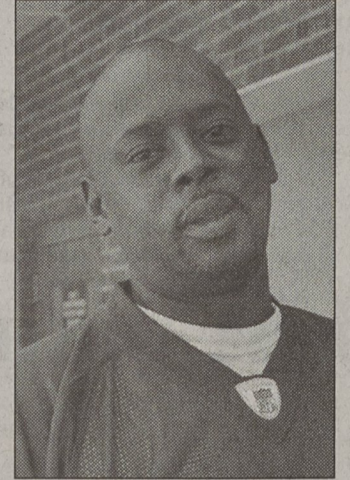
Two. That gives you a chance if they're not doing their jobs to replace them with someone who will.
Leroy Young
Kings Mountain



Two. Switch them out faster.
Phillip Fisher
Kings Mountain



I don't know. I don't pay attention to politics.
Brandi Hiland Grover



Four years.
Todd Reid
Kings Mountain

We need year-round schools

School's out right now and really for no good reason. Just because the calendar says it's summer that doesn't mean we have to close the school house doors.

Decades ago when our society was largely agrarian, students were given time off when their services were needed on the family farm. For the most part, children working full-time on farms, with unfortunately the exception of migrant workers, is a thing of the past.

Months off in the summer is a tradition but has no real reason to continue.

I'm not opposed to time off. I would like more of it myself. Four two-week breaks throughout the school year would help reduce teacher and student burn-out more than one long vacation.

Many children forget some of what they've learned during the long summer break. That in itself



Andie Brymer
Staff Writer

Enrichment programs could be set up for students who are not falling behind. In addition to helping

develop well-rounded kids, this would benefit the families who struggle to find childcare during the traditional summer break from school.

Another reason to eliminate the two-month summer break is the long stretch of often unsupervised time it creates. Boredom sets in and for some children, the temptation to misbehave is too great.

I understand that the former Kings Mountain District Schools attempted

to implement year-round school but community opposition was too great. I wasn't working at the Herald when that happened so I don't know the details, though I imagine some folks were worried family vacations, camps and other programs would suffer.

That doesn't have to happen. The two-week quarterly breaks are a great time for these activities. It would take some getting used to but in the long run would benefit our children.

Gas prices go higher and higher

If it's negative, and it makes the newspapers and TV news, gasoline prices will go up. That's just the way things are.

Does anybody remember the day gasoline prices first escalated? I had filled up my tank for about 30 cents a gallon the day before. That evening there was an obscure story on the news about oil prices, and the next day I was driving to work and got the shock of my life.

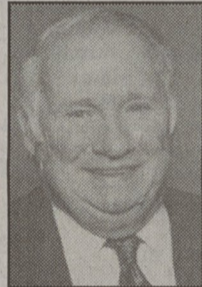
The first station I passed was selling gas for 57 cents a gallon. Ridiculous, I thought, that must be a joke. It was a joke all right, and it was on us.

Overnight, according to our government, energy supplies became scarce. I've always believed high gasoline prices came about because a handful of rich people thought the Arabs should live better. Henry Kissinger comes to mind.

I can remember

Congressional hearings, and every time a cabinet member testified, gas prices went up. I think the guy who kept going on TV to tell us we were going to pay higher prices was James Schlesinger. I don't remember what his job was, except to make gasoline prices go up.

When the so-called energy crisis first started, it took some kind of catastrophe to jack prices up. Last week when a hurricane was getting closer to the country, there was an announcement that gasoline prices were going up, because there was "fear" that some oil facilities would be harmed. If one of those caricature heads of state in the Middle East sneezes, it costs us another three cents a gallon at the pump. If Prince Faud, or Saud, or whatever his name is stumps his toe, consumers pay for it in the



Jim Heffner
Columnist

form of higher gasoline prices. When OPEC meets, gas prices go up, even if they increase their output. If OPEC announces a price hike on crude oil, it is reflected at the pump

almost before the announcement is completed, but when something happens that causes prices to go down (rare these days), it takes months for the decrease to show up.

By then, of course, a minor trash can fire at a refinery in Lower Slobbovia has occurred, causing prices to go up once again.

If you want to blame anyone for high gasoline prices, focus on the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), and then look around at all the environmental nuts in

the country.

The EPA says we have to use different blends of gasoline in different parts of the country, therefore there are 57 different kinds, known as boutique blends, of gasoline.

It stands to reason that if refineries could turn out regular and high test, or ethyl, as in days of yore, prices would be lower, but having to manipulate crude oil so many different ways is expensive, thus the high prices.

Then there are the nuts who have kept this country from building a new refinery for 30 years. Obviously, when the number of cars on the roads increase, more gasoline will be needed, and the only way to produce more is to build more refineries.

I think the nutso environmentalists want us all to go back to horses and wagons, or walk.

Just remember this: everything is in the mix. If the weather is bad, prices go up; if the weather is good, prices go up; if there is any unrest in one of the countries in South America, prices go up.

There is always unrest in South America and we don't use their oil, but that simply is not a factor.

Gasoline prices go up in the winter because oil companies are refining more heating oil and not as much gasoline, they go up in the summer, because it is vacation season and, therefore, demand increases.

Light, sweet crude is supposed to be the best oil to refine into gasoline. I wonder who tastes it? If anything ever happens to that guy's taste buds, gasoline prices may go out of sight.

Come to think of it, this column could cause a spike in prices.

Opinion Page Policy

The Herald welcomes your letters to the editor for publication in each Thursday's paper. All letters must be signed, and for verification purposes include the address and phone number.

Letters should be limited to 500 words.

Mail your letter to Editor, The Herald, P.O. Box 769, Kings Mountain, NC 28086; fax to (704) 739-0611; or e-mail to KMH

Letters@kingsmountainherald.com. Letters sent by fax and e-mail must also include name, mailing address and phone number for verification purposes.

Letters may be edited.

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ELECTION

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couple million dollars in the ground and then didn't do anything else to it. It needs to be continued in the next couple of years."

Spears would also like to see the city take a more active role in revitalizing downtown.

"We have an incentive for someone that improves their building - and I'm all for that - but the city hasn't had a whole of involvement in downtown renovations," he said.

Hawkins, who lost to Jerry Mullinax by nine votes in the Ward 3 race in 2003, says he is much more prepared to serve on Council now.

"Since July 2003 I have attended every Council meeting except for two," he pointed out. "I have been to more meetings than some of the council members. I have

also been appointed to the Planning and Zoning Board and to the Board of Adjustments by the current council.

"I feel like now, more than ever, I am qualified to serve on the council and to serve the citizens of Kings Mountain. By attending the council meetings I know the issues and I have all the agendas."

Hawkins said he has spoken with many citizens in Ward 3 and they feel there is a lot of wasteful spending in the city.

"We need to maintain expenses through revenue and monitoring," he said. "We need to recruit new employment opportunities, and provide the lowest water/sewer rates possible while aggressively seeking ways to maintain the budget."

Another issue that concerns Hawkins is the ambulance service and response

times in Ward 3, particularly in the Gaston County area of the ward.

"In Gaston County, it's terrible the way it is," he said.

Also touching on Gaston County issues, Hawkins said Kings Mountain residents who live across the Gaston County line should be allowed to attend Cleveland County Schools without paying a tuition.

Hawkins said he would not favor a tax increase, would be an advocate for senior citizens and city employees, and would "promote Kings Mountain as a good place to work and live and raise our children and grandchildren."

"I feel like I could jell with the present board," he said. "I could work with them and the mayor."

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