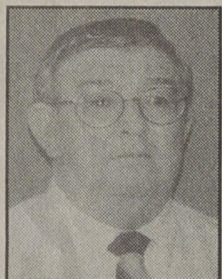


OUR OPINION

# Heroes of '06

When folks were asked in a news poll to name their heroes and villains of 2006, President Bush won both categories.

It got us to thinking about our heroes from stories in the Herald in 2006. We'll give the villains a week off.



Gary Stewart Editor

Suzanne Grayson and her

State Championship KMHS softball team. Coach Grayson and her ladies are perfect examples of the philosophy "you get out of something what you put into it." They work hard all year long, not just during the softball season, and last June it paid off for them with their second straight state crown. The Mounties finished 29-1 overall, had only two runs scored on them in those 30 games, and won the state crown with three consecutive 1-0 wins that took 37 innings.

KM Trooper David Allen, who received the Highway Patrol's highest honor, the Award of Valor, for saving the life of a truck driver just seconds before his cab burst into flames after a wreck on I-85 near Lexington.

Nine-year-old Hannah Mosley, who awakened at 11 p.m. one night, smelled smoke and realized the house was on fire. She awakened her parents and the family escaped.

Dr. John McGill, who received Erskine College's highest award, the Distinguished Service Award, for his generosity in helping finance improvements to the school's baseball facility.

Ron Massey, Larry Sipe, Jackie Houston Songaila and Jerry Morris, who were inducted into the Kings Mountain Sports Hall of Fame, and Scott Wells and Jeff Putnam, who received the Distinguished Service Awards for giving a combined 50-plus years of volunteer service as Pop Warner football coaches.

Jeff Cavender, who rescued two women from a wrecked car on Highway 74 Bypass. A few days later, Cavender was hospitalized after a freak accident in South Carolina.

Rev. Lynn Crouch, interim pastor of Second Baptist Church. Rev. Crouch learned in April that he had terminal cancer. In August, with his health declining quickly, he flew by helicopter from his home in Black Mountain to preach a farewell sermon to his congregation. He died less than two weeks later.

Kings Mountain businessman and longtime Scout leader Donald Crawford, who received the governor's highest civilian award, The

Order of the Long Leaf Pine.

An unidentified woman who pulled up beside Hebert Bonello, whose 18-wheeler got stuck when he tried to cross the railroad track at Oak Street. The lady told him to get out of the truck because a train was coming. Less than a minute after he exited the cab, a train demolished the truck.

Soldiers from the 505th Engineering Battalion who returned home in October after a one year tour of duty in Iraq.

KMHS senior Chris Greene, who convinced Kings Mountain City Council to adopt an ordinance banning the sale of rose stems which are used in the manufacturing of illegal drugs.

The day-time participants at the Neisler Life Enrichment Center, who made dolls for the Kings Mountain Police Department to distribute to needy children at Christmas.

Mary Neisler, winner of the Kings Mountain City Council's first Pride In Community Spirit Award.

Shonda Cole, who did Kings Mountain proud by being named Southeastern Conference Player of the Week three times, National Player of the Week once, and making honorable mention All-American in volleyball at the University of South Carolina.

KMHS students, led by Kristen Long, who collected Sun Drops to send to local soldiers fighting in Iraq.

KMMS eighth grade students, who traveled to Charlotte to inspect shoe boxes for Samaritan's Purse's Operation Christmas Child.

Mayor Rick Murphrey and City Council members, who dug into their own pockets to help provide 2,000 pairs of shoes to needy families at Christmas.

Police Chief Melvin Proctor, who was appointed by the governor to serve on the advisory committee to strengthen Homeland Security; and the entire KM Police Department which was cited by AAA Carolinas Motor Club Foundation for its commitment to traffic safety.

Softball slugger Rusty Bumgardner, who was inducted into the USSSA Hall of Fame.

Rev. Robert Eng and the congregation at New Life Family Worship Center, who followed the direction of God and with approximately \$200,000, a lot of donated and salvaged material, prayer and hard work built a beautiful church valued at almost \$2 million.

And, to the Rotary Club for its efforts in improving Patriots Park which has brought a lot of beauty, special activities and entertainment to downtown Kings Mountain.

YOUR OPINION

# Luminary Christmas was best ever

To The Editor:

Superstition says 13 is an unlucky number. But for the Mountain Rest Luminary Christmas, this year (our 13th season of lighting more than 6,000 luminaries in the Kings Mountain cemetery) was our best ever. Thousands of people enjoyed viewing the luminaries on Christmas Eve.

We want to thank the volunteers who worked many hours to make the Luminary Christmas possible. The cemetery staff is so cooperative and ready to assist in any way and the Kings Mountain Police Department, Kings Mountain Police Department Explorers and Kings

Mountain Public Works Department all play an important role in the success of the event.

It is a lot of work to collect 6,000 milk jugs that become glowing luminaries on Christmas Eve. This year, the Cleveland County Chamber of Commerce had its members collect jugs, Little Dan's #2 collected 1,000 jugs and Food Lion set up collection bins at ten stores. Once the jugs were collected, it took hours to place the jugs in the cemetery and light the candles. Boy Scout troops from Gastonia, Troop 7 and Cherryville Troop 323 helped with this task as did many other volunteers. We especially want to rec-

ognize Harris Funeral Home, Larry Hamrick and Mike Butler for their continued support and thank the Kings Mountain Herald for providing media coverage.

When we see everyone lighting the candles, we always think of the saying, "If everyone lit just one little candle, what a bright world this would be." With so many people taking part in lighting the luminaries, we know Kings Mountain is a brighter community.

People like our son, Joe, worked for weeks to help us get everything ready and then he spent days cleaning up. Tonya Jackson began helping when she was nine years old. Now, she is 16.

The Jim Hawkins family came to see the luminaries riding on a tractor and trailer and singing Christmas carols. This has become a Christmas Eve tradition for Jim and his family.

It is our wish that the luminaries make Christmas a little brighter for everyone who sees them. What started with a few candles lit in a cemetery on Christmas Eve has become a special holiday tradition for the people of Kings Mountain and surrounding communities. We are blessed to be a part of it.

Sincerely,  
Jim and Brenda Belt

GUEST COLUMN

# We have to save the polar bears

They're off and running in our nation's capitol, or "Crime Central," as I like to call it. The Democrats have taken over the House and the Senate, and the linguini-spined Republicans are falling all over themselves to curry favor with them.

Last week some dolt in the Department of Interior decided to go along with the pointy heads and declare polar bear on the endangered species list.

The global warming doomsday prophets have been preaching polar bear extinction for 20 years or more, saying the ice floes used by the bears are melting. There are, however, several groups pushing for more protection for the bears who say they are unable to provide evidence polar bears are on the decline.

Actually, polar bears are on the U.S. Endangered Species List, but the pointy heads want them moved up to threatened.

Meanwhile Dr. Mitch Taylor of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service conducted



Jim Heffner Columnist

an extensive review of the polar bear's status and reported: "No evidence exists that suggests that both bears and the conservation systems that regulate them will not adapt and respond to the new conditions (global warming)."

Taylor admits there is global warming, as there has been off and on since the world began, but he doesn't see the natural phenomena affecting any animal species to the degree that it becomes extinct.

Taylor also notes that, on the Boothia Peninsula of Canada, the number of bears has actually increased from 900 to 1,500 in recent years.

The organizations pushing for the "threatened" label are the usual suspects; Greenpeace the Centre for Biological Diversity, etc.

"Life may be good," Taylor said, "but good news about polar bear populations does not seem to be welcomed by the Centre for Biological Diversity."

IN THE NEWS — The Union County Board of Education has declared a ban on paddling students in school, and now the liberal rags all over the state are calling for a state ban on corporal punishment in schools.

Oh no, we must not paddle the little darlings. We should just let them run roughshod over other students and even some teachers.

It wouldn't do for my grandmother to have been superintendent of any school system. She would have reddened their little behinds in a heartbeat.

Spare the rod and spoil the child? You better believe it.

On the same day the newspapers called for an end to paddling, a national publication, "Education Week," issued a report which says that students in North Carolina face below-average odds of success in schools and the workforce. I wonder

why? Poor Whitney Houston is in a such a financial mess she's having to sell some of her dresses to make ends meet.

All of this just because she and her husband, Bobby Brown, have spent the last 14 years sucking dope up their noses. What a crying shame. I might even send her a donation.

Better yet, maybe she could contact Robert Nardelli and ask for a loan.

Nardelli has resigned as CEO of Home Depot under pressure from stockholders because he was making too much money.

His severance package is worth \$210 million. I'll bet he would contribute a little money to poor old Whitney, or maybe she could just go back into the studio and record an album, if she has a voice left.

Jim Heffner is a writer for the Belmont/Mt. Holly banner news and a longtime columnist for The Herald. Contact him at Jim@thebannernews.com

# 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.

Letters to the editor and columnists who appear on the editorial page do not necessarily represent the views of the Kings Mountain Herald.

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