

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

A grave concern

Letter to the editor:

First off, let me say that I realize how difficult it is to maintain the grounds at Mountain Rest Cemetery, being that I own and operate a landscaping business myself, and for the most part I feel like the city employees do a great job, considering how large the grounds are.

But, having said that, it is almost impossible to trim around every grave marker over there so on occasion, when we are doing a job in that area, we stop to trim and clean around my dad's and my father-in-law's grave markers. The last two times we stopped to do this, much to my surprise, a very aggressive city employee approached me and suggested we get our equipment and leave the grounds immediately or he would be forced to call law enforcement.

In return, I calmly told him to do what he needed to do, but I would finish cleaning around these two particular graves and that I would continue coming by to do this for my loved ones who were buried there.

He continued the conversation by stating that he was told by city management to escort us off the grounds if and when we returned. Just so city management knows, I will be back and after contacting the Kings Mountain law enforcement, there is not one thing they can do about it. So anyone who wants to stop by and take care of your loved ones' graves, feel free to do so.

By the way, why wasn't this city employee standing guard on Father's Day weekend when a lady was spotted stealing fresh flower arrangements off the graves? I seriously think he needs to pick his battles more carefully!

Fran C. Patterson
Kings Mountain

Citizens deserve the right to vote on liquor-by-the-drink

Letter to the Editor:

First, I would like to applaud the Herald for addressing the issue of Liquor By The Drink, which has been the "elephant in

the room" for too long.

It is time for LBTD to be addressed by the citizens of Kings Mountain. The Herald did a good job of explaining the three ways of doing that. I do not believe that the City Council will vote to allow LBTD in Kings Mountain. That approach is too politically charged for our elected council. They would be on record voting yes or no and would be subjected to too much criticism, no matter which way their individual vote went.

That is exactly why a petition for a referendum will not work either. We have seen, recently, what can happen to citizens who put their names on petitions that become public. The only appropriate forum for the LBTD issue is a referendum where the citizens of Kings Mountain can cast their votes by secret ballot.

This is an important issue for Kings Mountain and one that needs to be decided - yes or no. But it is a decision that our citizens need to feel comfortable and secure making.

Voting to hold a referendum is **not the same** as voting for LBTD. If our citizens and our council do not understand that the council would not be voting for LBTD, but would be voting to let the citizens decide, then we have a bigger problem than whether LBTD will bring economic development to Kings Mountain.

To deny the citizens their right to decide is to deny democracy and the very principles upon which this country was founded.

Joni Smith
Kings Mountain

It's time to let the voters decide on LBTD

Letter to the Editor:

Each election year for city officials, it seems that the first question asked of them is "Where do you stand on liquor by the drink?" Every candidate that I can remember has answered that "it's a citizen's issue" or "it's an issue for the people to decide."

I believe that it's time that the people are given the opportunity to decide this issue. As mentioned last week in The Herald, there are two ways to allow mixed beverages to be sold in Kings Mountain restaurants. City Council can vote to allow mixed beverage sales or a citizen's referendum (vote) can be held to determine whether or not to allow mixed beverage sales. A

referendum can be called two ways - through a city council vote or city council could be bypassed by the presentation to the county Board of Elections of a petition signed by 35% of the registered voters.

I don't believe that city council should vote to decide the issue, but I do believe that city council should vote to allow the voters to decide the issue. While a petition would be the easiest route for city council, it would be more difficult on the voters. Many people would be uncomfortable signing a public document where their support of a vote could be construed by their friends and neighbors as support of mixed beverage sales. The threat of scorn and ridicule, whether real or perceived, would make some voters hesitant to sign a petition even if they favored a referendum. Gathering and verifying the 2,000 signatures required would require a great deal of time and effort.

Could mixed beverage sales provide a boost to the local economy and job market or could it contribute to an increase in alcoholism and traffic accidents? Why should we even debate these questions when the voter's voice won't be heard?

I call on city council to allow the true will of the voters of Kings Mountain to be heard by allowing us to vote on this issue. I ask the council to have confidence that we will thoughtfully and prayerfully consider the issue and we will cast our vote in a way that we feel is best for our city.

By allowing a vote on mixed beverage sales, the council is not supporting mixed beverage sales, but showing their confidence in the collective decision-making wisdom of the 6,000-plus voters in Kings Mountain. City council, it's time to say to the voters of Kings Mountain "we trust you with this decision." It's time to call for a referendum.

Greg Johnson
Kings Mountain

Citizens have earned right to vote on LBTD

Letter to the Editor:

The City Council of Kings Mountain will soon be challenged as to what its role is in our community, with the question of allowing mixed beverages to be sold in Kings

Mountain.

While elected to assist in the administration of the public entity, the Council also is responsible for bringing the voices of the towns' citizens into the equation. Not just the voices of a few, or sometimes small vocal minority, but of all the town residents.

Allowing mixed beverages sales in the community will foster economic development, enhance the quality of life for all residents through growth in the tax base, and put personal decision making in the hands of the individual citizen. While each citizen will elect of their own free will to participate in mixed beverage sales themselves, at least they will have the choice to be heard directly through a referendum on the issue placed on the ballot.

Beer and wine sales are already allowed in the community, and there is an ABC store. Alcohol sales are heavily regulated by the state, and enforced by a multitude of local, state and federal agencies. The controlling infrastructure is in place, but this community has neglected to trust its citizens to make its own choice as to whether to partake in mixed beverage sales in the area.

If the City Council declines to allow the citizens to vote on this issue themselves, they are imposing their personal beliefs on others, in direct violation of the basis of democracy. The clear choice for our City Council in this instance is to allow a ballot referendum to decide the fate of mixed beverage sales in Kings Mountain.

This choice allows the Council to promote and foster

future growth through economic development, add to the tax base through new restaurants, developments and their related employment, and allow the citizens of Kings Mountain the ability to be heard directly through the ballot box.

As citizens who have been educated and raised by our public schools, allowed to serve our country through the military and other venues, have we not earned the right to vote on this issue ourselves?

Phil Dee
Kings Mountain, NC

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

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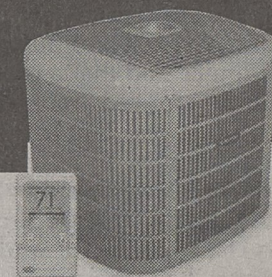
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