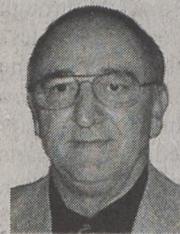


OPINION

Yankee by birth, Southerner by the grace of God



Ron Isbell
Publisher

A Yankee by birth. A Southerner by the grace of God.

That must be me.

I know because I "get" Lewis Grizzard.

He was a man who was proud of what he was. Proud of where he came from. He never found a reason to apologize for his hometown of Moreland, GA and it's 300 residents. Or for the way he talked.

Or for eating fried food.

And, yet, he was never critical of people who were unfortunate enough to live north of the Ohio River. Unless, of course, they challenged his right to be who he was. Those people could incur his wrath and an admonition that "Delta is ready when you are" to head on back north. Make fun of him and his "accent" and he'll tell you right quick where you should go. And it won't be hell. Someplace worse. The North.

Of course, he wasn't going. As he once said, "I don't see anybody at bars in Atlanta celebrating because they've been transferred to New Jersey."

I never met Lewis. Of course that's my loss and not his. But I've come close. Wendy and I saw the tribute show done by Bill Oberst, Jr. I've read most of his books and a lot of his columns.

I laughed out loud at the thought of all those potatoes taking in the sight of my own grandma's backside (Don't Bend Over in the Garden Granny Cause Those Taters Got Eyes). And I cried more than once after my grandma died listening to Lewis sing about "Grandma Willie's Yard."

I'm a Southerner now because I invited myself. That should make me a little suspect right there because no true Southerner would "invite himself" anywhere. But Lewis told me it was OK as long as I didn't try to make everyone I met feel like they were talking a foreign language and promised to NEVER tell anyone "how we did it up North." I confess, however, to explaining how things were done in Virginia (still technically a Southern state, right?), Tennessee and Florida (north Florida with all the rednecks, not south Florida with Palm Beach and Miami). I think Lewis would be OK with that.

It's been a while since I've sat down with Lewis, but I'm fixin to remedy that. I just came back home with a big ole stack of his best work. I've already read them all, of course, and some two or three times. But no one with his feet on Dixie dirt can never get too much of Lewis Grizzard.

Kathy Sue Loudermilk, since Lewis is gone, I'd be honored if you'd marry me.

Woods Tea Co. to perform at Joy

Woods Tea Co., a Vermont-based folk music group that tours the country, will appear in Kings Mountain on Saturday, Jan. 9 at the Joy Performance Center, 202 S. Railroad Ave., at 7:30 p.m. Woods Tea Co. is a professional touring band that performs over 200 concerts a year, many of them in the Northeast.

Combining outstanding musicianship with a unique style of audience rapport, their music features rich vocal harmonies accompanied by up to a dozen different instruments including guitars, banjos, hammered dulcimer, bouzoukis and bodhrans. Their dry New England humor blends in to make an outstanding show. They defy categorization and perform folk songs, Celtic tunes, gospel, sea chanties and bluegrass with equal ease and skill.

Tickets are \$20 each in advance and will be sold for \$24 each at the door. For more information, call 704-739-6385 or 704-739-9408.

Duckpin bowling

Duckpin Bowling League results from Mountain Lanes:

Tuesday, Dec. 22

Lucky Ducks 6, Half Timers 2
Lucky Ducks - Mike Murphy 122 game, 348 set.
Half Timers - John Schroter 110 game, 304 set.

Zeke's Zingers 4, Alley Cats 4
Zeke Rybczyk - 104

games, 306 set. Alley Cats - Allen Myers 136 game, 349 set.

Thursday, Dec. 24

Double Deuces 8, KM Warriors 0
Double Deuces - Allen Myers 139 game, 388 set.
KM Warriors - Tommy Barrett 119 game, 314 set.

Geezers 6, Old Timers 2
Geezers - Jessy Wright 140 game, 362 set.
Old Timers - Greg Evans 145 game, 403 set.

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bring more people to the sidewalks and more businesses to the empty buildings," Amos added.

In the money

Johnson said that MPI has been instrumental in grant facilitation this year. If the group is awarded the maximum amount of every one of the grants it has applied for, then Johnson said they will get a 922% return on their investments.

"If only 50% of the benefits of the grants are

awarded it is still a 461% return on investment. This is unbelievable considering most folks that are investing would like a 10% return on their investments in the stock market," said Johnson, who is vice president at First National Bank.

A \$12,000 grant was awarded in Nov. to Body Junction/Shapes by Jodi, which is relocating with the Looking Glass Salon to the McGinnis department store building. The money is earmarked for renovation and relocation, with the creation of one new job. It was one of 11 awarded statewide.

Several other grants are

in the works: \$12,000-20,000 for the expansion and renovation of Home-town Hardware; \$20,000 for the renovation of Stevo's Bar and Jazz Club; \$250,000 for small business and entrepreneurial assistance; \$250,000 for renovation of a downtown building for an anticipated fine dining establishment; and a total of \$10,500 for architectural services to seven downtown properties.

The new businesses and renovations carry the potential of creating 24 new jobs in downtown Kings Mountain.

Looking ahead to 2010

Board members of Mountaineer Partnership and downtown proprietors look ahead to the new year with promise and hope.

The streets are not as quiet as they once were and although they may not be as bustling as they were in the 50's, downtown Kings Mountain is coming alive again. Some of the shop keepers believe it. Mountaineer Partnership is counting on it.

The North Carolina Main Street Program is guarantee-

ing it. But like a beautiful garden, downtown will need some attention, love and devotion to bloom. A little hard work and a lot of team work top the New Year's resolution list for MPI.

"I look forward to the multitude of resources that the Main Street organization will bring to the downtown and the Mountaineer Partnership," Johnson said. "We will begin to work toward implementing the planning phases of several projects for the downtown."

MPI Executive Director

Adam Hines hinted at those phases by listing: downtown rebranding/marketing implementation; streetscape and public space redesign technical plan development/fundraising/implementation; business recruitment and expansion; two-five year works plan development for MPI and downtown; and, case for support and fund development, on his list of resolutions for 2010.

He added that it's "gonna be a busy year. Expect good things to come!"

JOBS From Page 1

a 24-inch line is the No. 2 goal for 2010. The city plans to have the project completed in 2012. The mayor said another big project will be King Street water line replacement since there have been breaks in the line.

The third big goal is completion of an environmental impact study for a second lake, the impoundment on Muddy Fork Creek about 1/3 the size of city owned Moss Lake. The mayor said the city will continue to work with HDR of Charlotte, the Army Corps of Engineers and the state on design, location and construction costs of completing the project in eight years. Additionally, some major renovations have to be done at the spillway with a 2011 completion goal.

Last year the city designated the Kings Mountain Fire Station 1 (beside city hall) as Kings Mountain's permanent emergency shelter and added storm warning systems in strategic areas in town: the police department, which had been the main location; the new fire station on US 74 West and the YMCA on Cleveland Avenue in East Kings Mountain.

The new year should see the completion of 12 apartments for the handicapped on Cherokee Street and beginning construction of 84 Kings Falls apartments, including 36 for senior residents, on Gold and Ruppe Streets.

The mayor said the city

will continue to apply for Community Development Block grants and others to help the community, including needed water and sewer updates.

"The year just ending has been very challenging for all of us," said the mayor. "We worked through a 2 1/2 million dollar shortfall as we began work on the new year budget and took steps internally to survive the economic crunch and not raise taxes or services to citizens.

Kings Mountain saw some firsts in 2009: Gateway Trails opened, the Margrace Village, 90 years old,

got in the history books with inclusion on the National Register of Historic Places, the local jobless rate hit 14.5%. The 120-year-old downtown landmark Plonk's was sold to a developer and the landmark over 50-year-old McGinnis Department Store announced its closing. The city of KM got some stimulus funds but a top federal grant of \$28.4M went to Chemetall Foote Corp to build a lithium hydroxide plant to produce very high purity lithium materials for next generation transportation batteries.

ANSWERS From Page 1

developments which might lead to a suspect being charged. She asks that anyone with any information to call Hamrick at 704-484-4888 or Crimestoppers at 704-481-TIPS.

Robert Deshawn Odums, of 306 Compact School Road, returned home on the night of Jan. 30, 2008 to find his house burglarized and his girlfriend dead, according to information released by the Cleveland County Sheriff's Department last January. Emergency communications received a 911 call at 11:40 p.m. Jan. 30, 2008 from Odums who said he had returned home to find his girlfriend, Kimberly Frances Pagano, lying on the floor of their bedroom at 306 Compact School Road, according to the officer's report. Pagano was pronounced dead at the scene. An autopsy report from

the State Medical Examiners Office confirmed that Pagano's death was a homicide. The front door of the residence was "kicked in," according to Det. Hamrick's report. He said at the time it appeared to be a break-in, nothing was reported stolen and no weapon was recovered at the scene.

The couple had been living at the address for about a month and had been dating about six months, according to Mrs. Pagano.

The Pagano family moved to Kings Mountain from New York five years ago. Kim, the daughter of Kathleen and Joseph Pagano, had worked at Bojangles in Gastonia. She has a brother, Thomas, 18.

"We're going to be in Kings Mountain as long as it takes to find our daughter's murderer," said Mrs. Pagano, adding, "We don't want this to turn into a 'cold' case and our family is leaving no stone unturned to get justice for Kimmie."

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New Year's Eve Celebration

8 p.m. - 1 a.m. Thursday, Dec. 31
Kings Mountain American Legion
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