

Where do those donations go?

BETH BROCK

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When you put items in donation bins around town do you ever wonder where your donations go after they are picked up? Are they for local, state, national, or maybe even worldwide causes? Are the providers of the boxes required to have a permit from the city?

Kings Mountain has donation bins all over town and in the outlying area. The white bins have been around for a while, but more recently, yellow bins have been popping up.

Peggy Henderson of the City's Codes and Inspection Department said owners of the bins are not required to have special permits from the city. "Maybe they ought to, but because they are non-profit they aren't required to have any special permits," she said.

According to an employee at Farmers Furniture where one of the white bins is located, the donations go to a thrift store "up the street."

Some of the bins have "Donation Station" and "Community Thrift" on the side. The phone number has been covered over.

Community Thrift is "up the street" from Farmers Furniture. A thrift store salesperson, was asked where the proceeds went



Photos by Beth Brock

Planet Aid boxes have been popping up all around town.

from the sale of articles in the store went, didn't know. She verified that the items came from the white bins and that she is a volunteer. She added that she thought the phone number had been covered over because there isn't a phone in the store. The owner of the store is out of town, and unavailable for comment.

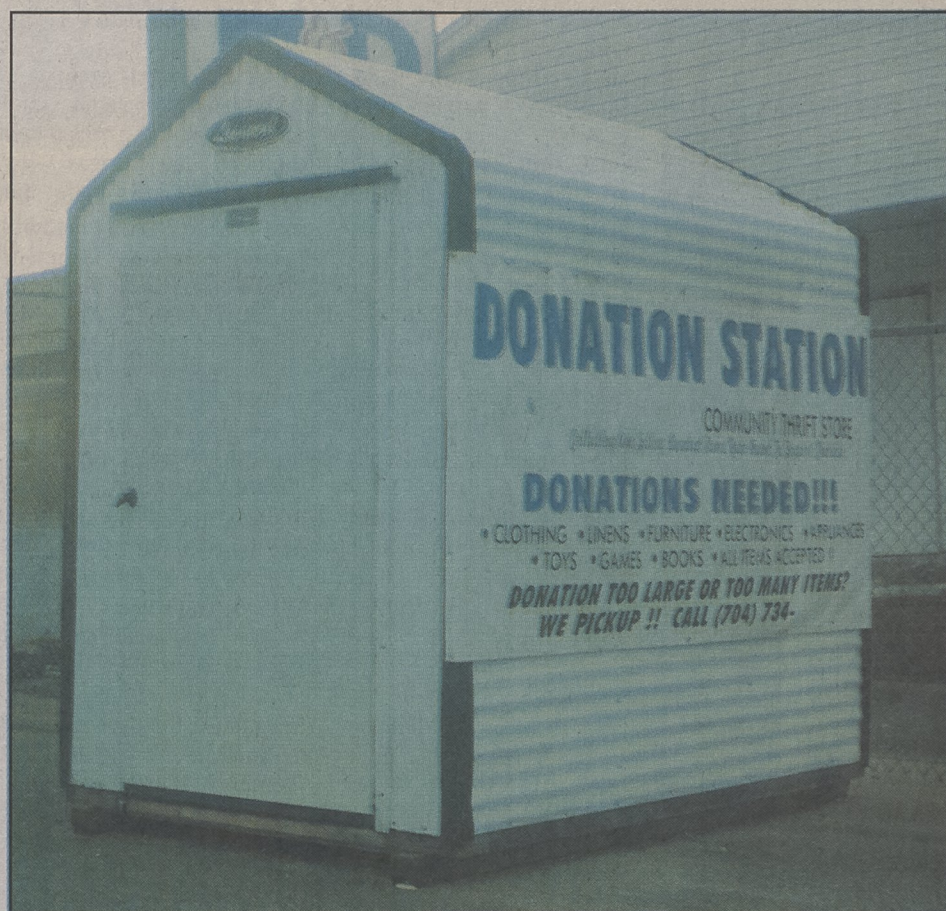
The yellow collection bins provide more information on them. Planet Aid with the phone number 336-420-9800, is printed on the front along with the donation information, clothes and

shoes. On the front and side is printed the website: www.planetaid.com.

John Benson, transportation and collections manager, was very helpful in providing information about Planet Aid.

He said Planet Aid is a certified non-profit organization. The clothes and shoes collected are sold in bulk, wholesale, to recycling companies overseas, often in Yugoslavia. The recycling breaks the clothing down which in turn makes more textiles.

The funds collected from



Community Thrift boxes have been around for a while.

the sale of the clothes and shoes help start schools where teachers are trained. These teachers in turn help farmers learn how to rotate crops in order to increase crop yield and how to raise animals for food.

Farmers are given two of several animals such as pigs, goats, or chickens, in order to be able to breed them and raise food for their families.

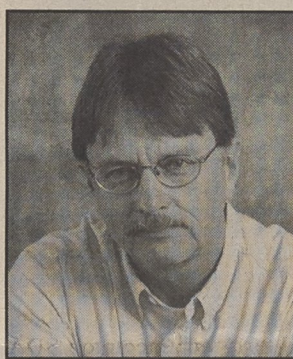
The Planet Aid farming programs also get additional funding through USDA.

Benson had the opportunity to go to Malawi, Africa last year for four months and helped train and work first hand with farmers.

Other areas in addition to Africa that benefit from the Planet Aid assistance are Asia, South America, and India.

Benson was quick to add that Planet Aid doesn't just assist people outside the United States. He said they have helped a lot of smaller towns with buying coats and other articles of clothing for people in need. He urges local organizations or church members to contact Planet Aid if they need assistance in clothing for local residents.

Gun control. The topic is stirring a lot of debate these days



Alan Hodge

No need to explain what prompted me to write this column as we have all sat before our TV sets over the past two weeks in shared shock and sadness at the events at Sandy Hook Elementary in Newtown, Connecticut.

I saw a poll last week that said the nation was divided with half wanting more gun control laws and the other half against the idea. I reckon that pretty well sums up how I feel too. Torn.

I am not strictly against firearms. During the course of the past 15 years or so I have taken part in War Between the States battle and living history reenacting events at places such as Gettysburg, Antietam, and Chickamauga where over 10,000 muskets and upwards of 100 field pieces were blasting away all at the same time. In fact, I have lost a good bit of hearing in one ear thanks to this pastime and my trusty P1853 Enfield rifle/musket is one of my prized possessions.

Not only that, but on a more modern note and closer to home, we have a couple of Roscoes at the house and Sharon took the concealed carry course and is a crack shot.

On the other hand—A lot of the debate surrounding the gun control

argument centers on the Second Amendment to the US Constitution (the so-called Bill of Rights) and the "right to bear arms." I have a theory in that regard and it came to me when I realized that when the Second Amendment was written in 1791, the long-arm used by folks and armies world-wide was a single-shot, flintlock musket either rifled as in a 'squirrel gun' by the general populace, or the smoothbore variety as carried by soldiers of the line.

Folks, it takes a full minute, steady hands, and over nine separate actions to load and fire a smooth-bore flintlock musket and if the weather is damp or rainy it still might not go off. A rifled musket of the same period is even slower to load because you have to include putting a cloth patch down the barrel before the ball to make a tight seal in the rifling grooves.

Compare this, if you will, to what a modern semi-automatic assault type rifle can do. It can

empty a 30 round clip in seconds. By simply altering a little piece in the firing mechanism called a 'sear' (illegally I might add) it can go full auto and blaze through hundreds of rounds a minute.

I contend that the folks who wrote the Bill of Rights could never have conceived of a day when one person equipped with something like an AR-15 or AK-47 would have in their hands, for good or evil, the firepower of an entire 18th or early to mid-19th century infantry regiment. I contend that if they could have peered into the future, they would have not given a blanket endorsement to the "right to bear arms" as in meaning anything you cared to own in that regard such as assault rifles, machine guns, drum magazines, 15-round pistol clips etc. etc.

Simply stated, assault rifles are designed for one thing- to kill people. Not to shoot paper targets although most are used that way, but to fire a round

that has such devastating power as to literally tear a human body to pieces, so I think ownership of these devices by civilians should be heavily regulated at the very least.

Some of you will disagree with me on that but that's my theory, and as a gun owner, I am sticking with it.

But wait! Someone hollered. "If law-abiding folks have their gun rights monkeyed with, then only crooks will have guns and the government can come and take over the country and citizens will be defenseless and naked!"

Do you really believe that shrill cry? Not me.

Of course over the next weeks folks on both sides of the gun control debate will squeal and clamor and each side will say the other is wrong and crazy and over-reacting. But I am afraid the uproar will fade sooner or later until another tragedy happens like the one in Sandy Hook then what will everyone say? The gun law round-and-round is like a

dog chasing its tail with a lit stick of dynamite attached.

Shifting gears a bit, I don't think that all the blame for the horrible mayhem that visits our news all too frequently can be laid solely at the feet of an inanimate object such as a gun or at gun owners. Ball bats and golf clubs and knives can be bad news too. But, a lot of it has to do with where our culture has been, where it is now, and where it is going.

I once read a statement, "America is a nation of warriors". Guns blasted our nation into being, blasted it apart, blasted it back together again, and blasted it into a world power. Every little boy has "shot" his fair share of Indians or enemies while playing army-man. Few, myself included, have actually seen what really happens when a person shoots a person, but the TV and video game movie versions of this act glorify

it just like dropping bombs on folks from 25,000 ft. and only seeing black puffs on the ground below and not the sight of the twisted bodies and burned houses below.

We need to look at guns and how to get a handle on limiting access to weapons of war, but we also need to look inside of ourselves individually and collectively as a nation and world to figure out how to keep certain persons from turning their darkest, fondest, fantasies of revenge, hate, and madness into our living nightmares.

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Kings Mountain Herald

Published every Wednesday
Periodicals postage at Kings Mountain, NC 28086
USPS 931-040 by Gemini Newspapers, Inc.
Postmaster, send address changes to: P. O. Box 769, Kings Mountain, NC 28086
Phone (704) 739-7496 • Fax (704) 739-0611
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