

editorials

Organized confusion

Tuesday night the Kings Mountain Commissioners met in special session to consider a five-point program submitted by members of the city's police department.

The KMPD requests are clear enough, but we must admit to a bit of confusion on how the commissioners handled portions of the request.

Items 1 and 2: to accept McDevitt's resignation, and to appoint William Roper chief and J.D. Barrett as assistant chief - are the items in question.

Ward Five Commissioner James Amos asked for someone to make a motion on Item 1. Ward Two Commissioner Lloyd Davis made a motion, but his move was to rescind his Monday night motion to grant McDevitt a 30-day leave of absence with pay, plus two weeks vacation pay, to reconsider his resignation. Davis' Tuesday night motion excluded rescinding the two weeks vacation pay.

Immediately following a passing vote on this motion, Ward Three Commissioner Corbett Nicholson moved to adopt Item 2 of the KMPD proposal. Ward Four's Don McAbee seconded and the "motion was ruled carried," according to Mayor John H. Moss.

And this is where the confusion begins.

Commissioner Amos said he didn't vote. Ward One's Ray Cline said he didn't vote. And when asked, Commissioner Davis even said he didn't vote. If that was the case, then the vote

was three to three and would mean the mayor would have to break the tie. But, remember, the mayor said "motion was ruled carried."

City Clerk Joe McDaniel told The Mirror Wednesday he just entered the motion in the minute books as carried without including who voted or how he voted.

After the "chief vote" the commissioners went into executive session to talk to both Roper and Barrett about their jobs. Why were both men interviewed after the vote was taken? More confusion.

Reconvening, the mayor announced "Items one and two of the request list have been acted on..."

Following the meeting Commissioner Amos commented "Item two had been changed to a unanimous vote."

Wow!

Since the resignation of McDevitt was never moved, seconded nor voted on in the open meeting, and at least three of the six commissioners commented they didn't vote on the chief, assistant chief motion in the open meeting, then following the executive session it was announced both Items 1 and 2 had been acted on, unanimously in the Item 2 matter, it would appear we do not have sole claim to being confused.

We would remind the commissioners voting in executive session is in violation of the North Carolina Open Meetings Law.

Master chefs brew trouble-stew

Police Chief Tom McDevitt resigned Monday.

And the Citizens of Kings Mountain are now getting a taste of what it's like to lose a police chief under less than compatible conditions.

And the taste is bitter.

It's also dangerous.

Monday night's board of commissioners meeting was a prime example of how bitter the taste can become and the danger for the community surfaced in the aftermath. It happens everytime any issue plays on people's emotions and the situation with Chief McDevitt can be defined as nothing less than an emotional concert.

The current commissioners were the master chefs in this trouble-stew. They were the chefs, but the ingredients were supplied by their constituents anxious to see them elected. The ingredients were rumors and campaign promises that placed a cloud over the KMPD and Chief McDevitt. In this case it's like the classic example of cutting off one's nose to spite one's face because some of the stew ingredients were supplied by KMPD officers.

The cloud remained throughout the campaign and after the election. The commissioners did little to dissipate the cloud when they failed to neither rehire nor fire McDevitt as they took office. Later, McDevitt was rehired, but not unanimously. Then came the question of nine cases of confiscated booze missing from a total of 41 taken in a bust almost six years ago. The booze has since been destroyed. Next came the question of police controlled equipment; hondas, revolvers and scanners. Where were these items? That question, too, has been resolved satisfactorily.

And with the resignation of

McDevitt it would seem all of this is now just so much liquid through the spillway.

It would seem so, but not quite. It made little difference to the citizens who packed the commissioner chambers here Monday night that while they were offering support to McDevitt, that he was in Forest City accepting the job of police chief. In fact it made the taste even more bitter as evidenced by the heated confrontations between citizens and commissioners, citizens and at least one police officer.

Such stirrings keep the bitterness strong and there is the danger.

The Mirror would be the last to suggest people do not have the right to stand up and be counted. More power to the people who make their feelings known to their governing bodies on the issues. And even more power to the people who make their feelings known on all the issues, not just the ones tainted with the scent of blood.

We said the commissioners were the chefs and some constituents supplied the ingredients for the trouble stew. Then we must also mention that the rest of us, through non-support and apathy, supplied the pot in which the stew was brewed.

McDevitt is gone. To his devotees, Forest City's gain is Kings Mountain's loss.

To his enemies, the opposite applies.

At this point that is neither here nor there. We must remember that Kings Mountain is still here and the people are still here and they are entitled to expect the best police department possible.

But we must also remember this will not be possible without community interest and support.

appendix

the misadventures and memoirs of one man's organ



Every now and again I like many of you, am given to reminiscing. I suppose it's brought on lately because of the 55-mph law.

The only trouble with this reduced speed limit is now your danger of being run down by a transfer truck is much greater.

But, anyway, back to reminiscing. Being a fellow who likes to think through past events with the eye of an uninvolved observer it came to me about 3 a.m. on a recent day that I had never really paid proper respects to my appendix.

It's belated, but bears out the ancient soothsaying that you never value anything until you don't have it any longer. I haven't had my appendix since 1956.

I do remember at the time I was only too happy to be rid of them. Afterwards I never gave them that much thought. Being young at the time I was not given to lamenting lost companions.

But at the morning hour of three, while a friend was talking about the new Woody Allen movie playing in Charlotte, I suddenly was filled with remorse over the fact I had not said the proper words, nor sipped even a toast to my late appendix.

Shame on me. It's utterly indecent of me. After all, were we not warmed by the same womb? Did we not make our debut in the maternity room together? It was on the 27th day of January back in '37. There was snow on the ground. A kindly old doctor was in attendance. My mother was there. It works best that way. I wasn't sick so the slide for life was not made in the antiseptic confines of a hospital. It was the front room of my home, actually a textile mill superintendent's home - my grandfather's - in Belmont (Garibaldi Station, Montbell) on the Catawba.

Incidentally, this house also served as the death scene for my grandfather. I was barely two when it happened. I have

no memory of him. I don't even know whether he still had his appendix or not. I prefer to believe he did. It leaves no loose ends when the roll is called up yonder.

(sigh) I am not to have the same neat, orderly demise. I lost my appendix in Roncove, West Virginia.

Memories come streaming back now.

When I recall how horribly you could have done me in, my silent companion for little more than 19 years, but that you didn't I am overcome. Valiantly you kept it together, almost like a premier air passenger too embarrassed to use his motion sickness bag, until the surgeon's retractor (or whatever he used) lifted you pulsating, swollen and grotesque from that intricate cavity.

Safely away from me you came unglued. I was still unconscious when they packed you for shipment to Charlotte Memorial Hospital. I am crestfallen, old buddy. I have never had the thoughtfulness to even inquire why this was done.

I hang my head in silence when I recall how you awakened me in the middle of that chilly March night; your last night. Sharply you warned me. So sharply, in fact, I assumed the Lotus position instantly from a deep sleep. The earlier warning, which I foolishly ignored, had been mild. It was so like you to be gently, resorting only to violence when it came down to you or me. How unselfish. How noble.

At last, old buddy, the respects are paid.

Skull!

Salute!

Cheers!

There will always be a warm spot in my side for you.

And now, emotionally spent, I am left only with one more mystery to solve.

The mystery of why the mention of Woody Allen should remind me of the debt I owed to my appendix.



Dateline: February 8, 1974

White Plains, N.C. - Some of the boys got together down at the store today to talk about changing the name of the town to Kings Mountain. It was doubtful whether anything much would come of it since most folks felt like

LOOKING BACK

since the mining was about gone and everybody had headed for California, that the town of White Plains wouldn't last much longer anyway.

Stiffer Drug Laws A Must

To the editor:

I have read of President Nixon's plea for stiffer laws in order to control the dope pushers and feel this is something long overdue.

Also long overdue is an awakening of individuals who have not placed enough emphasis on the evils of drugs.

Only yesterday a young man I know remarked he knew of an individual who is pushing drugs in the community, and he asked what the police would pay for the information. I had a question for him; what is more important? Making a little money or perhaps saving the life of a friend?

Those who think informing the authorities of drug violations is hurting a friend must consider the awesome damage drugs is causing so many individuals. Whether or not we care to admit it - we are our brother's keeper.

Or don't we care?

We had better reexamine our thinking.

EVERETTE H. PEARSON
Kings Mountain



Citizens Quiz Commissioners At Monday Night Meeting

Letters To The Editor

Citizens Express Concern Over McDevitt's Plight

EDITOR'S NOTE: This letter was presented to Mayor Moss and the commissioners at Monday night's meeting at city hall.

Gentlemen:

I have heard, as I am sure most of you have, that Chief McDevitt intends to resign at this meeting.

I feel that this is something that you as the leaders of our city have caused and I don't see how you could possibly accept his resignation with a clear conscience.

This man has done an outstanding job since he has been here. Our police department has now developed into a group of well-trained men. Before Chief

McDevitt assumed the duties here anyone was hired as a law enforcement officer and was never required to undergo any special training. Now all of this changed under the supervision of Chief McDevitt.

I realize and I am sure that each of you do, that he has worked under a tremendous strain for the past several months, yet he has performed in his usual great manner. He has been questioned about everything possible and has been checked on countless times and each time has come out looking great.

I think if you will put yourself in his place you will find that he is trying to do a job that is all but impossible for any

human because of all the pressure that has been upon him lately. Could you perform under these conditions?

How many times have any of you tried to bring before the people of Kings Mountain all of the good things this man has done? I'm sure if you answer truthfully you will find you have not lost any sleep trying to bring out his good points. Yet, look at the papers from months past and you will see time was spent to dig up things to make him look bad - but none of it has worked.

McDevitt has proven himself, so why can't he be allowed to do the job he was hired for without interference from anyone? Why is he not allowed to hire, fire and promote within his department as he sees fit? Is this not part of his duties?

I know for a fact one of the reasons for him considering resigning is because he is not allowed to supervise his men in all phases of their jobs...What's wrong with giving him complete control of his department?...Who knows better than he who should be promoted or terminated?

Sincerely hope each of you will search your hearts and disregard any personal feelings you may have for Chief McDevitt, and look instead at the tremendous job he has done for each of us before you accept his resignation...

MRS. WAYNE RUSSELL
MRS. ORANGREL JOLLEY
MYRTLE PLOTT
NANCY K. SMITH
AUDREY DICKEY
W.H. CHILDERS
LAURIE JOLLEY
TINA RUSSELL

dialogue

What is the best method for checking a community's pulse? Through an exchange of dialogue. Through a reader's dialogue within these columns his or her point of view will be made clear on whatever issue he or she chooses. The Mirror values your viewpoint. Address your letters to: Kings Mountain Mirror DIALOGUE, P.O. Box 6, Kings Mountain, N.C., 28086. All letters must be signed and include full address and phone number. Pens ready? Then begin.....