

COMMUNITY NEWS

Resident views Kinston from behind the steering wheel

When I grew up in Kinston, we spent a lot of time riding around: riding by the Captain's Corner (it was the Jiffy Mart then), riding by friends' houses, or just riding around because there was nothing else to do.

I guess what they say about old habits dying hard might be true. I moved back to Kinston in May, after being away for nine years. When I first got back, I had a lot of time on my hands, and I spent a lot of time driving around.

When my friends would ask me what it was like to be back home, one of the things I would complain to them about was the pickup trucks. There weren't any pickup trucks that I could remember while living in North Raleigh. And they certainly didn't get in my way

when I was speeding around the beltline or down I-40. Here, it seemed like every time I'd try to drive down Hwy 70 or the backroads to Greenville to try to think and readjust to being back home, a big pickup would appear out of nowhere - driving WAY below the speed limit.

I hardly notice the trucks anymore, and I haven't been on the beltline or I-40 in quite a while. I guess I've adjusted to the slower pace. I now think it's perfectly normal to be able to drive to the grocery store and be back home in 10 minutes. In Raleigh, to accomplish this task in half an hour would have been pushing it.

The differences probably shouldn't seem that dramatic. It's not like Raleigh is New York city

or Atlanta or anything like that. And Kinston certainly isn't Hooterville or Mayberry. But there is a difference. There's a difference in the pace which requires an adjustment - especially if you haven't moved around a lot. I think there's also a difference in the people.

I don't ride by the Captain's Corner much, but when I do, I usually see someone I know. A lot of times, I'll ride by the homes of my high school friends, the homes where I spent so much time back then, but they don't live there anymore. Neither do their parents, which is, in some ways, harder to accept. Not long after I'd been here, one of my best friends - who was living in Greenville at the time - met with me one morn-

ing to say good-bye. She was moving far, far away to another small town called Maiden. Because we had only a few minutes in which to meet, she suggested that we meet in the parking lot of the "Jiffy Mart." She said it like it was the most natural thing in the world.

As we stood there trying not to cry - trying to act like the grown-ups we are supposed to be - we started remembering all the times we had laughed and cried and said good-by to people in the parking lot. This time, it was the perfect place for us to meet as she hurried off to begin her new life, to conquer yet another small town and assume her new role as a doctor's wife. It was sad to see her leave, but I knew that it wouldn't be long before I would decide

which adventure I would undertake next.

I still drive around a lot. Probably always will. But I don't spend quite as much time driving around aimlessly. I drive to Greenville to teach, a profession I thought I'd given up forever. And I drive around running errands. You know, just the usual stuff. Just the other day, I had to pick my sister up from school, and I saw one of my old teachers. I told

him I think I might be the same kind of teacher he is. Back in high school, he thought he was trying to teach me art. I bet he was surprised to find out that he'd taught me a lot more.

It's funny - the things you can learn from the teachers in your life once you slow down enough to pay attention.

This submission was written by Jessica Stanley.