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Top Students Honored

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Visits KM School

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Kings Mountain Herald

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KINGS MOUNTAIN, NORTH CAROLINA

Cemetery Department Targeted

SBI Investigation Is Underway

The State Bureau of Investigation was called in yesterday to conduct an investigation into alleged reports of missing funds from the Kings Mountain Cemetery Department.

Irvin M. Allen, Jr., chairman of the three-member committee of city commissioners appointed by Mayor John Moss to review written complaints from Bennett Masters, told the Herald

Tuesday that the SBI was being called into the investigation. The District Attorney was notified formally yesterday to ask for an independent investigation from the SBI, which will now take the investigation out of the Kings Mountain Police Department.

Mayor Moss told the Herald this week that the appointment of the three member cemetery commit-

tee, including Commissioners Corbet Nicholson and Curt Gaffney, came after several years of complaints from Bennett Masters, who owns and operates Masters Funeral Home and who sells monuments, concerning operation of the city owned Mountain Rest Cemetery. He said that one executive session of the board and two personal meetings with Masters and Jenkins together, had

aired but not settled the matter, but that his decision to appoint the committee was not in the order of a "personal matter" and involved "a long simmering situation" which he felt needed to be looked into in depth by a committee of commissioners and given the proper attention. The Mayor is authorized to appoint committees.

The Mayor told the Herald he advised Superintendent

Ken Jenkins that a review committee was appointed.

The furor surfaced Wednesday when WBTV reporters and cameramen came to City Hall and then subsequently went to the city cemetery office acting on information from a citizen.

At the center of the investigation is Ken Jenkins, a 22 year employee of the City



KEN JENKINS

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Photo by Gary Stewart

HONORED FOR SERVICE - Buren Randle, center, accepts a plaque from Grover Rescue Squad's first captain, Fain Hambricht, right, signifying Randle's 25 years of service to the squad during its 25th anniversary celebration Sunday. Looking on at left is the squad's present captain, Jackie McCurry.

Charter Member Randle Honored By Grover Squad

Buren Randle has officially retired as a member of the Grover Rescue Squad. But, don't expect him to divorce rescue work completely.

Members of the squad and community honored the 71-year-old Grover resident Sunday during the climax of the squad's 25th anniversary celebration. He received a plaque, had his volunteer services number 1650 retired, and was applauded by fellow members of the squad and community.

But, the program wasn't even over before Squad Captain Jackie McCurry announced that Randle had agreed to represent the squad at all area meetings of the Rescue Squad Association.

"I'm not going to completely get away from it," said Randle. "I'll still be coming in and out. But, I'm 71 years old and I figured 25 years was enough to be running the ambulances."

Randle has been a familiar face to Grover and surrounding communities since the squad was organized in 1960. As McCurry pointed out, Randle went to bed each night for 25 years with a pager on his dresser, and each time it went off, Randle accepted the call.

Randle was one of 19 men who organized the squad in 1960 after the area had experienced a rash of auto accidents. Ollie Harris of Kings Mountain met with the group to help them organize, and donated to the squad a Cadillac ambulance.

The ambulance was housed at a Grover service station for sometime, then was moved to the Grover Fire Department for 18 months.

In 1962, with less than \$100 in the bank, Randle, Captain Fain Hambricht and Dennis McDaniel signed a note for a \$10,000 loan from the Blacksburg State Bank to begin a rescue squad building and purchase needed equipment. Members of the squad paid one dollar a week to belong and members of the community helped out with donations. Other funds were raised through

ballgames, dances and suppers.

The squad purchased its first new ambulance early in 1962 and occupied its present building later that year. Members of the squad and other volunteers built the building.

"Even in those hard times, we had a lot of fun," said Hambricht, who flew from San Francisco to Grover to take part in the celebration. Hambricht served as captain for the first 10 years of the squad's existence.

"I was always very appreciative of the way the people of Grover supported our squad...then and now," Hambricht said. "Louise Harry gave us free use of the Grover softball field where we raised much of our money."

Hambricht said early training consisted of a Red Cross first aid course and Rescue College. "I'm most happy of the way the training has developed," he said. "It is much more intense now than in the early years."

"I'm most proud to recognize Buren for his 25 years of service to the squad," said Hambricht. "He was my right arm for 10 to 12 years."

McCurry, who has been captain for the past four years, said he has constantly gone to Randle for advice and to "ask how business is conducted here."

"We just wanted all the people in the area to know how proud we are of him," McCurry said.

McCurry pointed out that Randle served the squad as captain for six years and spent 14 years in other offices. He was a member of the first graduating class of Rescue College and didn't miss a meeting for the first 19 years of his membership in the squad. "The only reason he missed then was because of a family health problem," McCurry said.

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TG&Y Re-Opens July 1

The name won't change, but the inside of the Kings Mountain TG&Y Family Center will soon reopen for shoppers with a lively new look and better merchandise mix.

The decision to reopen was based on re-evaluation of the market situation, said Jim McKittrick, senior vice president - Store Operations.

"We decided the sales opportunities are there in the Kings Mountain community, so we're giving the Kings Mountain customers the new look and merchandise mix of our new prototype," he added.

The store's remodel is one of 150 planned companywide by TG&Y Stores Co. in 1985. Grand opening is planned for July 1.

"We made these changes for our customers," McKittrick said. "The physical changes make our stores more convenient and enjoyable to shop and the revised merchandise mix is tailored to the needs of each community we serve."

The new asymmetrical drive aisle layout circles the store, guiding customers through every department. The higher checkout stands increase convenience and merchandise visibility.

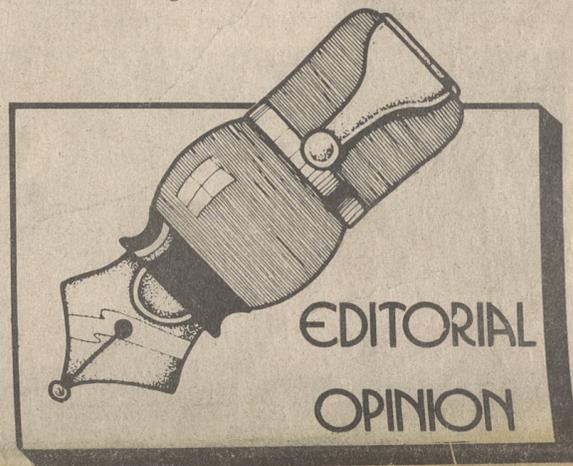
Existing space is utilized more effectively, creating a more open appearance with light gray walls and red striping.

As much merchandise as possible, without damaging the store's appearance or convenience, is displayed on the sales floor with some displays reaching from floor to ceiling. This helps maintain a better in-stock position and provide better service to customers.

Some departments have been expanded and others trimmed to offer the types of merchandise wanted by the residents in Kings Mountain. Expanded areas include health and beauty aids, infants and apparel.

Tom Quiram, a nine year veteran of TG&Y, will be the new manager. He began his career with TG&Y in July, 1976 as assistant manager in Louisville, Ky. He later served as co-manager for stores in Middletown, Berea and Hazard, Ky. before moving to Kings Mountain.

According to Don Sherer, district manager, about 30 full and part-time associates will be hired to staff the store.



EDITORIAL OPINION

A city meter reader's discovery of what city gas department officials say is an unauthorized gas meter at Masters Funeral Home has escalated more rumors circulating in town since the creation of a cemetery investigation committee leaked to the media.

This newspaper is interested in reporting facts but was accused by a man attending a Saturday morning meeting of the Open Forum of covering up activities at City Hall. We will not report rumors and "off record" conversations.

However, it is our editorial opinion that the last week has seen rumors fueled from personality conflicts of many individuals, including Supt. Ken Jenkins and mortician Bennett Masters over many years duration and now involves some members of the board of commissioners taking sides.

Master's complaint is not new. Several years ago shortly after opening Masters Funeral Home a representative of the funeral home came to a city board meeting complaining that Ken Jenkins was selling monuments at Mountain Rest Cemetery. The board met in executive session and took no action.

We feel that one of the duties of the superintendent of Mountain Rest Cemetery is to serve the public and if people come to him and ask him the name of monument companies in this area that he should give it to them.

We feel that any employee of the City of Kings Mountain who is being subjected to rumors or accusations should be given an opportunity to defend himself before an investigation is launched by a committee or mayor or commissioners.

We question the legality of charging families for placing monuments on grave lots purchased from the City of Kings Mountain. The city codes list no fees (see separate article). We strongly object to the commissioners meeting with the mayor prior to city board meetings. This creates suspicion and is a violation of the open meetings law.

Supt. Jimmy Maney of the city gas department told The Herald Tuesday that a meter reader discovered a meter on Jan. 9, 1985 at Masters Funeral Home on Shelby Road and did not find the meter listed in his book and reported it to city officials. According to records in the city clerk's office, Bennett Masters owes the city \$2497.26 but according to Masters' wife, Betty, the gas meter was in place when the Masters bought the property from Lawrence Davis and Mrs. Masters says the funeral home now heats with electricity. The city gas department turned off the gas meter on March 15, 1985 because of nonpayment.

The Herald checked the records of the city codes department Tuesday and there were no records indicating that Masters applied for gas service. Mrs. Masters said the chapel had been heated with gas but she had no recollection when the gas was hooked up. She said she found it hard to believe they could owe \$2497.26 for gas over a two month period. Mr. Masters was out of town.

City Commissioner Corbet Nicholson told The Herald Wednesday that City Heating installed heat and air conditioning and a line was run up the side of the new part of Masters Funeral Home from Knox Kut and Kurl which was a city gas customer before Masters built the funeral home. Nicholson installed the unit on top of the building for Knox Kut and Kurl. He said a water line and gas line was run by the side of the building. Nicholson said he installed two gas furnaces and two air conditioners for Masters and has records to support there was nothing improper. "I've been in this business 30 years and put in a lot of units for Kings Mountain customers" he said.

It should be pointed out that many businesses and individuals are behind in utility bills. City policy is to cut them off after they miss one payment but as the city has shown in several cases in the past, they don't always go by policy.