

# Board Fires Ken Jenkins

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After returning to council chambers at 1:15 p.m., Mayor John Moss announced that "the board of city commissioners voted 5-1 to terminate the services of the superintendent of Mountain Rest Cemetery as of this date."

The Mayor did not elaborate. Commissioner Norman King then explained why he voted the only dissenting vote. "I was well aware of the fact that we have a cemetery committee but I was not aware that it was in investigative committee," said King, who said he objected because the superintendent was being fired in the midst of an SBI investigation and that Jenkins, under the city's present personnel policy and as a department head, had a moral and legal right to be heard by the full board of commissioners, not just three, to give his side of the story."

The city's cemetery committee is the third cemetery committee appointed during the Moss Administration but only the first to function as an investigative committee. Three commissioners have been looking into questions raised by Masters about fees being charged and about the sale of monuments at Mountain Rest Cemetery. Mayor Moss said that a formal complaint was made by Masters and thus the "investigative" committee was appointed by the Mayor. The committee has included Allen, as chairman, and Commissioners Corbet Nicholson, District 3, and Curt Gaffney, District 5.

In recent months an audit of city cemetery records has been conducted covering the past five years.

City police were first called into the investigation at the beginning but then the State Bureau of Investigation started its own probe and several weeks ago turned over their materials to District Attorney Marty Shuford who is still reviewing the report of the SBI. Shuford says the investigation cannot be completed until the audit report is received.

Commissioner Allen said after the board meeting Friday that "the cemetery investigation is not over. We keep finding things and the SBI keeps finding things. We didn't railroad Ken, it's a sad thing, but that's what elected officials are for. Our committee talked with Ken once and he was not asked to resign. Based on our findings, we have no choice but to make this recommendation for his dismissal."

Allen said that the cemetery investigative committee's findings were turned over to the full board of commissioners at

the Friday 12:30 meeting. He said that each member of the commission, and the mayor, received the three page report which listed 10 allegations against Jenkins. He said the report was not made public but was placed in Jenkins' personnel file at City Hall. He said that all commissioners returned their copies of the findings with the exception of Commissioner Norman King, who refused to return his copy to Allen.

King says the report contains nothing but unproved accusations. King maintains that Jenkins should be given the right to defend himself. King says the city's personnel policy gives Jenkins that right to defend himself before the full board.

Allen said that a preliminary audit of city cemetery records revealed that only Masters Funeral Home of Kings Mountain and Jordan Monument Co. of Shelby had paid required cemetery fees over the past two years and that Jenkins apparently was an agent for Wiley Brothers Co. of York, which supplies about 90 percent of the tombstones erected at Mountain Rest Cemetery. Wiley has paid no fees due to a verbal agreement between the former superintendent of Mountain Rest Cemetery, the late Sam Suber, and the former deceased owner of the monument company, Jenkins has maintained.

A source close to the investigation said that the commission findings allege Jenkins is in violation of the city's code of ordinance adopted Dec. 12, 1967 and effective Jan. 1, 1968, which forbade Jenkins from operating under what he was referred to as "the old Sam Suber Rule" and that the code of ordinances required equal treatment as to all making use of the Mountain Rest Cemetery in the paying of fees and collection of the same.

The cemetery investigation committee alleges "gross inefficiency", that Jenkins accepted "gifts" in direct violation of the ordinances governing the operation of city owned Mountain Rest Cemetery, and alleges misuse of city funds and improper conduct by a department head, according to the source.

Jenkins, a Kings Mountain native, was hired by the city at Mountain Rest Cemetery Dec. 1, 1963. His salary has been \$365.11 per week. He is eligible for city retirement benefits.

Jenkins has remained on the job throughout the investigation, has met with the three-member cemetery investigative commission once, according to Allen.

After Mayor Moss announced that Jenkins had been fired, he called for a motion that Walt Ollis be appointed interim cemetery superintendent, which the board approved, until Jenkins' successor can be hired. Ollis is head of the city's water department.

## Letter To The Editor

### Bridges Drive Residents Thankful

To The Editor

The neighbors on Bridges Drive would like to take this opportunity to thank Mayor John Moss, Superintendent of Public Works, Wayne Kimbrell, Supervisor of Street and Sanitation Department, Jim Downey, Supervisor of Water and Sewage Department, Jim Poston, The Kings Mountain Police Department, The Kings Mountain Emergency Command Post, and a "GREAT BIG THANKS ESPECIALLY TO ALL CITY EMPLOYEES" who worked Saturday morning, noon, and night, until early Sunday morning, who assisted us and helped us to clean up after sewer and flood damage in our neighborhood August 17, 1985.

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**Lib Stewart**

### Play Depicted Life Of Weekly Newspaper

Ah for the life of working on a newspaper which is all "fun and games" as depicted in The Herald Publisher's play, "A Hell Of A Way To Run A Railroad."

The three-act comedy about the trials and tribulations of a weekly newspaper editor in the fictional "Eagle" premiered before large crowds at Gastonia Little Theater last weekend.

There were places in the script that only "Garland's" employees could associate with but otherwise, it was a fun-filled evening for all those attending, and especially for the 30-plus staffers from the seven weekly newspapers owned by Garland and Ellen Atkins of Gastonia.

The "boss" starred in the comedy, which he also wrote and directed, and kept the audience in stitches.

We thought all the "characters" were perfect for their parts but teetotaler Dave Cone should receive high marks for his portrayal of the lush in the newspaper office.

### Registrars Will Help Voters With Changes

Margaret White, East Kings Mountain registrar, (739-4019) and Hilda Goforth, Bethware registrar, (739-5160) both of whom live in Kings Mountain, will be happy to help voters to register their change of voting place.

Mrs. Becky Cook, chairman of the KM Board of Elections, said that voters can also change their voting place, if they have moved from one district to another in the past two years, by contacting the Cleveland County Board of Elections.

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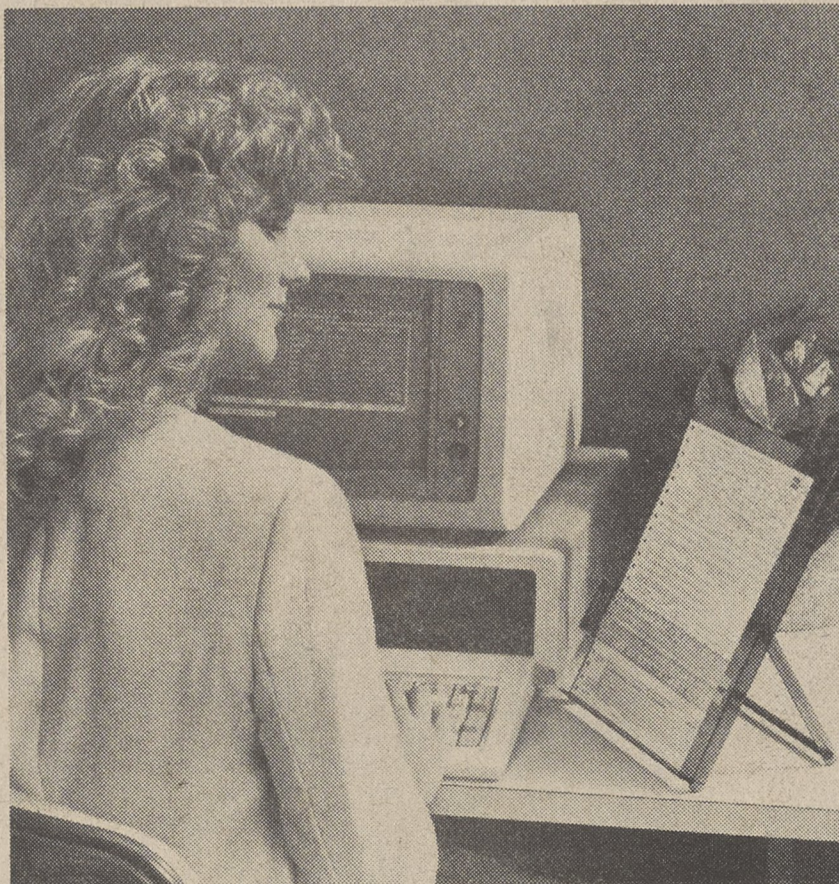
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