

WELCOME '90

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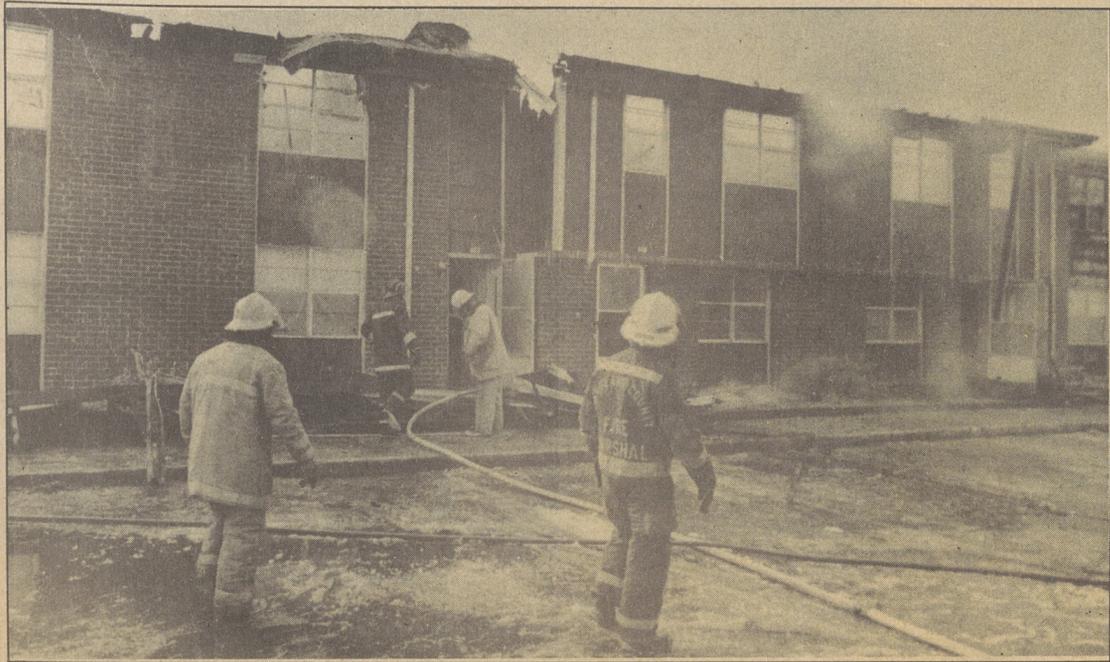


PHOTO BY DIETER MELHORN

Fire Destroys 8 Apartments At Pine Manor

Two eight and nine-year-old boys playing with matches on bunk beds in an upstairs bedroom of Apt. 38 at Pine Manor Apartments started a fire which gutted eight units of public housing and left 20 people homeless Saturday morning, according to reports of Kings Mountain Fire and Police Department.

Sgt. James Camp, of the Kings Mountain Police Department, and authorities with the Cleveland County Department of Social Services, are continuing their investigation into the fire and possible child neglect involving the minors. The two children, one of whom was a holiday guest, were alone in the house at the time, investigators said. Police said they were told that a neighbor was watching the children while the parents had gone to Statesville. Fifty-five firefighters, two of whom were injured, battled the blaze which was reported by a resident of the low-rent housing complex at 8:56 a.m.

No residents of the big subsidized housing project on Charles Street, owned and operated by U. S. Shelter of Charlotte, were injured and all families were either moved into vacant apartments on the premises or have moved into homes of relatives.

Willard Yarborough Jr., pump engineer with Kings Mountain Fire Department, was treated at the hospital and released. He was trapped underneath the burning part of a 24x14 foot of roof that fell on him and knocked him off a ladder. Yarborough suffered first degree burns on his face and a sprained wrist.

Philip Greene, a volunteer with KMFD, slipped on ice in 16 degree weather and hurt his knee.

Firemen and police salvaged Christmas gifts, radios and stereos and furnishings in the first floor rooms of the apartments as well as pictures hanging on the walls.

"Fortunately, two of the apartments were vacant at the time. See Page 13.

FIREMEN FIGHT APARTMENT BLAZE-Kings Mountain firemen, above, fight a blaze in 16 degree temperatures at Pine Manor Apartments on Charles Street. The fire, which started early Saturday in an upstairs bedroom by two young boys playing with matches, quickly spread and it was nearly two hours before the 55 firemen could contain it and kept it from spreading into the large

complex. Two firemen were hurt. No residents were injured. Twenty people, left in the cold and homeless, were moved into other apartments at the housing project and two of the families are living with relatives. Firemen estimate more than \$200,000 in property damages, excluding furnishings. Some Christmas presents, pictures and first-floor furnishings were salvaged. More fire pictures on Page 6A.

Hugo, Tornado Big News In '89

Mother Nature topped the news in Kings Mountain in 1989 and as 1990 sneaks around the corner she's still proving that you can't fool her.

The weather in '89 went from freezing cold to over 80 degrees, and back to freezing cold again, to tornadoes, a hurricane, plenty of rain, and back to cold again.

Area residents thought they had seen it all when a May 5 tornado ripped the upper end of the county and 16 other counties in North Carolina. Damages were reported at over \$60 million in the state and well over \$1 million in structural damage alone in a small area of Cleveland County near Toluca. Homes were ripped apart and two people in the county died when the tornado demolished their home with them inside of it.

President Bush declared Cleveland County and most of the other 16 counties hit by the tornado as a disaster area.

But the tornado was nothing to compare with Hurricane Hugo, which came over 250 miles inland in September and affected just about everyone in the area. Only a small number of homes in the area did not lose power during the 90-plus mile per hour winds which blew down electrical lines and trees and even destroyed some homes.

Weather officials warned the night before that the hurricane would hit around Charleston, S.C., and could come inland. But not many people in Kings Mountain took them seriously.

Over 3,800 homes in Kings Mountain were out of electricity. Most area citizens had their power restored within two to five days but some residents of the Charlotte area were without power for a month or more. Electricians came from other states to Kings Mountain and surrounding towns to help restore power.

It took city street crews several weeks to clear the debris which residents placed on the curb side,

and some minor cleanup continues even today.

Weather was a big story the entire year. Kings Mountain had enjoyed mild winters for several years but was greeted this December by freezing rain, sleet and even some snow...and very, very cold temperatures. In the days leading up to Christmas, the temperature during the day time reached only the teens and nighttime temperatures hovered close to zero with wind chills up to minus 20.

During the year, Kings Mountain got over 57 inches of rain, almost 20 inches above normal for this area. In 1988, the area received only 36 inches.

In February, the first ice storm of 1988 left 1,200 residents without power. Just a few days later, the temperature topped the 80-degree mark.

While the weather was the top headline-grabber in '89, there were a lot of other stories competing for top play.

An embezzlement investigation at City Hall resulted in charges filed against two former city employees and those two, plus two others, were instructed to pay the city over \$90,000, including pay for utility bills which they said a former supervisor said they did not have to pay in lieu of working overtime.

The city voters narrowly passed a \$9.2 million bond issue for improvements to the utility system.

Voters in Kings Mountain and Cleveland County approved a \$40 million bond issue for school construction and improvements. Kings Mountain will get \$10 million over the next several years to finance construction and renovations at all of its facilities.

Voters elected new faces to the city council and school board. Fred Finger was re-elected to city council.

See 1989, Page 9-A



Photo by Dieter Melhorn

CHASE ENDS IN MULTIPLE CHARGES - State patrolmen place Leon Keith Hall, 22, of Brooklyn, N.Y., into a patrol car following a high speed chase Wednesday afternoon in Kings Mountain. Hall, recently released from prison in Alabama, was charged with allegedly stealing a car in Columbus, Ga., and leading police on a chase up to 109 miles per hour through Kings Mountain. Police said the chase started on I-85, wound its way through back roads and onto the Highway 74 bypass. Charges included speeding, no operator's license, reckless driving, alluding arrest, possession of a stolen vehicle and resisting arrest. More charges may be pending by Kings Mountain police.

Stacey Hurt In Fighting

Christmas Day was extra special for Mr. and Mrs. Jerry Stacey. Their 21-year-old son Ronald was alive and well and home for Christmas in Kings Mountain with them and his two-year-old daughter, Priscilla.

Specialist Stacey was one of the thousands of U. S. Army paratroopers with the 82nd Airborne Division from Fort Bragg dispatched by President Bush to Panama in the early hours of Dec. 18. Jumping from a parachute at dark into the jungles was nothing like the training exercises he had completed in paratrooper school.

"Would he do it again?" "You bet," he told his father who went to Fort Bragg last week to greet young Stacey on his arrival with a Purple Heart and injuries to an arm hit by shrapnel in the fighting in Panama on the first day of the invasion by American troops.

"Although he can't talk about his experience much, he told us he was glad to be a part of the invasion and hated to leave his friends behind after he was hit and had to be brought back to San Antonio, Texas for treatment," said the elder Stacey, himself a Vietnam veteran of 17 years service.

They (the U. S.) just went into Panama and did what they had to do and Panama wasn't prolonged like Vietnam," said the elder Stacey, who runs a body shop in Kings Mountain. "I'd go back myself if I could and I know our son feels the same way." The younger Stacey returned to Kings Mountain and spent Christmas Day with his family. He will return this weekend and spend the rest of his two-weeks convalescent leave and then take his young daughter home with him.



STACEY

Stocking Fills At \$3,988.17



Kings Mountain's first Empty Stocking Fund in several years was a huge success, raising almost \$4,000 and helping a large number of children and their families in the Greater Kings Mountain area.

The final week's contributions came to \$525, making the final total \$3,988.17.

Empty Stocking volunteers, led by chairman Margaret Dilling, spent much of their time over the past several weeks getting the names and addresses of needy families in the area and purchasing clothing, food and other necessities. Items were distributed last Thursday.

This week's contributions:

Janet Falls, \$25.
Mary Lee Bridgeman, in memory of her father, Boyce Patterson, \$25.

Mr. and Mrs. Bobby D. Dyer, \$25.
Danny and Julie Crawford, \$25.
Jerry and Judith Blalock, \$15.
The Charles Ramsey family, in honor of the George Shinn family, \$100.
Mr. and Mrs. C.D. Ware, in memory of Lemuel Ware and James Crawford, \$50.
I Eugene and Jeanette Patterson, \$50.
Anonymous, \$10.
Anonymous, \$100.
Anonymous, \$50.
Mr. and Mrs. Howard Bryant, \$50.

This week's total, \$525.00
Previous total, \$3,463.17
Final total, \$3,988.17