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A Real
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Kings Mountain, N.C.

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KM cracking down on code violation

Funeral home owner given additional time

Kings Mountain funeral director Hazel Gill has received an additional three days to clean up the debris from his lot at the intersection of Tracy and King Streets before a city-hired contractor returns to finish the job.

Gill complained that he bought a burning permit Wednesday to clean up his lot but before he could do the work himself a city-hired contractor was on the job.

The contractor said he was following orders Thursday from the codes department which notified Gill in a letter dated July 30 that he was in violation of codes and the property must be cleaned up in seven days.

City planner Gene White said he spoke informally to Gill on July 22 and emphasized that City Council was wanting all lots on King Street in top order and he would have to put the house on the property in good appearance and condition and remove the debris and cut the grass. Gill indicated he planned to clean up the property. The vacant house is presently used by Gill for storage of tents and cemetery equipment.

Gill says he called contractor Billy Wilson, and left a message Tuesday night that he planned to

burn the debris and clean off the lot himself. Gill bought the permit at Bridges Hardware Wednesday and started cutting grass. Wilson bush-hogged the lot and used a weedeater for several hours Thursday, Gill said, and left after Gill said he would haul the debris away.

City Manager George Wood said the city had contracted with Wilson after Gill was given more than a 30 day notice to clean up the property. The city ordinance sets three days as the time limit for the owner to notify the city of his/her intentions to clean up overgrown lots.

"What's fair for one is fair for another," said Gill, who said he had seen many rotted houses in the past 35 years and many streets in town where residents haven't cleaned up their properties. "I got angry when I told a man I would clean it up and then he came with his bushhog and weedeater to do the work."

According to records in the codes office, the city conducted a hearing to condemn the house on the Gill property on August 30, 1988. The city stopped the proceedings after Gill said he planned to clean up the property. According to records in the codes office, Gill cleaned up some of the property



Billy Wilson, on tractor, bushhogs a lot at the intersection of Tracy and King Streets. The city, cracking down on ordinance violations which deal with clean up of properties, started cleaning up the lot Thursday after Hazel Gill failed to notify them he wanted to clean up the property himself. The city has given Gill three more days to haul off the debris.

last year.

Codes enforcement officer Jeff Putnam doesn't see the codes department as a "good taste committee" but says the department acts generally on complaints of citizens.

Inspectors under law have the authority to seek actions if they notice violations but in most cases they wait until complaints are

made. Most visible violations are priorities. City Council put teeth in ordinances in May when they authorized the codes officers and the police department to crack down on junked cars, weeds, nuisance or junk vehicles.

Wood says the city ordinances

See Gill, 7-A

Ten property owners charged for clean

Ten property owners paid city-hired contractors to clean up their lots of weeds and miscellaneous junk and 22 others volunteered to clean up the property themselves after city codes officers notified them they were violating city ordinances.

Volunteering to clean up their lots were Zettie McClain estate, 313 S. Ridge St., Paul R. and Myra Sheffield, King Street, the old KM Motor Court; R. L. Jordan Oil Co., 100 W. King Street; Catherine Mauney, Julia Kiser, George Houser, York Road and Slater Streets; Robert L. and Jean Chambers, 409 S. Battleground; Joseph and Ruby Payne, 413 Cherokee St.; Phillip and Bonnie Sanders, 611 Gantt St.; Patty Shoemaker, 1004 N. Cansler St.; Edward Clifton and Flora Hightower, 313 York Rd., R. E. Lee, vacant lots, Country Creek subdivision; Petroleum World, Highway 74 West; Ken Roberts, 322 N. Battleground; Petroleum World, 607 E. King St., J. E. Herndon Sr. heirs, 205 S. Piedmont Ave., Margaret Anthony, Ruth Craft, Mary Cothran, James Hord, 211 S. Piedmont Ave., Charles Lee Mashburn, 814 Church St.; Louise Roberts, vacant property, Cranford

Drive; Paul R. and Myra Sheffield, East King Street; Margaret St., Mary Mauney, Shirl Mullinax, property on Landing Street; Jay Rhodes, Carolina State Bank, lot corner east Gold Street next to bank; W.K. and Mary Mauney, lot, corner East Gold and S. Piedmont.

City Manager George Wood said codes officers notify property owners of weeds, trash, garbage, grass or other objects that appear to be a nuisance. After three days following notification, the city, under law, has the authority to clean the lot and charge the cost of such action or expense may constitute a lien against the property.

During the period May 15, 1992 through August 20, 1992 the following property owners were billed by the city for weed cutting and/or removal of junk, at a contractor's cost of \$25 per hour. They include: James and Maude Carroll, 310 S. Cansler St.; Charles Bagwell, 309 Stowe Acres; Brenda Kay Geer, 503 James St.; Edwin R. and Catherine Tillman, lot corner of Country Club Acres and Merrimont Ave.; W.K. and Mary Mauney, lot, corner of East Gold

See City, 7-A

KM Crisis Ministry facing its own crisis

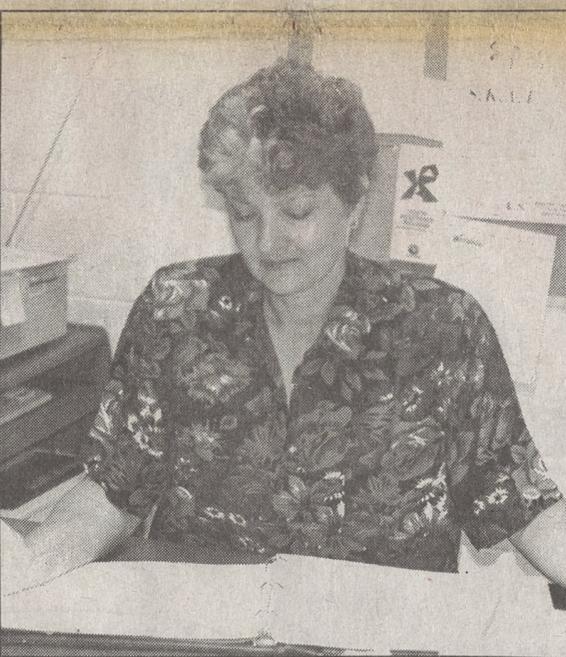
Kings Mountain Crisis Ministry needs your help! After a shortfall in its funding by the United Way, a winter of increasing unemployment and a summer of requests for help far exceeding any experienced in the past, Kings Mountain Crisis Ministry is faced with a crisis of its own.

For three years now Kings Mountain Crisis Ministry has provided a comprehensive program of help for those in our community who have found themselves in need. An outgrowth of the "Helping Hand Ministry" of the Kings Mountain Ministerial Association, Crisis Ministry still has a close association with the Ministerial Association but its operation is overseen by a board composed of community leaders from many areas.

Kings Mountain Crisis Ministry was established not only to broaden community participation and support but also to extend the areas of help provided. From the Helping Hands' Food Bank, Crisis Ministry

has grown to a helping agency providing assistance with rent, medicine, utilities, furniture, and a score of other things needed by the people of Kings Mountain.

Due to the cumulative effects of the current recession, however, Crisis Ministry cannot keep up with the calls for help. Crisis Ministry Director Sherry Hamrick reports barely \$1,000 in the Ministry's treasury. That is hardly enough to stock the Food Bank much less provide for rent and utility assistance or help with medicine. As of the middle of August, with barely half of the year gone, Crisis Ministry has already handled the equivalent of nearly 80 percent of our total client load for all of last year, and has spent 85 percent of its total 1991 outlay. Crisis Ministry desperately needs the help of all of those in the community who are blessed with steady employment and regular income. Donations are tax deductible and may be sent to: Kings Mountain Crisis Ministry, P.O. Box 1335, Kings Mountain, NC 28086.



Sherry Hamrick writes a check out of the fund for Crisis Assistance Ministry.

To pray or not to pray: school officials undecided

Kings Mountain High School will play its first home football game since the recent school prayer interpretation by the Supreme Court Friday night. At this point, school officials have not decided whether or not there will be a pre-game prayer.

Prayer before football games, during graduation and baccalaureate and other activities has been a practice here for years. School officials don't want to stop it, and neither do many members of the community who expressed disagreement with the Supreme Court's ruling at recent school board meetings. But, the school system doesn't want to do anything to bring legal woes upon itself, either.

Supt. Bob McRae and KMHS Principal Jackie Lavender have been discussing the issue with school board members and leaders of other school systems; but at the Herald's presstime Wednesday they still hadn't made an official decision.

McRae said if there is a pre-

game prayer, it will be a non-denominational prayer led by a student member of the Fellowship of Christian Athletes. That has been the practice here for several years.

The school system's other options are having no prayer at all, or observing a moment of silence.

Several school systems, including Lincolnton, have observed a moment of silence. At least one Cleveland County school had a pre-game prayer prior to its home game last week. Other schools, like North Mecklenburg, which hosted Kings Mountain in the season's opener two weeks ago, do nothing.

"This is an issue of great interest to the community," McRae said. "What we want to do is try not to abuse anybody's rights, and also be sensitive to the feelings of the citizenry of Kings Mountain and try to make a decision that doesn't put the school system in a difficult position."

Despite the Supreme Court's ruling, most school systems have not

See Prayer, 7-A

Say goodbye to Bubba, KM's resident alligator

Jim Gomez is no stranger to alligators. So, when his co-workers at Commercial Intertech suggested that he go to Woodbridge and catch "Bubba," Gomez was willing.

After two weeks of stalking the now famous resident of hole #17 at Woodbridge Golf Links, Gomez captured him Thursday evening. Friday morning he handed him over to Jack Mason, a North Carolina Wildlife officer who transported him to the North Carolina coast.

Like a good duck hunter calling his prey, Gomez used a gator grunt he learned as a kid in Florida to lure Bubba away from his abode. Gomez caught him on the second try with a snout provided by Wildlife officers.

"When I grunted, he went wild and came right to me," Gomez said.

Gomez taped Bubba's feet and mouth but his legs were so strong he kept breaking the tape. So, Gomez forgot about the legs and only kept tape around his mouth.

Gomez had been going to Woodbridge every night for two weeks trying to spot Bubba, who became a celebrity with local golfers who had seen him frequenting the 17th green. Some golfers even had T-shirts printed which said "I played golf with Bubba."

Gomez said he knew he was getting close to Bubba's territory when he saw evidence of Bubba's having killed some ducks to eat.

"He had been traveling from hole to hole," Gomez

noted. "I saw where he had caught a duck. That concerned me, because if a gator can catch a duck he can catch a child and I had been told that children had been playing around him."

Gomez estimated Bubba, who is 56 inches long, to be 4 1/2 years old. That, he said, is too big of an alligator to be living in a well-populated area like Woodbridge because a big alligator has incredible strength in his legs.

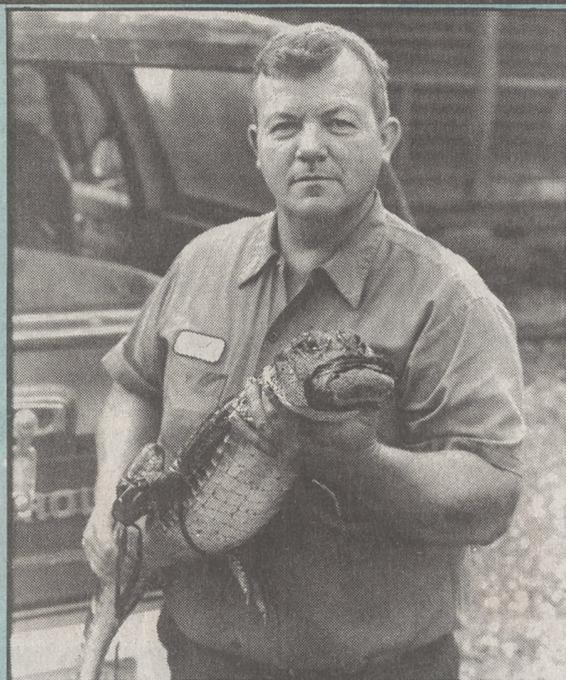
"As a boy in Florida, I remember one time that convicts were working on the road and felt the earth move under them," Bubba noted. "It was an 11-foot alligator. They caught him with a rope and put him in a horse stall, and he knocked the stall down."

Gomez explained that alligators make caves under the ground - some of which have water in them and some which do not - but they love to come out every day and "sun." An alligator can live a long time out of water, he said.

"Bubba's just at the right age to be getting a little wild," he said as he grunted and caused Bubba to get excited.

Gomez figures someone on vacation in Florida caught Bubba when he was small and brought him home to Woodbridge. And, that could be a favorite pastime with some unknown resident because Gomez spotted a baby alligator as he was looking for Bubba.

"The little one is very spunky," he said. "I couldn't catch him. But, Bubba came flying right up to me."



JIM GOMEZ AND BUBBA

Accidental gunshot kills boy

Kings Mountain Police say a handgun that accidentally discharged Tuesday night resulted in the death of a three-year-old boy.

Det. Lt. Richard Reynolds said Kings Mountain Police answered a call to the residence of Roger and Claudette Conner, 310 Somerset Drive, at 11:02 p.m. and found Jonathan Scott Wilson dead.

Family members told police that the four children of Shawn Michelle Wilson had been put to bed in a bedroom of the home while the mother and others in the family had gone to Conner's Service Station momentarily and Mrs. Conner was in the kitchen preparing a meal.

Apparently the child awoke and went into the Conners' master bedroom and found a handgun that had been stored near the head of the bed. The gun discharged one shot to the right side of the child's face, according to police.

The baby's father lives in the Clover, SC area, according to police. See Shooting, 7-A