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ATTITUDE OF GRATITUDE

Betty P. Cloninger thankful for blessings that have come her way during cancer battle

By ELIZABETH STEWART
of The Herald Staff

Betty Plonk Cloninger is optimistic that by fall she can undergo a bone marrow transplant, return to her normal routines and celebrate a traditional Christmas on her fourth wedding anniversary.

The plaque in her comfortable den on Crescent Hill Drive paints an accurate picture of this 49-year-old homemaker, fighting bone cancer with an attitude that would match any major league baseball player that her husband, Tony, coaches.

"The world would be a better place if there were more people like you," reads the Christmas plaque given her by a neighbor.

Visitors to the Cloninger home find a relaxed, beautiful lady of the house offering her company iced tea and pleasant conversation.

Like all full-time homemakers, Mrs. Cloninger shows her favorite pictures of her and her husband on their wedding day; of their extended family of eight children and 10 grandchildren and of her plans to see the New York Yankees play in the American League playoffs and supervise the painting of a playroom in their home.

But those plans may take a backseat to a bone marrow transplant if Betty and her brother, Bob Huntley of Wilmington, have a perfect match and the chances are one in four, her doctors have told her at Charlotte Presbyterian Hospital.

A bad pain in her right thigh and shoulder sent Betty to the hospital in June just after she returned from a trip with her husband to the

Yankees spring training in Fort Lauderdale, Fla. Several weeks before she had noticed pain after walking and exercising and doctors had diagnosed the problem as a fracture.

"What a shock it was for me to learn that the problem was not a fracture but a mass, a tumor," said Betty.

"I had asked a friend to go with me to the hospital that day, never expecting that I would have to stay," said Betty.

The fast-growing tumor was wrapped around her spinal cord.

"I was told if we didn't do the surgery immediately that I would be paralyzed from the waist down," said Betty.

"I didn't receive much hope for quality life without the surgery and treatment and I didn't hesitate."

This summer Betty has been in and out of the hospital, undergoing not only spinal surgery but numerous rounds of chemotherapy for Multiple Myeloma.

Recently a permanent Hickman was inserted in her chest so that she could receive the chemotherapy in bigger doses and also eliminate needles for medication and blood.

"Everything has been very positive and I have had few side effects from the treatments," said Mrs. Cloninger.

Betty returns to the hospital in about two weeks for more chemotherapy and evaluation. This fall she hopes to enter the hospital in Chapel Hill for a bone marrow transplant if cross matching between her and her brother are successful. If that procedure fails, Betty's name will be added to a donor waiting list.

See Betty, 3-A



BETTY P. CLONINGER

"I see cancer as just one of life's challenges and I think to lick it is mind over body."

- Betty Cloninger

Alternative school to be based in KM

The Kings Mountain, Shelby and Cleveland County school systems have received a \$346,980 grant to fund an alternative school program for sixth through 12th grade students.

The school, at least temporarily, will be housed in the current offices of Kings Mountain District Schools on Parker Street and should be in place no later than the second semester of the 1994-95 school year. Kings Mountain's District Office will move to the renovated Central School this fall.

The three systems had asked for over \$700,000 in grant money but Kings Mountain Superintendent Bob McRae said an effective school can be operated on the amount approved.

McRae said representatives of the three systems will begin an interview process for a principal within the next several days. When the principal is named, he or she will take part in organizing the program and choosing teachers and staff. McRae said there would probably be seven teachers, a counselor and a social worker to serve approximately 100-125 students from all over the county.

"We're real excited about this," McRae said. "It will take a while to get it functioning, but it is a real positive addition for us. I think we'll be able to save some students that we've been losing in the past."

The school will be designed similar to a very successful program in Catawba County which has been in operation for years. Students who cause continual problems in the regular classroom will be screened and assigned to the school with the goal of changing their attitudes and returning them to the regular classroom setting. Students assigned to the alternative school will continue to take regular classroom courses required for graduation, and in some cases students will graduate from the alternative school.

"The program is not designed for the student who just acts up one or two times, but for students with continual problems that not only get in the way of their learning but also others," McRae said. "The educational program will be very individualized and heavily based on technology to give them specific attention they are not able to get in a larger setting."

McRae said he hopes the principal can be selected by the first of next month.

Because the school will be located

See School, 2-A

Conduct code gets approval

The Kings Mountain Board of Education Monday night approved long-term suspensions for kindergarten through 12th grade students who take or possess weapons on school grounds.

The action passed unanimously after a public hearing in which no one spoke.

Two board members - Chairwoman Shearra Miller and Rev. Billy Houze - said they had reservations about long-term suspensions for kindergartners and other young elementary students who might not understand the consequences of possessing weapons, but both said they would support the policy.

The policy was recommended by a Violence Task Force, and will take effect immediately.

The disciplinary measures of the lengthy policy which includes the entire Code of Student Conduct policy, require:

■ Suspension for the remainder of the school year for students in grades K-12 who take or possess a firearm on a school campus.

■ Suspension for the remainder of the school year for students in grades 6-12 who take or possess any legally defined weapon on a school campus.

■ Disciplinary action as deemed appropriate by the administration for students in grades K-5 who take or possess a legally defined weapon other than a firearm on school campus.

■ Disciplinary action deemed appropriate by the administration for students who take other weapons such as knives on a school campus.

Rev. Houze said he had some concerns with automatic suspension for young children. "I'm concerned about how much they understand" about weapons, he said. "There's no opportunity for explanation, but I will support the policy."

Mrs. Miller said she had the same concerns but noted that the Task Force "went round and round about that. I have a problem with it and probably always will, but I can support the policy because the Task Force put in a lot of time and discussion and did a good job."

See Policy, 2-A

KM teen accidentally shoots, kills himself

A 17-year-old Kings Mountain High School senior accidentally shot and killed himself while target practicing Sunday morning at an old abandoned pool at Davidson Park.

Det. Richard Reynolds of the Kings Mountain Police Department said Trevor Jason Spencer of 132-1 Ebenezer Road was found at 9:16

a.m. lying on the ground with a gunshot wound to the right side of the head. He was rushed to Cleveland Memorial Hospital by Cleveland County EMS and died at 2:09 p.m.

According to Reynolds, Spencer and his 18-year-old cousin, Anthony Sellers of Wildwood

Drive in the Ebenezer section, were target practicing with a .22 calibre pistol.

Reynolds said Sellers went to nearby Kings Mountain Hospital to summon help.

Reynolds said evidence at the scene and reports from the witness indicated the shooting was self-inflicted and accidental.

No charges will be filed in connection with the death, but Reynolds said police are still investigating the possibility of other type charges.

Reynolds said it is unlawful for persons under the age of 21 to possess a firearm and that it is also unlawful to discharge a firearm in the city limits.

Little Theatre \$100,000 short of fund goal

Kings Mountain Little Theatre is shooting for early spring to begin renovations of its new home, the old Dixie Theatre on Railroad Avenue.

President Jim Champion said the hold-up is the completion of the \$300,000 fund drive, of which \$200,000 has been pledged.

"We hope that by the first of the year we will have enough cash on hand and in the bank to start the ball rolling to get our name on the old theatre marquee," said Champion.

Dr. Scott Mayse and Andy Neisler are co-chairmen of the fund campaign and they encourage both

small and large donations which may be forwarded to PO Box 1022, Kings Mountain, 28086. All donations are tax-deductible.

Members of the Little Theatre will finalize plans for the current season of plays on Thursday night at a board meeting, said Champion.

"Catfish Moon" will be the first production of the new season in early November and will be directed by Champion. The children's play, "Handel and Grethel" will be directed by Annie Grant in February. The comedy, "Meanwhile Back on the Couch," will be directed by Jeff Grigg next May. Plans are also in the works to

present a dinner-theatre.

New officers of the Little Theatre, in addition to Champion, are Mary Neisler, vice-president; Punkin Higginbotham, secretary; and Grigg, treasurer.

The Kings Mountain Little Theatre has served the Kings Mountain area as far back as 1941 when performances were held at the old Central School from 1941-56. In the early years Little Theatre members were active in outdoor dramas at the Kings Mountain National Military Park. The Theatre was reborn in the late 1960's and from 1971-1990 performances were held at the old Park

Grace School. Since its rebirth, Little Theatre has produced three or four plays a year, more recently staging productions at the Woman's Club and at Central School. Local theatergoers have been treated to dinner-theatre for several years.

The old Dixie Theatre has not been used as a motion picture house since the early 1950's and was donated to KMLT by Mr. and Mrs. John Plonk.

The plans for the extensive renovation call for an entrance from Railroad Avenue, adjacent to Plonk's General Store.

Utility group to meet Monday

Gas construction projects are on the agenda for Monday night's utility committee meeting at 7 p.m. in the fire department training room at City Hall.

Utility Director Jim Maney said that he will present several proposals for consideration by the committee.

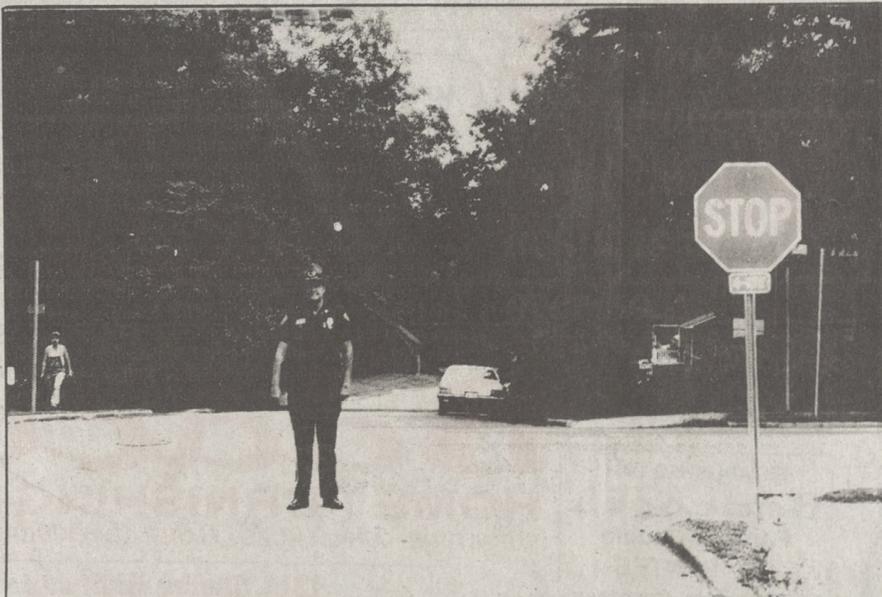
Maney will also update testing underway for PCBs and give a report on placement of 800 squirrel guards on transformers in the Lipwood area of the city where squirrels on the line caused several minor power outages recently.

Maney said that electricity was off twice, for 20 minutes one time and again for an hour due to squirrels on the Linwood feeder line. Maney said one squirrel in a transformer behind Battle Forest Apartments short-circuited the entire line.

Squirrel guards are plastic cones that fit over the insulator on top of a transformer.

"The squirrels can't sit on the guard and has to jump off," said

See Utility, 2-A



SLOW DOWN OR PAY UP - Speeding has been a problem on West Gold Street, and City Council recently approved putting up a four-way stop sign at the intersection of West Gold and Watterson street. The stop signs have helped the problem somewhat but city officials said some cars are still going through the intersection without stopping. Captain Bob Hayes of the Kings Mountain Police Department stands in the center of the intersection as a reminder for motorists to heed the stop signs or face a fine. With school starting next week, police say it's extremely important for motorists to be cautious on all city streets.

Schools get Tech Prep grant

Kings Mountain High School will begin two new Tech Prep programs thanks to a \$320,000 grant from the State Board of Education to fund Tech Prep programs in the Kings Mountain, Shelby and Cleveland County school systems and Cleveland Community College.

Fundamentals of Technology and Principles of Technology will be re-instituted after several years absence, according to Supt. Bob McRae and Vocational Director Betty Gamble. The classes were dropped about six years ago due to a lack of student interest, but Dr. McRae said a workforce preparedness survey in the community indicated a need to revive them.

Mrs. Gamble said the funds would provide staff development and help with purchasing books, supplies and equipment for the courses. Alfred Ash will be the instructor.

Fundamentals of Technology is an introductory course for ninth graders, and Principles of Technology I and II are for juniors and seniors. Currently there are 15 students registered for Principles of

Technology I and Principles of Technology II will be added next year. McRae said eventually the school hopes to have five classes involving 75 to 100 students.

The Tech Prep program is for students who focus on a curriculum designed to better prepare them for a community college, technical school, apprenticeship program or college. Regardless of their level of education, Mrs. Gamble said students who graduate the program are prepared to enter the workforce.

The funds will be received over a two-year period.

In their action Thursday night, the board:

■ Heard a report from Barbara Long of the Substance Abuse Task Force of the United Way of Cleveland County, and endorsed the group's position paper which calls for a county-wide effort to address abuse problems in the county. A luncheon will be held at the United Way office August 31 for county agencies, businesses, schools and other groups to share information on how to fight sub-

See Grant, 2-A