



KM HOSTS BAND CLINIC - Pictured are a group of band students performing in the South Central District Band Clinic at Kings Mountain High School Friday. More than 300 musicians participated in the two-day clinic highlighted by a Saturday afternoon concert in Barnes Auditorium.

Home sewing classes to begin at CCC Feb. 14

The Continuing Education Department of Cleveland Community College is offering an exciting new class for the home sewer.

Both day and night classes will be offered with specific areas of instruction to include window treatments to match function, style and window, three methods for balloon shades and pinch-pleated drapes.

The first seven weeks will cover the necessary techniques for sewing in the home.

The evening class will begin on February 14 and will meet each Tuesday from 6-9 p.m. through May 2. The day class will begin on February 16 and will meet each Thursday from 9 a.m.-12 noon through May 4. Both classes will meet in campus room 2007.

Cost for the course is \$35 and registration is at the first class meeting.



Little Billy Bridges Jr. and his grandparents, Clarence and Helen Barnette, enjoy Billy's fourth birthday at an early celebration Saturday.

Billy Bridges four years old

The four big candles on his Lion King cake made Billy Bridges Jr. laugh at his birthday celebration Saturday.

Terminally ill little Billy, 4 on Wednesday, fights for life despite the odds and his grandparents say their "golden boy" is worth every second of the attention they give him.

Billy hugged friends and thanked them for their presents at an early birthday party at Western Steer in Shelby where a decorated cake he could not eat was on a festive table.

"Blow her a kiss, Billy," his grandmother Helen Barnette said to Billy as guests arrived for his party.

Billy's grandfather, Clarence Barnette, said the family is really worried about Billy this week. Doctors let Billy leave Carolinas Medical Center Thursday but said the boy may have to be readmitted to the hospital if his condition does not improve.

Billy lost six ounces in a day's time this week and his weight dropped to 24 pounds, said Helen, who said the boy must be fed pedialyte each hour through a tube along with a formula and new medicines.

"We may decide to take Billy to Children's Hospital in Cincinnati, Ohio," said Helen, who is a registered nurse at Kings Mountain Hospital.

Mrs. Don McCurry of New Hope Baptist Church baked Billy's cake.

"This little boy has really touched our hearts," she said at his party on Saturday.

The party room was festive with red, blue and yellow balloons and streamers. Billy wore a colorful pantsuit with red turtle neck shirt. On the back of his suspenders was a Ninja turtle that could be squeezed to make a funny sound.

Doctors gave Little Billy little chance for survival when he was born four years ago.

On Wednesday the Barnette mailbox was full of birthday cards from friends near and far.

"The doctors call Billy their golden boy because his medical bills have amounted to millions," she said.

Barnette said she will return to Raleigh next week to try to fight the Medicaid system that is threatening to cut back on nursing care for the boy.

"Billy needs around-the-clock nursing care and the doctors say he thrives in a home environment," said Barnette.

"We're just going to put Billy and our financial situation in the hands of the Lord," she said.

WHITE

From Page 1-A

"However, you have already made a legal commitment," he said.

"Didn't you tell us that the city limits started and ended from the city limits across an imaginary line and back into the city limits on a straight shot," said Spears.

"That was not the case," said White.

White said the Councilmen violated the public trust and asked them to step down from their seats.

White also had questions about the Lybrand development in Ashbrook Park. In

December Council authorized on White's recommendation an engineering review in which it compared plans made by Moretz Engineers of Kings Mountain.

Tuesday Council tabled reimbursement to Lybrand for street improvements and water improvements at Ashley Park Subdivision.

"Since some questions have been raised I think we need to study this further," said Councilman Ralph Grindstaff.

Councilman Jim Guyton, utility chairman, said that the utility committee recommended at the recent meeting that the city pay Lybrand one-half of cost of the water lines now and one-half of the sewer line costs after the property is dedicated.

KERNS

From Page 1-A

Whetstone said the proposed "Williamsburg community" on 2.46 acres R-10 zoned on Williams Street will have a featured entrance, natural landscape buffers and speciality street lighting as enhancements and will be priced from \$130,000 to \$140,000 to be compatible with the surrounding community.

Whetstone said typical lot sizes will be 50 by 200 feet.

Kerns, property owner, and Whetstone, local builder, are the joint developers of the property.

"These three bedroom homes offer the low maintenance of condominiums and the privacy of single family dwellings," said Kerns, who said that retirees and "empty nesters" will find features they are looking for in retirement homes.

M.C. Pruette, chairman of

the Planning Board, said his board can't make decisions on variances related to standard building setbacks and Interim Planning Director Jeff Putnam suggested that a setback line be included in the plans he asked Kerns to resubmit.

Pruette acknowledged that he had received several telephone calls from adjoining property owners worried that new construction would cause additional traffic in the area. No one was present to oppose the building plan.

But Kerns said that the neighborhood he proposes would not create a traffic problem and he thought citizens would approve of the type of housing he proposed to build.

In other actions, the Planning Board:

Welcomed Jim Childers, Lee McIntyre and Odus Smith as new members.

Tabled consideration of a new sign ordinance until the March meeting so that all members would have time to review it.

TERMS

From Page 1-A

time for the upcoming election," White said.

His proposal got no public comment from Council.

After the meeting Mayor Scott Neisler said he would welcome the change.

Terms of Neisler and Commissioners Phil Hager, Ward 1; Jim Guyton, Ward 2; and At-Large Commissioner Norma Bridges expire in October.

"I think my paid advertisement in last week's Kings Mountain Herald explains my feelings and I am a fairly blunt individual," White told a standing-room-crowd which came for a meeting which lived up to its expectations of "fireworks." Only about 25 of a crowd of over 100 people remained for the full meeting.

Interim Chief of Police Bob Hayes and Officer Melvin Proctor stood at the front of the room throughout the evening. Ptl. Lisa Capps was at the back of the room.

Although tempers flared several times during White's second appearance on the agenda the meeting was otherwise orderly and there were no outbursts from the audience. There was applause after Gary Joy defended Finance Director and former Interim Manager Maxine Parsons "for doing her job."

"Maxine was hounded by the Mayor to resign and she didn't deserve it."

Joy asked Mayor Scott Neisler if former Manager George Wood helped him with his proposals to amend the 1994-95 Parsons-prepared budget. Joy claimed that faxed information came to City Hall from Cleveland, Tennessee, the present residence of the former manager.

"This is my proposal and I stand by it," said Neisler.

Neisler said after the meeting that a Charlotte accountant assisted him in his 19-page proposal and that the fax number from Tennessee was that of an electrical supply firm.

Joy questioned statements by the mayor that appeared in The Herald, Shelby Star and Gaston Gazette and asked him if he had ever been misquoted in The Herald. The Mayor said he had not been misquoted.

"I see no necessity of everything going in the newspapers," said Joy, quoting inferences by the mayor that the under-billing/overbilling of utilities

could result in an investigation by authorities.

"The only thing I said to the Gaston Gazette was that a third party opinion could be better after I concurred with an editorial in the Shelby Star," said the Mayor.

"First of all I want to put the rumors to rest," said White.

"This is not my kickoff campaign for mayor or City Council and I am not a former typical disgruntled city employee out to cause problems because you are doing all right without my help."

White emphasized he was not present to discuss numbers or out to criticize industry and business.

But White charged that the city's financial problem is not as big as has been portrayed through accounts in the newspapers, although he admitted there is a financial crunch.

"We've lost our credibility and the newspapers are full of it," he said.

"I'm showing you a list of mayors and Council members since 1874 who were responsible for the city and nowhere do I see mention of an auditor or employee," he said.

White said the city's credibility gap had widened by information disseminated by city auditor Darrell Keller and finance director Parsons and said they did nothing illegal in providing the information.

"I know the representatives from the Local Government Commission are going to tell us about fund balance and cash flow problems tonight and they see some improvement which is good news but I have a problem with reports in the news media that Powell Bill money has been spent for something else and that the city can't make its weekly payroll."

White questioned the hiring by Council on a 4-3 vote of Parsons as interim city manager last March over a retiree with more experience and questioned the hiring of City Manager Chuck Nance last September from a pool of 97 applicants, many of whom he charged had more experience in the operation of city government.

"Your mistake is that you were pennywise and pound foolish," he told the board.

"Mrs. Parsons was the first to tell us about a severe financial crunch and that the sky was falling and then bought a computer system and a new desk," he said.

"Is the city broke?" he asked. "No, the problem is not as big as we were told."

BUDGET

From Page 1-A

Bridges said she had received conflicting statements from both the newspapers and city hall personnel. She quoted from a balance sheet that showed clearly, she said, that the city was not bankrupt.

"The public has been misled," declared Bridges.

"I see no point in the newspapers making an ugly picture. At December 31, we had \$868,000 and had paid our bills."

Responding to question from Councilman Phil Hager, City Manager Chuck Nance said that the Duke Power bill for November was paid in February.

Hager requested copies of all unpaid bills. Guyton also asked for copies of expenditures and revenue which he said he had not received.

Councilman Ralph Grindstaff asked Barclay if, in his professional opinion, he thought the city was on the right track.

Barclay said he did not recommend a repeal of taxes or rates and that the budget prepared by Interim City Manager Maxine Parsons was a good move in the right direction.

Keller also praised Parsons and said she served in three or four positions at the same time while running the day to day opera-

tion of the city.

Council voted 4-3 to send the mayor's proposed budget intended to satisfy the 8 percent general fund balance requirements to the Local Government Commission for study. Voting against the motion were Commissioners Dean Spears, Guyton and Jerry White.

"I don't agree with his proposals but I don't object to the LGC taking a look at the mayor's proposal," said Murphrey.

Neisler maintains that over \$1 million in working capital in the utility funds and over \$600,000 cash in the bank is attainable by June 30, 1995.

The mayor contended also that the budget officer overbudgeted for capital improvements.

"I find it incredible that the LGC officials could tell me we would not be in a good cash position by June 30 without even looking at my proposal," said the mayor.

"All they talk about is what we owe and they don't talk about assets," said the mayor.

Neisler said the city's February balance sheet should paint a brighter picture.

"We will start accumulating funds once lease payments are paid off this year," he said.

Barfield said the city's increased dependency of utility funds and the decrease of the tax rate led to the current finan-

cial problems. Assisted by Holleman, he showed charts which showed the drop in net income from 1988 and the drop from a \$1 million in working capital in 1988 to non-sufficient cash to transfer to the general fund revenue in 1994. Kings Mountain's fund balance also dropped from 7.5 percent in 1988 to negative 1.2 percent in 1993 and negative 6.14 percent at June 30, 1994.

"The financial condition of the general fund has gone down and down," said Barclay, who said the city must maintain a minimum of 8 percent in reserves to take care of emergencies such as floods or a tornado.

At June 30, 1994, the city had only \$17,000 in the bank.

Holleman said the Local Government Commission could only report what it sees from budgets and audit reports.

Comparing Kings Mountain with cities of similar population and with those owning electric utilities, Holleman said Kings Mountain is out of place.

"I'm not trying to rub your noses in the ground but you can see how you stand with your peers," he said.

Holleman said the recent credit downgrade by Moody's Investment Service is an indication that the city, unfortunately, is not in good shape.

Nance also praised Parsons

for her leadership and said the Parsons prepared budget is over \$1 million less than the 1993-94 budget prepared by George Wood. He said the reason was the reduction in spending of \$435,210 and \$590,477 specifically allocated to fund balance. Nance said Wood's budget made no appropriation to fund balance. It was also recommended by the LGC to make the general fund reliant on the enterprise funds and there was a \$339,000 reduction in transfers.

Both Nance and Keller said the city expects its customers to pay bills on time and will cut off service if they don't.

"The city should also pay its bills on time and although we are not 90 days behind on wholesale power payments we are 30 to 60 days past due," he said.

He said the mayor's proposals don't address the remaining accounts payable debt shown in the 1993-94 audit of \$314,330.

He said he had never worked with a city that has received continued correspondence with the Local Government Commission regarding its financial situation, had less than what was required in undesignated fund balance or had trouble paying its bills.

Nance said he stands ready to carry out the current leadership proposals

CONFLICT

From Page 1-A

"Should Spears have discussed the matter and voted on it since he is a long-term associate of Ruppe Hosiery according to articles of Incorporation filed with the Secretary of State January 17, 1995 which lists the corporation in good standing," said White, producing the document at Tuesday night's marathon city board session.

"Why audit past one year when we can't legally collect it?" Spears said he asked at the city board meeting at which Council voted unanimously on the recommendation of City Attorney Mickey Corry not to bill further back than one year the eight utility customers who had been underbilled by the city.

"I asked why spend the money to audit for more than one

year when we can't collect legally for no more than one year," said Spears.

Ruppe was the major industry underbilled by the city. The city acknowledged it was the city's fault for the underbilling and some overcharging of utility customers.

Spears said he owned 10 percent stock in Ruppe, Dixon and Spears in the 1970's with stock also held by Chick Dixon. Tony Ruppe's father, George Ruppe, and accountants Trent Wilson and Leon Collier. Spears said he worked six years for the company and George Ruppe bought him out in 1980. The building was leased by Ruppe, Dixon and Spears to Andrew Milewski and operates as Hank Fink Inc.

"I am assuming that the building is still leased in the corporation name," said Spears.

White said the Articles of Incorporation in the Secretary

of State's office on January 17, 1995 list Ruppe, Dixon and Spears in good standing.

White said the company is still listed in the telephone book. Spears acknowledged the telephone number is 739-6531.

Tony Ruppe and his family own Ruppe Hosiery which has several locations in the city with offices in the old Sadie Mill office building on East Gold Street.

"The city's accounting procedure is to write off debts uncollectible and my point is should we follow Spear's advice and 'out of good faith' write off the debt."

"Why can't we get the utility billing right?" said White, laying the blame for the problems on management and suggesting that City Manager Chuck Nance "gather all the parties in a room and tell them they are killing us and straighten out the mess."

White fired off a list of numerous employees involved in billings and metering of utilities to the tune of \$236,000 in salaries.

"And don't forget it has been suggested that we hire a \$25,000 a year customer service representative," he said, alluding to a report in the local newspaper.

White also suggested the city bill Councilman Grindstaff \$900 for money he offered to give the city from his monthly pay of \$300. White reminded the first term commissioner that he made a motion in a city council meeting to cut salaries of elected officials \$100. The motion failed for lack of a second but Grindstaff directed Finance Director Maxine Parsons to cut his pay.

"Your pay has not been cut," said White.