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## Valentine Love Letters

KM Hospital  
finances improving  
7-A

Mountaineers  
sweep South Point  
10-A

# Kings Mountain Herald

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## Attorney: No conflict of interest

City Attorney Mickey Corry said Tuesday that in his opinion council members Rick Murphrey and Dean Spears accused of conflict of interest by former city planner Gene White did nothing wrong.

"The real issue is whether conduct is that which gives the appearance of impropriety," Corry wrote in a memorandum to City Council this week.

"It always seems that in politics, that matter gets dealt with at the polls," he said.

In Corry's opinion, no conflicts of interest or illegal action exists.

But Corry warned Council that since it set a precedent in

a controversial matter concerning a developer that Council must treat everyone alike.

White alleged that in January 1994 Murphrey and Spears demanded that Jim Lybrand be reimbursed for water and sewer lines installed outside the city limits, which is illegal, he said, under a city statute.

White also charged that their votes on matters that directly involved two industries represents a conflict of interest. Spears once held stock in Ruppe, Dixon and Spears, a parent company of Ruppe Hosiery which owes the city \$120,000 because of a utility underbilling. Murphrey is vice

president of sales of Spectrum, the city's biggest water user.

Corry said that Murphrey's voting on matters broadly involving his employer did not create a conflict of interest and that, if taken in that context, all council members would at some point be involved in a conflict of interest.

"It cannot be denied that there may be occasions where the employer of Murphrey may benefit from a vote he might make but if such a vote deals with a class, that being all of the industrial citizens, then I cannot assert that such is a conflict of interest," Corry wrote.

"All of you have occasion to

vote on matters which are of concern to you.

"If only matters which were not of concern to you were voted upon, there likely would be an abstaining of votes almost 100 percent of the time."

Corry said he was not present for discussions last January with the developer and former manager George Wood and White but he said he thought the discussions show the situation was unique. He said he thinks Murphrey and Spears acted out of concern for a constituent.

White claims Murphrey and Spears skirted a city water/sewer code to financially benefit a

developer. Both Spears and Murphrey vehemently denied the charges which were leveled by White during last Tuesday's Council meeting which spilled over into Wednesday morning.

White said that on January 14, 1994 Murphrey and Spears questioned a city policy regarding reimbursements to developer Lybrand who was building Downing Subdivision near KM Country Club.

Under the current policy, the city reimburses developers for 50 percent of water and sewer line installation costs inside the city limits. But for installation outside the city limits, the developer is required to pay all the

costs. White said Murphrey and Spears wanted to exempt Lybrand from the policy because the city limits were close to the subdivision.

When White disagreed, "Spears said I should be fired." White recalled, "He said you have done nothing here and should have been fired five years ago."

On January 25, Council approved the rebate to Lybrand but White said they were misled by Spears and Murphrey who had just taken office in December 1993.

White asked Council last

See Conflict, 14-A

## Hot dog sale to help fund

The Bethware Progressive Club will sponsor a hot dog sale to benefit the van fund for Billy and Tabitha Byers Saturday, Feb. 11 from 11 a.m.-5 p.m., at the Progressive Club, located on the campus of Bethware School.

Hot dogs will be one dollar. The club will also be accepting donations for the van fund.

Billy and Tabitha, children of Billy and Patricia Byers of Kings Mountain, suffer from Battin's Disease, an incurable disease that has left them incapable of doing anything for themselves. Since both are confined to wheel chairs and cannot be transported by car, a specially equipped van is needed to transport them to Duke Medical Center for medical care.

A fund has been established at First National Bank in Shelby, and to date over \$10,000 of the \$50,000 goal has been raised. Anyone who cannot attend the hot dog sale but would like to donate to the fund can send their donation to Van Fund, Billy D. Byers Jr., First National Bank, PO Box 168, Shelby, NC 28151.

Rayford White, president of the Progressive Club, said all of the items needed for Saturday's hot dog sale have been donated by area merchants, thus all of the proceeds from Saturday's sale will be profit and will be forwarded to the van fund.

Mr. and Mrs. Byers have indicated that when the van is no longer needed by their children, it will be passed on to another family facing a similar crisis.



Rev. and Mrs. Wray Barrett established their "Valentine" home 60 years ago, but they have actually been sweethearts since the third grade.

## Barretts sweethearts since 3rd grade

The Valentine love bug bit Wray and Irene Barrett when they were in the third grade at Bethware School.

Every Valentine Day since and during their 60 years of married life the well-known retired pastor and his wife count their blessings for their four children, eight grandchildren and five great-grandchildren and for scores of friends in the churches they have served.

In this day and time when wedded bliss often incurs troubles along the way, the Barretts are examples of how couples can live together in a give and take situation and happily.

"We never had a fuss and always were too busy for problems," said Mrs. Barrett, the former Irene McMurray.

"And we have been Christians since age 12 when we joined Pleasant Hill Baptist Church at

the same time," said Barrett.

During the early days of their marriage on December 26, 1934 times were hard. Barrett split cordwood for 50 cents a day and borrowed \$20 from a friend to start housekeeping on a farm which he owns today and where he built his new home in 1974.

"Irene and I were still newlyweds when an accident occurred that could have been disastrous," said Barrett. Plowing with a single-footed plow stock, Barrett tried to tighten it with a ballpoint hammer, missed the bolt and the hammer struck Irene in the head and knocked her to the ground.

Barrett thought he had killed his bride but luckily she suffered only a headache that stopped the corn stalk cutting and plowing for the day.

See Barretts, 14-A

## White circulating petition

### Mayor's budget being reviewed

Mayor Scott Neisler's proposed 1994-95 city budget which he claims would roll over recently passed tax and water rate hikes has been sent to government consultants with the Institute of Government and Local Government Commission to review.

The mayor mailed the proposals Friday along with recommendations of City Manager Chuck Nance which support the budget now in place and balance sheets for the last three months of 1994.

"I wrote Robert High, Chairman of the Local Government Commission, that I was concerned that two representatives of his department have been negative about my proposal before they looked at it," said Neisler, referring to last Tuesday's City Council meeting at which he questioned the LGC's Vance Holloman and Craig Barfield who said it would probably take two or three years of conservative budgets and other measures for the city to get back on sound financial footing.

"I see nothing to be overly optimistic about," Holloman said to a packed City Council meeting which spilled into Wednesday morning.

Spectators filled council chambers for the latest round in

See Mayor, 14-A

## Kings Mountain People



Fifty years after World War II a Kings Mountain man's 400-page novel about life in the military makes fascinating reading. Retired M/Sgt. Jim Todd relaxes in his home with books and other WWII memorabilia.

## Airman recalls war experiences

By ELIZABETH STEWART  
of The Herald Staff

Jim Todd found adventure in the United States Air Force.

The retired Kings Mountain man's 400-page novel of life in the military is not yet published but it makes fascinating reading.

Young men and women aspiring for a military career could take valuable lessons 50 years after World War II from "Follow The Sun," a story of a man's love of God, family, country and fellowman.

Todd, 77, has carried his service ID card with pride for 55 years and his military "guide," as he likes to describe his book, began in 1938 when he was a 18-year-old "dogface" soldier.

Relaxing with his books and WWII memorabilia in his comfortable N. Piedmont Avenue home, Todd chose his book title from his travels around the sun, at least once around the world and to all the Islands, Tasmania, China, India, Japan and



JIM TODD

Europe.

Todd admits to being hung up on history and travel. His first wife of 42 years, the late Martha Kincaid Todd of Bessemer City, traveled with him to many of his duty stations. Nine years ago he mar-

ried Margie Putnam and moved from Bessemer City to Kings Mountain. They still like to travel and Hawaii, before and after the big war, Germany and Colorado are favorite vacation spots. A Sunday School teacher at Bessemer City First United Methodist Church, Jim is also a Mason, Legionnaire and VFW member.

Coming out of service in 1959 before Desert Storm, Todd found civilian life boring compared to the excitement and glamour of the armed forces.

Books of philosophy and history line the shelves of his home library which is also filled with autographed pictures and letters from movie star Shirley Temple Black and General Westmoreland, among others.

Sixteen decorations including the Medal for Humane Action during the Berlin Airlift and the National Chinese War Memorial Medal from the

See Todd, 2-A