

## Mountaineers battle Shelby for first place

See Page 8A

## WIN \$100

### "Pick The Winners" Football Contest

See Page 6B

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## Group says Wood interfered in KM business

### Wood: It was a moral obligation



**WOOD**  
Former City Manager George Wood says he won't apologize for intervening in city budget matters for which he was censured for ethics violations by a national organization he has belonged to since 1984.

"I've never walked away from a moral obligation and I don't plan to start now nor to continue to belong to an organization that tells me to walk away when I am asked for help," he said this week in a telephone interview from Cleveland, Tn., where he is city manager.

"All of this goes back to last June when I sent the city a letter which proved that Maxine Parsons' budget projections were off base," said Parsons' former boss.

"Her projections were in many cases less than the money the city took in," he said.

Wood contends that the public

was misled.

"Kings Mountain underspent its budget by \$574,000 which comes pretty close to what I had proposed earlier," he said.

But Parsons disagrees with Wood that the public was misled. She said saying that Powell Bill and cemetery perpetual funds were being used as operating funds and that was incorrect procedure and that money had to go back into those special funds. She said that the underpending came in the last

See Wood, 12-A

By ELIZABETH STEWART  
Of The Herald Staff

The Executive Board of the International City/County Management Association (ICMA) recently voted to publicly censure George A. Wood, former Kings Mountain City Manager, for ethics violations.

Wood, who left the city in March 1994 for the position of City Manager of Cleveland, Tn., bypassed the woman who succeeded him as interim manager in Kings Mountain when he questioned the budget she prepared and sent the city council a lengthy letter which detailed his recommendations but not with a copy to the interim manager.

Mayor Scott Neisler charged the budget Wood questioned contained "\$427,000 worth of errors" and was revised three days after he read the letter from Wood in a public meeting at City Hall. Neisler said the revised budget presented a truer picture of the city's finances. Neisler has continued to maintain, supported by Wood,

that the city did not need to raise property taxes or water and sewer rates.

Under date of October 3, Mary M. Grover, ethics advisor to the 8,000 member organization, headquartered in Washington, DC, wrote the city's finance director Maxine Parsons, who succeeded Wood as interim manager, that the committee found, that after he left the community, Wood "advised and responded to inquiries from elected and appointed officials of Kings Mountain without informing Parsons and without informing Wood's successor, Chuck Nance.

"The effect of his intervention was to influence elected officials' decision making and the committee found Wood violated Tenet 1 of the ICMA Code of Ethics," said Grover.

Grover said that the committee found that Wood "publicly criticized Kings Mountain appointed officials, questioning their competence.

See Interview, 4-A

### Auditor disagrees with Wood

The City of Kings Mountain is still a half million dollars short of state required 8 percent undesignated fund balances, according to City Auditor Darrell Keller.

Keller said the undesignated fund balance in the general fund is still a negative figure of over \$100,000 and the Local Government Commission will be rapping the city again for failure to comply with the state's general statutes.

He made the remarks this week as he started typing the 1994-95 city audit which he is readying to send to the Local Government Commission for review and approval before presentation to the Kings Mountain City Council.

Keller said that at June 30, 1994 the city had paid a little over \$300,000 in past due bills and at June 30, 1995 the figure was down to \$40,000.

The auditor, who had speculated about six months ago that it would take Kings Mountain two years to have any money in the bank, said that the money situation has improved but that citizens get a false picture when they start looking at budgets and unaudited figures.

Keller says the city needs to cut spending for at least two more years but he says the city is facing a dilemma by not spending money for capital improvements.

"We have budgeted \$300,000 for a basin at Pilot Creek Waste treatment plant but those improvements out there could take a million dollars to fix," he said.

Keller said the city has made financial improvements this year but it has a "way to go."

Keller said that the city's poor financial picture is not "misleading" although he admitted that the situation is improving with careful

See Auditor, 2-A



**HALLOWEEN HOUSE** - The season of spooks and goblins is upon us and they can be seen in living color in the front yard and porch at the home of Reb and Lynn Wiesener on Gaston Street. Cars slow every night to see the lighted spectacle which is the handiwork of Mrs. Wiesener.

Photo by Lib Stewart

### Retirement facility planned in KM

By ELIZABETH STEWART  
Of The Herald Staff

Six months after the Consortium for Progress was organized, the group Monday chose the developers who will finalize site selection for a 64-bed assisted-living retirement facility in Kings Mountain estimated to cost \$3 million.

Summit Place of Kings Mountain is expected to get off the ground in about nine months once the site is selected, said John L. Easterling III, Vice-President of Pulliam Investments of Spartanburg, SC, and Norman E. Pulliam and David Matthews of Aaron Enterprises.

Easterling estimated that the entire project would be up and running by March 1 and that the project would open for residents about January 1, 1997.

The Consortium, chaired by Dean Westmoreland, gave unanimous consent to the project which Westmoreland said was much needed in the Kings Mountain area.

Pulliam estimated that the second phase of the project which would add more luxury hotel like apartments would cost an additional \$2 million.

The apartments are efficiency apartments with one or two bed-

rooms, private baths, carpet and Scots lighting. Transportation would be included for residents as well as three meals daily, 24 hour supervision and medication where needed.

"I am real excited bout the new facility for the Kings Mountain area," said Jackie Metcalf Pittman, administrator of the new Skyland facility in Spartanburg, SC where she has worked for 18 months and commutes from her home in the Oak Grove community.

"We are delighted you want us to proceed with the plans," said Norman Pulliam and other repre-

See Consortium, 4-A

### Williams says he'll stay on DSS Board

Calling an October 9 hearing to remove him from the DSS Board null and void," Robert A. Williams says county commissioners have no statutory authority to remove him and he will keep his seat until his term expires next spring.

Williams made the announcement Friday in a letter addressed to Chairman Cecil Dickson with copies to N. C. Attorney General Mike Easley, U. S. Attorney Mark Callaway, Governor Jim Hunt and other state and U. S. elected government officials.

"My lawful term on the DSS

board expires June 30, 1996. Until I complete my term or am lawfully removed from my sworn duty, I fully intend to carry out my legal responsibility on the DSS Board," said Williams.

"Even if the board of commissioners did have some authority to change the composition of the DSS Board, removal of a board member for exercising Constitutional rights or without Constitutionally required due process and equal protection of the laws invalidates the actions taken in your so-called probable cause hearing or meeting," he said.

### Shelby woman wants DSS investigated

A Shelby woman has written Governor Jim Hunt calling for a full investigation of the Cleveland County Department of Social Services.

Sandra S. Allen, of 417 Beaumonde Avenue, Shelby, also asked the governor in a two-page letter to focus an investigation also on the county commissioners, elected Representatives and Senators who she said "have not intervened in the ongoing child

abuse and death of children in Cleveland County."

"Cleveland County is in a state of rage because citizens clearly see Robert A. Williams of Fallston had good reason to question the operation of the DSS," she said.

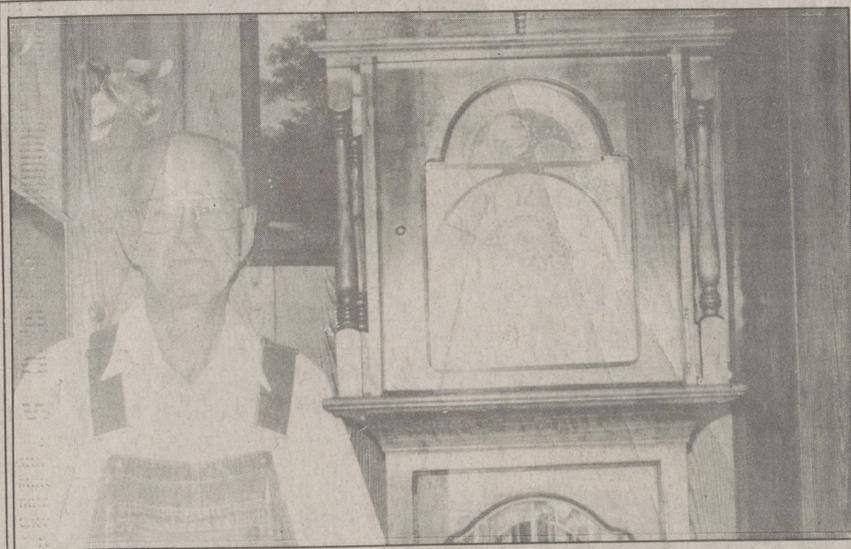
Allen said that Williams, in his efforts to bring control and accountability to the DSS, opened up the Department to public inspec-

See Letter, 2-A



Developer David Matthews, Consortium for Progress members John Henry Moss and Dean Westmoreland, developer Norman Pulliam and former Senator Ollie Harris announce plans for a 64-bed Summit Place of Kings Mountain.

## KINGS MOUNTAIN PEOPLE



Melvin Wright at 83 is still busy fashioning beautiful furniture in his shop in the Patterson Grove Community with no plans to completely retire.

### Self-trained carpenter Wright is still one of the best around

By ELIZABETH STEWART  
Of The Herald Staff

Unlike his contemporaries who dream of retirement to the front porch swing, Melvin Wright, 83, belies his age.

The popular Patterson Grove Community resident quit building houses at age 66 but his shop across from his country farm is busy with people ordering handsome bedroom suites, rolltop desks, porch swings, cedar chests, Grandfather clocks and you name it.

He also took a bride last May 24, exchanging I do's with his childhood sweetheart, Willie Howell, after Wright's wife of 60 years, Elta, died and Willie's husband of 57 years, Sam Howell, died after a long illness.

Relaxing in their comfortable home on Patterson Grove Road,

Melvin reminisced about giving Willie a Valentine when he was a seventh grader at Patterson Grove School and she was a sixth grader.

"That was just too long to think about," he said but Willie produced the card which she said her mother had kept in a jewelry box since the day she brought it home from school in 1927.

The boll weevil got Wright's cotton crop in 1950 and he took a job with Mauney Mills as the maintenance man at Bonnie, Old Mill and Mauney Cotton Mills, doing repairs on mill-owned houses.

"I started working in the mill for 15 cents an hour and took home about \$9 a week but we always raised vegetables and before the boll weevil hit we were harvesting about 45 bales of cotton every year," said Wright.

Wright built a shop across the

street from the family homeplace in 1946 and built his present house in 1954, tearing down the old farm house owned by his parents, David and Pantha Hamrick Wright, where he cared for his parents and his father, who was blind, until their deaths. Only the stately pecan trees remain on the old home site.

Coincidentally, Wright and Willie's former husband almost worked together in the carpentry business. Melvin needed an extra carpenter for several house jobs and Howell had finished up a job and could help out.

Most folks in town will recall that Wright was the professional carpenter on the site of numerous beautiful homes in the area, including the homes of Dr. and Mrs. John C. McGill, Wilson and Sara

See Wright, 3-A