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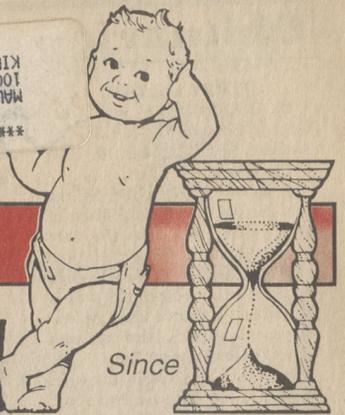
Thursday, December 28, 1995

Kings Mountain, N.C. • 28086 • 50¢

# Have a Safe and Happy

## Kings Mountain Herald

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### Over \$133,000 worth of poker machines, \$91,000 cash confiscated in gambling sting



Captain Richard Reynolds, facing camera, assisted by a Kings Mountain patrolman, confiscate a video poker machine during a raid Friday of eight businesses in which nearly \$100,000 and 38 machines were confiscated and nine people were arrested on a total of 56 warrants.

#### Police Chief says businesses illegally paid cash to winners

By ELIZABETH STEWART of the Herald Staff

A gambling sting two days before Christmas resulted in the arrest of nine people at eight businesses and the seizure by police of 38 poker machines valued at \$133,000 and \$91,250.05 cash.

Twenty-four Kings Mountain police officers and six N. C. Alcohol Law Enforcement agents from Charlotte, under the direction of Chief Bob Hayes and Captain Richard Reynolds, armed with search warrants, swarmed local businesses about 3:30 p.m. Friday.

Hayes said it was the largest bust he could recall during his 34 years at the Kings Mountain Police Department and was the result of a five-month undercover operation by KMPD and ALE officers.

"We hope this sends a message to other illegal operations in town that we mean business," said Hayes. He said it's just a matter of time until all poker machines are cleaned out.

Hayes said that gambling operations are paying cash to customers who win on the machines which by law are for amusement only.

Hayes said owners of the establishments are taking a huge profit, as much as \$15,000 a week in some places where players feed money into the machines in hopes of hitting it big.

"It's big time gambling at some of these places because people are putting big bills into them, from \$5 to \$100," said Hayes.

Hayes said the department has received numerous complaints from relatives of visitors to these establishments who say the customers are spending their paychecks gambling.

#### Arrested in Friday Sting

- Danny Carl Goforth (Little Dan's)
- Michael Virgil Passmore (Hugo's)
- Kenneth Hamrick (Sliver Villa & Hugo's)
- Linda Hamrick (Silver Villa)
- Pete Johnson (Pete's Game Room)
- Larry James Payne (Houston's)
- Michael Heath (Mike's Game Room)
- Ken Roberts (Depot Stop N' Go)
- Angela Short (Mike's Game Room)

Arrested Friday by Kings Mountain officers on misdemeanor charges of illegal operation of slot machines and related charges:

Danny Carl Goforth, 37, owner of Little Dan's convenience stores on Grover and York Road, 10 counts including one count of operation of slot machines or video poker, gambling, two counts of illegal operation of slot machines, one count of possession of gambling device, two counts of allowing gambling where alcohol is sold, two counts allowing a violation to occur and one count of keeping slot machines.

Michael Virgil Passmore, 41, of 105 Mail Road, was arrested at Hugo's, S. Battleground Ave., for one count of allowing a violation to occur, one count of gambling and one count of possession of a gambling device, one count of allowing gambling in a house of entertainment and one count of illegal operation of a slot machine.

See Sting, 11-A

#### Killian new KM Planning Director

Steve Killian, the new Director of Planning for the City of Kings Mountain, spent his first day on a new job Tuesday meeting co-workers and talking with City Manager Gary Hicks about New Year programs.

"I am very excited about being in Kings Mountain," said Killian, who comes to Kings Mountain from Lincoln County where he was Director of Planning for 6 1/2 years.

He will be paid annual salary of \$36,400.

"Steve has broad experience in planning and community development and we are hopeful we will see some revitalization and start the new year with a capital im-

provements program," said Hicks.

Hicks said that the results of a zoning, subdivision and annexation study in the works will be forthcoming in the new months of 1996 and that will be the areas that Killian will focus as he begins work in Kings Mountain.

Killian was housing specialist for the Western Piedmont Council of Governments in Hickory for five years and prior to that began his work experience in 1980 as the community development specialist for the City of Lenoir.

Member of an eighth generation family from Lincoln County, he is a 1973 graduate of East Henderson High School at Flat Rock and a 1977 graduate of the

University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. He holds a graduate degree from Appalachian State University.

He is married to Ann Robinson Killian. Son of Dr. and Mrs. W. D. Killian of Lincoln County, he is Lutheran. The family will continue to reside on a farm in Lincoln County.

Other members of the city planning staff are Jeff Putnam, director of codes/ inspections, Andy Scoggins, building inspector and Dottie Elkins and Shirley Payne, administrative assistants.

The planning and codes office is located on the second floor of City Hall.



STEVE KILLIAN

#### Harris Funeral Home promotes Ronnie Hawkins and Eric Wright

Key staff promotions have been announced by J. Ollie Harris, owner of Harris Funeral Home.

Ronnie Hawkins, vice-president, will assume the position of manager, and Eric Wright the position of assistant manager January 1.

Hawkins joined the firm 21 years ago and Wright joined the firm nine years ago. Both are Kings Mountain natives.

Hawkins, vice-president of Harris Funeral Home, has served six years on the Kings Mountain Board of Education and was recently elected to a third term as chairman of the board. He is an Elder in First Presbyterian Church and president of Kings Mountain Kiwanis Club.

Son of Mrs. Aloyse Jones of Kings Mountain and the late J. B. Hawkins, he is married to Libby Dye Hawkins. A 1970 graduate of Kings Mountain High School, he served in the US Army and was a nursing student at Gaston College and in training at Kings Mountain Hospital when J. Ollie Harris offered him a job at Harris Funeral Home 21 years ago.

"I decided to change my career plans and went to school and graduated from Gupton Jones College of Mortuary Science in Atlanta and



HAWKINS WRIGHT

never regretted it," said Hawkins.

Hawkins is a mission pilot on the Civil Air Patrol Composite Squadron in Shelby. He owns and operates his own plane and his hobby is taking children on their first plane ride. During the last six years he has flown 300 children.

Wright, son of Peggy Tucker Wright of Kings Mountain and James Wright of Spartanburg, SC, is a licensed cosmetologist who changed his career plans nine years ago to join Harris. He was a beautician on the staff of Scissor-Smith in Kings Mountain for 4 1/2 years and decided to go to school at Gupton-Jones in Atlanta, graduating in 1987.

See Harris, 10-A

#### City Council to discuss 1994-95 audit

Kings Mountain City Council will take a look at the 1994-95 city audit on January 16 at a 7:30 p.m. work session at City Hall.

Mayor Scott Neisler said that a preliminary look at the audit report reveals that "we appear to be in good shape, ending the year with over \$100,000 in the water/sewer fund budget."

Finance Director Maxine Parsons will present a financial report of the first six months (July-

December) of the current fiscal year and Auditor Darrell Keller will be on hand to respond to questions on the audit.

Neisler said that one of the first items on the city's agenda for the new year is responding to the recent letter from North Carolina Utilities Commission Director of Pipeline Safety Section James D. Anderson which slapped the city for eight instances of noncompliance in the operation of its natural

gas system.

"We have 30 days to respond and one of Anderson's chief concerns is the lack of personnel in the gas department," said the mayor.

Neisler says he plans to get with City Manager Gary Hicks this week to draft a letter to the state.

Hicks agreed that the city needs to act quickly to comply with the gas rules and said that is a number one priority for Council for new year 1996.

Hicks also sees community development high on Council's priority for the new year.

"We are in a strong position for growth and once we get a report on the various studies on annexation and zoning that are underway then we will be in a position to move on these programs," he said.

Kings Mountain has applied for a Community Development Block

See City, 10-A

#### Kings Mountain People

### Kings Mountain police officers excited about their work

#### Garris likes 'being there'

Dispatching other officers to the scene of a wreck or crime is not as exciting and rewarding as being there, says Ptl. Debra Garris, 36, who has worked both beats.

Garris joined Kings Mountain Police Department eight years ago, hired as a dispatcher by then-Chief Jackie Barrett. She was Debra Hullender then and met her future husband, Sgt. Raymond Garris, a longtime member of KMPD.

"Sometimes we go to work at the same time but we never come home at the same time because Raymond works an 8 a.m.- 5 p.m. administrative shift now and I work swing shift," said Mrs. Garris, who is a member of Sgt.

Derek Johnson's squad which also includes new officers Steve Skinner and Scottie Daves and dispatcher Vivian Payne.

A 1977 graduate of Kings Mountain High School, Garris worked the second shift at Kinmont Industries making comforters during high school and later took a job with Hamrick Mills and was a skilled operator of the machines that turned out beautiful blouses and pants.

"I wrote an essay about my dream of becoming a police officer when I was a child growing up in Cherryville but waited until I was

See Garris, 10-A



DEBRA GARRIS



PTL. JERRY TESSNEER

#### Tessneer found his niche

Versatile in several occupations, Ptl. Jerry Tessneer found his niche in police work.

He joined the Kings Mountain Police Department four years ago after working with the Cleveland County Sheriff's Department Reserves and following completion of rookie school at Isothermal Community College.

"I love it," said Tessneer, who regrets he didn't get into law enforcement when he turned 21.

He heartily recommends law enforcement as a career for young men and women who are dedicated and who enjoy working with the public.

"We have a good team at the

Police Department and a young team," laughed Tessneer, who described himself at 37 among the senior officers.

A native of Shelby, son of the late Mr. and Mrs. Millard Tessneer, he married Tammy Helms two years ago and together they have three children.

Tessneer said he had always wanted to be a policeman, recalling an incident in the fourth grade at elementary school when the father of one of his friends came to school to talk about police work.

"I always looked up to police and hope people treat us with respect," he said.

See Tessneer, 10-A