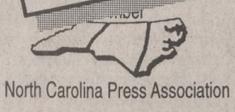


KM man swimming for University of Georgia
6-A

Bill McDaniel swans town 3-A
CCB to build new office in BC 6-B

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BRIEFS

Clogging classes at Woman's Club

Get ready to kick up those heels and have some fun. The Sidetracks Cloggers will conduct beginner clogging classes for youth and adults for six weeks on Thursday nights beginning January 25 from 6-7 p.m. at the Kings Mountain Woman's Club on East Mountain Street. Registration fee is \$25. Jean Stephenson of Catawba, SC will instruct. A special Spectator Night will be held January 18 from 7-8 p.m. and the public is invited to preview the course. For more information call Pat Hammett at 434-9277 or Corene Scarborough at 739-5860.

Health Council meeting planned

The Kings Mountain District Schools Health Council will meet Thursday, February 1 at 6:30 p.m. in the Teacher Center at Cental School. The meeting was rescheduled because of last week's snow. The meeting is open to the public.

Women's Resource Center sets meeting

The monthly meeting of the Women's Resource Center of Cleveland County will be held at 6:30 p.m. Tuesday, January 23, at the Women's Resource Center, 916 N. Lafayette St., Shelby (behind the Children's Clinic). All interested persons are encouraged to attend. The Women's Resource Center normally meets the fourth Tuesday of every month.

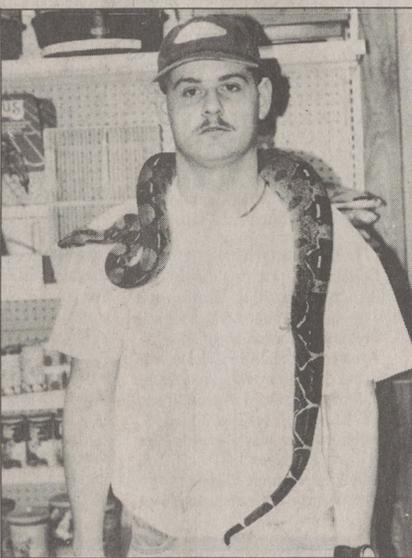
Financial workshop January 25 at KMHS

All parents of seniors planning to attend a college, university, community college or trade/technical school in the fall are encouraged to attend the 1996 Financial Aid Workshop January 25 at 7 p.m. at the Kings Mountain High School cafeteria. Eileen Dills of Queens College in Charlotte will instruct on how to file for financial aid and how to complete the financial aid forms. The free applications for federal student aid forms are now available. For more information, contact KMHS counselor Anita Campbell at 734-5647.

Snakes Alive!

KM's Kevin Cook to open exotic pet store downtown

Just nickname Kevin Cooke, 23, "Mr. Snake Man." The Kings Mountain man loves snakes, in and out of cages and even around his neck, and they are included in the wide selection of pets he features in his new business, Kings Mountain Pets & Supplies. Cooke has always loved reptiles. His grandfather, Espy Cooke, introduced him to snakes as a little boy and ever since Kevin has read books on how to care for all kinds of animals and birds, took home stray pets of all kinds and dreamed he would one day own his own pet store. Several weeks ago he leased the former Quality Sandwich building on Railroad Avenue from Mike Brown and has stocked it with supplies and cages filled with any and every pet imaginable. In between his job with Food Lion in the Meat Department he will run the business with the assistance of family members. His parents, Gary and Christi Cooke; his brother, Jonathan, 16; and his sister, Kristen, 11. He hopes his grandfather will also help out on occasion but not Grandma Cooke. She won't get anywhere near his three-year-old Columbia Red Tail Boa, his six-month-old Diamond Carpet Python or his three-year-old albino baby Burmese Python, the most popular snake pets.



Kevin Cooke has turned his pet collecting hobby into a new business, Kings Mountain Pets & Supplies on Railroad Avenue. Exotic reptiles are his favorites. Wrapping a Diamond Carpet Python around his neck doesn't bother him a bit.

One of Cook's favorite pets is his exotic Tiney African gray parrot, one of his most expensive pets, which when grown will have the vocabulary of a five-year-old human. The bird picks up on conversations among family members, calls the Dalmatian dog "Maggie" and Simon the cat by name and makes kissing sounds to familiar family members. Hands-on learning is how Cooke describes his expertise with animals. He reads how-to books, and he has books in stock, but his secret is giving his pets tender loving care.

Kevin wound his baby Albino Burmese Python around his neck, cuddled a Diamond Carpet Python and then talked to his pretty parrot, teaching her to say hello to strangers.

If he didn't have to make a living he would rent a building and house every pet that needed shelter and food.

Running a pet store won't be work for a young man who loves pets. Kevin may even shed a tear when he marks "for sale" on the cages which hold his prized friends.

Cats, dogs, fish, reptiles, birds, lizards, hamsters and exotic animals will be featured in the new business which is probably a first for Kings Mountain. Cook plans opening week specials next week and will probably get his new sign up this week. He will also ask his customers what they need for their pets that he may not stock and what new pets they prefer.



Kevin Cooke's prized pet is a Tiney African Gray parrot which is already picking up conversation around his new store. The new business will open in about a week.

Introduced to King, Black, Copperhead and Rattlers as a youngster, Cooke has devoted much of his studies to exotic reptiles, first as a hobby. He learned how to take care of the various pets and started saving his money after he went to work in 1991 after graduating from Kings Mountain High School. Traveling for Food Lion to various supermarket locations, he works for vacationing employees and learns about the food business.

"My hours at the pet store will have to be flexible at first and then I hope to get in the store full time as the business catches on," said Cook who sees a demand for a store to provide pet necessities as well as new pets for the public.

Parrots have charmed humans down through the ages. From Alexander the Great to King Henry VIII and beyond, people have been fascinated by feathered creatures.

City's financial picture improves

The city's auditor Darrell Keller had some good news and bad news for Kings Mountain City Council Tuesday night.

The good news was that the city's financial condition is improving but the bad news is that the city can expect a letter this week from the Local Government Commission admonishing them to hold the line on spending, keep the transfers lower and push for 8 percent of the general fund revenues in reserves.

Keller, Interim City Manager Gary Hicks and Finance Director Maxine Parsons held a telephone conference with Vance Holleman of the LGC in Raleigh Tuesday and they passed on the information to Council that members could expect a 14-page memorandum this week.

"Mr. Holleman told us to budget conservatively again, hold the line on spending and commended us while expressing concerns that the city will lose \$1.2 million annually in utility revenues by the closing of the Clevefont Fruit of the Loom Plant," said Parsons after the special meeting at which Council reviewed the audit for 1994-95 and looked at financial statements for the period ending December 31, 1995.

The city ended fiscal year 1994-95 with \$1.9 million in the bank, which included \$581,453 appropriated for reserves, \$242,276 for capital outlay for projects that went unspent, and \$192,000 for salaries since some department head positions had not been filled but funds had been included in the budget.

"The LGC is telling us again that our transfers are too high and based on our high transfers we would have problems borrowing and our bond rate would not be approved until the transfers come down," said Keller.

"They say the city remains in a weak financial condition and they urge us to get our reserves up to 8 percent," he said.

"If we go for a bond issue now it would not be approved," said Hicks, who said the LGC's rule of thumb is eight percent fund balance in the general fund.

"I know it's your money." Councilwoman Norma Bridges raised several questions. She asked how the city got money in the general fund and why transfers

Two million in the bank

The city's bank balance on December 31, 1995 topped two million dollars, according to a financial report presented by Finance Director Maxine Parsons to the City Council Tuesday.

Parsons said the city is paying its bills on time and will have the cash on hand to pay March/April bond payments and for a much-needed waste treatment plant basin. However, she said the city must continue to hold the line on spending.

At December 31, the reserve fund totaled \$535,436; the Powell Bill fund \$567,000; the water and sewer fund \$1.3 million; the electric fund \$145,000; the gas fund \$25,405; the sanitation fund \$29,000; and the cemetery fund, \$87,691.

City Auditor Darrell Keller said that the landfill, water/sewer, electric and gas funds showed profits for the first six months of the new fiscal year with the water/sewer fund showing a \$175,000 profit, the gas fund showing a \$255,000 profit, the electric fund showing a \$3,000 profit and the landfill fund showing a \$70,000 profit. At the end of the six months he said the general fund was \$300,000 in the hole.

"If transfers were made we would have broke even," he said.

Parsons said the gas department figures should be higher in the next six months of the year since December billings totaled \$543,000 and most payments will come in to city coffers in January.

"This is on the books as revenue but it isn't collected," she said.

Reviewing the cash position at December 31, the auditor said that the general fund was actually overdrawn by \$74,000 but the available cash to spend included \$1.3 million in water/sewer, \$145,000 in electric and \$25,000 in gas. In March and April bond payments totaling \$562,000 will have to be paid and a \$300,000 basin will have to be paid for from the water/sewer fund. Bond payments will have to be paid from the electric fund April 1.

See 2 Million, 7-A

Second snow sends shoppers scurrying again

A second winter snow storm in less than a week sent shoppers scurrying to the local supermarkets to stock up on bread and milk.

order extra supplies of both bread and milk.

were long at the checkout counters and customers were buying staple items, including bread and milk.

patches on Monday and ice was blamed for a wreck which sent three people to the hospital and resulted in high damages to vehicles.

Almost immediately after the weatherman started predicting more snow Thursday on top of the packed ice remaining on many roads the crowds hit the grocery stores.

"It was busy all day Thursday and we ran out of both bread and milk and had to get our vendors to bring all they could come up with and it was hard to find extra supplies."

"We had to send for an extra bread delivery because of the many calls for bread," she said.

Front wheel drive on vehicles helped drivers to maneuver the roads to get to work on Friday morning, although some workers remained inside.

Department stores were busy with requests for boots. Local stores also had numerous calls for chains and snow tires.

Crisp said that Food Lion is currently renovating its West Gate Plaza store and will be getting ready to offer 24-hour service in February.

Though not quite as treacherous as pure ice, the snow still caused a few problems around the county but Kings Mountain drivers fared pretty well, according to Kings Mountain police who warned them to drive slowly.

Town Hall opened later than usual and other businesses also opened several hours late. Schools were closed but will reopen on Thursday after a long snow holiday.

Robert Crisp, assistant manager at Food Lion, said business was brisk on Thursday and he had to

At Harris-Teeter, where 24-hour service is offered, Co-Manager Helen Smith said the situation was about the same. She said that lines

Ice was blamed for several wrecks in Kings Mountain. Even after the sun had melted much of the roadways there were some ice

See Snow, 7-A

Schools may look at early opening next fall

The extended vacation that Kings Mountain students got due to the recent icy wintry blast may cause school officials to eye opening school as early as August 10 next year and scheduling mid-winter exams before the Christmas holidays.

Students missed five days of school because of snow last week and then were out Monday for a national holiday and on Tuesday and Wednesday for mid-winter teacher workdays.

sunshine. Monday was the national holiday honoring the late Civil Rights leader Dr. Martin Luther King.

23 and 24, according to Principal Phil Weathers. Thursday, Friday and Monday will be exam review days.

"Change is always awkward but starting early would also mean getting out of school earlier in the summer," said Supt. Dr. Bob McRae.

It has been the most lengthy weather-related vacation for students in nearly 10 years but getting the students back in class hinged on the condition of the roads and McRae said that ice on back roads were a major concern.

"All in all students have been in class three days between Dec. 19 and this Thursday when the buses roll again," said McRae.

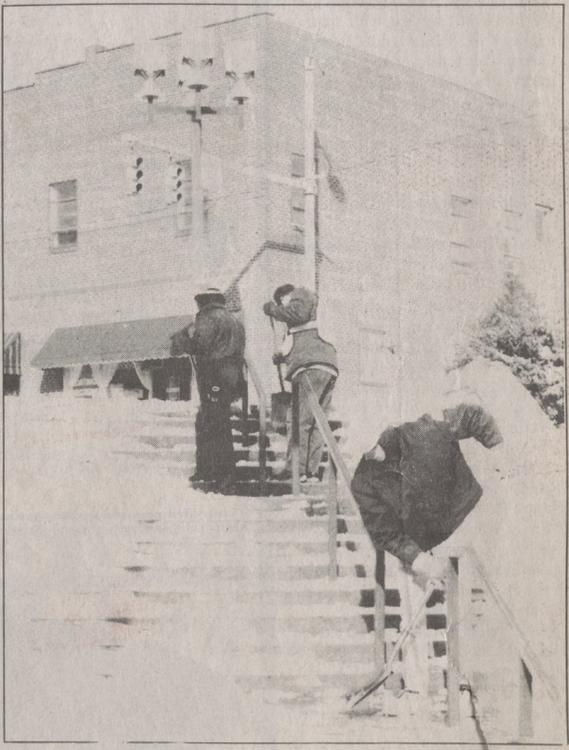
The makeup days when students will return to class on what was originally scheduled for holidays and work days are: Monday, February 26, originally a teacher work day; Friday, March 22, originally a teacher work day; and three days during spring vacation, students returning to classes Wednesday through Friday, April 10-12.

McRae said he will recommend to the district school's calendar committee that they also look at more flexibility with mid year teacher work days.

McRae said it would have not been fair to students and teachers to try to reschedule Tuesday and Wednesday workdays at the last minute when roads improved with

McRae said that he will recommend that the calendar committee and the board of education look at scheduling the mid-winter work days at the end of the exam period due to the bad weather that often occurs at this time of year.

At Kings Mountain High School exams have been rescheduled for Tuesday and Wednesday, January



Kings Mountain City employees shovel snow from the steps in front of City Hall last week. Mother Nature dumped four inches of snow and ice in the area at the first of the week, and came back Friday with a couple more.