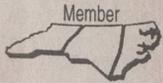


# The Lord has been good to Larry Rountree

Page 5-A

# Grover has new policeman

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# Kings Mountain Herald

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## When big thaw begins, so do plumbing problems

The icy blast is over but as temperatures rise the calls for service are pouring in to local plumbers and insurance agents.

Frozen pipes. Broken pipes. Busted hot water heaters. Tree limbs laid over the roofs of houses. Power boxes ripped off houses. Some physical damages to houses.

"All in all Kings Mountain was mighty lucky," said John Caveny of Nationwide Insurance.

Caveny could not give a dollar figure on the extent of damage claims he had received but he said most reports could be labeled as minor with the biggest claim in the \$2,000 range from roof damage.

Linda Bennett of Hamrick and Warlick Insurance said only minor damages had been reported and those were due to limbs falling on houses. "We were lucky," she said.

Mary Wade and Bob Smith of Smith Insurance Agency had received six claims for weather-related incidents Tuesday but none major.

"The Shelby office of Cleveland County Farm Bureau received a slew of calls but Kings Mountain Farm Bureau has had some calls but we don't have a true dollar figure," said Richard Morgan of the Kings Mountain office.

Morgan predicts there will be more claims filed as homeowners venture outside as temperatures warm and they start looking around at their homes and properties.

Morgan said that a Gastonia woman called him last Friday from the beach and when she learned about the icy weather headed home and immediately turned on her heat. "She smelled something and fire erupted and there were damages," he said.

"We just aren't prepared in this area for 5 degree temperatures," said Morgan.

Lane Logan reported few calls on Tuesday to Logan Plumbing but said he expected more as the temperatures rise. Logan thinks homeowners are wrapping and protecting pipes better this winter than in previous years.

"We've had a bunch of calls about frozen pipes," said Bill Grissom of Goforth Plumbing. He also said he expects more calls as the temperatures go up as did Phillip Bollinger and Don Phifer of Bollinger Plumbing. Local plumber Ben Page had a message on his answering machine that he was answering a prior call.

Water pipes either froze or burst because of the freezing temperatures.

The city had no water/sewer problems but without power the Town of Grover experienced major sewer problems that took Mayor Ronald Queen and maintenance supervisor Dean Causby all day Saturday to correct after the power went off about 10 p.m. Friday.

See Warm-up, 2-A



A Kings Mountain Public Works employee cuts a big pine tree off the power lines on North Goforth Street during Friday's freezing rain. Like other neighboring communities, KM had a rash of problems with trees falling on power lines, knocking out power, but most homes had their power restored in 24 to 48 hours.

## Ice storm leaves 5,000 in the dark, downs 300 trees

Tired city crews worked around the clock in sub zero temperatures during the weekend to restore power to 5,000 homes left in the dark by a third winter storm which iced the area and knocked down over 300 trees.

Twenty-four hours after the power went off Friday evening in 90 percent of the homes in the city electricity was restored to 80 percent of residents and city crews spent the next 24 hours on isolated areas that required repairs to lines that were jerked from houses due to falling trees and tree limbs.

Maney said that Duke Power had problems that related to Kings Mountain's supply of electricity. A trip capacity release module went out on the Linwood Road breaker and jumpers had to be cut to tie it in to the Lackey Street breaker until repairs could be made to the electric Substation.

In the Margrace area where some homes are on Duke Power the electricity was off until Monday. There were about 40 isolated areas where gas regulators also froze up on houses.

The city borrowed equipment from Union, SC to repair breakers and four crews from the electrical and gas departments aided by a

Public Works tree crew and only one contract tree service made the repairs.

Maney called the operation a team effort by all who participated.

"We contracted Kenny Bumgardner and Carolina Tree Service for three days and they and Karl Moss's public works crew cut the trees on the ground and Bumgardner cut the trees in the air hanging over the lines and Bumgardner handled the bucket work.

"Other than the one contract crew we did everything in house."

Kings Mountain area residents shivered through some of the coldest weather in years.

During a 48-hour period from Friday morning until Sunday night the switchboards at the Public Works Department received 6,000 calls.

Snow, sleet and freezing rain fell Friday night and early Saturday coating streets and power lines with ice, closing schools on Friday and some churches on Sunday. Many people without power also were without heat. Citizens without heat and water in rural sections had to start scurrying for heaters or

See Ice, 2-A

## Fire departments serve as shelters

Home is where the heat is.

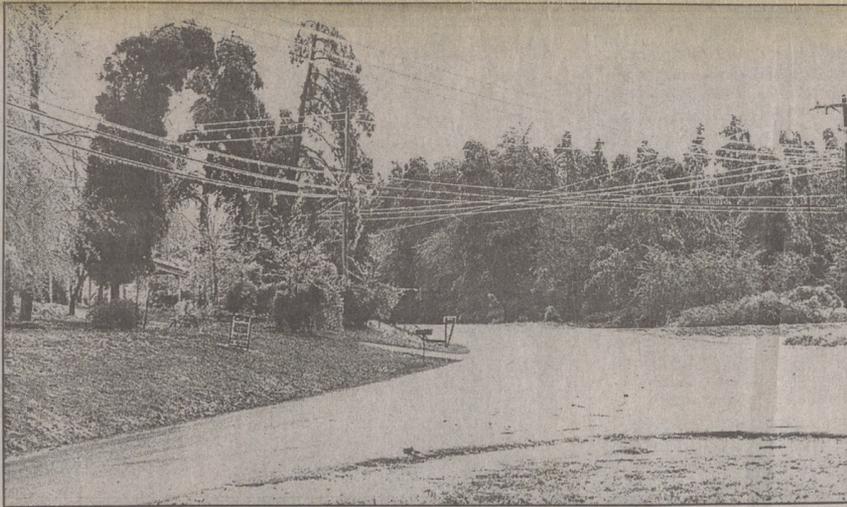
For 10 Kings Mountain people without power Saturday night that was the Kings Mountain Fire Department training room where the American Red Cross installed cots and served hot food.

At Oak Grove Fire Department the Red Cross set up a similar home away from home for those who needed a warm place and food.

With their homes frigid, numerous other people in the Kings Mountain area warmed themselves at a neighbors' gas logs, cooked on gas grills and heated with fireplaces and kerosene heaters. Many people had unexpected company for a day or two.

"We were without power too but my husband Johnny and I had gas logs and it was comfortable and we

See Shelter, 2-A



Tree limbs falling across power lines - like the one shown here in the Compact Community - put many Kings Mountain area residents out of power during last weekend's ice storm. Thawing is underway now, and the weather man says Friday's high could reach 60.

## City to give break on bills

The city will give a break to natural gas customers hit with higher than normal gas bills in January.

City Manager Gary Hicks said that customers will be able to make partial payments at City Hall and have more time to pay the bill.

Gas Supt. Jimmy Maney said the wholesale price of gas, the price the city pays for the fuel, jumped 30 percent as a result of the blizzard of 1996, the second winter storm of the season in a month when it was 18 percent colder than it was the previous year. The jump was passed on to customers but Maney said the profit margin for the city remains the same.

Telephones at the Public Works Department started ringing off the hook this week after customers received their January bills and in some instances found them twice as high as December.

Bills are determined by a base rate, plus the city's variable cost of gas - the wholesale price. When

that price spiked 30 percent, customer bills also increase.

Customers were also using more gas to heat their homes in a colder than average January, which increased the bill again. Add to that the fact that the January billing cycle included three more days than a normal cycle and customers took a serious hit in their pocketbooks.

Maney said gas contracts were sold at the highest rate they have been sold in 10 years, explaining that producers froze natural prices up. Some cities and companies have reserve funds and when there is a spike in gas prices they dip into the reserve funds and eat the increase, he explained. Kings Mountain had no reserves to use, thus had to pass on the increased costs, he said.

The city tracks wholesale cost of gas.

"If the price goes up we pass it

See Break, 2-A

## Kings Mountain People

### Graham has overcome some tough battles

By ELIZABETH STEWART  
of The Herald Staff

When Al Graham saw friends die on the battlefield in World War II he asked why he was spared and a friend told him "God makes no mistakes."

Fifty years since his discharge from Uncle Sam's Army on January 31, 1946, the memories keep returning to the 72-year-old Dixon Community resident.

"It took my wife and I a long time to accept the loss of our only son, Mike, who lost his life fighting for his country in the Vietnam War," said Graham.

Mike Graham landed in Vietnam on his 20th birthday July 12, 1970 and was killed in action October 7, 1970. He had been married 4 1/2 months when he was drafted and was in the Army only seven months.

Mrs. Graham said her father, the late John Caveny, was their inspiration and his faith helped their faith to become stronger after the death of young Graham.

"I remember Dad telling us over and over that God makes no mistakes."

Evelyn and Al Graham have their son's Purple Heart and Bronze



Dixon Community resident Al Graham holds the .31 caliber Japanese rifle and bayonet he shipped home from Japan at the end of World War II.

Star and his framed photograph in a prominent place in their comfortable living room.

But the memory of the young man will always remain in their hearts and that of their only daughter, Sheila Graham Brown. The family also includes their son-in-

law, Joe and granddaughter Ashley Brown Pearson. The Browns are their across-the-street neighbors.

"Sometimes Al gets in a melancholy mood and talks about his wartime experiences but the 50th anniversary recently of his homecoming from the War was special,"

said Mrs. Graham, Al's wife of nearly 50 years, as they relaxed over a crossword puzzle and Al added firewood to a roaring fire in the fireplace as the temperatures dropped to subfreezing outside.

Occasionally Al takes his .31 caliber Japanese rifle and bayonet and shows it to friends. Al shipped the gun and blue steel bayonet and holster home in 1945.

"We always kept the nickel plated parade sword and rifle loaded and slept with our finger on the trigger," he demonstrated.

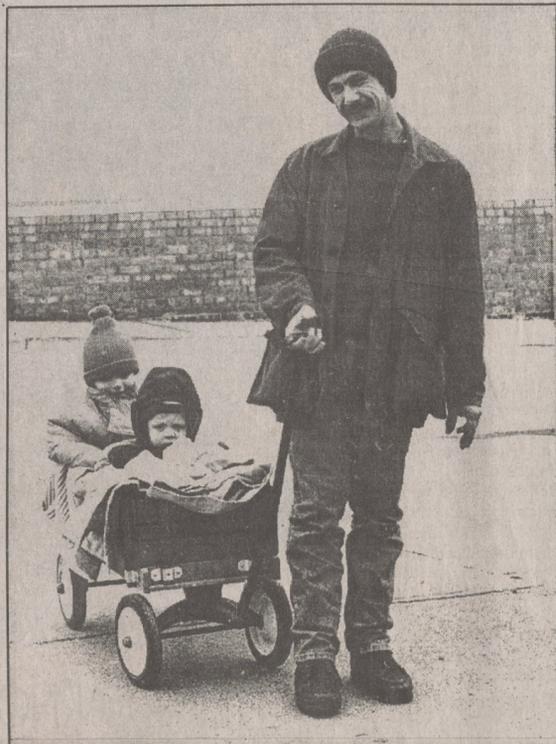
"The odds for our platoon were two of the enemy to one American and there were few of my platoon left when the war ended," said Graham, who fought in some of the roughest terrains in the South Pacific against the Imperial Japanese.

"Snipers shot friends before my eyes and some of the guys had a premonition of death but I never felt uneasy," said Graham.

Al Graham must have had an angel on his shoulder.

Bloody Ridge, Five Brothers, Five Sisters, China Wall, Death Valley, Wildcat Bowl, the 81st Infantry Wildcat Division are

See Graham, 2-A



Last weekend's sub-freezing weather didn't stand in the way of Ray Hale and his children Brittany, left, and Travis from making their usual rounds around town in their little red wagon. Brittany and Travis, who were well-bundled up, said they were very comfortable.