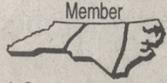


4-A

Balanced budget is just good common sense

6-A

Mountaineers defeat Shelby, tied for first place in SWC



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Public hearing in Grover

The third public hearing on how to spend \$6.1 million in school construction bond money will be held Tuesday at 7 p.m. at Grover School.

The public is invited. At Thursday's second public hearing at 9 a.m. at the school administrative office building only five people attended besides the board members and staff. Raeford White, the only spokesman, said he supported the grades 5-6 organization which got wholehearted support from the nearly 50 people attending the first hearing last week.

Chairman Ronnie Hawkins proposed that the system build a new school to house all fifth grades and then expand to a sixth grade when funds are available.

Hawkins said a new building should be of good construction and functional but eliminating some of the frills present in modern day school plants would get the price down to a workable range.

Supt. Dr. Bob McRae said that building a 5-6 school would cost about \$10 million. Building of a K-5 plant and building of a grade 5 school would take a large chunk of the bond money and Hawkins said building the auxiliary plant and adding on at a later date would save money by going ahead with construction now.

McRae said that the state will pay the salary of a principal for a new school. He foresaw that some reshuffling of positions might be required but no new employees.

Hawkins said he hopes the school board will make a decision soon after the public hearings are completed so that monies could be made available.

The school bond money is spread out over a four-year period and Hawkins said Kings Mountain should get its name in the pot as soon as possible.

"We have some crowded schools and no room for expansion," said Hawkins.

Rezoning request on Board agenda

A rezoning request which could pave the way for a new industry on Crocker Road is on the agenda for Tuesday night's meeting of the Planning and Zoning Board at 7 p.m. at City Hall.

Former Kings Mountain resident Phillip Elam of Mars Hill is asking that his property be rezoned from residential to light industry.

See Zoning, 5-A

CUPID RIGHT ON TARGET



SWEETHEARTS FOR LIFE - Olland and Iva Lee Pearson have been married nearly 68 years. Valentine's Day is every day for the well known Kings Mountain couple.

Iva Lee, Olland Pearson have been sweethearts for 68 years

For 68 happy years Iva Lee and Olland Pearson have been sweethearts.

The Kings Mountain couple share their love for each other every day, not just on Valentine's Day. Olland, 86 in March, and Iva Lee, 86 in September, credit their successful marriage to learning to give and take.

In a day when couples split up more often than they remain together, the Pearsons are a shining example of a bride and bridegroom who took their wedding vows seriously "for better or worse and until death do us part."

Pearson likes to goodnaturedly kid his wife but both admit they have never had a serious argument and if they ever disagreed they always made up before they retired for the night.

"I told our Young at Heart group on our 65th wedding anniversary that I stole something I never got rid of and I'm still serving time," laughed Olland who was referring to their elopement May 18, 1928. Olland Pearson was 18 and his bride, Iva Lee Falls, was 17 1/2. They had met a couple months earlier at her aunt's home, started courting, and decided to get married.

Saturday night the Pearsons will be among those honored at a Valentine banquet at First Wesleyan Church. They're making plans to attend, although Mrs. Pearson has been in poor health in recent months and her husband took her out of the kitchen and is now preparing breakfast and supper and they are enjoying noon meals on wheels from the KM Senior Center.

Iva Lee, who has always been the chauffeur in the family, also had to give up driving and sold her car. She fell and broke a bone two years ago, apparently after a light stroke, and suffered a heart problem on Christmas day.

But they never miss a Sunday in church and the couple attend senior citizens group programs at First Wesleyan Church.

Neighbors on Fairview Street, including their daughter and son-in-law, Shirley and Gene Mayes, keep a watchful eye on the personable couple who enjoy company.

Iva Lee, daughter of Jay and Minnie Mozell Hoyle Falls, went to work in the Dillon Mill at the age of 17 and retired after 42 years. She spooled, ran a twister, creeled warpers and

worked in the packing department. Olland worked at the same plant for some time but retired from Battleground Service Station where he pumped gas and operated the grocery store for many years for the late Fred W. Plonk on Grover Road.

"I can remember pumping gas for 15 cents a gallon during a gas war and when there were three busy grocery stores on that street," he said.

Pearson also was active in politics during the Garland Still administration in 1951-53. He beat his friend and grocer Tommy Ellison for a ward seat and the next time around Ellison beat Pearson. He also likes to tell the story of how all of East Kings Mountain was Gaston County, a bustling community with four mills and an elected mayor. Of course Pearson, now 86, was only four years old when that part of history happened and when West Kings Mountain in Cleveland County on the other side of the tracks also had a mayor. In 1915 East Kings Mountain residents voted to join Cleveland County.

The Pearson family also includes one son, Harold Dean Pearson and his wife, Diane, of Richmond, Va. and their son, Chris, and grandson, Jackie Putnam and two great-grandchildren, Jason and Brandon Putnam. Olland Pearson was one of 11 children of the late Bob and Emma Hawkins Pearson. He dropped out of school at age 14 to go to work in the Dillon mill to help support his family. His brothers are Everette, Arthur, Roy and Flay Pearson, all of Kings Mountain, and sister, Roberta Cobb of Detroit.

The Pearsons enjoy television. Mrs. Pearson likes mysteries, particularly Perry Mason and Matlock, and Mr. Pearson enjoys westerns and playing solitaire. Neither care for the soaps.

"We used to spend a lot of time visiting the shut-in and sick and taking some of my home canned vegetables and freshly baked cakes but now Olland insists I stay away from the stove and my good neighbors are bringing those nice things to us," smiles Mrs. Pearson.

The Pearsons don't plan anything special Friday on Valentine's Day. Maybe Olland will give Iva Lee a valentine heart but more than likely he'll just tell her he loves her.

Students rank high in math and reading

Kings Mountain students in grades 3-8 rank significantly higher on reading and math scores than other North Carolina students and in grade 7 on writing, according to the recently released state report card which shows local students above the state average.

"We are below the state average in fourth grade writing but the work being done at the Middle School to improve reading and writing accounts for the big growth in that area," said Assistant Supt. for Instruction Dr. Jane King.

Jean Thrift, Director of Student Services, reviewed the report card results for the Kings Mountain District Schools at Monday night's board of education meeting.

Thrift said the system ranks No. 10 among 100 systems in the state in writing, No. 13 in math and No. 33 in reading. The report card also showed that the system reduced the drop-out rate, that all high school graduates received diplomas with no certificates presented in 1996 and that seniors met all requirements for admission to the UNC College system, 52.6 percent in 1996 compared to 45.9 percent in 1995.

"We have a way to go to bring the fourth grade writing scores up but there are always areas to work on in the schools and I think teachers should be commended for the big growth we are seeing in reading, writing and arithmetic," said King.

The system/state comparison revealed that Kings Mountain students were 72.3 percent pro-

ficient in writing compared with a state average of 59.7 percent in 1996. The ratio of students earning five or more credits went up from 80.9 percent in 1995 to 88 percent in 1996. Participation in the NC Scholars Program decreased slightly, from 25.2 percent in 1995 to 24.2 percent in 1996. Student performance in reading and math showed a big gain from 1993-96 and King credited those statistics to the increased emphasis on these subjects by teachers. Those charts showed that the percent proficient score in reading for grades 3-8 was 59.3 percent in 1993, 66.4 percent in 1994, 69.8 percent in 1995 and 71.5 percent in reading, grades 3-8; and in math for these same students 59.3 percent in 1993; 70.01 percent in 1994; 76.6 percent in 1995; and 80.4 percent in 1996.

Core courses are English I, Algebra, US History, Biology and Civics.

The drop-out rate decreased from 3.30 percent in 1995 to 2.76 percent in 1996. The ratio of students earning five or more credits went up from 80.9 percent in 1995 to 88 percent in 1996.

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GIFT TO SCHOOLS - Supt. Dr. Bob McRae accepts a check for \$350 from Margaret Wilkins, Education Coordinator for Time Warner Cable of Gaston, Cleveland and York Counties from proceeds of an education campaign last fall in which \$5 of each installation fee went to area schools for media related purchases. Time Warner Cable also provides free cable service to each school in the KM School District.

KINGS MOUNTAIN PEOPLE

C.D. 'Red' Ware's blood is fire engine red

C.D. "Red" Ware, 89, hopes his great-grandchildren will follow in his footsteps as a fireman. On his birthday Jan. 28 Ware enjoyed pizza with his grandsons, Brad and Chuck Austin and their families and reminisced about his firefighting career which spanned 34 years.

And he told his five-year-old great-grandson Cody Austin, and he wasn't kidding, not to ever chase a fire truck to watch the action, something he never did as a kid g rowing up in the Patterson Grove Community.

Charles Dewitt Ware earned the nickname "Red" as a little

boy because of his carrot colored hair. His immediate family always called him "Dewitt" but his fire-fighting buddies and friends all know him as "Red."

Ware's son Bud followed his father in the fire-fighting business and is the veteran Assistant Fire Chief at the Kings Mountain Fire Department.

After serving as a volunteer for 10 years, Red became a full-time employee of the Kings Mountain Fire Department in 1951 at the urging of Chief Grady King. Red was the driver pump operator, the man on the hose and captain for 10 years. He retired at the age of 67 but

kept working part time for the late J. Ollie Harris at Harris Funeral Home where he drove the ambulance for 30 years.

"I could just about name the many, many people that I brought home to their final resting place," said Ware about his travels all over the country. He lost his devoted partner and wife of 62 1/2 years, Estelle Ware, in 1990.

Ware suffered a stroke in 1991 which paralyzed his left side and he has been homebound since. His good humor and keen memory belie his age.

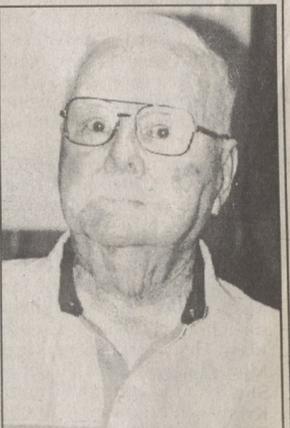
Son-in-law Gene Austin, Mayor Scott Neisler and local

Radio WKMT disc jockey Jim Arr flew Red in Neisler's airplane to the Grand Ole Opry a few years back and Red said he had the time of his life. A big Nashville Network fan, Red said he met Roy Acuff and Charlie Walker sang his favorite song, "San Antonio Rose" from the stage of the Grand Ole Opry.

Red says he hopes he can return someday to Nashville but going that distance would be a challenge for him and his friends. He's about to make country music fans of his neighbors, Home Health nurses and his family.

"Dad listens to the radio and watches the Nashville network but Gene and I can't get him hooked on soap operas," says daughter Phyllis Austin.

Red recalls that he helped neighbor, Ioma McClain, move from the country in a two-horse wagon many years ago. Ioma's country cooking is on his table at least once a week. Neighbor Edith Crow helps him exercise his arm. Granddaughter Karen Melton supplies baskets of homebaked goodies and Red also enjoys other grandchildren, Chuck and Brad Austin



See Ware, 5-A

C.D. WARE