

Mounties
go through
mini-camp

8B



Legislators
vote to end
tax on food

5A



Councilman
says it's time for reality
check at ... ke 4A



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Roamin' 'Round Kings Mountain

By Gary Stewart

Rev. Oscar Stalcup retires from KM Foursquare church

Monday was a "downer" for the Rev. Oscar Stalcup. After 25 years as a Foursquare Gospel minister - including the last 18 at Foursquare Gospel Church in Kings Mountain - the Bessemer City resident had no office to go to, no sermons to prepare, and no visits to make.



REV. STALCUP

He was retired. Leaving full-time church ministry - and especially the Kings Mountain church which he has loved and served so well over the years - was a difficult decision but one which Rev. Stalcup says he had to make. The past several years the stress has been tremendous, and more so recently since his oldest son, Greg, and his wife, Linda, are both experiencing health problems.

Even though family obligations may keep him out of the pulpit, Rev. Stalcup is quick to point out that a minister never really retires and he may someday accept another church. "But because it was official Sunday, it's like I told my son, I kind of feel like I am of no benefit," he says. "It's kind of sad...a downer position...like a horse put out to pasture. Even though it's retirement, you still feel like you're not as useful and effective as you once were. It's not all joy."

Rev. Stalcup said he will help the local church through its transition period, continue his book ministry and maybe even fill-in at other churches when their pastor is on vacation. But his health and the health of his family will take priority for awhile.

Rev. Stalcup's wife, who was an active leader in the women's and children's ministries at Foursquare, has a muscle disorder called "fibramyolgia" which gives her almost constant pain and causes distress, and his son, Greg, 32, found out last October that he has cancer. At first, doctors thought it was in remission but it has appeared again in recent tests.

"A combination of all of that, plus the stress of the ministry has begun to give me some health problems, too," Rev. Stalcup said. "I had talked to the men of the church in July of '96 and told them if we didn't get a co-pastor or someone in that could take some of the duties off me that this was probably going to happen. We never did get any help or relief, and just feel like under the conditions and personal problems I can't give the church what it needs."

The Kings Mountain church has grown by leaps and bounds since the Stalcup's arrived 18 years ago. He recalled that there were 27 people in attendance his first day with the congregation, and the membership is now over 100. Many of the people who were youngsters then are adult leaders now and have helped the church grow tremendously in attendance, programs and facilities. Rev. Stalcup also helped begin a number of churches in this area and in Africa. He has written a number of books and ships Bibles and other materials all around the world.

He credits his family with helping him be a successful pastor, not only here but in other churches he pastored previously in Gastonia, Paw Creek and Lake Norman.

"My mom and dad (Mergie and Howard) really stood behind us and did whatever it took," he said. "My mom teaches Sunday School, does yard work, sings in the choir, and is a back-up pianist and my dad is a faithful prayer warrior." The Stalcup children have also been very active in the church.

Rev. Stalcup said he had no intention of becoming a minister when he enrolled at UNC-Charlotte to get a degree in business and economics and computers. He worked several years as a computer programmer while "fighting" the call to the ministry.

"It was in the early seventies," he recalled. "I was in my third year at UNCC. I fought the call for seven years before I finally went to Bible College. I was doing ministry but I never would just give it my all."

Like any pastor, he said he ran the gamut of emotions over the years but the greatest joy was always seeing lives changed through the power of the gospel.

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Elections Board adamant on moving KM polling site

by ELIZABETH STEWART
of the Herald Staff

Over objections of three city officials, a former mayor and a former precinct leader, the Cleveland County Board of Elections Tuesday refused to change the No. 2 polling site from the Kings Mountain Hospital to the Kings Mountain Community Center.

Ward 4 Councilman Gene White called the move "arbitrary" and lacking in common courtesy.

"If this change is submitted to the U.S. Justice Department we will use whatever means of protest available to us," said White.

"We can dress this up anyway we please but it has the appearance of trying to appease a very

"...it has the appearance of trying to appease a few people, maybe even one, at the expense of many."

-Gene White

few people, maybe even one, at the expense of many."

Kings Mountain City Council signed a letter last week, recommending that the board of elections return the polling place to the newly renovated Kings Mountain Community Center.

The two board members - Ruth Wilson, secretary, and Pat Spangler, chairman, and Director of

Elections Debra Blanton listened to concerns also from Mayor Scott Neisler, Councilman Jerry Mullinax, Charlie Carpenter and former mayor Kyle Smith. Near adjournment, both Wilson and Spangler shook their heads "no" to the question posed by Neisler if the board would change the polling place.

"I think you're going to like it when you get used to it," said Spangler.

Wilson, longtime member of the board who resides on Scism Farm Road, dismissed accusations, saying that the board must look at the geographical area and the needs of the voters.

See Election 9A



BACKYARD GARDENERS - Wink Russell, left, and his brother, Wayne, have a garden that is the pride of their community. The Russells have tomato plants growing six feet tall and other vegetables almost ready to eat.

You'd 'wink' at Russell's garden

How does your garden grow? Just ask Wink and Wayne Russell, brothers in the backyard gardening business, or better still take a drive to 910 Henry Street.

Their neighbors chided them that they planted too early but even after his tomatoes were frosted on twice the beautiful plants now reach a height of six feet. Wink, 73, can stand in his garden and his tomato plants are taller.

"I've been gardening 27 years but this year I needed a little help and my brother Wayne has been my right hand man and you can see the results of our working together," Wink said this week as he smiled broadly and gave visitors samples of

fresh green onions, cucumbers and squash. Before long the brothers Russell will have vine-ripe tomatoes by the bushels, green beans, beets, lettuce, collards and cabbage. Last year Wink put up 600 jars of vegetables and this year he and Wayne plan to can and freeze vegetables and give the rest away.

That's their secret for success in gardening. They give the vegetables away and that's what they plan to do this year. Wayne says they'll probably load up some of the goodies in his truck and distribute them at the Senior Center.

Their 40x40 foot garden in Wink's back yard is watered by a sprinkler system coupled with

good fertilizer and, of course, tender loving care.

"There was a time when I wouldn't let anyone step foot in this garden, I wouldn't dare let anyone walk around in it," said Wink, displaying the wide rows of green beans which he said he used a hoe to make a furrow between the tomatoes and then just sprinkled the seeds.

Wink retired from Reeves Brothers 10 years ago and Wayne, 60, retired five years ago. Wayne and Pat Russell have two children, Mark and Nancy Russell and Carla and Mike Bennett and four grandchildren, Christopher and Katie Bennett and Tyler and Brittany

See Russell 9A

City may protest voting at hospital

By ELIZABETH STEWART
Of The Herald Staff

Challenging the Cleveland County Board of Elections over its choice of polling places for Kings Mountain No. 2 voting precinct, the City Council will seek legal direction from City Attorney Mickey Corry Tuesday night.

Ward 4 Councilman Gene White has asked that the report of the dispute over a change in polling places from the Kings Mountain Community Center to the Kings Mountain Hospital be on the agenda along with a report of Monday's Board of Elections meeting at which the board denied a request from Kings Mountain to rescind its previous action.

A total of 2,012 citizens are registered to vote at the KM No. 2 precinct. The biggest vote recorded at the site, according to election officials, was in 1996 when 1,999 people went to the polls.

Kings Mountain contracted with the county last year to run the municipal elections and at the time was among only two cities in the county that ran its own elections.

A letter from the Board of Elections to the U. S. Justice Department requesting the change in polling places was to go out this week as well as a letter to Hank Neal, Administrator of the Kings Mountain Hospital, thanking the hospital for agreeing to serve as an alternate site for future elections.

"We are community-minded and we could not say no to the request by the Board of Elections to use the hospital," said Neal. She said Board Chairman Pat Spangler and secretary Ruth Wilson visited the hospital recently looking for an alternate site for voters and said that the location would be ideal.

"We will just have to work out all the details, including parking," said Neal, who said that perhaps adjoining businesses would volunteer use of their parking lots if that became necessary.

"We were just being good citizens because we want to help our neighbors and we certainly don't want to be in the middle of a dispute over polling places," she said.

White told the elections board Monday that he hopes Council will petition the U. S. Justice Department and/or seek an injunction against the board's action, if necessary.

See Protest 9A

KINGS MOUNTAIN PEOPLE

Painting KM brings Bolin joy

Happiness for Kathryn Long Bolin, 79, is working at her easel painting Kings Mountain subjects and producing beautiful art, a talent she has enjoyed lifelong.

Unfortunately, Bolin never signed her paintings, a dozen baptisteries including Allen Memorial Baptist Church's watercolor she produced 40 years ago, and one of her proudest works, the six-by-ten foot oil painting of the Battle of Kings Mountain which hangs at City Hall.

Because she loves her hometown, Bolin took on the city project in 1979 as a labor of love and the mural was hung in 1980 during the 200th celebration of the Revolutionary War Battle.

"I always research my subjects and that particular project took much research at the library," said Bolin this week as she relaxed with her friend, Frances Green, at her home on Phifer Road. Green has encouraged the artist to start signing her work.

"I had to figure out what the weather and terrain was like in 1780, what type of rifles and uniforms to paint," said Bolin who discovered one eyewitness account which said the sun came out as the Patriots reached the battleground around 3 p.m. It had rained that morning and the night before.

Because of its large size, the canvas had to be specially ordered from New York. It is woven of Belgian flax. After sizing

the canvas with rabbit glue, Bolin painted the entire canvas with a titanium white foundation. She painted the most distant parts of the scene, the sky and the trees, first. Then she drew her perspective lines. Starting from the vanishing point in the center and moving outward, she began filling in the human figures dominated by Maj. Patrick Ferguson being shot from his horse. While the trees are brightly colored against a blue sky, and the British uniforms are a bright red, the flesh tones and rustic clothing of the Patriots give a somber impression. Smoke hangs thickly in the trees.

"The hardest part was the fa-

See Bolin 9A



KATHRYN BOLIN

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