

Kings Mountain Herald

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Football
rapbook
inside today's
Herald

Proud to be American

Mounghane home after visit to Laos

Her life-long dream to return to her native country and discover her roots in Laos left a Kings Mountain woman with an even greater appreciation for America and her citizenship.

Douan Mounghane, 24, is back in graduate school at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill this week with plenty to tell her roommates of her recent trip to Laos with her mother, Didi. She also has plenty to tell of her experiences as a Peace Corps volunteer for two years in Jamaica.

"I was saddened to see the poverty that exists in Laos," said the pretty young woman who came to America when she was five years old and to Kings Mountain with her parents, Chantay and Didi Mounghane, when she was age 11 and a sixth grader.

Douan visited relatives in Laos, her grandfather and her aunts and uncles for almost a month. Flying from Atlanta to Thailand and to Laos, it took about 19 hours.

"The biggest lesson I learned was that we are very lucky over here," said Douan, who is pursuing a Master's of Public Health, specializing in maternal and child health.

After graduating from UNC in December 1995, Douan reported to the Peace Corps in Jamaica in July 1996 and returned to Kings Mountain June 30, 1998.

After serving the poor of Jamaica, Douan said she discovered in Laos a country less developed and in even more need of assistance.

"I felt as if I felt short of my obligation to my own people," said Douan. She explained that while she was serving strangers abroad Laotians were living in such dire conditions, many worse off than the Jamaicans she represented.

In Laos the slow pace of life, like in Jamaica, was quite peaceful, a great escape for awhile, in Douan's words, from the hustle and bustle of America. Foods are still made from scratch and ridiculously cheap. With a few U. S. dollars you can live it up pretty well. She ate all the delicious foods set in front of her and fared well without any gastrointestinal upsets, she said.

Douan said the U.S. dollar goes far on the exchange rate but most Americans visiting Laos see only the nice homes where there are servants and little of the shacks. Tourists stay in the fine hotels and visit the nice shops and beautiful waterfalls and miss out on the real Laos, said Douan who speaks the Laotian language as well as English and the Jamaican dialect. She has also studied French.

Douan and her parents became U.S. citizens in 1992, a red letter day for the family. Douan learned about the Peace Corps from a recruiter at Carolina and chose Jamaica from three options.

See Proud, 3A

What's up for '99?



Michael Henderson, Milo and Ronnie Hawks are hard at work laying pipe at the new Kings Mountain Police Station. The city hopes to get the building "in the dry" before the bad winter weather hits and have it ready for occupancy later in 1999.

KM to focus on sewer treatment, PD and other building projects

New Year 1999 is just around the corner and Mayor Scott Neisler is predicting that the city's future will be bright.

"We will be focusing on our priorities and one of our big efforts will be to renegotiate a contract with the City of Gastonia for sewer treatment at the Crowders Creek Wastewater Treatment Plant," said the mayor.

The mayor says it's almost a foregone conclusion that Council may up the sewer rate to Kings Mountain customers in the light of a 18 percent increase over the past two years from Gastonia.

"We have been eating those increased costs for years and we just can't do it anymore," said Neisler.

The mayor said that over the past 10 year contract with Gastonia that the neighboring city has raised the inside industrial rate to Kings Mountain 47 percent.

The mayor explained that Kings Mountain is not meeting its minimum requirement for sewage treatment in the contract to Gastonia but still must pay the minimum charges.

Also in the new year:

The \$1 million plus Law Enforcement Center should be ready to open in the summer. Metal studs were being erected on the inside of the big building this week and soon the roof will go up.

Bids will be taken soon for the new Children's Wing at Jacob S. Mauney Memorial Library. Community donations have exceeded over \$600,000 to build the new addition.

Recreational facilities, virtually completed in 1998, will see the addition of bathrooms at Deal Street and Davidson Parks and contracted maintenance for grassing at both facilities.

The new year is an election year. In November all seats on City Council and the mayor's seat are up for grabs.

The Kings Mountain Senior Center Advisory Council is looking at a community fund raising effort to build a \$1 million plus new Kings Mountain Senior Center.

See City, 3A

Finding land for new 5-6 school one of top priorities for District

New Year 1999 will find a "full plate" for Kings Mountain District Board of Education, says reelected Chairman Ronnie Hawkins.

Looking for feasible sites for the new Grades 5-6 School is high on the board's priorities for the new year.

Supt. Dr. Bob McRae is meeting early in the new year with Holland, Hamrick & Patterson Architects to talk about a system-wide facility needs study and also to start looking for a site for the new school.

In August the Board of Education voted to make the new school a city-wide fifth and sixth grade school to draw fifth graders from the five existing elementary schools and sixth graders from Kings Mountain Middle School. After completion of the new school, the Middle School would house grades seven and eight with enrollment of about 800.

Hawkins said the most recent estimates have the new school costing around \$9 million, about \$1.2 million less than initial estimates. Paying this bill will require some frugal budgeting on the part of the board but Hawkins said the money will be in hand to pay for the school by the end of construction.

The system can depend on \$6.1 million in state funds. For the past two years the system has tried to save as much of its repairs budget as possible and Hawkins said another plus is action by the N. C. General Assembly which voted to allow school construction supplies to be sales tax exempt.

"We can find the money in the budget to pay for the school," he said.

The New Year '99 will find the five board members looking at plans for the new school with construction expected to start in the year 2000 and guestimates by the chairman are that the new school could open by August 2001 to students.

"We will be purchasing land in the new year and letting bids," said Hawkins who is beginning his

See Schools, 3A

Guys' New Year's wish to have son back home

The Kings Mountain young man who stole the hearts of Kings Mountain people with his courageous trip to Mexico for cancer treatments is coming home January 2.

"I talked to Ed and Judy Guy today after Anthony had more blood work done and they are hopeful they can fly home next Saturday," said Melony Bolin, a family friend.

In this the season of hope and miracles, the Kings Mountain family embarked on a journey to Mexico November 28 for treatments for Anthony who is battling brain cancer.

Meantime, Kings Mountain people have raised over \$2600. A Interact Club benefit at the recent Kings Mountain High School football game raised \$2326 to help the Guys pay the costs of airfare, housing and

medical costs
"We appreciate so much the support of Kings Mountain people during this difficult time for our son and we ask for their continued prayers," said Ed, a teacher at Davidson School.

Anthony has taken 20 anti-cancer treatments, including mega doses of vitamins, in Mexico. Every day Ed and Judy Guy and their older son, Jeff, have accompanied Anthony from Ysidro, California over the border to a medical center in Mexico for the 4 1/2 hours of anti-cancer treatments not yet approved by the U.S. Federal Drug Administration.

Still unable to walk, talk or chew, Anthony was breathing on his own this week, Bolin said.

See Guy, 3A

Christmas ice storm kind to KM

By Alan Hodge

People who wished for a white Christmas last week got more than they bargained for. Instead of fluffy white snow, the entire Southeast was hit hard by one of the worst ice storms in recent years. Between power outages and roads that looked like skating rinks, Christmas turned into a test of survival for many.

The Carolinas got their share of the slick stuff. Duke Power reported that 116,000 of its customers had their power go off. Despite efforts to get the juice flowing, Christmas Eve saw at least 68,000 homes still without electricity. Duke Power reported that this was the fifth worst ice storm as far as outages went that they had experienced.

Across the foothills and Piedmont of North Carolina, and the uplands of South Carolina, power lines were down in droves. As of 4 pm on Christmas Eve, Charlotte reported 18,250 homes in the dark and Greensboro had 13,850 outages reported. Smaller towns had their share of problems too. Mt. Airy had over 1,000 places in the cold, Chapel Hill had 2,000, and Madison 1,700. Gastonia got off rather lightly with just 750 places without power.

Down in South Carolina, the hardest hit town in Duke's domain was Lancaster with 1,400 Christmas Eve outages. Other towns reported were Spartanburg with 400 structures less electricity, and Greenwood calling in 200 dark spots.

Thanks to hard work by Duke crews, all power in North Carolina was back up by Christmas night.

"Cleveland County got off relatively lightly," said Jim Maher of Duke Power. "At the peak of outages only about 1,500 places lost their power in Cleveland."

The power situation in Kings Mountain was not as bad as it could have been either according to city electrical manager Nick Hendricks.

"We just had one of our six circuits go out," said Hendricks. "We came in around 5:30 on Christmas Eve morning to take care of a limb on the lines at the corner of Henry and Rhodes Avenue. Power was only out for about 90 minutes. Another limb at Hawthorne put around 30 houses out for a short time, but we took care of that too."

"We worked for about six or seven hours total for the day," Hendricks commented. "The whole situation was a borderline disaster. Thankfully, the ice wasn't as bad as it could have been."

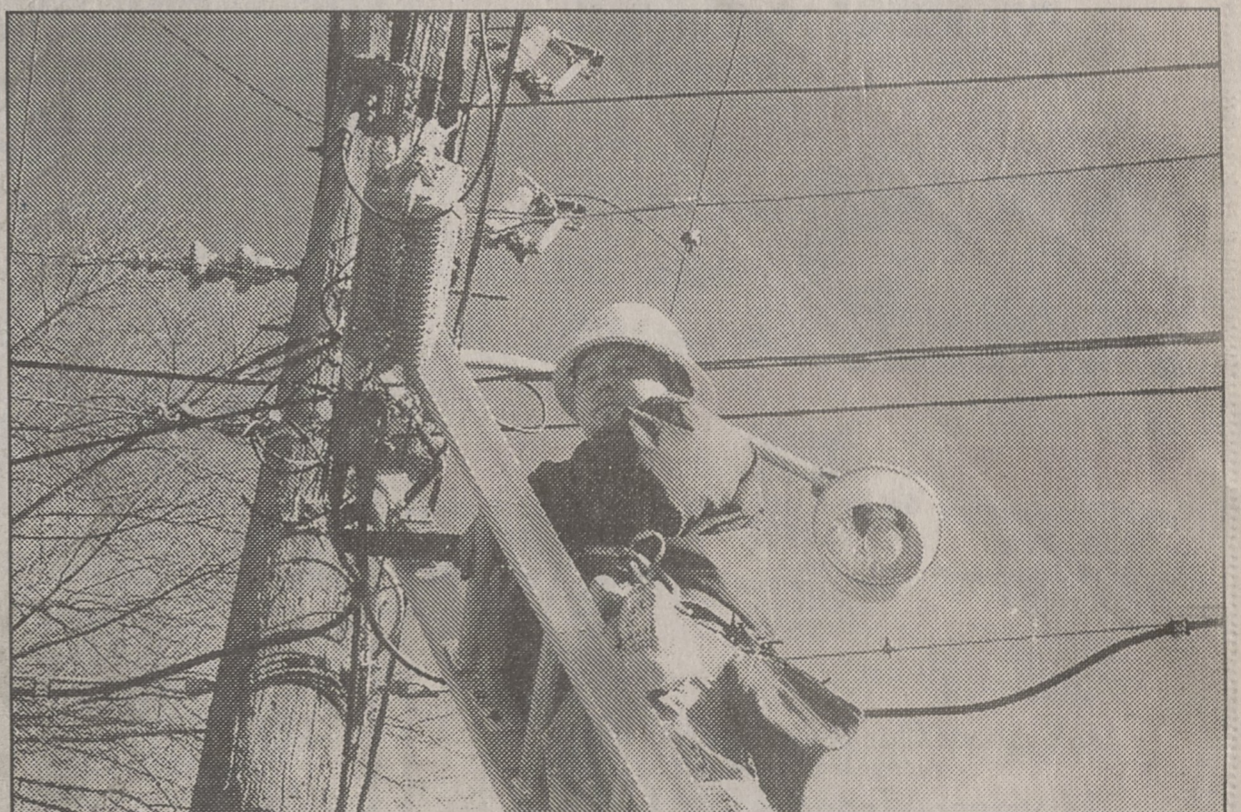
Dewey Cook of the Cleveland County Emergency Management office said that things went smoothly for his department.

"Knock on wood, we dodged the bullet on this storm," said Cook. "We just had some trees down in a few roadways that local fire departments took care of, and a few homes in remote locations without power to deal with."

On the driving scene, the North Carolina Highway Patrol communications office in Monroe reported that Christmas Eve saw eleven accidents reported in Cleveland County. One of the worst occurred north of Fallston.

"A tractor-trailer hit a bridge and jackknifed," said Debbie Sarratt of Shelby Body Shop. "We had a time towing it away because both the tractor and trailer were totaled."

Chief Frank Burns of the Kings Mountain Fire Department reported "all quiet" along his front during the storm.



UP A POLE - Cable worker Ray Austin checks to make sure all connections are secure on West Mountain Street. Austin hopes any ice storms stay far away.

First Carolina Federal

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