

Kings Mountain Herald

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Kings Mountain, NC • Since 1889 • 50¢

Count
down
to 2000



By Alan Hodge

Local banks on top of Y2K problem

Of all the potential Year 2000 computer problems that might affect most people's day-to-day lives, glitches with banking seem to be getting the most attention. Don't think that the banks will be caught flat-footed. Work has been underway for several years to make sure that when the fateful day of January 1, 2000 rolls around, everyone's financial dealings will go smoothly.

The three largest banks in North Carolina, NationsBank, Wachovia, and First Union, have spent large sums of money and man-hours to address the Y2K problem. Heading off any Y2K "bugs" is not an option for banks—over 80% of all banking transactions require a computer. For example, First Union has over 70 million lines of computer code for customer transactions.

Beginning in early 1996, First Union put a staff of 30 people on the Y2K problem. That number has grown as the millennium draws nearer. Wachovia got on board in early 1995 with a \$40 million anti-bug program. NationsBank has over 200 employees working to make sure 2000 doesn't cause them any troubles.

One way that banks set out to identify potential Y2K problems dates back to 1994 when polls were taken of bank employees, vendors, and bank departments to find out what equipment and operations were most vulnerable to "bugs."

The results were interesting. Not only were computers in banks chip driven, but other things such as elevators, heating systems, and vaults turned out to be potential problems.

Just what can go wrong if the Y2K "bug" bites the bank? One problem is that if the computer sees "00", a homeowner could be billed for 100 years of interest on January 1, 2000. Computers that calculate customer ages by subtracting birth dates from 2000 could show ages in minus years. Much of the problem goes back to the 1960s and 1970s when programmers adopted the two digit dating system so that the then-expensive computer chips would not be overloaded with four digit dates. As early as 1970, mortgage bankers began realizing that something could go wrong when 30 year mortgages came up in 2000.

Banks won't wait until the last minute to find out if their Y2K programs have been cleaned up. Most banks will spend all of this year running tests of their fixes. The Comptroller of the Currency in Washington said in mid-1997 that 85% of large banks were on track to beat the year 2000 deadline. Smaller community banks were behind that figure, but most of them used PC-based hardware which was easier to deal with.

Several banks in the Kings Mountain area reported on their Year 2000 plans.

"We've been working on our Year 2000 project since September of 1997," said Kathy Butler, manager of First

See Countdown, 3A

City axes rec complex proposal

A proposed grant application to help fund a new recreational complex was axed 4-3 by Kings Mountain City Council Tuesday night.

"It sounds good but on paper it says the city would be responsible for matching \$250,000 or dollar for dollar if a grant is approved," said Councilman Gene White leading the opposition along with Councilmen Clavon Kelly, Bob Hayes and Jerry Mullinax.

Council members Rick Murphrey, Norma Bridges and Phil Hager joined Mayor Scott Neisler in supporting a new

venture suggested by Denise Stallings, Cleveland County Health Director and an active member of the Kings Mountain Tennis Association which recommended the project along with members of the Parks & Recreation Commission.

Stallings presented a draft proposal of a new indoor facility to be constructed at Kings Mountain High School for six new lighted tiered tennis courts to serve the school system and public. She said the KM Tennis Association wanted to hold regular clinics and tournaments for the public and that a certified

tennis instructor has volunteered to direct the program and that local builders have volunteered time and labor to put up the facility. Stallings said a multi-purpose center would house two racquet ball courts with kitchen and restroom facilities and a large deck would provide space for groups to view football games, tennis matches and other activities. Stallings said that she had received wide support.

Responding to questions by council, Supt. Dr. Bob McRae said the school system would provide the land but could not

commit to spending money at this time due to building a new school.

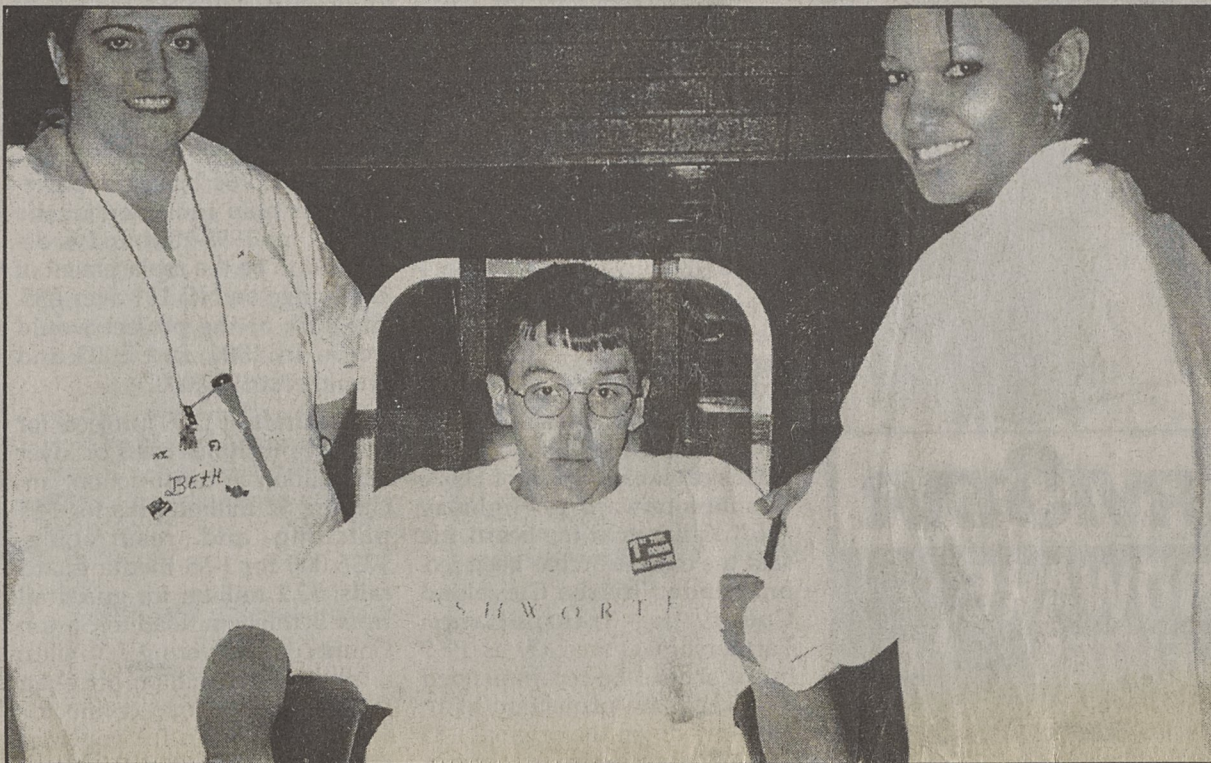
Stallings asked Council to endorse the project so that she could submit the grant to the state. She said she thought the city had a good chance to receive the grant money.

Neisler said the recreation plan suggested by the Kings Mountain Tennis Association blends in well with the city's master plan for recreation and land use plan. He said he felt the community would back a fundraising project. Hager concurred and Bridges said the city

would have to put up its own new tennis courts at some point. City Manager Jimmy Maney said there are currently no tennis courts on city property but the city had a reciprocal agreement with the schools, providing the lighting for the school tennis courts.

"It sounds good," said Kelly. "But when it comes to push and shove time the city will have to come up with the money. We sound like Baptists, we can't take up a collection anytime you want it. The bottom might fall out."

See Council, 2A



ONE PINT COMING UP - Kings Mountain High School student Michael Jolly gets ready to donate blood during the Red Cross Bloodmobile's visit to the school. Flanking Jolly are (left) Beth Willis and Renee Galarza.

Out For Blood

First-time donors help Kings Mountain High School reach goal of 55 pints for Cleveland County Red Cross

By Alan Hodge

The blood flowed freely last Wednesday at Kings Mountain High School—but it was all for a good cause. Visiting the school for blood donations, the Red Cross Bloodmobile found the students at KMHS more than willing to give.

Sponsored by the Future Homemakers of America class, the blood donation drive brought nearly 60 Kings Mountain High students into the gym willing to donate blood.

"We had 58 students show up," said FHA teacher and blood drive organizer Ann Bennett. "We made our goal of 55 pints of blood. Thirty-nine of the students were first time donors."

One of the students who climbed into the donor's chair for the first time was Michael Jolly.

"My grandmother had to have an operation recently," Jolly said. "I knew she had to have blood that someone donated. This made it personal for me."

Handling the technical end of getting the blood was Red Cross collection specialist Beth Willis.

"We use 2000 pints of blood per day," said Willis. "Right now there is less than a half day supply on the shelves. There is a critical need for all types of blood."

Thanks to the expert way in which Willis and her colleagues went about their work, the experience of giving blood was not as bad as some students had feared.

See Blood, 2A

Jay Rhodes: The Voice of Kings Mountain

By GARY STEWART
Editor of the Herald

He's not a Kings Mountain native, and he's been living in town for less than 10 years.

But the town has no greater advocate than Jay Rhodes.

Whether it's a church, community, civic or sports activity, everyone knows they can call on Rhodes to do the job right.

He's a former basketball coach, college athletic director, and banker; he's a "good talker" who is the radio voice of the Kings Mountain Mountaineer football team and master of ceremony for various events; and most recently he has become Vice President of the Cleveland County Chamber of Commerce in charge of the Kings Mountain Branch.

That position brings on a new challenge for the Maryland na-

tive, but one he welcomes with open arms and a lot of energy.

The KM office is open each Monday through Friday from 9 a.m.-12 noon, but don't think for a second that Rhodes is looking at this endeavor as a part-time job. Whether he's on the clock or not, he's always eager to promote the city.

Of course, the main goal of any Chamber of Commerce is to recruit and keep members, but Rhodes also sees his role as working closely with the city and greater Cleveland County Chamber officials to promote all the good that's going on in Kings Mountain.

"We hope to see the Chamber of Commerce committed to economic growth and quality of living in the community," he said. "We hope the city and

See Rhodes, 3A



Jay Rhodes has settled into his new position as head of the Kings Mountain branch of the Cleveland County Chamber of Commerce

KM Senior Center gets \$100,000 grant

A grant for \$100,000 from the State Division of Aging for the Kings Mountain Senior Center has given a boost to the Center's plans for a new facility.

City Council Tuesday night unanimously approved a 25 percent matching grant and gave the green light to proceed with building plans.

A conceptual design for the new building is to be presented to Council at the March 30 meeting by members of the Senior Citizen Advisory Board.

Aging Director Monty Thornburg said the project would be presented in phases.

Last year a grant application for senior center funding was turned down by the state agency. Thornburg reapplied for the grant and got the news of the award funding January 15.

To use the grant money the facility must be operational by September 30, 2001.

Council members wholeheartedly gave the green light to the project before a standing-room-only audience of mostly senior citizens who attend the programs.

"The number of seniors served by the current center continues to increase and the Center provides not only a place to meet with friends but a number of planned services," said Councilman Rick Murphrey.

Councilwoman Norma Bridges issued an invitation to anyone with five to seven acres of land to donate to come forward. "We need land and we will be considering a site location soon," she said.

City of KM to celebrate 125th birthday

The City of Kings Mountain will mark birthday 125 on February 11.

Mayor Scott Neisler said a 4 p.m. ceremony will include the presentation of the new city flag which will fly from the third flag pole at City Hall. He said a caricature of the new flag will appear on all mail delivered that day by the Kings Mountain Post Office.

"We hope that everyone will come out at city hall for this flag dedication," said Neisler, who will present miniature flags as a memento of the occasion.

Other events are planned this year to celebrate the city's birthday.

The Kings Mountain Business & Professional Association is putting up a gazebo downtown and the old cupola from the former police station will top it.

On October 7, the city will open the time capsule which was buried during the Centennial celebration.

The city of Kings Mountain was incorporated February 11, 1874.

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