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Youth drowns in private pool

BY ALAN HODGE
Staff Writer

Kamahee K. Chambers, 9, drowned in a pool at 611 Gantt Street in Kings Mountain Tuesday night. The boy's body was discovered by his stepfather Shan Black and a neighbor lying at the bottom of the in-ground pool just before 11 pm. Chambers was pronounced dead at the scene when a Cleveland County EMS crew arrived.

The youth had had been told by his aunt, Crystal Chambers, not to go in the pool because he couldn't swim. He lived with his mother Melissa Chambers, and his stepfather at 612 Charles Street in Kings Mountain. Crystal Chambers was caring for Kamahee and his cousin Devonte Chambers when they went out to play. Later, only Devonte returned.

When Kamahee didn't return home by late Tuesday afternoon, relatives filed a missing person report at 6:30 pm with the Kings Mountain Police Department. After officers and family members failed to find Kamahee, cousin Devonte led searchers to the Gantt Street location where he was discovered at the bottom of the pool. Devonte said he and Kamahee had been in the pool earlier in the day despite Chambers' instructions not to do so.

No one was at home at the Gantt Street house at the time of the drowning. Neighbors told police the house had recently been sold. Cleveland County Coroner Ralph Mitchem estimated the body was in the water six hours.

Wednesday an autopsy was being performed on the victims body to determine the exact cause of death.

"There's nothing suspicious at this point," said Kings Mountain Police Chief T.R. Reynolds. "The autopsy report will be very important and we are launching an ongoing investigation to determine the facts that led to this death."

Guyton to run for Ward 2

By Jim Heffner

Former city council member Jim Guyton has announced he will run again in the upcoming election for his old Ward 2 seat.



GUYTON

Guyton, born and reared in Kings Mountain, has lost in the last two elections - 1995 and 1997 - to Jerry Mullinax.

Guyton is married to the former Shirley Yarbrough. The couple has three daughters and six grandchildren. The entire family resides in Kings Mountain.

Asked his priorities if elected, Guyton said he'd like to see a new water line to Moss Lake installed.

Guyton said he would like to see more industry for the town and he wants to see the program to clean up residential and business structures continue as well as completion of the senior center.

Guyton is a self-employed building contractor. He served in the United States Marine Corps from 1951 through 1954 and was wounded during the Korean War.

He and his wife are members of Second Baptist Church.

KM annexation hits roadblock

By Jim Heffner

The much-heralded vote to annex the Canterbury area did not occur at the Tuesday night city council meeting.

Council voted 5-2 to table the issue until the August meeting after two members of the panel tried to kill it off altogether. The vote was delayed until the city staff can examine service options to the new residents.

The plan calls for annexing 2328.79 acres, 256 homes, over 700 people and more than 25 business, some of them along a prime stretch of I-85. The city had planned to build a \$2.7 million sewer project to be phased in over a period of years.

State law says annexed residents must be provided basic services, principally water and sewer, within two years. The law was modified a few years ago allowing septic tank maintenance programs to extend that time frame. The city wants to take advantage of that change to help ensure a smooth transition of the new area into the city.

At Tuesday's meeting City Manager Jimmy Maney said workers recently found there were already sewer lines in close proximity that could serve the area and the septic tank maintenance program might not be necessary.

Before the annexation discussion, one citizen scolded the mayor, city manager and council members for "failure to provide adequate information to residents."

Jane Martin told the panel the vote should not go forward.

"It's ludicrous to think you're going to do all these great things without raising taxes," she said.

She said she didn't think residents had been given ample opportunity to voice their concerns and accused them avoiding legitimate questions.

Councilman Jerry Mullinax, meanwhile, moved to delay annexation indefinitely. "I don't see how we can ever provide the required services," he said. "I'm not sure the people who were annexed the last time are getting all the services they deserve. I'm not opposed to See ANNEXATION, page 5A



ALAN HODGE/THE HERALD
Three year old T.J. Bird gets ready for a gallop on the merry go round at the Bethware Fair. Running through Saturday night, the Bethware Fair is a 52 year tradition in Cleveland County.

Bethware Fair is fab

BY ALAN HODGE
Staff Writer

One of Cleveland County's best and oldest traditions, the Bethware Fair opened for the 52nd consecutive year Tuesday evening near Kings Mountain. Held at the Bethware School, the Fair is expected to draw 10,000 patrons to its myriad of rides, exhibits, food booths and other amusements. The Bethware Fair will run through Saturday with hours of 6 pm until 11 pm.

The Bethware Fair had its start after World War II when members of the Bethware Progressive Club came up with the idea of holding a community fair to showcase local farm goods, raise money for the Bethware School, and just have a good old time get together for folks in the neighborhood.

"Since Bethware School was in the county back in the 1940s, it had a hard time getting funds to operate," said Progressive Club member Fred Tate. "Once the local farmers got it started, the Bethware Fair has grown every year as well as being held on the same grounds. One thing that's good about the Fair is that the Progressive Club still takes money it makes and gives it to worthwhile causes and folks in need."

There are plenty of things to see and do at the Bethware Fair. The school gym has been transformed into an exhibit hall where row upon row of garden vegetables, cakes, antiques, art works, crafts, and quilts delight the eyes and senses. Also on display in the gym are booths by local civic and agricultural groups like the Future Farmers of America and 4-H.

The main fairgrounds behind the Bethware School are just as impressive as any autumn county carnival. Row after row of rides with names like "Tornado," "Thunderbolt," and "Sea Ray," are guaranteed to give ticket holders a thrill. Concessions are not lacking either. Besides the hamburgers and hotdogs being sold by the Bethware Progressive Club, other booths are offering clouds of cotton candy, rivers of soft drinks, candy apples by the case, and a variety of other snacks.

For those who bring their sporting spirit with them to the Bethware Community Fair, there are plenty of games to try. Backing up the bright lights and adding to the overall carnival atmosphere at the Fair is the constant throb of musical accompaniment.

One of the highlights of Tuesday's grand opening See BETHWARE page 9A

City employees recognized for longevity

By Jim Heffner

Calling it his favorite act as mayor, Scott Neisler presented plaques and service pins to eight Kings Mountain City employees at Tuesday night's council meeting.

The eight were: Marilyn Sellers (10 years), Kenny Downey (10 years), Larry Deal (10 years), Frank Burns (10 years), Bobby Wright (15 years), George Jacobs (15 years), Bill Herndon (25 years) and Jesse Lee Perry (25 years).

"I believe Kings Mountain has some of the best city employees in the country," Neisler said.

The council was asked to rule on two instances of the modification of the city's subdivision ordinance. Both requests passed unanimously.

ly. Council also voted unanimously to adopt a resolution accepting water, sewer, and street improvements for Mountain Manor.

In other business the council voted to adopt an ordinance ordering the demolition of a dwelling located at 951 York Road.

Tim Barrett of 949 York Road appeared before the panel in favor of demolishing the structure. He passed around photos from several angles depicting the poor state of repair of the house. Barrett told council he couldn't prove the tall weeds on the lot had snakes but he'd found several in his swimming pool. He stated further that the weeds obscured oncoming traffic and that vagrants had used the house on several occasions.

Bridges wants to be first woman mayor

By Lib Stewart

Mayor pro tem Norma Bridges made it official this week that she wants to be Kings Mountain's first woman mayor.

The 12-year veteran on city council paid her filing fee Wednesday afternoon at the Cleveland County Board of Elections.

The entry of Bridges into the race makes the mayoral race a four-person race. Kyle Smith, a former mayor, Ward 5 councilman Rick Murphrey and Ted Chandler filed previously. The filing deadline for the mayor's and seven council seats ends August 6 at noon. After Scott Neisler announced that he would not offer for a second term, rumors had been circulating for weeks that the popular Bridges, who has consistently led in the polls and several times been honored as mayor pro tem, was planning to give up her at-large seat to run for the mayor's job.

"I have a vision for Kings Mountain, I am proud of Kings Mountain and our progress and I would like to serve," said Bridges, a life-long resident of Kings Mountain, wife of Bobby R. Bridges and daughter of the late Marion and Ruth Falls. She has served two four year terms on council and is completing the second two year term.

Bridges' responsibility on the board for a number of years has centered in the recreation department where she has served as chairman of parks and recreation and let the efforts for major improvements at the Community Center, ball parks and walking track.

"I started pushing for a walking track years ago and for more recreational improvements and due to the combined effort of the entire council, mayor and city manager we have one of the best recreation complexes in the state," she said.

Bridges was among the crowds of fans and volunteer city workers at the recent tournament.

Bridges said she is not only proud of the new recreational facilities but the new police department, the updating of electric utilities and the plans in the works for a new senior center of which she is a member of the advisory and planning committee.

If elected to the city's top office, she said her priority will be to work with all council members on bringing a second water line from Moss Lake to town. She said she also push beautification and codes enforcement.

"So much has happened in the dozen years I have worked on council and progress has been accomplished by team effort," she said. Bridges said she is pleased at the upbeat attitude of city See BRIDGES, page 5A



BRIDGES



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