

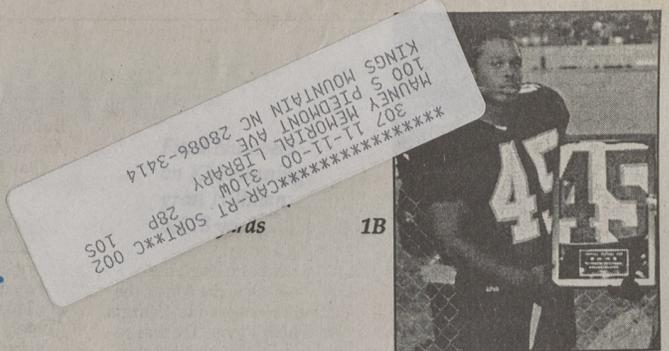
# The Herald

Thursday, November 11, 1999

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Since 1889

50 Cents



## Blanton named Herald Publisher

Kings Mountain native Michael S. "Mike" Blanton has been named Publisher of the Kings Mountain group of Republic Newspapers.

The group includes The Kings Mountain Herald, The Cherryville Eagle, Belmont Banner, Mount Holly News, Bessemer City Record, and The Cleveland Times.



BLANTON

Blanton, a 1970 graduate of Kings Mountain High School, began as Publisher effective November

1. He replaces Wes Grooms who left to pursue other interests.

Blanton will be in charge of the overall operation of the group of weeklies in Cleveland and Gaston counties.

His wife, Susan, a native of Belmont, graduated from Kings Mountain High School also. They returned in June to reside in Kings Mountain.

The Blantons have one daughter, Jennifer, a recent graduate of UNC-Charlotte, who lives in Chapel Hill.

After finishing high school, Blanton attended Gaston College and North Carolina State University at Raleigh before beginning his newspaper career in the mid-70s.

He worked in the circulation department for a variety of newspapers in North Carolina and Virginia over the next decade.

He was named Publisher of weeklies in Indiana and Virginia before being named Publisher of two dailies in Blacksburg, VA in 1990. A transfer within the same company returned him to North Carolina in 1995 as a Publisher of the Avery Journal in Newland, NC.

Blanton returned to the area earlier this year when he was named Circulation Director of The Gaston Gazette.

When asked about his return to his native area, he responded, "Susan and I have enjoyed returning to the area to be near her father, Charles Wilson, and our other family members. We look forward to getting reacquainted with our many friends and family members in Kings Mountain, Belmont and the surrounding areas."

He continued, "I know The Kings Mountain Herald and the other sister papers have high readership and are respected in their communities. I want each newspaper to be a leader in its own community. I believe a community newspaper should be a reflection of the community it represents."

Blanton can be contacted at 739-7496 or at kmgmike@aol.com.

## Veterans Day service set at Mountain Rest

The city will sponsor a Veterans Day service November 11 at 11 a.m. at Mountain Rest Cemetery.

Mayor Scott Neisler will lead the service, assisted by members of the American Legion and VFW.

The public is invited.

## MOUNTAINEER CHRISTMAS



GARY STEWART / THE HERALD  
Todd Hughes of the City Electrical Department strings lights around a Holly tree on Railroad Avenue. City employees are getting downtown ready for the Christmas season which will include a parade and many other special activities.

## Cable rates going up

Kings Mountain cable customers will see an increase in rates on January 1, 2000.

Time Warner Cable's Shelby System Manager Floyd Williams announced the prices today, but added that the pricing packages are a result of continued investments in new programming and programming choices, improvement in customer service, and investments in system technology.

"Time Warner Cable continues to keep prices as low as possible while supporting the variety of services that customers find valuable," Williams said. "We are investing in programming that customers want to watch, making investments in the future by upgrading our technology by offering customer service guarantees. As a result of these contin-

ued investments, it is necessary for us to make this adjustment in our prices. As a whole, the price increase for some of our popular level of service will be around five percent."

Over the past five years, Williams said the Shelby System has been upgraded to 750MZ to allow more channels and services. The popular Road Runner High Speed Internet is scheduled to start here in the first quarter of 2000. The system has also been improved to a state-of-the-art facility, capable of providing the most advanced telecommunications services, Williams said. He said, in addition to new services, local customers will benefit from upgrades in technology, better picture and sound quality, and improved service reliability.

See Cable, 3A

## Here comes... the Spiderman

Biker pedals 145,000 miles across U.S. to raise awareness of Multiple Sclerosis

By GARY STEWART  
Editor of The Herald

He's pedaled 145,000 miles over the past nine years to raise money and awareness of multiple sclerosis, but 31-year-old Thomas Beasley of Anaheim, CA is ready to call it quits.

Known as the Spiderman - a nickname given him by his grandmother because he climbed chairs even before he learned to walk - Beasley has a goal to raise \$60,000 for MS before he hops off his bike in Columbia, SC in 13 days and catches a train back to California.

"I have raised \$58,040," he said Monday before stopping for a night's rest at a hotel in

Kings Mountain. "I don't think I'll make the \$60,000. I may get two or three hundred more, or maybe a thousand."

The Spiderman's travels have taken him to every state in the U.S. except Alaska, Vermont and New Jersey. He has pedaled through most of the states many times over - spending the winter in warmer states such as Texas, and the hot summer months in the north.

He covers about 30 miles a day, visiting numerous businesses, telling his story and asking for a donation to fight MS.

"I talk to the owners of the businesses," he said. "If they feel what I am doing is worth-

See Beasley, 3A

## Board delays site selection for new school

By GARY STEWART  
Editor of The Herald

The Kings Mountain Board of Education held off on choosing a site for a new 5-6 school at Monday night's board meeting at Central School, but after a Closed Session it did authorize Supt. Bob McRae to begin inquiring about the price of two parcels of property near the present site of Kings Mountain Middle School.

Only one person - realtor Kay Cloninger - signed up to speak at the public hearing called to receive input on the two pieces of property as well as any other tracts that might be available. One other citizen, David Dellinger, sent typed comments with Board Chairman Ronnie Hawkins.

Both Cloninger and Dellinger expressed concerns about the possibility of heavy traffic on Phifer Road and the new Dixon School Road extension, which will eventually be a connector road between I-85 and Highway 74, and which is very close to both parcels of land being considered.

Vice-Chairman Shearra Miller said she had hoped that the Board would "get to the point where a tract would just jump out at us," but said that's not the case.

"I'm not thoroughly happy with either tract," she said.

One tract being considered is the Beam property, which adjoins the present Middle School property and has some frontage on Phifer Road. If that tract (up to approximately 50 acres) is chosen, the entrance to the school will be on the new connector road.

The other tract, known as the Elam property, is 40 acres with frontage on Crocker and Phifer Roads. If that parcel is chosen, the entrance to the school will be on Crocker Road.

Both tracts have municipal water and sewer nearby, a factor that disqualified one piece of property that was offered earlier.

Cloninger said the Elam property is more suitable for the system's needs because the school entrance would be on the less-traveled Crocker Road, and that the school system could take an option on an additional 83 acres of land for future expansion. She said the property is available for \$7,000 an acre.

She advised against purchasing the Beam property because she said there is a "potential for five lanes on that road" in the future.

"You need to look at the larger picture and not be so focused on what we need

five years down the road," she told the board.

She predicted that "transfer trucks, dump trucks, buses and general traffic" will make heavy use of the connector road once it is completely finished.

"I worry about that," she said. "A traffic light can do a certain amount of good, but the potential for situations would be great if you front a school on that road."

In his typed remarks, Dellinger spoke of congestion at either site. He said that grades 5 through 12 (or 50% of the total KM Schools population) would be located in "one geographic area."

In the year 2015, when Kings Mountain's estimated student population would be 10,000, there would be major traffic concerns, he noted.

"Regardless of the chosen location, the school system must continuously push the DOT to widen Phifer Road," he said.

The system eventually plans to turn the new 5-6 school into a second middle school and build two new elementary schools to take care of the fifth grades.

"For convenience of the school population, the two schools should be located in separate areas of the school district," Dellinger said. "If the Phifer Road area is selected for the new school, the intent should be to serve as a future elementary school (K-5) and not as a future middle school. Another tract of land can be selected in the future to serve that purpose, away from the present middle school."

Regardless of the site selected, the Board, which had hoped to have the new school ready for occupancy at the beginning of the 2001-2002 school year, was told by Architect Roger Holland that "we're past the point of being in it at the beginning of 2001."

Holland said, even if a site is selected now, it would take several months to do drawings, advertise for bids, etc., and after that 18 months would be needed for construction.

"We're looking at a best case scenario of completing construction in December 2001," he said. "You could opt to complete it in the spring of 2002 and have students move in in the fall of 2002."

Supt. McRae said if the building is completed in December 2001, the school could be occupied at the beginning of the second semester in January 2002.

"It would not be impossible to open in mid-year, but it would be cumbersome," he said.

The school, which would house all of the system's fifth and sixth grade students, would have a projected enrollment of 756 if opened in 2001-2002, and 766 in 2002-03.

## Like a Good Neighbor, KMDS helps county with construction funds

By GARY STEWART  
Editor of The Herald

In a "good neighbor" move, Kings Mountain's Board of Education Monday night unanimously approved loaning Cleveland County Schools \$1.5 million out of its construction allocation so the new Springmore Elementary School in upper Cleveland County can be completed on time.

Supt. Bob McRae told the board that Kings Mountain has \$2.3 million in its bond account, and that letting Cleveland County use part of its allocation would not affect the upcoming purchase of property for a new 5-6 school in Kings Mountain.

New allocations of state bond money for school construction is due in March 2000, McRae said, and at that time \$1.5 million of Cleveland County's allocation will be placed in Kings Mountain's account.

"This basically falls into the 'Good Neighbors' category," McRae told the Board. "We would still have \$800,000 which is enough to purchase property if we get the details worked out by then."

Vice Chairman Shearra Miller, who seconded Larry Allen's motion to allow Cleveland County to use the funds, said it is "often perceived" that the three Cleveland County School Systems "are

See Schools, 3A



GARY STEWART / THE HERALD  
Thomas Beasley - The Spiderman - stopped in Kings Mountain Monday on one of his many bike rides across the United States to raise money for and awareness of Multiple Sclerosis. He hopes to top the \$60,000 mark in donations.



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