KINGS MOUNTAIN

# The Herald

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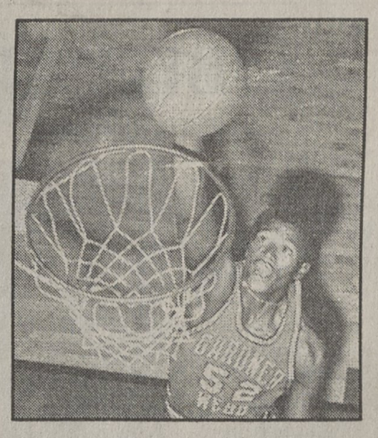
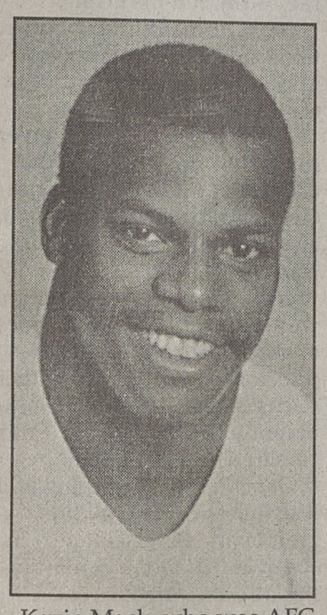


*George Adams*

*Kings Mountain's Basketball Player of the Century* 1B

## ALL-CENTURY



Kevin Mack, who was AFC Rookie of the Year with the Cleveland Browns, is Kings Mountain's Football Player of the Century and is one of a host of former Mountaineer greats who are included on The Herald's All-Century and All-Decade Teams. 1C

## COMMUNITY

### Chronology of '99 lists top KM stories

The top stories of the year 1999 in Kings Mountain are reviewed in a special chronology beginning on page 3B

### Black leaders voice concern about merger

Some Black leaders of Cleveland County spoke on the school merger issue at Tuesday night's meeting of the Cleveland County Board of Commissioners. 3A

### New Council tours city's main facilities

Newly-elected members of Kings Mountain City Council toured most of the city's main facilities during a six-hour orientation session Wednesday to gain insight on how the departments operate and what some of their needs may be. 5A

### Phone book lists incorrect numbers

The Community Phone Book recently circulated in Kings Mountain may be causing some problems after incorrectly listing numbers with a 739 prefix as 734. But the publisher of the book promises to republish the book. 2A

## SPORTS

### Kings Mountain YMCA to officially open today

The new Kings Mountain YMCA will officially open with a ribbon cutting at 1:30 p.m. Thursday at the Kings Mountain Community Center. 7A

### KM basketball teams split SWC opener

Kings Mountain and R-S Central split their Southwestern 3A Conference opener Tuesday at R-S, with the R-S boys and KM girls winning. 7A

# Happy 2000

**Kings Mountain police officers Kenny Stewart and Angela Borchert staffed the dispatch desk on New Year's Eve. The police and other city employees on duty paseed a quiet evening with no Y2K problems.**

## Y2K comes through without a glitch

BY ALAN HODGE
Staff Writer

With a mighty drum roll heard clear around the world, Y2K came and went last Friday night- and nothing happened. Despite predictions by some and worries by others that computers would come crashing down and take the civilized world with them, Y2K ended up being as quiet as a church mouse.

Of course, it took a lot of hard work on the part of many people to make nothing happen. Computer analyst for the City of Kings Mountain, Carol George and her Y2K Task force put a whole year worth of work into making sure the town's computers and systems breezed into the new millennium.

"We were on duty until 1:30 a.m. Saturday morning and everything went well," George said. "Our practice drills really paid off. Everything went exactly as planned. It was, however, good we checked all systems earlier in the year, because if we hadn't fixed some potential glitches there could have been a couple of difficulties."

Part of the Kings Mountain Y2K Task force involved manning nine command posts throughout town New Year's Eve- just in case. Fire chief Frank Burns also reported all quiet along that front.

"It was a real quiet night," Burns said. "A few people came to the command posts and wished us a Happy New Year, but that was about all that happened."

Burns noted that seeing what type of entrance the Year 2000 had in other parts of the world gave him a pretty good idea that no major problems would be associated with the coming century.

For their part in the Y2K event, the Kings Mountain police department had extra personnel on duty. With crowds small, and computer problems nonexistent, the police also had quiet beats.

"Everything was very smooth," said Sgt. Ware. "We had no problems whatsoever."

In Cleveland County, Emergency management Director Beau Lovelace and his people were diligent, but had an easy evening.

"We were on duty until about 3 a.m.," Lovelace said. "Nothing unusual took place. We were also in contact with emergency agencies on a state level and they seemed to be having a quiet night too."

Cleveland County EMS training officer Louis Jenkins said his crews responded to several ambulance calls but nothing Y2K related bothered them.

"There were the usual fights and minor illnesses on New Year's Eve," Jenkins said. "But all of our communications went smooth as clockwork."

On the utilities scene, Duke Power did have a problem that briefly shut down part of their Catawba nuclear station, but it wasn't Y2K related. All other systems at Duke went smoothly and were under constant monitoring.

As midnight, December 31, 1999 approached and passed, BellSouth and its landline and wireless systems took everything in stride. Even with a surge of calls as 2000 came into being, BellSouth took it all in stride.

"We want to thank our customers for keeping BellSouth's network free for emergency calls," said Rick Harder, Vice President for Year 2000 Operations. "As a re-

See Computers, 3A

## School merger talk, annexation stirred up KM citizens in 1999

By GARY STEWART
Editor of The Herald

Stir the emotions of a small town and you're likely to create a big story.

Such was the case in the top two of The Herald's Top Ten Stories of 1999.

School merger and annexation were two topics that kept some Kings Mountain citizens stirred up for months. In the case of school merger, they're still hot.

The latest in a long line of school merger talks that have traced back most of this century began in November when Cleveland County Commissioners circulated a letter calling for a "merger assessment."

It was revealed, though, by several persons on the Kings Mountain side of Buffalo Creek that merger had been talked about behind closed doors for several months.

Commissioners claimed that business leaders were interested in merger because students weren't prepared to enter the workforce.

But in less than two months, the issue has snowballed with the commissioners and the Kings Mountain and Cleveland County School Boards hiring lawyers to advise them about merger.

As we enter the year 2000, the commissioners have reportedly circulated a memo to the three school systems stating that any information they want commissioners to study should be made available by January 11, leading some to believe that merger is going to be quickly forced by the county board.

But a new twist also entered the picture this week when it was revealed that because Kings Mountain's school district lies in both Cleveland and Gaston counties that the Gaston County Commissioners must give their approval to merger, or that the General Assembly would have to create special legislation to allow it.

**TOP TEN STORIES OF 1999**

| | |
|---|---|
| 1 - School Merger | 6 - Elections |
| 2 - Annexation | 7 - New YMCA |
| 3 - Y2K concerns | 8 - Video gambling |
| 4 - Hurricane help | 9 - Bank shooting |
| 5 - Building projects | 10 - Church fire |

The City of Kings Mountain's largest annexation ever created a stir early in the year, but it was eventually approved and will take effect in June 2000.

The annexation increases the size of the city limits by one-half. The plan takes in 10.03 acres in the Linwood Road area and 2,318.76 acres south of the city, including prime residential and industrial property along Canterbury Road and I-85.

The other top ten stories of the year included Y2K concerns, a major storm which brought out the best in

See Top Ten, 3A

## KM's Hawkins running for commissioner

### Opposes merger of schools, for district representation

By GARY STEWART
Editor of The Herald

HAWKINS

Kings Mountain School Board member Ronnie Hawkins Monday became one of the first to file for Cleveland County Commissioner as filing opened at the Board of Elections in Shelby.

Filing continues through 12 noon, February 7.

Primaries will be held in May, with the general election in November.

Hawkins will be joined in the Republican primary by incumbent commissioner Joe E. Cabaniss. Another incumbent, Joe Hendrick, filed for the Democratic primary.

Commission Chairman Jim Crawley, a Republican, is expected to file. The terms of Republican Charlie Harry and Democrat Willie McIntosh do not expire.

Five persons filed Monday for the 48th House of Representatives, including incumbents Jim Horn, Andy Dedmon and Debbie Clary, and former representatives Dennis Davis and John Weatherly. Davis, Clary and Weatherly are Republicans.

Republican Danny R. Cartee of Shelby filed for the Cleveland County Soil and Water Conservation District; and incumbent Bonnie Reece of Kings Mountain filed for Register of Deeds.

See Hawkins, 3A

## Little known law may give KM schools glimmer of hope

By GARY STEWART
Editor of The Herald

Kings Mountain School Board was meeting with attorneys Wednesday afternoon to see if there is a way they can head off a merger with the other two Cleveland County school systems.

Representatives from the Schwartz and Shaw law firm of Raleigh were in town for a 12:30 p.m. meeting.

A little-known law that has been in existence for years may give Kings Mountain a glimmer of hope in retaining its system, or at least delaying a merger decision.

G.S. 115D and 115C-68 states that when a school system lies in two different counties, a forced merger cannot be accomplished without the approval of the governing boards of both counties.

School officials in Kings Mountain weren't quite sure what that process involves, but were going to pose the question to their attorneys Wednesday for interpretation and advice.

"The law does clearly say that procedures (for merger) are different if all systems are totally in one county than if one or more of the systems are in other counties," Supt. Bob McRae said. "Because Kings Mountain laps over into Gaston County, as I read the law Gaston County commissioners have to be involved in the process."

Whether that process simply means that Gaston County commissioners would "sign off" on the merger, or if they would have to take advice from their own County Board of Education, or even if the matter must go before the General Assembly, appears unclear at this point.

"Until our attorneys get involved and figure out what all that means, we really don't know," McRae said.

Kings Mountain's School District and the city limits overlap into Gaston County in the Linwood and Northwoods sections, involving around 150 students, McRae said. In the past 15 years or so, Gaston County has paid Kings Mountain the same per pupil funding rate as it allots to the Gaston County Board of Education.

Kings Mountain Board member Ronnie Hawkins, who filed Monday for a seat on the Board of County Commissioners, said he hopes the discovery of the law, which Kings Mountain had known of for several weeks but had not made public, will slow down what appears to be a fast effort by the county commissioners to merge the systems.

"This may not stop it, but maybe we can slow it down," Hawkins said.

See School, 3A

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