

KINGS MOUNTAIN The Herald

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Since 1889

50 Cents

PEOPLE

Billy Bridges notes his ninth birthday



Billy Bridges of Shelby, who was born with a myriad of health problems, recently battled the flu but is feeling much better and celebrated his ninth birthday Tuesday with his friends at Number Three Elementary School. 3A

Jordan, Centurymen nominated for Grammy

Morris Jordan, music director at First Baptist Church in Kings Mountain, is a member of the Centurymen, a group of over 100 church music directors who travel all over the world to share the gospel in song. The group is in the running for a Grammy Award. 6A

Hawkins on Board of Cleveland Chamber

Ronnie Hawkins of Kings Mountain has been named to the Board of Directors of the Cleveland County Chamber of Commerce. 4B

SPORTS

Mountaineers sign with Gardner-Webb

Wednesday was national signing day for Division 1 football schools, and two Kings Mountain players cast their lot with the newest Division 1 school, Gardner-Webb University. The Bulldogs picked up star running back Anthony Hillman and big defensive end Brian Thornburg. 1B

KM girls in running for state 3A playoffs

Kings Mountain High's first-year girls basketball Kevin Moss has only eight players - and they're young ones - but the Lady Mountaineers pulled off two big wins last week to move into contention for a state playoff berth. 2B

Realignment will break up SWC 3A

The proposed make-up of conferences for the next four-year realignment which begins in 2001 will end the Southwestern 3A Conference. Kings Mountain will likely go into a new conference with Crest, Burns, R-S Central, East Lincoln and Fred T. Foard. 3B

COMMUNITY

Black History Month program at library

A celebration of Black History Month will be held Saturday, Feb. 13 at 2:30 p.m. at Mauney Memorial Library in Kings Mountain. 3A

KM students give it all to bloodmobile

Kings Mountain High School students and staff exceeded their goal of 55 pints of blood at Tuesday's visit of the Cleveland County Bloodmobile at KMHS. 5A

Mid-year sewer hike angers KM manager

By GARY STEWART
Editor of The Herald

Kings Mountain City Manager Jimmy Maney is considering how to handle an unexpected 6 1/2 percent sewer rate increase that was imposed by the City of Gastonia on Kings Mountain effective February 1.

Maney said the increase will cost Kings Mountain approximately \$80,000 annually and could create budget problems for the remainder of this fiscal year.

He said he is not happy with Gastonia's action, which came five months prior to the beginning of the next fiscal year. He said Kings Mountain's rates have gone up 47 percent in the last "six years or so."

"The city is Gastonia's largest sewer user," said Maney, "and it seems like every time they want additional revenue they look over to Kings Mountain and say, 'they're paying us \$1.2 million a year now, let's just hit them up for another \$200,000' and that's not right."

According to Maney, Gastonia gave the city only 15 days notice of the rate increase.

"There's no way I can make a recommendation (to City Council) until we see how this applies to the city as a whole," Maney said. "Any change that can be implemented would be March, or maybe April."

Maney said he is upset over the short notice, and also that the increase came in the middle of the fiscal year.

"This was not budgeted by the city of Gastonia," he said.

"It was decided at their January meeting. The city is very upset and concerned over this and we plan to analyze it further."

Maney said past rate increases were implemented for upcoming budget years. He said the city could lose "\$35,000 to \$40,000 in revenue before the next budget year" because of this increase.

Kings Mountain contracted with Gastonia to treat part of its wastewater in 1989 when it was under judicial order not to accept any more customers

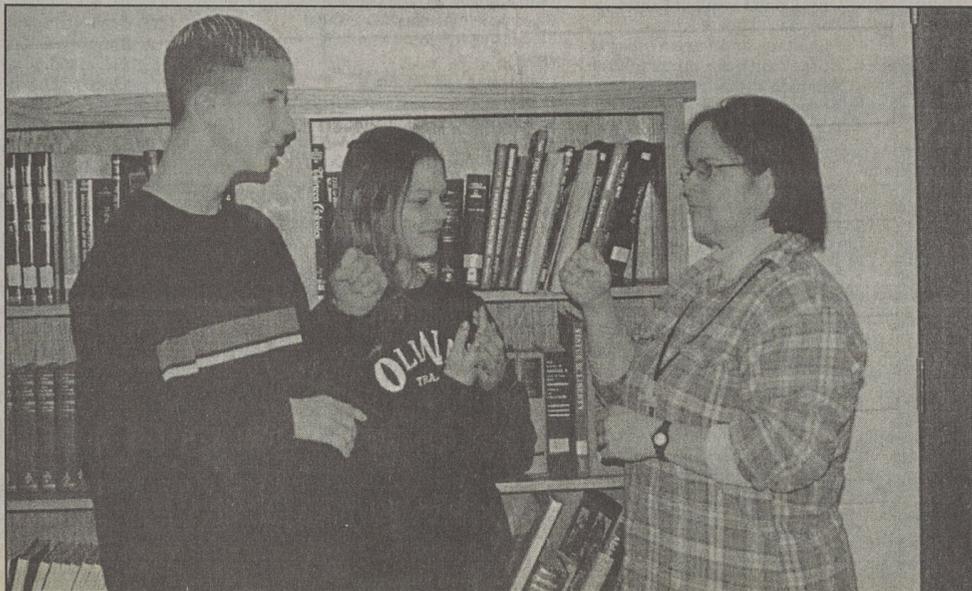


Michael Bell (top) helps lead KMHS wrestling team to SWC crown 3B



-Jimmy Maney

"It seems like every time they want extra revenue they look over to Kings Mountain"



Kings Mountain Middle School signing instructor Tracy Price, right, offers a few words in sign language to students Stacy McGinnis and Hunter Caldwell. Six students take Price's class, with two being hearing impaired. ALAN HODGE / THE HERALD

Voting site changes irk KM officials

By GARY STEWART
Editor of The Herald

A decision by the Cleveland County Elections Board to move the Kings Mountain #2 and #3 polling places has drawn the ire of several Kings Mountain officials.

Some members of City Council attended the monthly meeting of the Board of Elections yesterday in Shelby to voice their concerns over the move.

The Elections Board plans to move the #2 voting site from the YMCA to Boyce Memorial ARP Church, and the #3 site from the National Guard Armory to First Baptist Church.

Some KM officials are upset because of the move, others say they are upset because of the way it was handled, and still others are upset that Elections Board Chairman Debra Blanton stated that "basically, the Kings Mountain YMCA ran us out."

David Ozmore, Director of the KM YMCA, said that was not the case. He said the Y delayed its renovation program last year because of the election, but since that time exercise equipment has been placed in the "glass room" where previous elections were held.

"We offered them the gym and she (Blanton) evidently didn't want to change the location within the Y," Ozmore said.

"They said we couldn't have the room we had selected, and there really isn't any other adequate space for us to be over there," Blanton said.

Ozmore said the gym would have been more convenient for voters, because in the past the gym parking lot had been used and voters had to walk all the way through the gym to get to the "glass room."

"We had so many complaints from senior citizens that they had to walk so far to vote," Ozmore said. "In our plan they didn't have to walk as far. It wasn't a big deal."

Blanton wrote the YMCA and the Armory this week notifying them that their buildings were no longer needed for elections.

Blanton said the problem at the Armory was lack of parking and telephone service.

See Elections, 3A

BUILDING A BOND

KMMS sign language class helps students communicate

By ALAN HODGE
Staff Writer

A special group of students at Kings Mountain Middle School talks to each other without saying a single word. Members of Tracy Price's sign language class, the group of six eighth graders has been meeting this year in an effort to learn and improve their signing communication skills.

"I like doing sign language," said student David Lee Gill. "I went to a summer camp and met a person who was hearing impaired. We became friends and that sparked my interest in learning signing."

Price's background in sign language has made her an excellent choice for the role of signing instructor and interpreter. A graduate of East Carolina University, Price is a certified signing professional. Like Gill, she became interested in communication for the hearing impaired through acquaintance with a deaf college roommate.

Price has been involved off and on with sign language for 18 years.

"Sign language helps bridge a communications gap as well as providing self esteem for the hearing impaired," Price said.

Part of Price's job at Kings Mountain Middle School involves interpreting for the hearing impaired in regular classroom situations. This activity has sparked an interest in signing with many members of the student body. In addition to her classroom work, Price also interprets at special school events.

Seeing Price's signing class in action is to witness the concept of communication transfer from the oral to the visual. Expressing feelings and thoughts with their hands as easily as most people do orally, Price's students bridge the language gap between those who hear and those who do not. By doing so, Price and her students have built a bond that goes beyond words.

Ice storm didn't present any major problems for KM area

By ALAN HODGE
Staff Writer

To some folks, this weekend's ice storm bathed the landscape in crystalline sheaths of sparkling beauty. For everyone else, it was just another rotten, cold mess. With snow still on the ground in many places from January's storm, the ice and freezing rain that came down Saturday and Sunday made for a glaze hard as concrete.

Even with the new ice, conditions on the highways and with power companies went relatively well. Give credit to the Super Bowl, or lessons learned during the mini-blizzard of January 21st, but a lot of people stayed indoors in front of the television and off the streets.

"We eased through the ice

storm with just a few minor outages," said Gary Whitener of Rutherford Electric Membership Corporation. "We fared great and had little if any trouble."

Electricity in Kings Mountain made it through the ice storm with scarcely a blink.

"We did great with the ice storm," said Nick Hendricks with the Kings Mountain electric utility department. "A few limbs touched some lines, but we didn't have any outages."

Just catching up from January's snow, Duke Power got another dose of bad luck when the ice hit. Even though there were no Duke outages reported in Cleveland County, several areas east and south of Charlotte had lines go down. Crews from Duke Power and

other states were on the job restoring power to about 90,000 folks who were in the cold and dark Sunday. Most had their lights back on by Monday night.

The North Carolina Highway Patrol in Cleveland County reported that they responded to a total of 11 ice related wrecks from Saturday night to Monday afternoon. This was a fraction of the 60 or so crashes that happened during the snow weekend in January. The Kings Mountain Police Department also reported just a few minor incidents in connection with the ice.

"We had only three or four minor bump-ups," said records clerk Penny Fulton.

See Storm, 3A



ALAN HODGE/THE HERALD
Kenny McAbee took some time off from cooking sandwiches at his store in Kings Mountain to spread salt on icy patches. McAbee said he had seen enough ice for this year.



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