KINGS MOUNTAIN

The Herald

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Houston helps Wake tennis gain national rank 8A

Merger hearing Tuesday in Shelby

County's three School Boards to meet Thursday to discuss possible alternatives

By GARY STEWART
Editor of The Herald

Cleveland County's three school boards will hold a joint meeting Thursday at 7 p.m. at Cleveland Community College to discuss possible alternatives to a planned merger of the three systems.

Their effort, however, may be too late as the County Board of Commissioners will hold a public hearing during its regular meeting Tuesday, April 18 at 6 p.m. at Shelby High's Brown Auditorium to receive citizen input for and against the plan.

Many people believe that, following the hearing, the commissioners will vote to merge the Kings Mountain District, Shelby City, and Cleveland County School systems on July 1, 2000.

Commissioners have been studying merger since last November, and recently received a report from attorney Gil Middlebrooks of Charlotte, who was hired to conduct a merger analysis, listing 12 pros to merger against only four cons.

Despite a public outcry throughout the county opposing merger, four of the five commissioners appear ready to approve the plan.

While they are still hopeful a merger can be prevented, Kings Mountain School Board members said at their monthly meeting Monday night at Central School that the commissioners should delay implementation until at least July 1, 2001 to give an interim school board time to organize their central office staff, policies, and other areas of service. If the commissioners approve merger, they will appoint an interim school board which will have the responsibility of implementing the plan as well as making decisions concerning the day-to-day operation of the system.

"If the effective date is July 1, 2000 there is a need for a change of leadership, financial offices and changes in policy," noted former Board Chairman Ronnie Hawkins, who is running for county commissioner.

Board members cited many areas of concern, and they plan to address the commissioners on those matters at Tuesday's public hearing.

Vice-chairman Melony Bolin, who said her son recently left private school to re-enter the public school system, said she is concerned that the commissioners' plan calls for "grandfathering" only rising 11th and 12th grade students. She said all high school students should be allowed to complete their high school careers at their current school.

"Sometimes things look good but there are a lot of issues that

See Hearing, 3A

Drugs: never ending battle

BY ALAN HODGE
Staff Writer

Folks who think that Kings Mountain's quaint charm has kept it free from drugs are living in a dream world. Not that the town has problems on the scale of Charlotte or some other metropolis, but the fact is that drugs of many types are available right here.

"It's a never-ending battle," says Sgt. Lisa Proctor of the Kings Mountain Police Department. "Drugs are being sold in Kings Mountain all the way from the low rent neighborhoods to the street corners."

So far, Proctor's stack of complaints lodged by citizens concerned about drug dealing in Kings Mountain and vicinity in 2000 is over one inch thick.

According to Proctor, the drug that causes the biggest problem is crack cocaine. Available in "rocks" that go for $20 for a pea-sized chunk, crack is intensely addictive. People can become hooked on crack from their very first try.

"People who use crack have [illegible]l me that the first high is re-[illegible] 1 up there," Proctor said. [illegible] after that is not quite confere so it takes more of the 10-0-1 [illegible]ieve the same ef-[illegible]

"Ke[illegible] colla[illegible]'s highly addictive na-[illegible] "[illegible]eads its abusers down a rocky path. Many become thieves to get the money for their dope. Others turn to prostitution. Both of these activities go on every day in Kings Mountain.

Other drugs found in the Kings Mountain area are marijuana, Xanax, Valium, and Gamma Hydroxy Butyrate, also known as GHB, Salty Water, Georgia Home Boy and Blue Monster.

Marijuana has been around since the dawn of time. Street names for marijuana include pot, Mary Jane, yang, huff, weed, grass, dop, and hooch. A $10 bag of pot will make about five medium-sized cigarettes known as joints, doobies, numbers, or jays.

Xanax and Valium are prescription drugs that go for about $5 per pill in the Kings Mountain/Cleveland County area.

GHB is relatively new on the local dope scene. GHB is a clear liquid that has a faint aroma like watered down rum. It can be put in a drink and not detected until its effect takes place. A behavioral depressant and hypnotic, GHB can also cause high levels of intoxication, nausea, coma, uncontrollable seizures and respiratory depression.

"GHB has come on the local drug scene within the last several weeks," Proctor said. "It was popular in California last year, and made it here that fast. Usually, it takes three years for something like GHB to come from the West Coast to Cleveland County."

GHB is a Controlled Substance in California, and federal legislation is pending. A capful of GHB sells for around $10.

Just because dope is on the streets in Kings Mountain doesn't mean that the police aren't fighting for all they're worth. In addition to undercov-

See Drugs, 3A

Steve Moffitt, Keith Layton, Regina Brown and Roy Pearson, left to right, were inducted into the Kings Mountain Sports Hall of Fame Tuesday night at B.N. Barnes Auditorium.

4 inducted into Hall of Fame

By GARY STEWART
Editor of The Herald

Four Kings Mountain sports legends were inducted into the Kings Mountain Sports Hall of Fame during the 13th annual induction ceremony Tuesday night at B.N. Barnes Auditorium.

Former Mountaineer players Regina Brown and Keith Layton were joined by former KMHS wrestling coach Steve Moffitt and retired City of Kings Mountain Recreation Director Roy Pearson.

In addition, the Hall of Fame presented eight Special Achievement and Special Recognition Awards, and four $500 scholarships to deserving KMHS seniors.

Scholarship winners included Heather Causby, Joe Williamson, Manisone Phanthalack and Torez Leach. Two of the scholarships were given by the Hall of Fame. The other two were given by the KMHS Booster Club and Anita Phillips in memory of the late Alfred "Duck" Phillips, a longtime supporter of Mountaineer athletics.

Special Achievement Awards were presented to KMHS teams that won conference championships since last year's Hall of Fame ceremony. They included the 1999 men's track team, 1999 women's soccer team, 1999 women's volleyball team, 2000 wrestling team, and 2000 men's swim team.

Special Recognition Awards, given for significant contributions to sports, went to former KMHS athlete Kareem Marshall who won two state track championships in 1999,KMHS junior Matt Ash, who won the 2000 State wrestling championship, and KMHS senior Anthony Hillman, the school's all-time football leading rusher and scorer and also a 2000 State 3A wrestling champion.

Gil McGregor, former Wake Forest basketball star and current radio voice of the Charlotte Hornets, was the guest speaker. Former Hall of Fame inductees attending were Ken Baity, Shu Carlton, Fred Withers, Carl Champion and Chuck Gordon.

There are now 43 individuals and six teams in the Hall of Fame.

Keith Layton, a three-sport

See Hall, 3A

Candidates criticize way merger issue was handled

BY ALAN HODGE
Staff Writer

The current crop of candidates for the Cleveland County Board of Commissioners held their second public forum in the auditorium at Cleveland Community College Tuesday evening.

The format for the forum gave each candidate the opportunity to give a brief answer to 11 questions on topics ranging from school merger to countywide zoning. After the question and answer session, each candidate was allowed 90 seconds to sum up why they should be elected. About 30 citizens attended the event which lasted nearly two hours.

Candidates who appeared at the forum included Mary Accor, Tom Bridges, Joe Cabaniss; Jim Crawley, Ralph Gilbert, Ronnie Hawkins, Joe Hendrick Conjoins, Kenneth Ledford, David Morrow, and William "Bill" Walker. The event was moderated by Steve Thornburg.

Though the questions asked of the candidates were on a variety of subjects, the question of school merger raised its head on several occasions. David Morrow in particular took a number of opportunities to express his disgust with the current commissioners' recent approval of a draft for merger. When asked what could bring unity back to the people of Cleveland County after merger, Morrow said that the commissioners should not have re-

See Forum, 3A

Citizen participation urged in massive clean-up effort

By GARY STEWART
Editor of The Herald

Mayor Rick Murphrey is seeking the help of citizens in a massive Operation Spring Cleanup Friday and Saturday, April 14-15.

On those two days, from 7 a.m.-7 p.m., the city will man four huge trash collection containers in the parking lot of the Fire Museum, 210 Cleveland Avenue, the parking lot of Public Works, 1013 North Piedmont Avenue, the parking lot of City Hall, 101 West Gold Street, and at the dead end street behind the National Guard Armory, 300 Phifer Road.

The city is asking citizens to clean up all trash in and around their homes. Items must be those that can be transported to the county landfill.

Many items cannot be accepted, including tree trunks, boards with nails, hazardous and dangerous refuse, and rock, sand and dirt.

Appliances and other large items will be accepted. Trucks will be at each of the above sites

See Clean, 3A

Council okays $754,000 bid for new water line

In a special called meeting Wednesday, Kings Mountain City Council approved a bid from Crowder Construction Company for construction of a new 36-inch water main from Moss Lake across Muddy Fork Creek.

The bid of $754,729.80 includes a 10-percent contingency fund.

The city hopes to have the 3,000 plus foot line in place to tie-in to the the city system during the July Fourth holiday period.

The city is asking all industries to close down on Sunday, July 2 and reopen on Monday, July 10.

"We're notifying the companies verbally and in writing," noted Mayor Rick Murphrey. "We need them all to shut down the same week."

See Water, 3A

GARY STEWART / THE HERALD
Liza Dellinger, left, accepts the KMHS Teacher of the Year Award from last year's recipient, Judy Gibson, at Thursday's Academic Awards Celebration. See story on 10A

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