KINGS MOUNTAIN

# The Herald

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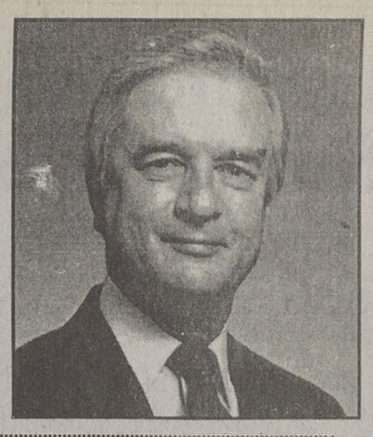

# Save Our Schools

## Parents group hires lawyer to fight merger, Schools to make appeal at State Board meeting

By GARY STEWART
Editor of The Herald

Kings Mountain Schools will appeal to the State Board of Education next week to deny the Cleveland County Commissioners' merger plan, and they will have the support of a group of parents who have retained an attorney to represent their interest in the matter.

Save Our Schools - a small group of parents who met with attorney Lue Lesesne Jr. of Charlotte last week, is raising money for legal fees which could be used to seek an injunction against the State Board acting on the plan, or filing suit against it if the plan is approved.

The basis of both the Kings Mountain District Schools' and the parents' appeal to the State Board is that Cleveland County Commissioners violated state law when its plan did not include the 180 KMDS students who reside in Gaston County and did not seek the approval of Gaston County Commissioners.

Although it hasn't been determined how long Gaston students have been attending schools, on several occasions their attendance here has been recognized by higher authorities than School Boards and County Commissioners.

In the 1960s, a parents group filed a law suit because their children who lived inside the Kings Mountain city limits were charged tuition to attend KM schools. The parents won.

In 1976, then Supt. William Davis sought - and received - per pupil expenditures from Gaston County schools for the Gaston students who lived in the KM city limits.

Supt. Bob McRae said most of the Gaston students who attend Kings Mountain schools live in the Linwood and Northwoods areas. It hasn't been determined how long Linwood has actually been in the city limits, but some of the residents of that area say residents have been attending KM schools at least as far back as the 1960s.

The Northwoods sub-division was built in the early 1970s and children in the Gaston County portion of that neighborhood have been attending schools here ever since.

Although it's not sure if the Save Our Schools group will be allotted time at the meeting of the State School Board May 3-4 in Raleigh, the group does plan to charter a bus and take as many citizens as possible to the meeting. Anyone interested in going may call Kathy Falls at 739-5297 or Sandra Bumgardner at 739-3040.

Also, the group has opened a special account at First Union to receive funds for legal expenses. Anyone wishing to donate may make checks payable to Save Our Schools and mail them to Elaine Grigg, First Union, 125 South Battleground Avenue, Kings Mountain, NC 28086.

Dr. McRae said he expects the State School Board to give the School System time on the meeting agenda to make its appeal.

"We do expect to make a presentation regarding the Gaston County issue," he said. "I would feel better if we had an election or if the General Assembly took action, but that doesn't mean we don't have a very good chance. They (the Gaston County students) have been here for over 30 years at least, and nobody has challenged that so it's reasonable to consider them here."

The State Board has the authority to approve or deny the merger, or even to table the matter until the Gaston County issue is resolved.

"Even though we'd like for them to deny it, our case will be that we don't feel like the commissioners have followed the

See Merger, 3A

## KM plans tax cut in budget

By GARY STEWART
Editor of The Herald

The City of Kings Mountain is considering a 2000-2001 fiscal year budget of $27,690,419 which represents a tax cut and numerous capital improvements.

A hearing on the proposed budget has been set for the May 9 Council meeting

City Manager Jimmy Maney went over the proposed budget with Council and city department heads during a lengthy work session Thursday at City Hall.

The proposed tax rate is 36 cents per $100 valuation, down from 40 cents from the current fiscal year. The total budget is $1,405,164 higher than FY 1999-2000.

Total revenue from local taxes is projected to be $1,582,066 compared to $1,596,076 this year, or $14,011 less. Maney said he tried to take into account Cleveland County's recently revaluation of property and make sure the citizens' actual tax amount did not increase.

"The only increase that could happen is if Gastonia increases

See Budget, 8A

ALAN HODGE/THE HERALD

**Fresh fruits and vegetables have been selling like hotcakes at Richard Wright's little stand at the corner of Carpenter and King streets in Kings Mountain. Wright also delivers produce to handicapped folks.**

## KM Hospital at 'fork in road'

By GARY STEWART
Editor of The Herald

Rumors that Kings Mountain Hospital will merge with Cleveland Regional Medical Center or close are apparently just that - rumors. But Administrator Hank Neal admits that the hospital is "at a fork in the road" and must prepare to meet some future challenges.

Both Kings Mountain Hospital and Cleveland Regional are operated under the umbrella of Carolinas Health Care, which also owns Carolinas Medical Center in Charlotte.

Because profit margins aren't as great as they have been in recent years, Neal said Carolinas Health Care has suggested that the local hospital explore the

See Hospital, 10A

## Primary election set for Tuesday

A record turnout is expected for the Tuesday, May 2 primary elections in Cleveland County.

Cleveland County voters will join those from all over North Carolina in choosing the Democratic and Republican nominees for President, Governor and numerous other local, state and federal offices.

But, the main focus here will be on the Cleveland County Commissioners race, where seven Democrats and four Republicans are seeking nomination for three seats available in the November general election. Democrats will choose from incumbent Joe Hendrick and Mary Accor, Tom Bridges, Ralph Gilbert, Ken Jones, Kenneth Ledford and William Bill Walker. Republicans will choose three nominees from incumbents Jim Crawley and Joe Cabaniss, Ronnie Hawkins and David Morrow.

The Cleveland County School Board will be electing three members in a non-partisan election, however it may not take office. If the State Board of Education approves the county

See Primary, 3A

PRIMARY 2000

## Democratic candidates share goals

By GARY STEWART
Editor of The Herald

The 2000 primary elections for Cleveland County Commissioner candidates is Tuesday, May 2. Both the Republican and Democratic parties will choose three candidates to run in the November general election.

*The Herald* asked each of the Democratic candidates to list their top three issues for the campaign. (Republican responses were in last week's paper).

See Candidates, 7A

## KM Police Chief Reynolds retires with 31 years service

By GARY STEWART
Editor of The Herald

Kings Mountain Police Chief Richard Reynolds is retiring May 1 after 31 years of service to the City of Kings Mountain.

REYNOLDS

Assistant Chief Houston Corn will serve as Interim Chief until a permanent replacement is appointed by City Council.

Reynolds said he doesn't have any immediate plans except for "doing some things around the house," and in his church, First Wesleyan, but he did say he would return to some type of employment.

"I've put my 30 years in and just felt like this was the time to move on to something else," he said. "I have enjoyed working for this city. I can't thank Kings Mountain enough for giving me this opportunity."

Reynolds, a 1964 graduate of Kings Mountain High School, joined the police force on June 19, 1969 after working with the Prison Department. He has seen tremendous changes in the police force and law enforcement in general since that time.

"When they hired me we had 12 people in the patrol division," he noted, "and we were able to have two days off a week. Now we have 30 sworn full-time officers, and just on the patrol shift there's 20. All total, counting school crossing

See Reynolds, 3A

**Kings Mountain mayor Rick Murphrey donned an Easter Bunny suit on Saturday for the first annual "Easter Egg Hunt at the Gazebo." After the egg hunt, Murphrey hopped over and delivered Easter cheer at several spots in town including Bolin's Day Care.**

## KM students mourn death of Boo Boo

BY ALAN HODGE
Staff Writer

A 15-year-old Kings Mountain youth was shot to death last Wednesday night. The incident occurred following an argument between Scotty "Boo Boo" Crocker Jr. and his father, 41-year-old Scotty Crocker Sr. Boo Boo was the father of an 11-month-old daughter, T'nasia Crocker, who lives with her mother in Ohio, and a student at Kings Mountain High School.

Students and faculty at Kings Mountain High were in shock over the shooting. A special

See Crocker, 3A

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