KINGS MOUNTAIN

The Herald

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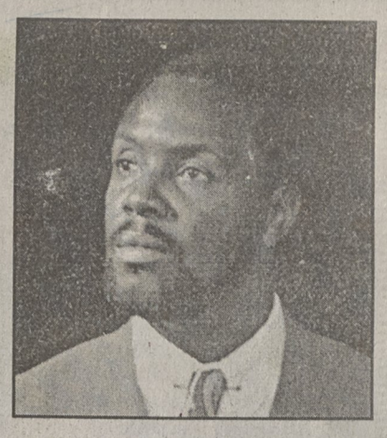

McDowell pointed head basketball coach at KM High 6A

KM man faces burglary, robbery charge

A 26-year-old Kings Mountain man has been charged with first degree burglary and robbery with a dangerous weapon following an incident Sunday at a residence on Hill Street.

Lt. Melvin Proctor charged Tyronne Deshawn Crocker of 520 Crocker Road. He was jailed without bond at the Cleveland County Detention Center. A $30,000 bond was set Monday during a first appearance hearing in District Court.

Proctor alleges that Crocker and another man went to the home of Mary Ruth Beheler and James Michael Huskins at 312 Hill Street April 30 at 1:50 a.m. and knocked on the door. A visitor, Richard Alton Handcock of 619 Chestnut Ridge Church Road, reportedly did not know the men and went to get Huskins.

According to Proctor, Crocker, who reportedly had been asked to leave the property on previous occasions, and an unknown individual "let themselves in" the house and inquired about purchasing a necklace.

Proctor said when they were told the necklace wasn't for sale, the unknown suspect allegedly pulled a gun and Crocker allegedly took the necklace from around Beheler's neck.

Also reported stolen was a Zenith VCR. The VCR and Farago silver necklace are each valued at $60.

According to Proctor, the unknown suspect is referred to as "Cisco," and he is working on leads to locate him.

Police are also investigating a common law robbery which occurred Wednesday at New China Restaurant, 213 E. King Street.

According to Lt. Proctor, a man approached the cashier and asked for change. When a female employee opened the cash register, the suspect allegedly reached his hand over the counter and grabbed money out of the register and ran out the door.

The case is still under investigation.

Subway closed until tax matter is rectified

The Cleveland County Sheriff's Department closed down the Subway on York Road in Kings Mountain Thursday, apparently for late payment of North Carolina sales and use tax.

Officer Brian Hawkins said he secured the building around 1 p.m. on a warrant from the North Carolina Department of Revenue Sales and Use Tax Division.

Officials of the NC Department of Revenue refused to comment on the case.

Subway owner Paul Brintley of Kings Mountain said he is working with the Department of Revenue officials to reopen the business.

"We are in the process of reopening," he said. "It's just a matter that has to be cleared up with the state on sales tax. It should be no more than a day or two, and we appreciate all the business from the community and look forward to reopening."

Voters speak loud and clear

2 of 3 commissioners ousted, KM candidates top vote getters

By GARY STEWART
Editor of The Herald

Cleveland County voters who felt their concerns about school merger fell on deaf ears let their voices be heard loud and clear in Tuesday's primary election, ousting two incumbent commissioners and making sure the third finished a distant third in his party's race for three seats available in the fall general election.

Democrat Joe Hendrick and Republican Joe Cabaniss, both supporters of merger, finished dead last in tickets led by King Mountain candidates. Only Chairman Jim Crawley survived to run again in November.

KM School Board member Ronnie Hawkins led the battle for three nominations from the Republican Party. Hawkins collected 77 percent of the vote (2,633) and won 28 of the 31 county precincts. The only precincts he did not lead were Shelby #2, #3 and #4.

David Morrow ran second with 1,655 votes, and Crawley was third with 1,054. Cabaniss finished with 963 votes.

Bethware School Principal Mary Accor, a former appointed commissioner, led the Democratic ticket with 4,628 votes, followed by former KM School Board member Tom Bridges with 3,922 and current Cleveland County School Board member Kenneth Ledford with 3,781. They will all move on to the November election against the three Republican nominees. The top three vote-getters will be elected.

Rounding out the Democratic field were former commissioner Ralph Gilbert with 2,806 votes, Ken Jones with 2,599, Bill Walker with 2,029, and Commissioner Joe Hendrick with 1,705.

According to Elections Board Chairman Debra Blanton, 28 percent of the registered Democrats (8,856) and 20 percent of the registered Republicans (3,150) participated in the election.

All three Kings Mountain winners were ecstatic with their Tuesday showing, and all three said the vote was an indication that Cleveland County folks did not appreciate the way commissioners handled the merger issue.

"I think the people of Cleveland County realized what it was like to have a voice, and they went to the polls and made the decision and voted their conviction," Accor said. "I am glad they had confidence in

See Election, 5A

GARY STEWART / THE HERALD
Sandy Surber of Kings Mountain places her completed ballot in the vote tabulator at the Kings Mountain American Legion during Tuesday's primary election.

Merger battle goes to Raleigh

By GARY STEWART
Editor of The Herald

As the State Board of Education began its two-day monthly meeting Wednesday morning in Raleigh, lawyers for the Kings Mountain Board of Education and Support Our Schools parents group were preparing court action in case the Board approves the Cleveland County Commissioners' plan to merge the county, Kings Mountain and Shelby school systems.

The State Board will hear the request today at 9:15 a.m. Brian Shaw, attorney for the KM District Schools, will be allotted 15 minutes to try to persuade the Board to deny the request, but Lue Lesegne, attorney for the parents' group, said he had been denied a spot on the agenda. Gil Middlebrooks, attorney for the Cleveland County Board of Commissioners, will present the merger plan.

Both KM groups are protesting the plan, saying it violates the rights of 183 students who live in Gaston County and the city limits of Kings Mountain and who have always attended KM District Schools. The KM school board interprets state law to mean that both Cleveland County and Gaston County Commissioners must approve the plan. Cleveland County Commissioners did not seek approval of the Gaston Board.

"There are some cases that our attorneys feel that are related to the claim that Gaston County students are in our system," noted Supt. Bob McRae. McRae pointed out that there is "ample evidence" that the Kings Mountain school lines have been in existence for a number of years.

Kings Mountain Schools' original 1905 charter established the district lines as "all the territory embraced in the incorporate limits of the town of Kings Mountain."

The Gaston students affected live in the Linwood and Northwoods communities, both part of the city limits of Kings Mountain. Students from Linwood have been attending KM schools since the 1960's,

See Merger, 5A

Some voters unhappy with poll change

BY ALAN HODGE
Staff Writer

Many people in Kings Mountain cast their votes in Tuesday's election at a new place, and not all were happy about it.

Since the decision by the Cleveland County Elections Board to move polling places in Kings Mountain from the YMCA in the former Community Center and National Guard Armory to First Baptist Church and Boyce Memorial ARP Church, some voters have experience confusion and aggravation.

"They shouldn't have changed it," said Roosevelt Ingram. "It seems like they try to discourage people from voting. I voted at the Armory for 30 years, now they move the polling place. Nothing was wrong with the armory."

Elections Board Chairman Debra Blanton has said that the Kings Mountain YMCA "ran us out." David Ozmore of the YMCA said the elections people didn't want to change the location of the polling place in the Y while renovations were being done. The Armory was closed down as a poling place because of lack of parking and telephone service.

"It seems like we've voted in every place in town," said Raeford White. "They need to get one place and stick with it."

Billy Benton of the Cleveland County Sheriff's Department didn't mind coming to Boyce Memorial to cast his vote.

"The church has more parking and is easier to get in and out of," Benton said.

Kings Mountain contracted with the Board of Elections to run city elections in 1997. The city provided the county with two voting tabulators and agreed to pay a monthly charge of $3 per 100 registered voters or a fraction thereof for the purpose of maintaining voter registration in the city.

The city also pays the actual cost of conducting the elections, including salaries for judges, assistants, and clerical help. The Elections Board reimburses the city the filing fees of candidates who run for city positions.

"It seems like they waited until the last minute to tell us where to vote," Ingram said as he went in to cast his ballot.

Budget hearing Tuesday

By GARY STEWART
Editor of The Herald

City Council will hold a public hearing Tuesday, May 9 at 7 p.m. at City Hall to receive citizen input on the proposed 2000-01 fiscal year budget. Council may take action on the budget after the hearing.

The city is considering a $27,690,419 budget which represents a $1,405,164 increase over the current year's budget. The budget also includes a decrease in the property tax rate from 40 cents to 36 cents per $100 valuation.

The proposed budget is available for public perusal at City Hall and Mauney Memorial Library.

One major item in the general fund is an appropriation of $830,365 for the Sanitation Department which includes a proposal to go to curbside garbage pick-up. According to Mayor Rick Murphrey, curbside pick-up could generate $180,000 in savings after one year and would provide better and more dependable service. There would be special provisions to continue backyard pick-up for totally disabled citizens.

See Budget, 5A

Revitalization meeting

By GARY STEWART
Editor of The Herald

Kings Mountain Mayor Rick Murphrey has called a public meeting for Monday, May 8 at 7 p.m. at City Hall to receive public input on a revitalization of downtown Kings Mountain.

Murphrey and City Manager Jimmy Maney have been discussing ideas with Steven Turner of Communitas of Rock Hill, SC, a firm that has had tremendous success with downtown revitalization efforts in other municipalities. If sufficient interest is shown to revitalize downtown for tourist and business attractions, the city may consider hiring Turner to advise it in the effort.

"We have been looking at what we can do as a city to revitalize the downtown area, and we've been meeting with different consultants and organizations to provide the best economical plan to

See Downtown, 5A

ALAN HODGE/THE HERALD
Kings Mountain mayor Rick Murphrey tries one of the new 36-inch water pipes for size that will be installed near Moss Lake. The project will lay 3,000 feet of pipe in the first phase of a new line to Kings Mountain.

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