

# The Herald

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Thursday, July 6, 2000

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**INSIDE SPORTS**

**KM girls going to state tourney**

Kings Mountain's 10-12 year-old Dixie Youth fast-pitch softball team won the District Tournament last weekend at Kings Mountain's Deal Street Park and will compete in the State Tournament July 12-16 in Locust. 6A

**PEOPLE**

**Jane Kiser notes 20th year in KM**

Jane Campbell Kiser is celebrating her 20th year as a dance instructor in Kings Mountain. During that time she has taught over 3,700 girls to dance and has also helped them prepare for local and state beauty pageants. 3A

**5-year-old helps save father's life**



Five-year-old Taylor Birt of Kings Mountain is credited with helping save her father's life after he had a reaction to a wasp

sting. The youngster called 911 and doctors at a local hospital said if she had waited five more minutes it would have been too late. 5A

**COMMUNITY**

**Bloodmobile today at Grace Methodist**

Because of extra demands during holiday periods and the usual decrease in donations during the summer months, The Cleveland County Bloodmobile is in dire need of blood. All eligible donors are urged to give Thursday from 1:30-6 p.m. at Grace United Methodist Church in Kings Mountain. 5A

**History Channel premier at KMNMP**

The History Channel will premiere its new production on the Battle of Kings Mountain Saturday night at the KMNMP auditorium. All proceeds will go to the Brigade of Friends for funding of special projects. 5A

**KM Senior Center lists new activities**

Kings Mountain area senior citizens have a full slate of activities to choose from during the months of July and August. 9A

**Real to Reel at Arts Council**

The Cleveland County Arts Council will hold its Real to Reel video festival July 17-22. 10A

## School merger on hold again

### 3 Friday rulings give KM new hope

By GARY STEWART  
 Editor of The Herald

Three surprise rulings late Friday gave Kings Mountain School officials renewed hope in their fight to prevent a merger of the Kings Mountain, Shelby and Cleveland County school systems.

The three rulings - by the

State Court of Appeals, Wake County Superior Court, and the U.S. Department of Justice - came within a two-hour time period as county officials were preparing for the official mid-night merger of the three systems.

On the previous evening, the recently-appointed interim school board of the new Cleveland County Schools had unofficially selected Cleveland County Supt. Dr. Gene Moore as its superintendent, and Kings Mountain's Bob McRae and Shelby's Cliff Wilson as deputy superintendents.

But the action of Friday afternoon, which could hold off merger for at least 60 days, voided that plan for at least the time-being, and along with action taken on Monday by the Gaston County Board of Education virtually assures that all students will continue in their present schools for at least another year.

The Gaston County Board, which had earlier expressed desire to have the 183 Gaston County students who live in the Kings Mountain city limits, voted that if and when merger occurs they would allow the KM

students to continue attending Cleveland County Schools upon successful negotiation of funding with the new Cleveland County Board of Education. If the merger does not take place, Gaston County students currently residing in Kings Mountain city limits would continue to attend Kings Mountain District Schools.

Kings Mountain's School Board, which met Thursday afternoon at Central School for what it thought might be its final meeting, referred to the whole merger process as a "roller coaster ride" in which

they had had more downs than ups.

As the clock ticked closer to 5 p.m. Friday, the usual "getting off" time for most court officials, their emotions reached rock bottom.

But they quickly turned to joy as first the Court of Appeals, then the Wake County Superior Court, and finally, at 4:55, the Justice Department issued rulings to hold off the merger until more information can be received.

The Wake Superior Court issued a 7-day restraining order

See Merger, 8A

**FESTIVE FOURTH**



**Kings Mountain Mayor Rick Murphrey dressed as Uncle Sam to officially open the city's Independence Day celebration Tuesday at Deal Street Park. Mayor Murphrey stood on top of the YMCA to deliver a short patriot speech and lead the countdown to the city's annual Fourth of July fireworks extravaganza.**

GARY STEWART / THE HERALD

## KM Board 'cautiously optimistic'

By GARY STEWART  
 Editor of The Herald

Kings Mountain School Board members greeted Friday's news of another delay of merger with mixed feelings.

Although all are happy that there is a chance Kings Mountain will finally get its day in court, the decisions obviously raised the question of whether or not the action would just delay the inevitable.

All are confident, though, that Kings Mountain will win if the Board can someday get a jury trial.

The decisions last week by the Court of Appeals and Wake County Superior Court only grant temporary stays until judges can review earlier decisions by judges in Cleveland and Wake Counties. The Justice Department's decision not to pre-clear merger until it receives more information could delay the merger for 60 days or more, and if the Justice Department denies pre-clearance, the merger cannot take effect.

Melony Bolin, vice-chairman of the KM School Board, said the rulings are reason for "cautious optimism" and could be the stepping stone the system

See Optimism, 9A

## Tax decision could cost KM \$300,000

By GARY STEWART  
 Editor of The Herald

With the anticipation of merger of Kings Mountain, Cleveland County and Shelby schools on July 1, County Commissioners adopted a budget which calls for a huge revenue increase and one county-wide supplemental school tax.

Although the base tax rate of 62.7 percent remained unchanged, the county will receive millions of dollars of extra revenue because of the recent property revaluation which resulted in an average increase of 18%.

Looking toward a single school system, the commissioners set the supplemental school tax at 16 cents per \$100 property evaluation. That's six cents less than Shelby's previous rate of 22 cents, three cents less than Kings Mountain's previous rate of 19 cents, and six cents more than Cleveland County's previous rate of 10 cents.

See Budget, 8A

## KM School Board approves contracts

The Kings Mountain Board of Education approved a number of personnel items at its called meeting Thursday afternoon at Central School.

Susie Hughes, who formerly taught in the Accelerated Lab at Kings Mountain High, was named Assistant Principal at Kings Mountain Middle School. She received a four-year contract.

Former KMHS teacher Ronny Funderburke, who had earlier been named Assistant Principal at the Middle School, was transferred back to the high school as Assistant Principal.

There, he replaces Steve Moffitt, who will move to Davidson School as a Physical Education teacher.

Several other transfers were approved.

Danny McDowell, fourth grade teacher at Bethware School, will move to the Accelerated Lab at Kings Mountain High School. He was

recently named the Mountaineers' head men's basketball coach.

Frankie Webster, formerly clerical assistant at KMHS, will become KMHS secretary replacing Barbara Starnes, who retired.

Tina Stewart, formerly a teacher assistant, becomes secretary at Davidson School; and Tony Glenn, formerly a custodian/bus driver, becomes a teacher assistant at Davidson.

Teacher contracts were awarded to Judy Howell, Guidance, North School; Donna Cannon, Exceptional Children, Middle School; Connie Bell, Consumer Science (interim), Middle School; Monica Williams, Exceptional Children, Bethware; Dana Drennan, Elementary/Middle; and Jackie Blanton, third grade, Grover.

The board accepted the resignation of Tamara Allison, Fourth Grade, North; Kevin

See Board, 10A



GARY STEWART / THE HERALD

**Dr. Larry Allen, center, chairman of the Kings Mountain Board of Education, makes a point about the status of the Kings Mountain Board's lawsuits against Cleveland County Commissioners and the N.C. State Board of Education at Thursday's called board meeting at Central School. Left is vice-chairman Melony Bolin and right is Supt. Dr. Bob McRae.**



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