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A Historical Star

Restoration of KM's oldest home door nears completion

BY ALAN HODGE
Staff Writer

It's the oldest house in Kings Mountain, but come spring and full restoration, it will be the newest star on the local history scene.

Originally built back in 1873 by W.A. Mauney, the little frame home at 104 N. Battleground Avenue was originally a two-story store that Mauney and his brother Jacob Mauney ran. With the coming

of the Charlotte-Atlanta Airline Railway in 1874, the Mauney's moved their mercantile business to a larger building in the heart of downtown. After the move, a one-story section was added, the house was turned to face the railroad tracks, and it became a four-room dwelling.

The decades since it was first built saw many changes come to Kings Mountain. In time, a gas station was built next door to the home, then a restaurant. As time marched on, its feet left

heavy treads on the quaint homestead. When restoration of the house was initiated two years ago by Kings Mountain Historic Home Preservation Inc., the place was in pretty rough shape.

"The house was a gift to the preservation group from Jim and Will Herndon," said restoration organizer Mary Neisler. "Its rebuilding has taken a lot of research and hard work."

See House, 4A



ALAN HODGE/THE HERALD
 Restoration of the oldest original house in Kings Mountain is nearing completion. Located at 104 N. Battleground Avenue, the circa 1873 dwelling was built by W.A. Mauney as a mercantile store.

County merger issue go to NC Assembly?

By GARY STEWART
Editor of The Herald

While it's not likely to happen soon, the issue of the merger of Kings Mountain, Cleveland County and Shelby City Schools could ultimately make it to the floor of the State General Assembly.

At present, the issue is tied up in the court system since the Kings Mountain Board of Education and a KM parents group sued the Cleveland County Board of Commissioners and the State Board of Education for approving the merger plan, which originally was scheduled to take effect on July 1, 2000.

Once those appeals are settled, the merger must also be pre-cleared by the U.S. Justice Department.

But, since the new Board of County Commissioners passed a resolution at its December 4 meeting to ask the State Board to rescind its action, and also for the Justice Department to refuse to pre-clear it, there has been talk around the county that the local delegates to the State General Assembly may be asked to introduce local bills to have the State Board's action overturned in the General Assembly.

The new General Assembly convenes on January 24, but for a while members of both the House and Senate will be dealing with important organizational matters.

There is a good chance, though, that the County Commissioners may ask the local delegation to get involved in stopping the merger before the Session ends in July.

State Senator Walter Dalton of Rutherford County said he has heard some talk along those lines but said he has not been officially contacted about the matter. He and Representatives Debbie Clary and Andy Dedmon said it may be necessary for the local delegation to have a meeting and discuss the matter. Rep. John Weatherly could not be reached for comment.

But Dalton also hinted that before he would consider taking the matter before the Legislature he would have to have a formal request from a local governing body such as the Board of Commissioners, as well as concrete support from other agencies such as the three school boards and city councils.

"Usually, on any type of local legislation it has to be pretty much of a consensus of all the people back home," he said. "We would have to look at what kind of recommendation we get and what type of support we'd have. I'd have to see what they suggest and whether it had other support of entities in the community. Usually, school boards and county commissioners would come together and present a joint proposal."

He said the November election, when three merger opponents swept the three available seats on the commission, may have suggested that the majority of citizens oppose merger but "that body must now come together and discuss what they want to do and present some kind of concrete resolution."

All three legislators were asked their personal views on merger, and only Dedmon was clear in his answer.

"I have been publicly saying all along that I'm against the way it was handled," he said.

Dedmon said he hasn't been approached about introducing legislation to stop it, but said if contacted he would "definitely give it due consideration. I think the people have been very vocal about their feelings about school merger."

Like Dalton, Clary said the legislators would have to have a "delegation meeting" to discuss the matter.

"It's a very large issue and it's one that I wouldn't feel a freedom to speak about without the rest of our legislative delegation," she said. "But I firmly believe in community schools."

Everything being equal, Dalton said he supports leaving merger decisions to the counties.

"My thinking is that as long as funding is equitable it should be up to the county to decide how many administrations they want," he said. "It should be a local issue as far as how many educational entities you would have."

Regardless of the merger situation, this year's GA session could be quite interesting. Saturday, the state will swear in a new governor, Mike Easley, and its first female lieutenant governor, Beverly Perdue. When the House convenes on January 24 the state might also see its first female Speaker of the House.

Connie Wilson of Mecklenburg County may have enough support to unseat current speaker Jim Black, also of Mecklenburg. Clary supports Wilson and Dedmon supports Black.

According to Clary, there are 58 Republican and 62 Democrats in the House, but many of the more conservative Democrats are expected to support Wilson.

"It looks like a toss of the coin," Clary said.

What's coming up in 2001?

New 5-6 school, merger top priorities for KMDS

BY ALAN HODGE
Staff Writer

Sailing ahead valiantly through uncertain waters illustrates the current state of the Kings Mountain District Schools board of education. With merger still undecided, and superintendent Dr. Bob McRae soon moving his tent to Randolph County, the board and school system is focusing its attention to getting construction of the new \$10.8 million grades 5-6 school under way.

Though he won't be around to see all of 2001, McRae has several items on his agenda for the remainder of his tenure.

"Getting the new school started is a top priority," McRae said. "Also seeing out merger in a way that allows us to keep the school system and selecting a new superintendent."

According to McRae, representatives from the N.C. School Board Association will be meeting with Kings Mountain school board members on January 11 to discuss ways the association can assist in selecting the new system head.

As far as the new school is concerned, ground breaking will take place in a matter of weeks on that project located on Kings Mountain Blvd. McRae says that though the school design is done and ready for construction, things such as selection of interior colors and furnishings will not come for a while yet.

Looking ahead to 2001, Kings Mountain school board chairman Dr. Larry Allen says that his group will come up with a specific set of goals at their January 18 meeting. One of the top priorities to be examined at that time will be closing the achievement gap between high and low scoring students.

"We will continue to identify the areas that need attention in the area of underachieving students," Allen said. "Strategies to address those areas will then occur at the school and system level."

See School, 2A



GARY STEWART / THE HERALD
 Employees of Ronny Turner Construction Co. brave the bitter cold weather to install new 16-inch water lines on Cansler Street in Kings Mountain. The \$880,000 Phase II of the eight-year replacement of the main water line from Moss Lake to the City Public Works Department will be completed in the spring. Phase III, which takes the line from Cansler to Oak Grove Road, will take place in the 2001-02 fiscal year.

Outdoors will get attention from KM

BY ALAN HODGE
Staff Writer

What's in the works for the City of Kings Mountain in 2001? The great outdoors for one thing.

On a list of items that city government in Kings Mountain will be looking at in the coming year, tying the town into the connecting land bridge between Crowders Mountain State Park and Kings Mountain National Military Park and State Park will near the top of the list, according to mayor Rick Murphrey.

"We will be working with the Department of the Interior after the first of the year to see how the parks and city can benefit each other regarding the corridor," Murphrey said. "There will be a tremendous number of visitors coming to take advantage of the recreational opportunities that the connecting land will provide."

Ideas that Murphrey has for linking Kings Mountain to the new wilderness area include making Highway 161 a gateway to the three parks. Signage

See City, 4A

Building bridges top priority of county chairman

BY ALAN HODGE
Staff Writer

Anyone who has attended a meeting of the new Cleveland County Board of Commissioners has probably sensed a different atmosphere in those chambers. Given some of the contentious Tuesday evenings that characterized many of the ousted commissioner's sessions, the new board is placing as one of its top priorities for 2001 a "kinder, gentler" way of doing business.

"My top priority is getting the county back together," said commission chairman Willie McIntosh. "Merger and zoning broke it and we need to build bridges to one another."

One way that McIntosh and his fellow commissioners intend to begin construction of that bridge is with a special meeting planned for the end of January.

Coordinated by the County Association for Government Officials (CAGO) the power powwow will be open for every single elected official in Cleveland County to attend. According to McIntosh, this list runs the gamut from "congressman on down."

"The meeting will include not only elected officials, but the Cleveland County Chamber, representatives from Gardner-Webb University, Cleveland Community College, local high schools and Cleveland Tomorrow," said McIntosh.

McIntosh emphasized the need to have the college and high school students take part in the

event. In his opinion, getting youth involved in government is a top priority for 2001.

The overall theme of the CAGO get together will be to take input from those present, and carry those ideas to the commissioner's planned retreat in early February. From the retreat, McIntosh said a set of goals and priorities for the coming year will be set.

Newly elected commissioner Mary Accor says that she has several ideas on her plate for 2001. Heading the list is increased input from citizens.

"I want to make people feel comfortable when they approach the commission," Accor said. "We will be listening to the people."

Other things Accor feels will be important for the commissioners to examine in 2001 will be dealing with land usage and zoning issues and restrictions as they apply to those areas. Maintaining and increasing job availability and economic growth in Cleveland County is also important, Accor said.

"We have to keep the county growing. It's important to bring jobs to the county, but they must be good paying jobs."

As principal of Bethware School, Accor is especially aware of the need to address education issues in Cleveland County this year. Of course, the subject still on many minds is the unfinished merger melee.

"We have to wait and see what the final outcome is on the merger issue," Accor said. "Whatever it is, we will just have to deal with it."



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