

# MCRAE

From 1A

of family services such as Communities in Schools, Smart Start, and before and after school care programs "hopefuly made raising children easier for families."

An avid supporter of athletics, McRae saw KM teams excel in many areas.

"In no way would I want to imply that athletics is the most important thing in the system, but it's something I've enjoyed," he said. "We had a great athletic program, not just in one sport but every sport had some significant accomplishments and that's been gratifying."

Many Kings Mountain folks will attend today's reception to honor McRae and tell him how much he meant to them and to the system over the years. A group of students from Kings Mountain High School will present a musical program at 5 p.m., and the Board of Education will make a presentation to McRae.

One man on the program who says he will miss him is County Commissioner Ronnie Hawkins, who served on the Board of Education for almost 12 years under McRae. He was chairman of the Board for about half of those years.

"He has always been one that wanted to make sure that everyone had the information that was necessary to perform their job," Hawkins said. "I think the one thing that I will always remember most about Bob is that no matter what the situation, his first and primary concern was how it was going to affect the children."

"I've always been impressed by his ability to stay in the classrooms and to know each employee of the school system."

He knows all the teachers, assistants, custodians, cafeteria workers, bus drivers and everyone else by their first name. He tries his best to stay in the schools and listen to the concerns of all of the people.

"I know that sometimes he seems to be frustrated by not being able to do what everybody wants him to do, but he tries and to my knowledge has ran the Kings Mountain District Schools the best of anyone that I have ever heard of. He's going to be missed. His leadership abilities will be missed, and I'm going to miss him as a friend. He has always been a first class gentleman and a good Christian man. Randolph County is going to be better off for having hired him. If he works for them like he has for Kings Mountain, we're going to be seeing their name in the paper a lot. It's going to be our loss."

Current Chairwoman Shearra Miller said things won't be the same without McRae.

"I think he's been an outstanding superintendent," she said. "He's 100 percent professional. He has a lot of vision and foresight and I always felt like he thought things through before making a final decision. I have the utmost respect and trust for him."

"Personally, he has been a role model for me as a professional. I think we've been very lucky to have him as our superintendent for all these years. In North Carolina, superintendents don't usually stay in one system for 14 years. He's given us a lot of consistency and that's one of the reasons we've done so well."

# ETHEL

From 1A

as Jan Digh from Clover who brings her books.

"Ethel reads at least four or five books every week," Digh said. "Her favorites are mysteries and novels by Janet Oke."

All in all, being 94 seems to sit well with Childers. "I've had a good life and I still got one," she surmised.

# FRANKS

From 1A

fifth grade teacher assistant. Her fellow educators there all agreed it looked genuine.

"I called the number on the e-mail to see if it was true," she said. "The lady told me that everyone who wins can't believe it actually happened."

Actually, Franks said she called three times just to confirm what the e-mail said. The contest prize was a 2002 Ford Expedition, but Franks decided to take the cash prize of \$31,000.

"I've never won anything," said Franks. "It was a nice surprise."

Now that the check has arrived and is safely in the bank, the question of what to do with it naturally arises. While others might buy a new bass boat or motorcycle, Franks has a more down to earth plan.

"We might fix up our house or wait until next year to help our daughter with a car when she starts driving," said Franks. "We won't go crazy with the money."

A once in a lifetime event, winning the sweepstakes is something that happens to a lucky few. Now that it has happened to Kim Franks, she says others should try their luck online.

"I didn't have to buy a single magazine," she said.

# MERGER

From 1A

Cleveland County residents are very pleased with the school systems that they have."

Although Bolin said she is concerned that fighting merger costs a lot of money, she feels "we should stay the road with what we're doing" and after summer see about having their attorneys get a court date.

"I certainly was disappointed that Shelby came out pro-merger but I wasn't surprised," Bolin said. "The writing was on the wall. Each board has to do what they think is best for their system."

"But I think we're going to win in court. I don't see the need to rush anyone to make a hasty decision. Let's wait and see what the attorneys want us to do and base our decision accordingly."

McClain said Shelby could solve its money woes and do Kings Mountain a favor at the same time by surrendering its charter. That would automatically cause a merger of the Shelby and County systems.

"I can see that they're only trying to look out for their children," McClain said. "But they do have an alternative if they're willing to look at it. They could give up their charter. They

could do us a service by giving up their charter. That would exclude Kings Mountain. They probably won't do that but I hope they could hear our plea."

McClain's comments drew roaring applause from the small number of people in the audience, and prompted fellow board member Putnam to congratulate him on being willing to make that statement publicly.

"Sometimes it's hard to say what we feel," Putnam said. "We all live in our own capsule. This has not been an easy thing. We looked at redistricting and people have known where we stood all along."

"We're not on a bandwagon," added Bolin. "We've listened to the people. We didn't come this far to turn around and be threatened. Sometimes slow and steady wins the race."

Miller said the KM Board has always felt that "a smaller system is the best" and she and Putnam pointed out recent news reports from California and other states where large systems are failing.

"It's sad that we're looking at large places where it's not working, and we wait 20 years and then try it," Miller said. "I've said all along if you can prove to me that it's best educationally then I'd be the first one out there supporting it."

# Maxway employees are suing company

BY ALAN HODGE Staff Writer

A group of former Maxway employees in Kings Mountain have filed a lawsuit against parent company Variety Wholesalers Inc. alleging they were coerced into signing confessions they had stolen from the store. The group includes Melissa McCoy, Kimberly Haraszkiwicz and Sheryl Stacey of Kings Mountain and Sherry Buchanan who lives in Grover.

Allegations in the suit cite fraud, deceit, false imprisonment, and emotional distress in connection with interrogations the women say they were subjected to by company loss prevention personnel. The women claim they were coerced into signing confessions and agree-

ments to pay back what they were told was \$125,000 in losses from the Shelby Road Maxway.

Attorney R. Frost Branon, Jr. of Charlotte is representing the four women. He says he was referred to the case by a local resident. His speciality is employee litigation.

"When I heard the facts of the case as the plaintiffs presented them, I felt they had been coerced," said Branon. "They were from different parts of the county, but gave the same version of what happened."

Variety operates more than 500 stores in 15 states. In addition to Maxway, they also operate Roses stores.

None of the four women could be reached for comment. Their suit was filed in Cleveland County Superior Court on March 2.

# Tube Enterprises to cut ribbon

Commonwealth Aluminum Tube Enterprises LLC will host a grand opening and ribbon cutting Wednesday, March 21 at 11:30 p.m. The event will take place at 133 Industrial Drive just off Highway 161, one half mile south of I-85. Local civic and business leaders will attend as well as customers, suppliers,

and employees.

The new tube mill is the first to be built in the U.S. in 20 years. It features state of the art equipment and can produce tubing at a rate of 600 feet per minute. Several planned expansions are planned over the next 24 months.

# DIALING

From 1A

in the 10-digit scenario. Telephone companies are planning on having an overlay area code come to the 919 and 336 areas around Greensboro and Raleigh. Phone companies are also looking at overlay codes in South Carolina for the 803 and 843 codes.

To get ready for the upcoming 704 area code change, there are several things you need to do. One is to reprogram your alarm system so it can add the area code to any numbers it au-

tomatically calls. Another tip is to make sure your fax machine is set up to include the area code in programmed speed dial numbers. Check your computer modem and make sure it will include the area code in numbers it dials up to get online.

Other things you can do to help ease the transition to 10-digit dialing is to include your full phone number of business cards, and stationery.

For more information on the 10-digit dialing method, call BellSouth at 1-800-964-7941 or visit their website at www.bellsouth.com/areacode.

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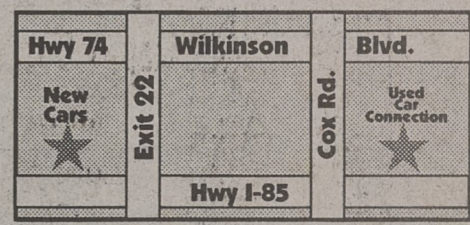
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