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Making a Difference

Cops, community join together to clean up Hillway

BY ALAN HODGE
 Staff Writer

Depending who you ask in the newly annexed Hillway community of Kings Mountain, police officers T.L. Reeves and Brad Bumgardner are a blessing or a curse.

Part of the Kings Mountain police department's Community Oriented Police (COPS) program, Reeves and Bumgardner are heroes to the hard working and law abiding citizens that constitute the majority of the area's citizens. To the drug dealers, trash dumpers, bootleggers and other shady characters who consider the neighborhood their turf, their presence is not nearly so welcome.

A ride along Hillway Drive and some of its side streets and pathways presents a study in contrasts. Sitting within a stone's throw of neat and tidy bungalows are shanties a rat would find distasteful.

Not only dwellings, but the landscape as well suffers from this syndrome. Within the shadow of some spectacular outcrops and peaks on Crowders Mountain are roadsides covered in a blizzard of cans, bottles, and paper.

Folks such as Rev Pruella Sanders of Adams Chapel AME Zion Church are glad to see officers Reeves and Bumgardner on the Hillway beat.

"I'm real happy with the COPS program and their in-



ALAN HODGE/THE HERALD
Unsavoury elements in the Hillway Drive area had best beware. As the top photo shows, local leaders Rev. Pruella Sanders and Kings Mountain mayor Rick Murphrey are working with COPS policemen Brad Bumgardner (left) and T.L.Reeves to rid the neighborhood of trash. Places like the "hole in the wall" below are on the route the patrolmen drive every day as part of their community watch program.

volvement in the community," Sanders said. "It has already started to make a difference."

Helping jump start the involvement of Kings Mountain police in the Hillway section was a meeting held last month at Adams Chapel. That gathering saw mayor Rick Murphrey, police, and 56 local citizens gather and discuss ways to work more closely together.

"The city is committed to establishing good communications with the Hillway area citizens," Murphrey said. "We are determined to clean up any illegal activities and substandard buildings that are encountered."

Several abandoned shanties in the neighborhood are already slated for demolition. Also,

plans are in the works to have a major roadside trash pickup day where city workers, neighbors, and other volunteers can come together to clean up the mounds of garbage that have accumulated in some areas.

Kings Mountain police chief Houston Corn recognizes that most people who live in the Hillway area are law abiding citizens concerned with their neighborhood.

"Much of the trouble with illegal activity such as drugs and alcohol comes from outside influences," said Corn. "We will be working closely with the neighborhood watch committee to eliminate this."

Putting action to Corn's words, a crew of city workers erected signs on Hillway

Monday afternoon indicating the area was indeed part of a community watch program as well as a place where children were at play.

Long-time Hillway resident, Robert Curry, says he's glad to have officers Reeves and Bumgardner patrolling the area.

"They have definitely been a help," Curry said, "I can tell things are improving."

Curry's neighbor, Cleveland Brown even praised the efforts of Animal Control.

"Since the city has sent the animal control officers down here, there's not nearly as many stray dogs running around," said Brown.

One area of Hillway that po-

See Cops, 3A

County says it will hold line on taxes and budget

BY ALAN HODGE
 Staff Writer

Just like Mecklenburg, Gaston, and many other North Carolina counties, Cleveland is feeling a budget pinch. What that boils down to is a dilemma those same counties are struggling with- if they don't raise taxes, they might have to cut services.

With many citizens struggling financially due to job layoffs and astronomical utility bills, higher taxes are a political powder keg. That leaves the options of county departments cutting back on services or at least holding the line for another fiscal year. The recent retreat by the Cleveland County Board of Commissioners took a preliminary look at where the county stands financially.

"We took a tentative look regarding any shortfalls we might have," said commissioner Ronnie Hawkins. "We are looking at holding the line and continuing the hiring freeze for now."

Hawkins said the budget process would last until June. At this stage, department heads have not turned in their final needs.

See Tax, 3A

Commissioners 'endorse' library

BY ALAN HODGE
 Staff Writer

Proponents of the new Grover public library got some encouraging news at Tuesday's meeting of the Cleveland County Board of Commissioners.

Though the commissioners stopped short of officially approving funding for the facility, they none the less gave what blessing they could for the project. The main sticking point in the situation was, not surprisingly, county budgetary constraints.

Following a motion by commissioner Charlie Harry, the board voted unanimously on a resolution to "endorse the library project to the extent that we can." The commissioners promised to revisit funding for the Grover branch next year. Their vote was a show of support for library steering committee members and their fund raising efforts.

"The decision was wonderful considering the current bud-

See Library, 2A

First day of spring brings rain, wind

BY ALAN HODGE
 Staff Writer

Spring might have arrived this week, but Old Man Winter went out with a bang. Dumping a foot of snow on the mountains and two inches of rain on Kings Mountain, a strong low pressure system reminded everyone just how fickle March weather can be.

According to Kings Mountain's backyard weatherman Kenneth Kitzmiller, Tuesday saw 1.95 inches of rain in his gauge. By Wednesday morning, another measurable amount had fallen. Besides the rain, Kitzmiller also observed ice.

"It was mostly pellets," he said. "They stung when they hit

your face."

Winds around 20 miles per hour blew most of the day Tuesday. Wet ground and winds can mean uprooted trees, but Cleveland County Emergency Services director Beau Lovelace said his folks had no reports of damage.

"We came out OK with the storm," Lovelace said.

As usual, some folks didn't have sense enough to slow down in the wet conditions while driving. The Highway Patrol reported over a half dozen wrecks Tuesday morning. According to Cleveland County EMS official Lewis Jenkins, two accidents, one on Highway 74 Bypass Tuesday af-

See Spring, 2A

KM mourns death of dedicated physician Blue Durham

By GARY STEWART
 Editor of The Herald

A "quiet, caring, and loyal person who loved his patients and they loved him" is how Kings Mountain friends and co-workers are remembering Dr. T.G. "Blue" Durham, 68, who died Monday following a four-month bout with cancer.

Dr. Durham served the Kings Mountain community for over 40 years, coming here on January 1, 1960 as a partner with Dr. Paul Hendricks. Prior to that he drove to Kings Mountain each Wednesday to work part-time for Dr. Hendricks while he was interning in Greenville, SC.

Dr. Durham's wife, Casey, said he learned just before Christmas that he had cancer.

"He had fallen off a stool at the office," she recalled. "He went to have his back x-rayed and

they found the cancer in his lungs."

He took chemotherapy, Mrs. Durham said, but the cancer spread quickly. "It seemed like every time one place would get healed another would pop up."

From that time, Dr. Durham did not return to work.

Holly Cooke, a co-worker at Kings Mountain Medical Center on West King Street, said Dr. Durham's patients missed him and called often to see how he was doing.

"Some of his patients wouldn't see anyone else," she said. "We offered them appointments with other people. They were all just waiting to see if he'd come back. Most of them had been with him for over 30 years."

The mood at the office was somber this week, she said.

"He was just a genuinely caring person," she

said. "He was wonderful to work with and very understanding."

Two women who served as his nurses echoed those feelings.

"His patients loved him," said Jackie McRae, who left the clinic at about the same time Dr. Durham became ill. "He was a wonderful boss. He treated my family just like he treated his own. He'll really be missed."

Betty Spears was with Hendricks Clinic when Dr. Durham came to Kings Mountain to replace Dr. Paul Nolen, and she worked with Dr. Durham again prior to her retirement 2 1/2 years ago.

"He was loved by a lot of patients," she said. "A lot of them have told me they just don't know what they're going to do."

"When I got married I went to work with Dr. Hendricks and Dr. Nolen, and then when Dr. Nolen left to go to Tennessee Dr. Durham came,"

she recalled. "I was his nurse when I retired. I feel like a lot of people are really going to miss him. He was a pillar to a lot of patients, that's for sure."

His son-in-law and associate, Dr. Lewis Roberson, said Dr. Durham "always went the extra mile to do anything for his patients. He touched so many lives in the community his shoes will never be able to be filled. He is going to be missed."

Ronnie Hawkins, manager of Harris Funeral Home and a County Commissioner, said he has been going to Dr. Durham ever since the doctor came to Kings Mountain.

"Blue has always been kind of a quiet, private person but I always found him to be a very enjoyable person," he said. "When I worked at Kings Mountain Hospital I found him to be a very con-

See Durham, 3A



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