

KINGS MOUNTAIN The Herald

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Lincolnton man dies at Buffalo Creek

Family blames police, police say they went 'beyond the call' of duty

By GARY STEWART
Editor of The Herald

An autopsy and toxicology tests have been ordered on a Lincolnton man who died shortly after being pulled from the muddy waters of Buffalo Creek at Moss Lake Sunday afternoon.

Kings Mountain Police ruled the death of Grover Hatcher Jr., 53, of Lincolnton as drowning but family members claimed in a Shelby newspaper that law

enforcement officials stood by and didn't do enough to save him. County Coroner Ralph Mitchem is holding off on listing an official cause of death until he hears from the autopsy report, which could take seven days. The toxicology report will be done at the office of the State Medical Examiner in Chapel Hill and may not be released for several months.

Lt. Derek Johnson, who is heading the investigation for the KMPD, contradicts the fam-

ily's claim, saying KMPD Lake Officer Harold Parker and State Highway Patrol Trooper J.E. Deaton "went above and beyond the call of duty."

Johnson said Hatcher and his son, Bobby Eugene Hatcher, 24, of 331 St. Lukes Church Road, Kings Mountain, were at a restricted area of the creek owned by the City of Kings Mountain near Doran Yarn on Highway 150. That area of the creek, which feeds into Moss Lake, is posted for no swimming, no

fishing and no alcohol, Johnson said.

Johnson said Officer Parker was on routine patrol when he discovered the Hatcher's automobile stuck in the sand near the creek. Johnson said Parker actually offered assistance and took the younger Hatcher to a location on Highway 150 to call for someone to come and help them get their car out of the sand.

Johnson said Parker brought Hatcher back to the scene, and

as he was getting information from the two Grover Hatcher got out of the car.

"He advised Mr. Hatcher to get back in the car, and he made a comment to Officer Parker and just started walking out into the water," Johnson said.

Parker had called for back-up, and Trooper Deaton arrived at the scene about that time.

"Mr. Hatcher goes under the water, and obviously he is

See Creek, 2A



Candice Mayes is 2001 Queen of the Bethware Fair.

Bethware Fair opens Tuesday

The 54th annual Bethware Fair will be held July 24-28 on the grounds of Bethware Elementary School near Kings Mountain.

The event will run from 6-11 p.m. Tuesday through Friday, and 3-11 p.m. on Saturday.

This will be the biggest Bethware Fair ever and will feature over 20 rides provided by Smoky Mountain Amusements. In addition, there will be plenty of food and games for all ages and over 1,500 exhibits.

Outdoor exhibits will include modern and antique farm equipment, and exhibits inside the school gymnasium will range from arts and crafts to antiques, farm produce, and exhibits from children in grades kindergarten through fifth grade.

Entries for general exhibits will be accepted Monday, July 23 from 9 a.m.-8 p.m., and Tuesday, July 24, from 9 a.m.-6 p.m. They will be judged on Wednesday, July 25 and will be released on Saturday, July 28 at 7 p.m.

Candice Annette Mayes, a fifth grade student at Bethware Elementary and daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Kelly Mayes, will be the Fair Queen.

The fair has been sponsored since its beginning by the Bethware Progressive Club. Craig Mayes is President and Glenn Hicks and Marshall Jones are Fair managers. Supervisor of exhibits is Ruby McKinney.

White Plains Shrine Club will be in charge of parking, which is \$3 per car. Admission to the fair is free.

"The Bethware Progressive Club continues to strive for a fair that features the talents of people from throughout the community; a fair that provides wholesome family entertainment; and a fair that benefits the community by returning the proceeds back to the needs in the community," Mayes said.

Mayes gives credit for the Fair's tremendous success over the years to the Progressive Club members and volunteers.

"The fair does not just happen," he said. "It takes much planning and work to bring about a week of rides, games, exhibits, food and everything that makes the fair a fair. With that in mind we thank everyone who contributes to the continued success and operation of the fair."

"We hope this edition of the Bethware Community Fair will be the best ever."



GARY STEWART / THE HERALD
David Cooper, left, and Robbie Chapman of Fountain Electric of Spindale drill 15-foot deep hole at John Gamble Stadium, where new lights are being installed this week. The light project, which is costing \$100,000, includes underground wiring and will be completed in time for the high school football season which begins August 18 with the Cleveland County Jamboree.

Judges dismiss KM appeal against CC

Wake suits to be heard next week

By BEN LEDBETTER
Staff Writer

A three judge panel of the North Carolina Court of Appeals dismissed the appeal the Kings Mountain District Schools filed against a Cleveland County Superior Court ruling which involved the Board of Commissioners Tuesday in Raleigh.

Raleigh lawyer Brian Shaw, who has been one of the Kings Mountain merger attorneys, said the case was dismissed because it appealed an intermediate judgment and not a final ruling.

Shaw said the exception to that rule is if filing an intermediate ruling would affect a substantial right.

An issue to decide now, Shaw said, is if the proposed merger affects any substantial rights.

"We filed the appeal because the merger would affect a substantial right," Shaw said. "But the indication is that merger will never occur because both parties are opposed to merger."

The appeal was filed after Cleveland County Superior Court Judge Oliver Noble denied the preliminary injunction against the school merger.

When the appeal was filed, See Appeal, 12A

Barnette appointed to KM School Board

By GARY STEWART
Editor of The Herald

The Gaston County area of Kings Mountain that has been the key argument in Kings Mountain District Schools' fight against merger got its first representative on the Board of Education Monday morning when the Board named Trace Barnette of Alpine Drive to fill the unexpired term of At-Large member Melony Bolin.

Mrs. Bolin, whose seat is up in November, resigned recently because of health reasons.

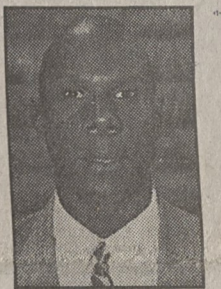
Barnette is the third person appointed to the Board since last November when Ronnie Hawkins resigned after being elected to the Cleveland County Board of Commissioners. Terry McClain was appointed to fill his term, which also ends in November.

Jerry Blanton joined the Board in March after Dr. Larry Allen, who held the other outside city seat, resigned to become Superintendent of Schools.

Barnette, who has lived in Kings Mountain for 13 years, said he isn't sure yet if he will run for the At-Large seat in November, but he looks forward to joining the Board. He will be sworn in at a special meeting Thursday at 5:30 p.m. at Central School.

"I feel like this is a great opportunity to serve the community," Barnette said. "I'm real interested in our young people getting a great education."

Barnette and his wife, Myra, are active in the East Elementary School PTO. They have three See Barnette, 3A



BARNETTE

Space Explorer KM teacher participates in unique Space Camp

By BEN LEDBETTER
Staff Writer

She did not get to go to space, but she was close.

Kings Mountain Middle School Science Teacher Julia Clore-Laurich spent six days in Huntsville, Ala. at the National Aeronautics and Space Administration's Space Academy Summer Educator Program which was at its space camp on July 10-15.

Clore-Laurich, the only one from Cleveland County to go, was selected by the Kings Mountain Rockwell office. Rockwell paid her expenses to

attend space camp.

"I jumped on it with both feet," Clore-Laurich said. "Because it would be a once in a lifetime opportunity."

Some of the activities that she participated in were simulated missions, simulated astronaut training, classroom work and lectures.

The "Exploring Space: the Classroom Connection" consisted of 40 hours of intensive classroom, laboratory and training time focusing on space science and space exploration.

Instructional techniques were

See Space, 3A



BEN LEDBETTER/THE HERALD
Kings Mountain Middle School Teacher Julia Clore-Laurich poses in a spacesuit she received from the Summer Educator program at NASA's Space Camp in Huntsville, Ala.

Pedestrian killed on US 74 Bypass

A pedestrian was killed Sunday afternoon when he walked into US Highway 74 Bypass to retrieve a necklace that he had dropped.

Christopher Lee Baker, 20, of 304-1 Long Branch Road, died at approximately 6:48 p.m. when he was struck by a car driven by Beverly Earley Ward of Forest City.

According to Kings Mountain Police Officer Brian S. Biletnikoff, witnesses said Baker was walking west in the grass median near NC Highway 216. Biletnikoff said Baker ran across the westbound lane of traffic on U.S. 74 to the northern shoulder of the roadway. As he crossed the roadway, Biletnikoff said he dropped a necklace. He ran back into the westbound lanes of traffic to retrieve the necklace, and was struck by Ward's vehicle.

Two other vehicles driven by Sherry Ledbetter of Ellenboro and Lindsay Black of Arden collided while trying to avoid the accident. Damages to their vehicles were \$1,500 and \$4,000 respectively.

The funeral for Baker was held Wednesday at Clover, SC Church of God.



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