

KINGS MOUNTAIN The Herald

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Christmas activities scheduled

By BEN LEDBETTER
Staff Writer

Today marks the beginning of Mountaineer Christmas in Kings Mountain with a variety of events scheduled for this weekend.

At 7 p.m., the annual Christmas tree lighting ceremony will be held at Mauney Memorial Library with the Grover Elementary School Head Start/Smart Start Choir singing Christmas carols. The tree lighting will follow the singing.

Saturday's events begin with a five kilometer race through the Central School Historic District.

Registration materials are available at the Kings Mountain branch of the Cleveland County YMCA, Kings Mountain City Hall, Kings Mountain High School, and local businesses.

Cost for the race will be \$12 in advance or \$15 on race day and includes a long sleeve t-shirt and jingle bells.

Race day registration will be held from 11:45 a.m. - 12:15 p.m. at the former Heilig Meyers building on Battleground Ave.

Awards will be given for multiple age categories including top male and female.

The Kings Mountain High

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GARY STEWART / THE HERALD
 The NC DOT uses a crane to remove a dangling overhead message board after it was hit by a tractor-trailer on I-85 North near Firestone Friday morning. The mishap backed up traffic for miles while motorists were re-routed through town.

KM Police Chief Corn to retire on January 31

By GARY STEWART
Editor of The Herald

In a surprise announcement at the end of a marathon 3-hour City Council meeting Tuesday night at City Hall, Police Chief Houston Corn announced that he will be retiring on January 31, 2002.

City Manager Jimmy Maney will begin a search for Corn's successor today, and said he hopes to be able to make an announcement on a new chief before Corn's effective retirement date.

"He's a very special person," Maney said about Corn. "Our relationship has been great and he's been a great employee. I congratulate him for 30 years of service to Kings Mountain. I've been very proud to work with such an outstanding officer."

Corn, 50, said he leaves city employ-

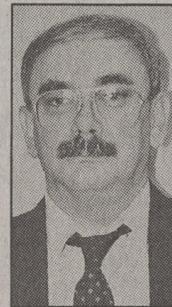
ment with mixed emotions. He joined the city's gas department shortly after graduation from Enka High School in 1970. After a two-year stint in the U.S. Army, including a year in Vietnam, he returned to Kings Mountain and took a job as a patrolman on the night shift.

He has served as police chief for 19 months and during that time the city has been able to receive numerous grants for manpower and equipment while operating out of a new state-of-the-art law enforcement center on Piedmont Avenue. The department now has 40 full-time officers and its total staff, including part-time and civilian help, is over 50.

"I think through the years I've been real fortunate," Corn said. "During the time I've been chief the city's financial situation was as good as it's been in a long time. We had good people on city council and they, the city manager and the mayor supported me in the different programs I wanted to get implemented. Without their support and the money the city had it wouldn't have been possible."

During Corn's tenure the city added a Resource Officer at Kings Mountain Middle School, two traffic officers, one COPS officer, and installed a new computer system and a new recording sys-

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HOUSTON CORN

Consolidation of KM, Shelby hospitals rumored

By BEN LEDBETTER
Staff Writer

Although Kings Mountain Hospital and Cleveland Regional Medical Center are both part of Carolinas Healthcare System in Charlotte, the two could still consolidate.

According to sources with both hospitals, any talk of consolidation is still speculation.

At its last Board of Trustees meeting Monday in Shelby, Cleveland Regional Chief Executive officer John Young said there has been no talk about any consolidation of Kings Mountain Hospital and Cleveland Regional Medical Center.

"They're going through an evaluation of strategic planning process of their own," Young said. "We haven't had any discussions about it. So we're waiting to here if they want to do it."

Competing with Gaston Memorial Hospital, which is a part of CaroMont, would be a reason for keeping Kings Mountain Hospital regardless of a consolidation, Young said.

"I think Kings Mountain is a definite reason for being," Young said. "It's a good hospital, and it's easier to compete with Gaston Memorial from Kings Mountain than it is from here. There's a lot of reasons why it ought to be there. And it will be there."

"Whether it's there working with us or in competition with us is less than clear to me until that group decides what they want to do."

Young said the discussions of consolidation stem from the Kings Mountain Hospital Trustee Council.

In September, Kings Mountain CEO Hank Neal told The Herald that many options are discussed during strategic planning.

Trustee Stella Putnam said she wanted to consider each option, but would do what is best for the city.

"My goal for Kings Mountain is for us to have the best facility for our community," Putnam said. "I feel like our hospital has made great strides in the past five years."

One of the strides Putnam has seen is an increase in doctors, and she said the hospital is an asset to the area.

"I think we take that for granted," Putnam said. "We've got to figure out what's best for

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EXTRA! EXTRA!



BEN LEDBETTER/THE HERALD
 From left, Donnese Owens, teacher's assistant and physical education teacher Kathy James answer student questions during a work session for the North Elementary newspaper last week at the school.

Use of newspaper in classroom leads to North School's own publication

By BEN LEDBETTER
Staff Writer

After participating in a Newspapers in Education program with a local newspaper, North Elementary School Teacher Kathy James decided to start one at the school.

"When we started using the newspaper the kids didn't even know how to put them back together," James said. "So then I started thinking it would be good if we started our own newspaper and it would give them a chance to develop their newspaper skills by actually putting the newspaper together."

The staff includes James, Teacher Assistant Donnese Owens, and five other teachers.

The newspaper, which is expected to be

published twice this year, has an editor and reporters from different classes at the school.

James said she asked teachers to select a student from their class, and none of the ones asked to join turned it down.

And while many newspapers strive to provide information for its readers, the one at North is no exception.

James said contents of the premiere publication ranges from class field trips, a student's motocross races, editorials, comic strips, and upcoming events in different classrooms.

She emphasized coverage by describing a particular event at the school.

"We're having Indian Heritage Week,"

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Arts Society interested in using old Depot

By GARY STEWART
Editor of The Herald

With the Kings Mountain Senior Citizens program now in its brand spanning new \$3.1 million facility on East King Street, City Council must decide what to do with the old Depot Center which housed the senior program for over 25 years.

Although the Southern Arts Society would love to have it and has pledged to maintain it without any city funding, Council had to delay the use by any group at Tuesday night's monthly meeting after Attorney Mickey Corry told them the lease agreement with Norfolk Southern must be researched.

Members of the Southern Arts Society - and representatives of two clubs endorsing them - presented a request that it be allowed to use the building as an Arts Center.

Councilman Dean Spears made a motion to allow it, but Corry said he would have to review the lease and see if Kings Mountain has that authority.

"I have begun a review of the lease agreement," Corry said. "The city has been in possession of the building since 1975 but there are a couple of restrictions in the lease that must be clarified."

One restriction, he said, indicated that the city cannot assign an occupant without the approval of the Railroad.

Another restriction indicated that the building cannot be used except for municipal purposes.

Corry said it isn't clear if the lease agreement is for the building and land, or just the land. He said there was indication in the past that the Railroad had given the building to the City.

City Manager Jimmy Maney said the building is on the Historic Register and the city must also find out for sure whether it owns the building and what repairs are needed.

"This is a landmark," Maney said. "We need to have our architect look at it. The Southern Arts Society would be great for that building but there are some questions that need to be answered."

Pat Childers, President of the Southern Arts

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