

The Herald

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 Of the Year
 6A

Blacks voice concerns to School Board

Jones not pleased with hiring practices of minority employees

By GARY STEWART
 Editor of The Herald

Dr. John Jones hinted that "legal redress" may be the only way to improve minority hiring practices in Kings Mountain Schools at Monday's Board of Education meeting at Central School.

Jones, responding to an article in last week's Herald about the number of minority employees, said he was not surprised at the low number of employees but did not agree with the System's reason that the low minority employee percentage is a "national trend." He said the percentage in Kings Mountain has been "abnormally low" and is a "phenomenon" that was created locally.

"Process produces outcome," Jones told the Board. "The hiring practice has produced this outcome. The practice here has been to hire non-minorities who are family and friends of current employees."

He said that until the School Board reviews its hiring practice "we can expect this outcome to go unchanged."

"This outcome is by design,"

he said, "and maybe can only be remedied by legal redress."

Immediately after the meeting, the Board went into closed session to discuss a student matter. Contacted Tuesday afternoon, Supt. Larry Allen said minority employment has been a concern of the School System for years, but that in filling vacancies the Board has focused on hiring the most qualified candidate.

"Our Board and previous boards have talked for a long time about trying to solicit and secure minority employees for the teaching ranks, and we've had minority employees that have applied for other jobs but weren't selected," he said. "In some cases they opted out themselves and our leadership group at the schools throughout the System have focused on getting, in their opinion, the best qualified person as the employee."

"We recognize that we need to work harder in trying to get the qualified people, and I think we'll continue to do that. But we don't look at individuals for employment at the color of their skin."



GARY STEWART / THE HERALD
 Frank Smith voices concerns at Monday night's meeting of the Kings Mountain Board of Education.

Smith says coach ripped up son's letter in front of class

By GARY STEWART
 Editor of The Herald

The father of two Kings Mountain High athletes voiced concerns about alleged racial incidents and called for the resignation of football coach Dave Farquharson at Monday night's School Board meeting at Central School.

Frank Smith said he was not representing any organization but "concerned Black parents" and was there to express concerns about what their children have seen and heard at school.

He said some staff members "discriminate openly with our kids" and pointed out instances where some Black students transferred to other schools because of it.

Speaking of what he called KM High's "Day Care Child Watch," Smith spoke of incidents where Blacks and Whites either talk, date or hold hands.

He claimed a "top administrator" called a White parent to report that her daughter "converses with Black students" but wondered "is this person also informing the Black girl's parents that their daughter is conversing with White boys? I'm

just curious."

He also disagreed with the school's decision to use the school's locker room as a storage area for girls' volleyball equipment. While he said he knew of no problems that it has caused in the past, he said there is always the possibility that a boy could be using the bathroom and a girl come walking in to get volleyball equipment.

"Why would anybody put children in a position like that?" he asked.

His most serious allegation was leveled at Coach Farquharson, who he said "tore in two" a letter that was addressed to his son Courtney in care of Coach Farquharson from N.C. State University, and threw it in the trash can in front of a class.

"Students got it out of the trash can," he said. "What right does he have to rip up my son's dreams?"

Farquharson, who was in the audience to hear a request from baseball parents that they be allowed to raise funds for a field house at Lancaster Field, did not respond. He left the

See Smith, 5A

Baseball field house proposed

By GARY STEWART
 Editor of The Herald

Businessmen and parents David Brinkley and Mike Gaffney appeared before the Kings Mountain Board of Education Monday night to ask permission to begin a fund-raising drive to build a field house for the baseball, softball and soccer programs at KMHS.

The Board did not take any action on the request but promised to talk about it during a work session on February 1.

Brinkley and Gaffney were representing a group of parents who think they can raise all the money necessary to build the facility. Plans, which could be changed, are to build a 3,280 square foot facility directly behind the third base dugout at Lancaster Field. It would be a brick facility and would include locker rooms for both male and female athletes, a breezeway, training room and public rest rooms.

Brinkley, a former KMHS coach, pointed out that the current field house is no longer adequate to provide the needs of an ever-growing athletic program. But, he said, if the baseball, soccer and softball programs had their own field house the current field house at the north end of John Gamble Stadium would be more than adequate for football and track.

He said parents of students playing "fall baseball" had been discussing the possibility of a field house for about two years. He said they have already talked to representatives of the City and feel that the only possible drawback would be a sewage system. The project may require a septic

See Baseball, 3A



GARY STEWART / THE HERALD
 Principal Jackie Lavender reads to students in the Grover School library.

Grover's Jackie Lavender KM Principal of the Year

By GARY STEWART
 Editor of The Herald

Jackie Lavender, principal of Grover Elementary School, has been named Principal of the Year for Kings Mountain District Schools for the 2001-02 school year.

Mrs. Lavender now enters competition for Region 6 Principal of the Year. Each Region winner will advance into competition for State Principal of the Year, which will be announced in May.

The award is sponsored by Wachovia Bank. Mrs. Lavender was selected by her peers in Kings Mountain District Schools. This is the second time she has won the award. She was also Principal of the Year in 1992 when she was principal of Kings Mountain High School.

Mrs. Lavender must prepare a portfolio to be judged in Regional competition. It will include such areas as work history, awards, philosophy of education, interests, ways that principals have helped improve student achievement and growth,



LAVENDER

a School of Distinction, an honor given to schools that have at least 80 percent of their students scoring at grade level or above.

"That's a real big growth for us," Mrs. Lavender said, "and we're really proud of that."

Mrs. Lavender takes pride in the success of all of her students and the Grover staff makes special effort to assure that all students are successful in the State approved-curriculum.

See Lavender, 5A

King day celebrations set in Kings Mountain

By BEN LEDBETTER
 Staff Writer

Several events honoring Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. will be happening in Cleveland County next week.

On Monday, Jan. 21 at 8 a.m., former Lenoir-Rhyne College Professor and current educational consultant Dr. Forrest Toms is scheduled to speak at Bynum Chapel Family Life Center, 213 N. Cansler St., Kings Mountain.

An observance sponsored by the city of Kings Mountain will give observers and participants another perspective on one of Dr. King's more well-known speeches.

An oratorical competition will be held on Monday, January 21 at Kings Mountain High's Barnes Auditorium from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m.

The event will feature competitors reciting the "I Have a Dream" speech that Rev. King delivered on the steps at the Lincoln Memorial in Washington, D.C. on August 28, 1963.

Judges are expected to pick five contestants from the auditions and tapes that will compete in the final competition.

Judges will award cash prizes of \$300 for first place, \$200 for second place, and third place \$100.

One of the judges, Rev. Clarence Wright of St. Paul United Methodist Church, said the oratorical contest is the first type of King Day observance that he remembers for Kings Mountain.

"It's exciting to me to listen and hear the speech," Wright said. "I'm looking forward to listening to the participants."

Points will be assigned in categories of delivery appearance, and crowd response.

But Dr. King's speech will not be the only item for the contest

attendees.

Also scheduled for the Monday contest are vocal and dance performances by Veronica Green, Shana Butler, and the Mount Zion Missionary Baptist Church Choir, Adams Chapel AME Zion Church liturgical dance team, St. Paul United Methodist Praise Dancers and Springfield Praise Dancers.

While several performance groups were scheduled, only two contestants had agreed to participate in the competition by the initial deadline of Jan. 11.

Noell said the deadline was extended in hopes of attracting more participants.

Preliminary entries were made by audition or video. One of the organizers of the event, city of Kings Mountain Special Events/Public Relations Director Ellis Noell got the idea from Mayor Pro-Tem Howard Shipp, who had knowledge of Dr. King's career.

Noell said Shipp came in contact with different people who could quote long passages of King's speech.

Although this is the first King Day observance for Kings Mountain, Noell said the event should go well.

"I'm extremely optimistic about it. I think it will be a good event," Noell said.

He said the event will be unique.

"It's something different and that's what we were looking for," Noell said.

There will also be a King Day observance in Shelby.

The Cleveland County Chapter of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People will be having its annual program at Shelby High School's Malcolm Brown Auditorium from 12 to 1 p.m. Monday, with The Rev. Carolyn

See King, 5A

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