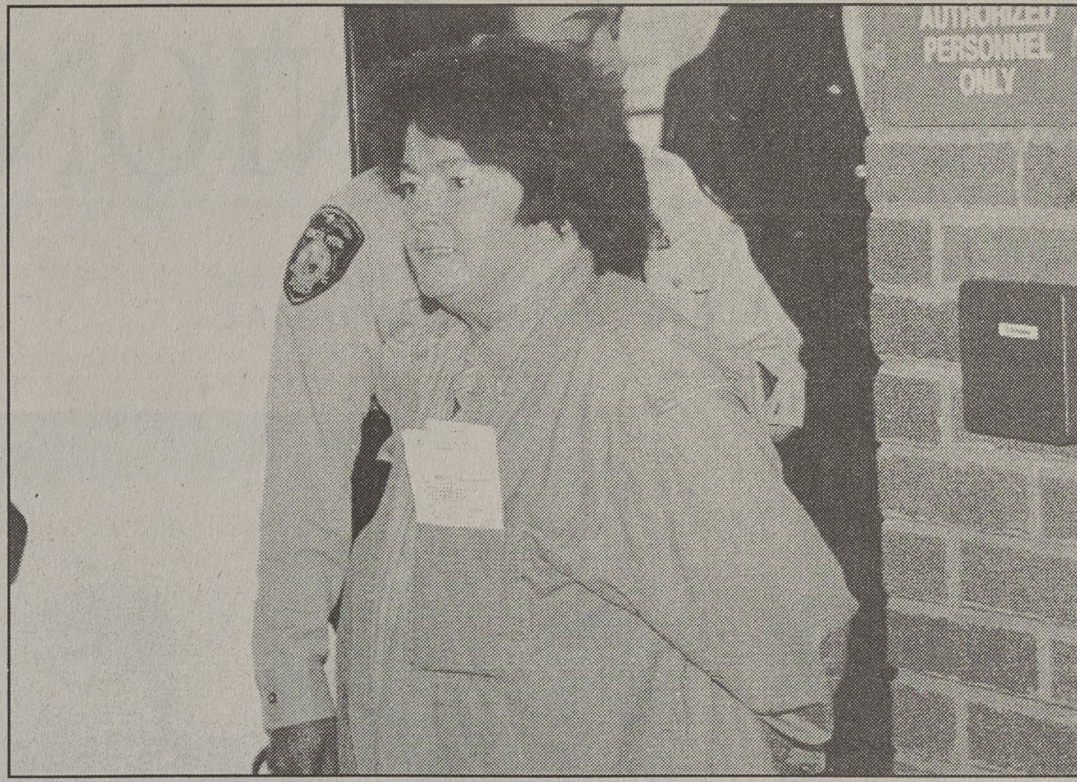


Kings Mountain police officers Ronnie Costner, left, and J.D. Buff escort Garreth Deron Thompson out of the police station to be transported to the County Detention Center following Thursday's drug bust on Grace Street.



Annette Pennington Norwood is escorted out of Kings Mountain's Law Enforcement Center to be taken to the County Detention Center after she was booked after Thursday's drug raid in Kings Mountain.

BUST

From 1A

Gaston County in '95 or '96 when I was working with the Federal ATF."

Det. Lisa Proctor said the house on Grace Street has been the site of suspected drug deals before. She said the house was raided in January but no drugs were found. However, people living in the house were later charged. She said police talked with the owners and the renter was evicted but the house rented again to someone already living there.

The house is owned by Roy Lee Huffstetler and the property is rented through Hubert Toney, both of Kings Mountain. When contacted by The Herald on Friday afternoon, Toney said he was on his way to the Cleveland County Courthouse to go through the legal channels to get the renter out.

"I was not aware that drugs were being sold there, and no one living there was charged," Toney said. "But we do have a policy concerning drugs and can take the

house back anytime."

Most of the homes in Kings Mountain being used as drug houses are rented, Chief Proctor said. He said the city has already cleaned up one drug-infested neighborhood and will eventually get them all.

"What these home owners need to do is join forces with us and help us fight this battle," he said "Rental property is a problem. If you don't manage it properly it's an attraction to the drug trade. It's the same battle we fought in the Hilltop section. Until the property owners there joined forces with us we couldn't finish the clean-up that needed to be done. But when they joined with us we effectively defeated the drug problem in Hilltop.

"The police can't do it alone," he added. "It takes the citizens. That's one of the reasons this one was as successful as it was. The people in the community over there have called and given us the information we needed. Hopefully the community will bond with us. If they do we can effectively defeat the drug problem here in Kings Mountain.

NEXT

From 1A

said. "We are united in our stand and will combine our resources as we continue our drug enforcement efforts. We will also work with the SBI, FBI, DEA and local DA's and US Attorneys offices to prosecute cases on the federal level when appropriate. Our message is strong and clear: We want to rid our community of the dealers and suppliers, and we will work relentlessly toward that goal."

Proctor said his department is noticing more crimes related to drug activity, and it's gotten to the point that it must be stopped.

"We will not tolerate drugs in Kings Mountain," he said. "From this day forward all of us will work together to run the drug dealers, suppliers and users out of Cleveland County...if it takes me dedicating officers to stand on their doorstep we'll do it."

Mayor Murphrey said the police department has the full support of City Council.

"We are sending a message to the illegal drug traffic in Kings Mountain - we will not tolerate illegal drugs in our community," Murphrey said. "We will pursue all who are involved in buying and selling of illegal drugs. We will not rest until every drug dealer is arrested. I pledge my continued support to our law enforcement and a commitment to our citizens that we will not give up until this battle is won."

Murphrey said most families are affected "in one way or another" by illegal drugs.

"We will continue to put the pressure on every day to eliminate this problem," he said.

Proctor said law enforcement officials met with District Attorney Bill Young prior to the 10-month "Operation Sleigh Ride" effort and the D.A. assured them no deals will be cut.

"They will either plead guilty to what they're charged with or go to court," Proctor

said.

"The message that I've sent is that if we didn't pick you up today your day's coming," Proctor added. "You may already have been charged - we just didn't pick you up today."

Proctor said the 10-month operation included "intelligence" but did not elaborate on whether that meant undercover officers, informants or both. But he did say the community is becoming more aware of what's going on in their neighborhoods and have been very helpful.

"We have a huge stack of complaints about drugs in Kings Mountain," he said. "People of this community are stepping up to the plate and saying 'no more.' I'm going to bond this police department with the community and when they bond with us we'll get something done."

"We've already stopped it in one community (Hilltop) but you just can't clean up Kings Mountain and push it out into the county. That's why we have to work together with the sheriff's department and other law enforcement in the county. It's going to take years to do it."

Even though it's a small town, Kings Mountain's close proximity to major highways such as I-85 and US 74 Bypass makes it enticing for drug suppliers from bigger cities such as Charlotte, Proctor said.

"Anytime you're located along an interstate you have problems," he said. "They're the corridors for drug traffic. Any town that thinks they don't have a drug problem is either badly mistaken or they're just turning their head. We know we've got a problem. The first thing you have to do is acknowledge that you have a problem, and then address it."

Many of the persons arrested Thursday are repeat offenders, Proctor noted. The extent of their criminal history may determine whether or not they spend time in jail, if convicted.

"But we're going for the maximum," he said. "It's a solid case."

McSWAIN

From 1A

September 11, 1941 until December 13, 1945. His amphibious outfit had orders for overseas but he was sent to Camp Wheeler, Ga. to train MPs and then got out of service when Japan was bombed. When they married Jan. 7, 1941, Maude was working in the office at the old Margrace Mill and Gene was working for Joe Lee Woodward at Margrace Store and his salary was \$15 a week.

Gene didn't return to school for his degree. He said he "figured after my MP experience I had enough education."

But he got in the "movie" business at the old Joy Theater where he was associated with the late Cash brothers, Charlie and David, and remained in the industry for 29 years.

"I got a job tearing down the old Mountain View Hotel and then helped the Cashes build the Joy," said Gene, recalling that he rolled concrete in wheelbarrows and the construction was of solid concrete. After the theater chain was sold to Stewart/Everett, Gene managed three theaters in Belmont and one theater in Cramerton before getting out of the business.

In those good ole days of the Joy and Dixie Theaters, a youngster under 12 years of age got a ticket for 11 cents and spent just pennies for popcorn and all the eats, a far cry from today's prices. Over age 12, the ticket was 35 cents.

Gene was manager at The Joy for 17 years. He worked the ticket booth, sometimes with the help of his wife, and cleaned up chewing gum from the backs of seats and on floors and cautioned kids about kicking the backs of seats.

After 29 years in show business, he said he saw all the movies he has ever wanted to watch. Charlie Cash preferred westerns with Sundance Kid and Hopalong Cassidy and David Cash wanted to try out every new flick on the market. Andy Jenkins was one of the popular projectionists during this era. This was also a time in history when the movie house was crowded. The Blacks sat together in the balcony and the White population sat together in the downstairs area.

In recent years, McSwain was a sworn officer with the Kings Mountain Police Department and worked patrol at city owned Moss Lake. He retired after 10 years and some of his favorite relaxing times were with Ken Davis hunting birds and fishing. Davis and McSwain are still good buddies.

Born near Blacksburg, SC and reared in the Bethlehem section of Kings Mountain, McSwain is the son of the late John Spurgeon and Margaret Eugenia Little

McSwain. He has two sisters, Jeanette Jenson of Virginia Beach, Va. and Juanita Goforth of Kings Mountain. He is a member of Bethlehem Baptist Church. Reared on a milk dairy farm owned by his father, Gene kept the farm for 31 years after his father died. The McSwain farmland is now Bethlehem Estates and the homes of many residents. Several of the streets are named in honor of his parents, including Spurgeon Street, Gene Court, and Margaret Little Street. The McSwains bought their present home from Orey Rhea in 1946.

Maude, only child of Elizabeth Rhea and Charles E. Dengler, was reared in a house behind Central School. She recalled that her house was at the school back door and her neighbors were her grandparents, Nora and Tim Hardin, Granny Hayes and Alice Jenkins. For 28 years she was bookkeeper at Phifer Hardware and also filled in from time to time as cashier at The Joy. She is a member of First Presbyterian Church. Maude gets good-natured ribbing from her husband that she was a "little spook," since her birthday falls on October 31. Gene's birthday is October 5.

During his wife's illness, Gene writes checks to pay the family bills and the family's good friend, who they consider a member of their extended family, helps out every day with the household duties. Bill Hefner and his wife, Kathy, became good friends of the McSwains when they operated a car lot near the McSwain 150-year-old two story house off Shelby Road. Bill walks Mickey, the five year old miniature German Schnauzer and is helping Gene out in the kitchen and with other duties.

"Bill is our best friend," said Gene McSwain. Hefner, who has become disabled and has moved to Clover, SC, says he is honored to be of help and plans to be with Gene when he faces surgery. In the meantime, Bill is looking for a caregiver for Mrs. McSwain while he is away from the house.

Bouts with a ruptured colon and arthritis have been health challenges for Mrs. McSwain for some time Gene McSwain is diabetic and underwent heart surgery in 1988.

"But we're hanging in and are looking for better days ahead," smiled Gene, keeping on eye on his wife as he chatted about their upcoming wedding anniversary. Their loving relationship is evident in their closeness also with their beloved pet who has the run of the house and lets everyone know that he's around.

Kings Mountain has changed a lot since the heyday of the Joy. But does Gene want a return to some of those good ole days? Not on your life. He, like so many in the dark during the recent ice storm and power shortage, had difficulty finding old lamps thought stored forever.

WEATHER

From 1A

Kings Mountain has also begun to plan for future growth and economic development within the city, just in case a severe drought occurs again. The city is beginning to look at Muddy Fork as possibly another water source for the city, said Murphrey.

The recent ice storm was one of the worst storms in Kings Mountain history, said Murphrey. For the second time in Kings Mountain history, FEMA [Federal Emergency Management Agency] declared a state of emergency in the county. The first time, of course, was during Hurricane Hugo.

While Hugo was bad, the ice storm brought the first total power outage from both substations of Duke Power ever. Kings Mountain was declared a federal disaster area, with approximately \$450,000 worth of damages. City officials are planning to meet with FEMA about reclaiming most of that

money, said Murphrey.

The city woke up with out power on the morning of Thursday, December 5. While many residents regained power by the following day, others did not get their power back until Monday, December 9.

The debris from the storm will become approximately 400 tons of mulch, said public works director Jackie Barnette. A tub grinder had to be brought in to grind it up last week. Free mulch is available to the public, said Barnette.

Except for the power loss and the debris, the storm caused few major problems. Only a handful of car accidents occurred due to the ice. Only one case of breaking and entering occurred, and it was to a car, not a business. Most citizens helped each other in whatever way they could.

With the appearance of a winter storm so early in the season, more could be on the way. Murphrey said the city is already preparing for the next storm by establishing an emergency shelter for citizens and a larger command center.

SHORTFALL

From 1A

last couple of years, that withholding has reached \$900,000, a significant amount of money, even to financially strong cities like Kings Mountain.

"The city was able to cover most of the shortfall with our strong fund balances," said Murphrey.

Murphrey also said that the city has started receiving part of the \$600,000 held from the utility franchise tax. The city will see payments on the \$600,000 at the end of each quarter and has, in fact, already received one payment, said Murphrey.

In spite of the potentially dangerous situation caused by the revenue shortfalls, the city fared very well in its audit.

"The city received a perfect audit with our strong balance of funds," said Murphrey. "We were able to make up for their shortfall."

CHARGES

From 1A

Archie's bond was set at \$250,000 secure.

According to Shores, Archie has a prior criminal record dating back to 1992 on convictions of one count of trafficking in cocaine, two counts of sell and delivery of cocaine, and one count of possession with intent to sell and deliver cocaine.

HERALD DEADLINES

The Herald will publish a day early next week because of the New Year's holiday.

All Lifestyles, church, club and community news is due by 12 noon Friday.

All A section news such as city and county news, opinions and sports is due by 12 noon Monday.

The Herald will resume its regular printing schedule on Thursday, Jan. 9.

KINGS MOUNTAIN

The Herald

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