

KINGS MOUNTAIN The Herald

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Board discusses merger, class size

BY ANDIE L. BRYMER
Staff Writer

An East Elementary kindergarten classroom is exceeding state size limits. Kings Mountain District Schools board members looked at the issue during their Monday night meeting.

There are 49 students enrolled in East Elementary's two kindergarten classrooms. This means one class has 24 students and another has 25 students. State standards limit kindergartens to 24 students.

"We're not going to have classes oversized," Superintendent Larry Allen said during the meeting.

Allen said the problem could be alleviated either by moving a student to another school or by shifting teachers around within the school.

Classroom numbers are not considered official until 10 days into the start of school.

In other business, school board members pledged to continue the fight to keep Kings Mountain District Schools from merging with Cleveland County.

Last week, a state appeals court ruled against Kings Mountain. That decision becomes official Aug. 25.

School attorneys will file an appeal of that decision to the state Supreme Court Aug. 26. Department of Justice and legislative intervention are two other options.

Board member Stella Putnam criticized the court's decision.

"I'm real disappointed in the court system. It's never been about the children," she said.

Other board members shared similar sentiments.

Terry McClain questioned if judges were afraid to rule against the state.

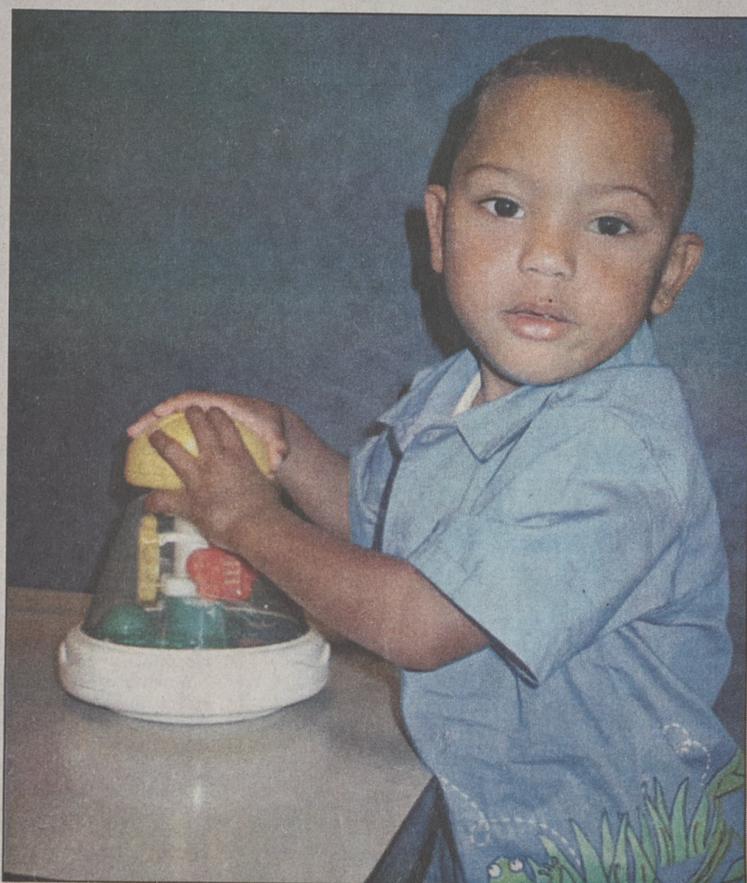
"It's hard to understand," McClain said.

"Bigger is not always better. I've never seen it would benefit our schools," said board member Michael Smith.

The school board approved four children to

See Board, 3A

SCHOOL DAYS



ANDIE BRYMER / HERALD
Emory "Nunu" Wingate enjoys playing during Smart Start library orientation on the first day of school Monday.

Except for traffic, opening went well

BY ANDIE BRYMER
Staff Writer

School officials say Monday's first day of school went well despite traffic congestion around the campuses.

In kindergarten classrooms across Kings Mountain many students got their first taste of education.

The crayons came out at East Elementary after students in Melinda Canniff's kindergarten classroom heard the story "The Little Engine That Could." They colored pictures of a train engine as lunch time approached.

As Bayne Sprouse colored, he declared his first day "good." His teacher made sure Bayne and classmates had sweet memories of their first classroom experience.

"We have candy in our cubbie and we get to take it home," Bayne explained.

The kindergartner with a sweet tooth said he had made a new friend but could not yet remember the new pal's name.

For Micayla West meeting the class pet, See Opening, 3A

Library helps children get off to a good start

BY ANDIE L. BRYMER
Staff Writer

As children's librarian Christy Conner showed parents a room full of toys, games, video and books, one joked that it was like being in Wal-Mart. While the variety of educational supplies available for check out may be greater than the department store, the price is always less. Everything can be borrowed for free.

The parents were participating in Smart Start orientation Monday afternoon. The state funded preschool program for children ages three and four attempts to make literacy a part of their lives.

"We are immersing the children in language. What better place do you find language than the library," said Karen Lineberger, a pre-school inclusion

See Library, 3A

KM Council votes down 4-year term

BY ANDIE L. BRYMER
Staff Writer

Kings Mountain officials will continue to serve two year terms. That comes after a proposal to extend terms from two to four years was defeated.

Votes were cast in a special called meeting of City Council Tuesday night at City Hall. Councilman Howard Shipp made the motion and councilman Rick Moore seconded it.

Shipp and Moore cast the only votes for the measure.

Shipp favored the measure because it would eliminate the possibility that an entirely new council and mayor could be voted in at one time.

Shipp said in earlier interviews that it takes council members four years to become proficient at their jobs.

Council members Clavon Kelly, Dean Spears, Carl DeVane and Gene White voted against the measure.

Had the measure passed the council, it would have appeared on the ballot during the November 4 general election. The measure also would have called for staggered terms for council members.

White was the only council member to make remarks on the matter during the meeting. He said two year terms help insure accountability.

White also said that two year terms were the wish of the electorate. Term limits were switched from four years to two years following a 1995 referendum.

"The voters have already spoken," he said.

That vote came after White circulated a petition requiring the matter be placed before the citizens. White was not yet serving on the city council at that time.

White secured more than the 10 percent of required signatures. The measure passed 485 to 340. Eighteen percent of the city's 4,500 registered voters turned out for the referendum.

White pushed for the two

See Council, 3A

Jim Guyton withdraws from race

BY ANDIE L. BRYMER
Staff Writer

Kings Mountain City Councilman Jim Guyton has withdrawn his name as a candidate in the upcoming election. Fellow council members and officials are praising Guyton's work on the council.

Guyton, who will finish out his term, is opting not to run again due to health problems. He told the Herald last week that he made the decision after talking with his family.

"At this time we felt like it wouldn't be best," he said of running again.

Guyton said it was not an easy decision to make. Councilman Dean Spears praised Guyton's dedication to the people he represents.

"He's really concerned about the people in his ward," Spears said.

Spears said Guyton on occasion had paid the water bills of Ward 2 residents when those bills were the result of a leak.

Guyton also took time to investigate citizen complaints, Spears said.

Council member Carl DeVane said he admired Guyton's forthrightness.

"You always knew where he stands. We might not always agree but I respect him," DeVane said. "He's a great guy."

According to DeVane, Guyton was especially good at handling utility matters. Guyton worked in that field prior to retirement.

Councilman Rick Moore served on the utilities committee with Guyton.

"With me being a newcomer, Jim has taught me a lot of things," Moore said. "He has been a pleasure to work with."

Mayor Rick Murphrey has worked with Guyton for several years, first as a council member and then as mayor. Murphrey describes

See Jim, 3A

Patriotic banner returns from Iraq

By ANDIE BRYMER
Staff Writer

Months ago U.S. Marines stationed in Iraq received a patriotic banner signed by the people of Kings Mountain. Last week, that banner arrived back in town with words of gratitude from these same marines.

Over 100 marines signed the back of the banner.

"You're the best. You make us proud to serve our country," wrote LCPL Baloassano.

"Thank you for your blessings," LCPL Pino wrote.

Many of the marines used

nicknames like Genghis Khan, Snarf, Fats and Poundcake.

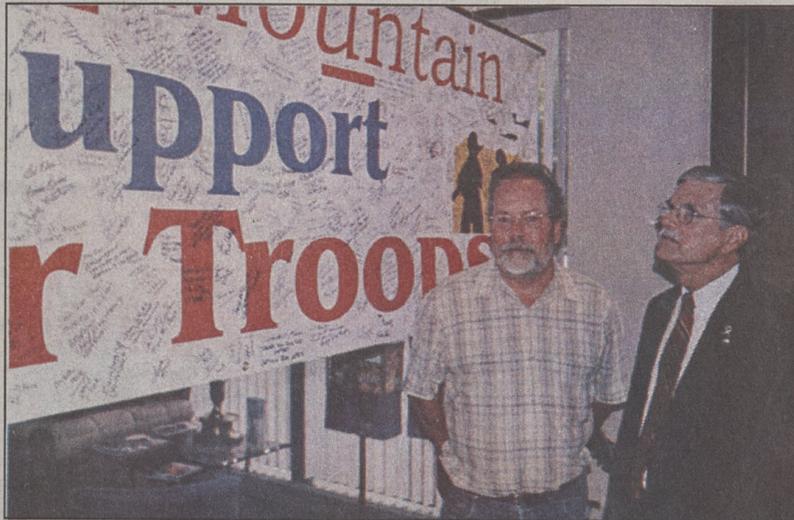
The front of the banner reads "Kings Mountain Supports Our Troops." Local residents signed the banner March 29 during a community rally.

Mayor Rick Murphrey organized the rally after hearing about protest against U.S. involvement in Iraq.

"It's our responsibility to support our troops," he said.

The banner will be on display at city hall for one month. After that it will be

See Banner, 3A



ANDIE BRYMER / HERALD
Mayor Rick Murphrey, right, and Ellis Noell look over signatures on banner that soldiers in Iraq returned to the City of Kings Mountain last week.

City seeks grants for Gateway

BY ANDIE L. BRYMER
Staff Writer

When the Gateway Project is complete, hikers will be able to walk from Kings Mountain state and national parks to City and Davidson lakes and into town.

The project is nearing the end of the planning stage, according to Kings Mountain Mayor Rick Murphrey. City officials are now seeking grants to fund implementation.

Passive recreation like

See Grants, 3A



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