

KINGS MOUNTAIN The Herald

Thursday, December 18, 2003

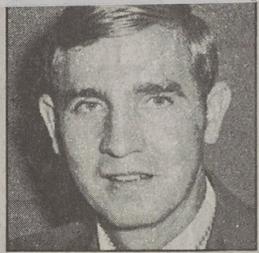
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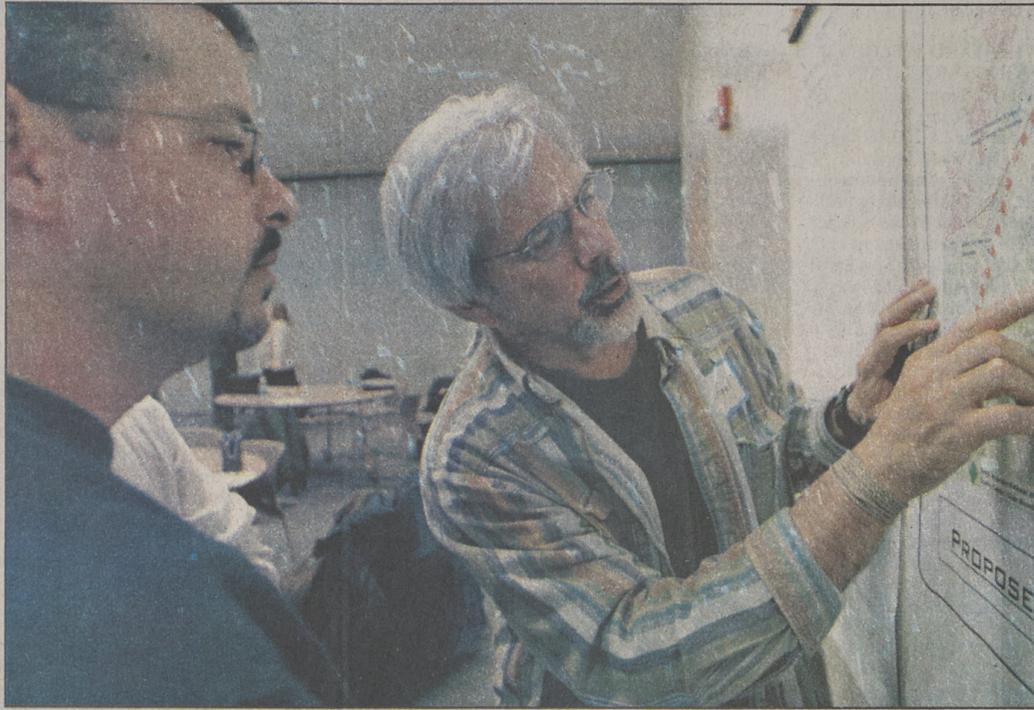
50 Cents

Bobby Hussey
getting involved
in basketball
again

7A



GATEWAY PROJECT



Michael Eldridge, right, and Dennis Cole look over the map of the proposed gateway trail at Thursday's meeting at the Patrick Center. Below, Chris Revels of the National Park Service listens to the presentation.

Trails would begin at cabin

BY ANDIE L. BRYMER
Staff Writer

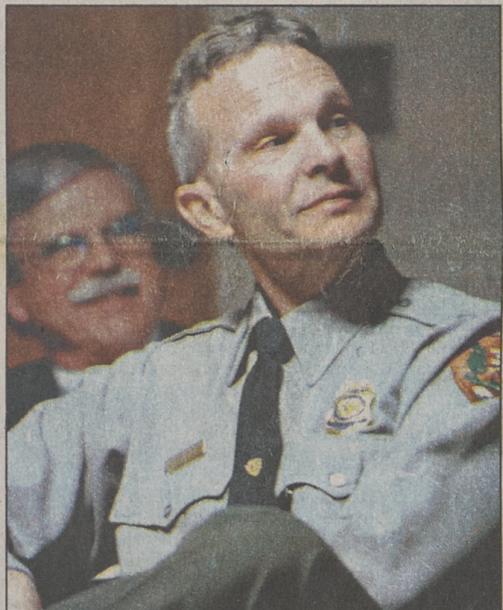
Taking a hike from downtown Kings Mountain to nearby Crowders or Kings Mountain parks may become easier than it sounds. A trail system connecting all four is on the drawing board.

National and state park officials met with local government and residents Thursday night at the Patrick Senior Center to talk about the proposed Gateway Trails.

The three proposed trails would begin at the Barber Cabin located behind the Kings Mountain Historical Museum. The National Park Service has designated the City of Kings Mountain a "Gateway community." This nationwide program links parks with nearby towns for tourism purposes.

The eastern trail would go through Canterbury and end up at the Crowders Mountain State Park visitor's center.

See Trails, 3A



JOSEPH BRYMER / HERALD

Alcohol vote taken off KM Council agenda

BY ANDIE L. BRYMER
Staff Writer

A controversial vote on allowing alcohol at city owned properties was taken off Kings Mountain City Council's Tuesday agenda apparently due to an outcry from area churches.

Council member Carl DeVane issued a press release Monday which read, "Due to the withdraw of a commitment by an outgoing council member and erroneous information distributed, I am requesting that the mayor remove Item 17 as stated above from the Dec. 16, 2003 city council agenda."

DeVane would not say who the outgoing council member. The four outgoing council members are Gene White, Dean Spears, Jim Guyton and Clavon Kelly.

Kelly, White and Guyton have consistently spoken out against alcohol. Kelly went on record to say it was not him. White was the first council member to publicly oppose the item.

Guyton declined to comment citing issues with the media.

See Alcohol, 3A

New council takes office, DeVane named mayor pro-tem

BY ANDIE L. BRYMER
Staff Writer

Council member Carl DeVane was narrowly elected mayor pro-tem during Tuesday night's Kings Mountain City Council meeting, defeating Jerry Mullinax by one vote.

Council members Howard Shipp, Rick Moore and Houston Corn voted for DeVane. Brenda Ross and Kay Hambricht voted for Mullinax.

Before the new council members were sworn, the outgoing council voted on several matters.

They approved a \$17,000 contract for architects Stewart, Cooper and Newell to draw plans for improvements at Patriot's Park. The vote was originally bundled with other matters on the consent agenda but council member Jim Guyton had it removed.

See Council, 3A

KM board approves Testa poker permit

BY ANDIE L. BRYMER
Staff Writer

Kings Mountain Board of Adjustment members approved a conditional use permit Monday afternoon allowing Jim Testa to operate three video poker machines, however, that decision was criticized by Don Johnson who also owns video poker machines.

Johnson accused the board of making a "special exemption" for Testa because he plans to develop an industrial park and build a motel on property along I-85 and Dixon School Road.

Johnson called the adjustment board "the most discriminatory group of people I have ever witnessed in my life."

City planner Steve Killian spoke up defending the board as "consistent and

fair."

Board chairman Bob Myers said Johnson was "entitled to his opinion but we try to be unbiased in all decisions we make."

Board member Clavon Kelly said if applicants meet requirements they cannot be turned down.

The board approved a conditional use permit Nov. 13 allowing Johnson to continue operating video poker machines at the Silver Express shopping center. However, the city has sought civil penalties from Johnson and permanent injunctions against poker machines at seven other businesses he owns.

Johnson said legal fees have put his company in a financial bind.

City attorney Mickey Corry updated city council

See Testa, 3A

Gaston would send students to 2 schools

BY ANDIE L. BRYMER
Staff Writer

If Kings Mountain District Schools are forced to merge with Cleveland County Schools, around 180 current Kings Mountain students will be considered Gaston County Schools students. However, those students may get to remain in their current schools.

These students live in Gaston County but also inside the Kings Mountain city limits.

The Gaston school board voted Monday night to assign the elementary students, around 100 pupils, to its Bessemer City and Chapel Grove districts if merger does occur. The students would be split with 50 going to each school.

George Litton, a current Cleveland County Board of Education member who will chair an interim merged board, said he believes those students should be allowed to stay at their current schools. Litton said he was not

speaking on behalf of the entire board.

"It's my personal feeling if and when merger occurs we welcome those students to go to the schools they are attending," Litton said.

He said Cleveland County Schools has always had a liberal transfer policy. Before Cleveland could make any decisions those students would first have to be released by Gaston County Schools.

When Cleveland approves an out of

See Gaston, 3A

7th annual luminary display Christmas Eve at cemetery

By GARY STEWART
Editor of The Herald

For the seventh straight year, luminaries will light up Mountain Rest Cemetery from 6-12 p.m. Christmas Eve.

"It's becoming quite a tradition," says Jim Belt, who along with his wife, Brenda, began the event in 1997 to honor deceased friends and relatives.

The event has grown from 40 luminaries that year to over 6,000 the past several years. Luminaries will light part of King Street to the entrance of the cemetery, as well as the route and approximately 5,000 graves.

There will also be several writings on the hills of the cemetery, such as the Star of David and "A Child is Born."

Belt is looking for over 60 volunteers to

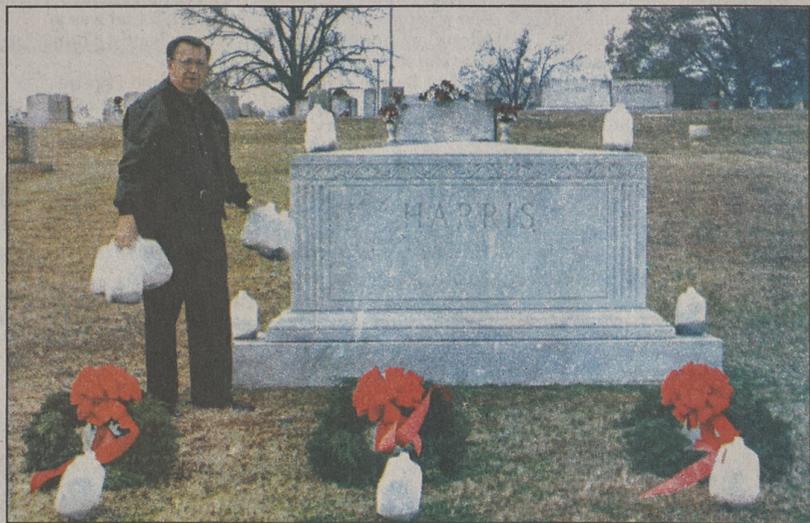
help light jugs beginning at 2:30 p.m. and stay during the night to keep them burning.

Persons wishing to place lights on their loved one's graves should go by the cemetery and do it themselves. Belt said volunteers place the milk jugs on as many graves as they can, but they cannot take the time to look for specific grave markers.

"Everything will be furnished, such as bags, candles and lighters," he said. "But we do need to stress that people take it upon themselves to place jugs on their loved ones' graves. We will be glad to light them."

Approximately 10,000 people saw last year's display, and Belt hopes that number will increase to 15,000 this year. For the first time there will be a street counter to accurately count the number of cars coming through.

See Luminary, 3A



Jim Belt puts out milk jugs for Christmas Eve luminary display at Mountain Rest Cemetery.

GARY STEWART / HERALD



FIRST NATIONAL BANK
Celebrating 129 Years

Kings Mountain
300 W. Mountain St.
704-739-4782

Gastonia
529 New Hope Road
704-865-1233

Shelby
106 S Lafayette St.
704-484-6200

Bessemer City
225 Gastonia Hwy.
704-629-3906