

The Herald

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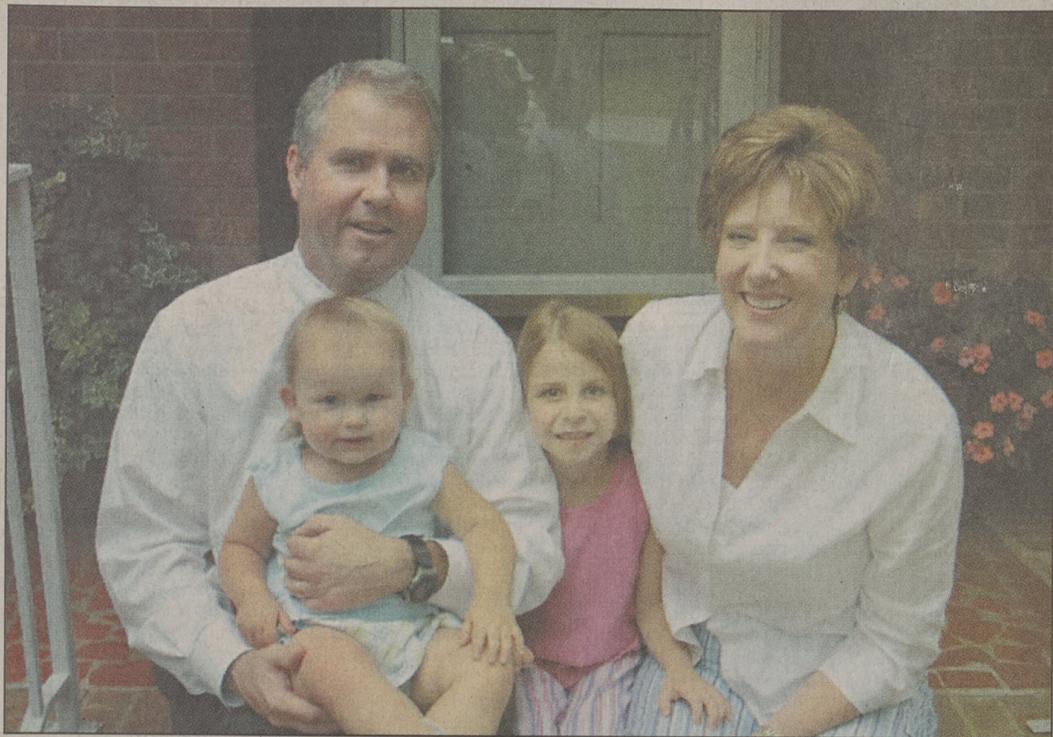
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From Russia with love



ANDIE BRYMER / HERALD
 Greg and Karen McGinnis and their daughters Emma, left, and Lyndsay. Both girls were adopted from Russian orphanages.

New city manager and wife adopt two girls from Russia

BY ANDIE L. BRYMER
 Staff Writer

In the mid-1980s, as a U.S. soldier Greg McGinnis guarded the border between a Germany divided by the fight between Communism and Democracy. In 1999, he stood in Red Square holding the Russian infant he and his wife Karen had just adopted. "God's really got a sense of humor," McGinnis said. In April 1998, after years of infertility treatments, the couple faced in vitro fertilization, however the cost and 40 percent success rate made the procedure unappealing. They were

told a domestic adoption could take four years. Demand was so high and supply low that some agencies had even curtailed waiting lists. Then, Greg McGinnis picked up the Charlotte Observer to find a headline reading "Russian Adoption Done Right." He read the story and learned Catholic Social Services was holding an information meeting that night. The couple went to the meeting and, according to Karen McGinnis, "we knew immediately that's what we wanted to do." The two were fingerprinted and went through FBI and INS background checks. A social

worker visited several times. Photos of their home were sent to Russian authorities. In February of the following year they received a video of three female infants. The couple was told to pick one. Karen McGinnis asked herself "how do I choose?" but as soon as they saw the video, they agreed on one bright-eyed little girl. At three months Lindsay Daria was holding her head up. The couple took this to mean she was determined. The other two babies were not as responsive. They later learned that their daughter had received a lot of love
See Adopt, 5A

KM council sets public hearing for incentive request for new industry

BY ANDIE L. BRYMER
 Staff Writer

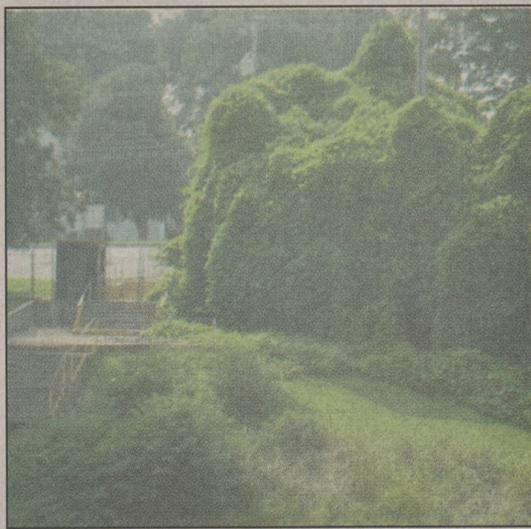
Southeastern Container Corporation may be coming to Kings Mountain. During a Tuesday night city council meeting, council members unanimously approved a Sept. 13 public hearing on a \$300,000 incentive for the company. The incentive would be spread over five years. "Hopefully we'll pass that. I know we will," said Mayor Rick Murphrey. The company will generate 79 jobs. Murphrey called those "high paying" but would not give salary specifics. Nor would he give any information on whether the company would build a new facility or occupy an existing one, though he did say Southeastern Container will make a \$26 million investment. Murphrey credited both state and local economic development officials for recruiting the company. During the public comment portion, four people asked the city to advocate that all of Kings Mountain's students be included in the newly merged Cleveland County Schools. Before the merger, students living in the Gaston County portion of the city attended the former city school district. Now they must pay \$1,414 in tuition to attend. Parent Nicole Sellers challenged the board to do more. "I haven't seen a one of you march beside us," she said, referring to Murphrey's promise last month to do so. Officials defended themselves, saying council members Houston Corn, Carl DeVane, Kay Hambricht

and Howard Shipp attended a Cleveland County Commission meeting in support of the students. DeVane addressed that board. Other council members said they had conflicting schedules and Murphrey said his wife was ill. Sellers also held up several newspaper articles about a new sewer lift station, beach blast, national night out and industrial incentives. "A lot of waste is going on that could go to keeping the children in the schools here," she said. Sellers told the council that there had been talk that Michael Smith was alone in the fight to keep the city students in one system but the group had elected him as their spokesperson. Sellers said she and some of her neighbors had moved to this area because of East Elementary's excellent reputation. Now that school was not an option for the ones who cannot pay the \$1,414 tuition. "If we cannot get this resolved you should enjoy your last days in office because you will not be back," she said. Smith, Ella Leach and Jonathan Merrill also spoke. The city cannot legally give funding to schools, according to Murphrey. Council heard an update on the swimming pool fence issue from Attorney Mickey Corry and Codes Director Holly Black. They described a complaint driven plan which would give neighbors the right to ask for the city to investigate pools without fences. If the pool was determined to be a public threat to safety the owner would
See Council, 3A

Woman says kudzu coming from stadium needs cleaning up

BY ANDIE L. BRYMER
 Staff Writer

A Kings Mountain grandmother has gotten tangled up in a fight against kudzu. Faye Bennett says the vine is growing into her son's backyard from two directions - City Stadium and from a neighboring home. Bennett says the vine coming from the neighbor originated in City Stadium. Bennett, who lives across Gaston Street from her grandson John Bennett, would like the city to take care of the problem she says causes rats, snakes and opossums. "The only thing we want is to have the place cleaned up," Bennett said Friday. According to Building and Codes Enforcement Director Holly Black, the city has not trimmed kudzu in the wooded area at City Park because of erosion. "We normally would not clear a drainage area," she said. The city did trim undergrowth a few years ago to abate
See Kudzu, 5A



ANDIE L. BRYMER/HERALD
 Kudzu climbs a fence and extends onto steps at City Stadium. The fast growing vine has at least one neighbor upset.

Schools tobacco ban may be studied in work session

BY ANDIE L. BRYMER
 Staff Writer

The Cleveland County School Board will most likely discuss a tobacco ban during a Sept. 27 policy work session. If a total tobacco ban passes it would go as far as prohibiting spectators from using tobacco during sporting events. "Every school hires security. I would imagine if it's a rule, it would be enforced," said Chairman Dr. George Litton. Of the state's 115 school systems, 40 have completely banned tobacco. Lincoln County Schools prohibit students from smoking. On-duty employees may smoke outdoors if they are not visible by students. That school board is currently studying its policy. Gaston County Schools enacted a 100 percent tobacco ban in January. At the start of a recent football game in Gaston, the ban was announced. Potential violators were warned police would escort them out if they used tobacco. Litton doesn't imagine Cleveland would have problems enforcing a ban.

"I think most people will go along with whatever rule is there," he said. "It's a school. We are trying to set a good example." Despite a ban on students by the former Kings Mountain District Schools, some coaches have used smokeless tobacco. "That was a no-no in our system," Litton said referring to the former Cleveland County Schools. Coaches had to be out of sight of students to use tobacco products. Students were completely banned from using tobacco. School staff who "absolutely failed" to follow the ban, if it passes, could be considered insubordinate, Litton said. Discipline would start with the principal. According to Litton, state law charges school boards with setting policy. The superintendent can put rules and regulations with the policy. Use or possession of tobacco products by students while at school, on any school-owned or managed property or while supervised by school personnel is considered a cate-
See Tobacco, 7A

Wayne King at GOP convention

BY ANDIE L. BRYMER
 Staff Writer

As he stood in line leaving ABC Studios and whizzed down the city streets in a cab, delegate Wayne King gave an update via cell phone on this week's Republican National Convention in New York. King summed up his first four days in the Big Apple in two words - "it's great." So far King has talked with Karl Rove, President George Bush's senior political advisor, and New York's Governor George Pataki. Rove told King he had driven through Kings Mountain while on U.S. 74. "He (Pataki) was very interested in people from smaller towns being in bigger

towns," King said. On Sunday night the North Carolina delegation joined with New Jersey and Pennsylvania to see "Fiddler on the Roof." During a Monday breakfast the state delegation heard Virginia Senator George Allen, head of a GOP committee to elect more Republican senators, talk about North Carolina candidate Richard Burr. Monday afternoon King talked with Charlotte Mayor Pat McCrory during a visit to the Bronx Zoo. AT&T sponsored the event for North Carolina and Georgia delegates. Senator Joe McCain and former New York Mayor Rudy Guillianio spoke Monday night.
See King, 5A



WAYNE KING