

SCHOOLS



ANDIE L. BRYMER/HERALD
 Steven Byrd, center, casts his vote Friday in Kings Mountain Intermediate School's mock presidential election. President George Bush won re-election by a landslide.

Bush wins mock election in Kings Mountain schools

BY ANDIE L. BRYMER
 Staff Writer

President George Bush won the youth vote in Kings Mountain. Teachers at Kings Mountain's intermediate, middle and high schools held mock elections to give students a hands on civics lesson.

At the intermediate school, Bush garnered 250 votes and Senator John Kerry, 61. Homeland security was the main issue for students with health care a moderate concern and the environment the lowest rated issue, according to teacher Linda Frye.

Student Steven Byrd wasn't impressed with either candidate. He said Kerry keeps switching his opinion and Bush wants to continue the war in Iraq despite no weapons of mass destruction being found there.

Xavier Jarrett was similarly frustrated. "Bush and Kerry aren't explaining themselves enough," he said.

Hector Casey threw his support behind third party candidate Ralph Nader citing his support of environmental issues and fire alarms.

Almost all the students in Frye's classroom say they'll vote for real when they turn 18-years-old. Before the mock election, most students admitted they had little interest in the political process. According to Frye, the students tend to support the same candidates as their parents.

Former Kings Mountain Mayor Scott Neisler visited the class to talk about the electoral college. Students used their lap top computers for that civics lesson. Current Mayor Rick Murphrey brought sample ballots for the students.

At Kings Mountain High School, 772 of the 1,311 students voted with Bush at 60 percent; Kerry, 34 percent and Libertarian Michael Badnarick, three percent. Another

three percent of ballots were improperly marked.

The big issues for Kami McKay's social studies' students are the war in Iraq, abortion, the economy and healthcare costs.

"They have really firm beliefs one way or the other," she said.

The issues are hitting home, according to McKay. Some of the students' brothers and sisters are in Iraq. Minimum wage laws affect teens who work. Healthcare costs affect some students' grandparents.

Tenth graders Kyra Alexander and Kinsley Mashburn support Bush.

Mashburn liked what she described as his firm stand on the issues. Bush's opposition to abortion impressed Alexander.

"He's just a really great president," she said.

Jennai Pettis disagreed.

She believes the Constitution grants women the right to an abortion. Pettis believes gay marriage should be up to the individual.

"That's giving people freedom. That's what America is all about," she said.

Pettis charged Bush with starting the war in Iraq to avenge his father and to secure oil.

Students conducted exit polls, looking at how data stacked up by grade and ethnicity. They were also required to campaign for both the Democrat and Republican candidates. McKay said that helps students understand both sides of the issues.

Kings Mountain Middle School participated in Channel One's nationwide One Vote 2004 October 19 and 20. Bush received 393 electoral votes and Kerry, 145. In the school's paper ballot election Bush received 69 percent of the popular vote and Kerry, 31 percent, according to Julie Y. Rikard, media coordinator.

Rhyne named Who's Who

Kings Mountain High School teacher Randy Rhyne has been included in the eighth edition of "Who's Who Among America's Teachers." Rhyne teaches physics, physical science and chemistry.

Rhyne was nominated by former student Wesley Griffin who now attends Duke University.

Rhyne graduated from

UNC-Chapel Hill. He has taught for 27 years, 24 in Kings Mountain.

Rhyne is married to Vickie Loftin Rhyne. The couple have three children, Mandy Rhyne, Justin Rhyne and Chip Boyd. Rhyne's parents are Roy and Nancy Rhyne of Bessemer city. His in-laws are Major and Dessie Loftin of Kings Mountain.

"Who's Who" selects five

percent of our nation's teachers. Only high school and college students who have been cited for academic excellence themselves in "Who's Who Among American High School Students" and "The National Dean's List" are invited to nominate one teacher from their entire academic career.

Science bus teaches students DNA testing

BY ANDIE L. BRYMER
 Staff Writer

They had one drop of blood from the crime scene. Using DNA testing, it revealed which of two suspects was guilty.

This scene wasn't played out on television or inside an SBI crime lab. It was part of a lesson aboard UNC-Chapel Hill's Traveling Science Learning Program.

The 40-foot bus visited Kings Mountain High School Tuesday.

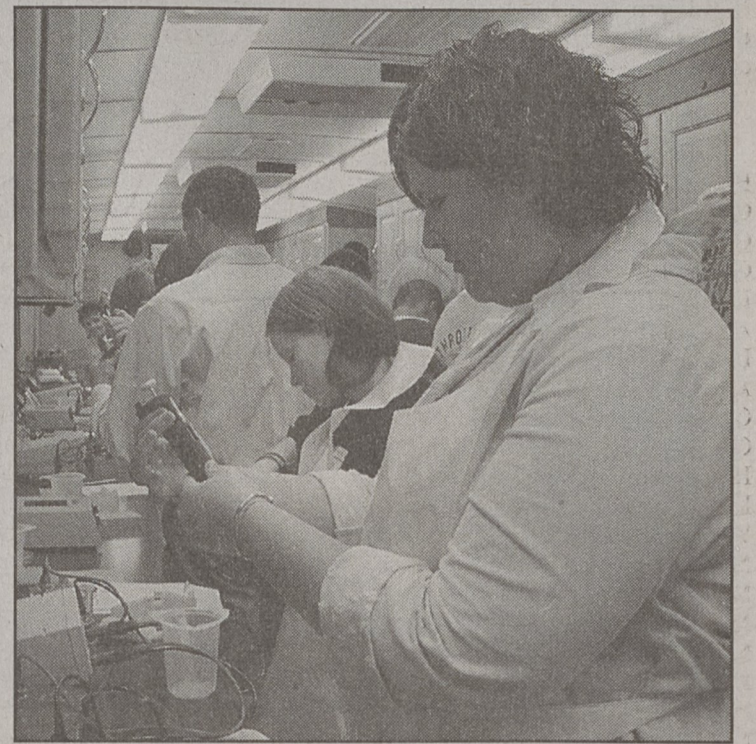
"I've never seen anything like it. It's unique," said sophomore Tim Collins. Over his tee-shirt and jeans, Collins wore goggles and a plastic, disposable apron and gloves.

Teacher Hank Neal learned of the bus at a biotechnology workshop. The program provided classroom materials for use the day before the bus arrived on campus. Neal also attended a half-day workshop to prepare.

Neal says television shows which use high tech science to solve crimes are getting students more interested in the field.

"When they can relate it to something in their world instead of something they're made to study they get excited," she said.

For Neal science isn't just academic. She hopes some of her students will look for jobs in bio-tech. A two-year degree means an entry level



ANDIE BRYMER / HERALD
 Kimberly Dorsey, foreground, and Candy Lewis learn about science Tuesday afternoon on a science bus from UNC-Chapel Hill.

bio-tech job making more than a teacher, according to Neal.

"The future is in bio-tech," she said.

North Carolina is the third leading state for bio-tech jobs and, according to Neal, those aren't just in the Research Triangle Park area. The jobs are all across the state with some in Cleveland County.

Sponsored by Glaxo Smith Klien Pharmaceutical and UNC-Chapel Hill, the program is free to schools across North Carolina. The

equipment on board is more advanced than in many classrooms. The bus and the labs costs \$.5 million.

In addition to DNA fingerprinting, program Coordinator Betty Brown leads labs in genetic engineering, sickle cell anemia, protein analysis and DNA extraction and preservation.

Operations Manager Andre Patterson drives the bus and assists Brown.

"I love it, seeing them excited, learning something new," he said.

Advanced Placement exams popular among KM students

BY ANDIE L. BRYMER
 Staff Writer

Cleveland County Schools passed a policy last week to pay for all Advanced Placement exams. Passing scores on the exams allow students to by-pass taking some introductory level college courses.

Seniors Thomas Reid, Marcus Jimson and Megan Wright are among the 165 Advanced Placement students at Kings Mountain High School.

Reid and Jimson say the courses look good on college applications. Wright likes the challenge, the edge AP provides scholarship applicants and the six point weight on grade point average. Right now she has a 4.667. Jimson is at 4.3 and Reid, 4.7.

Jimson estimates he spends 15 hours a week on homework. Reid takes advantage of study hall and class time to review. Wright typically studies till 9 p.m.

All three volunteer as tutors. Wright plays tennis and Reid runs cross country.

The three describe this semester as "heavy." A senior project and deadlines for scholarship and college



ANDIE L. BRYMER/HERALD
 Thomas Reid, left, Megan Wright and Marcus Jimson are among 165 Kings Mountain High School students taking Advanced Placement classes.

applications mean more than just homework.

A few of Wright and Reid's friends are taking AP classes. Jimson says none of his friends are though one can do his homework but is avoiding the challenge.

"It's not too popular to be too smart," he said.

All three have impressive college and career goals. Jimson plans to attend N.C. State and be a computer engineer. Reid is hoping to attend Duke University or

UNC-Chapel Hill where he'll study medicine. Wright is aiming at Wake Forest. She wants to work as an obstetrician.

AP students take their exam off campus. They say unlike end-of-course testing, teachers don't have as much information about what will be on the exam.

Contact Andie Brymer at 704 739-7496 or e mail abrymer@kingsmountain-herald.com

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