

## LOCAL

# KMHS Class of 2008 receives diploma, inspiring words

EMILY WEAVER

eweaver@kingsmountainherald.com

Kings Mountain High School's Class of 2008 is 247 strong. Some graduates found their strength in academics, some on the field of sports, some in arts and others in specialized areas that they dug into with skilled hands.

But no matter where their individual strengths may lie, after graduating from a place that has been hailed by national publications as one of the best schools in the country, these competitive grads are ready for the world.

In lines of two-by-two, the graduates stepped onto the field inside John Gamble Stadium Tuesday night for their ceremonial march to "Pomp and Circumstance," played by the 9th grade band. The commencement exercise began a little after 8 p.m. The home-side stands were packed with proud supporters.

Kaitlin Teague, Vice President of the Class of 2008, led the crowd in the Pledge of Allegiance. President of the class' Senior Participation Organization Courtney Hartgrove welcomed the

crowd.

"We all know that we are to take the final steps into a new beginning," she said. "Here are a few things that I would like the Class of 2008 to know: This one is very obvious - do your work. When faced with the fear of a challenge, you can either dissolve into a funnel of fear or get prepared. You are capable of more than you think. Don't limit yourself. Take action. Every story you've ever connected with, every leader you've ever admired, everything that you've ever accomplished is a result of taking action...You can either be a victim or the superhero of your own life."

"You cannot afford to spend your life stumbling through," she said. "This state, this city and this nation needs you. This isn't a rehearsal, this is real life. The choices are difficult and the consequences are real."

Senior songsters from Symphonic Chorale broke away from the graduation pack to sing "Maybe Someday" and "Forever Friends." They were led by Choral Conductor Shae Truax.

President Laura Ashley



EMILY WEAVER/HERALD

North Carolina Scholars rise when their name is called to be honored among the many other bright Mountaineers in the Class of 2008.

Gaffney presented her class. "Our visions and talents will help us to dream. The future successes are far away it seems. But walk with me students and dream with us all, as we take big steps into our futures step proud and stand tall," she said.

Gaffney paid tribute to the classmate who couldn't be with them at graduation Tuesday

night. "We all receive our diplomas tonight in partial honor of Nicholas Hensley, who was taken from us last year," she said.

Avery Dahl read the names of the Class of 2008's N.C. Academic Scholars. Arti Patel gave the valedictorian address. Principal Ronny Funderburke congratulated the graduates

and challenged them to succeed. Christopher Potts gave the salutatorian address.

One by one the Class of 2008 was called to the stage. Funderburke and School Board member Connie Phifer Savell handed out the diplomas each had spent at least 13 years of their young lives attaining. Congratulations Class of 2008!

# Money's all gone, work's all wrong

## Case of building fraud

Part 1 of a 2-part series

REBECCA T. DICKINSON

rdickinson@kingsmountainherald.com

Lawrence Sam Weir, Jr. has allegedly victimized over 22 people in eight counties of the Carolinas - including Cleveland and Gaston - through his construction businesses listed as Sun Masters, Crete Magic, and Weir Builders.

While he has been charged for "Misdemeanor-Fail," (not completing work after being paid), by the Mecklenburg Fraud Department, victims say they still haven't seen their money or Weir where they believe he should be - behind bars.

Marlina Curtis of Gastonia expected a peaceful retirement after serving 22 years in the military and working from 2003 to 2007 as a Senior H.R. Representative in Iraq. She bought a new house in 2006. The following year she wanted a porch added on. Friends recommended Weir, but they gave

his name before he finished work on their homes.

"His pattern was to sign-up a job receive a third down of a total \$25,000, and then (he) didn't finish the job," states Better Business Bureau of the Southern Piedmont CEO and Chairperson Thomas Bartholomy. "It's disheartening the way he did business because it allowed him to fly under police radar."

Marlina Curtis paid in full. She called Weir, but he didn't return her messages. She filed a complaint with the BBB of Southern Piedmont. Lawyer Ted Mitchell, of Gray, Layton, Kersh, Solomon, Sigmon, Furr, & Smith PA, won her case. But she said that Weir still didn't respond.

"I finally told the lawyer I can't pay any more money. I gave him (Weir) all my savings, and nothing's been done. My house could go into foreclosure," Curtis said.

Weir appeared in 1999, and according to Tom Bartholomy, had a clean record until 2001. It wasn't until 2004 Weir's name appears from numerous concerns. He failed to settle disputes with his customers. The BBB changed the rating for his Sun Masters business to unsatisfactory.

"We (BBB) have strengthened because we've been able to shine a light on unreliable sources."

Altogether, complaints to the BBB have risen 10%, 6,000, from May last year to May 2008. "There are always consumer concerns, but they are resolved," says Bartholomy.

There are 22 complainants against Weir. Some have won law suits, but no one has received any money yet.

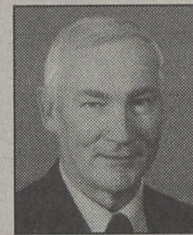
According to BBB's investigation, throughout 2004-2007 Weir contracted in Florida under different company names. He signed on to rebuild hurricane

victims' homes, but that also fell through, according to BBB.

In 2007 Weir moved to 602 See FRAUD, Page 7

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Call me or stop in to get a quote today.



**John Caveny**  
210 East King Street  
Kings Mountain  
(704) 739-3953  
cavenyj@nationwide.com

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