



B.J. Hill set to reach finish line in his walk across America Saturday

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Take Note

Petitions get more names than needed

Liquor vote predicted to be held in spring

By EMILY WEAVER
 Editor

Around 4,000 signatures were turned into the Cleveland County Board of Elections last week to call for a referendum on mixed beverage sales within city limits. Over 300 were received by the Gaston County board.

Pages and pages of signed petitions have been weeded through in both counties to come up with the current total number of verified signatures - 2,291. Only 2,212 were needed to call for an election, which CCB&E Dir. Debra Blanton said will be held this spring.

There were a lot of smiles on the faces of some business owners and professionals last Thursday as they gathered for a ribbon cutting of a new clinic downtown. Word of the upcoming referendum spread with quiet cheers and gestures of victory.

Citizens for Progress, a group of individuals who had pushed for a vote on mixed beverage sales, began their fight about a year ago. In casual conversations members of the group talked with councilmen in March, testing the waters.

They were urged then to circulate a petition - a very tedious route. A few months later, spirits stirred again over the issue. And at the city's Aug. meeting, Citizens for Progress requested a referendum for liquor by the drink. It was postponed and later denied in a 4-3 vote.

Although another request seemed to be on the horizon, Citizens for Progress decided to take the matter into their own hands - in the form of petitions. For 90 days, they passed the pen and clipboards, called for names at city events, rang doorbells or offered customers a chance to sign-up at local stores. The petition seems to mirror the struggle.

Nearly half of the 4,000 signatures turned over to Cleveland County by the Jan. 5 deadline were dismissed due to multiple repeats and some collected from folks residing outside of city limits or who were not registered to vote. Blanton said that they had certified 2,194 signatures as of Tuesday morning.

The Gaston County Board of Elections had certified 97 signatures, with a few hundred more to sift through, as of Tuesday morning. But the number continues to fluctuate.

Until the names are officially certified and a referendum is scheduled at the CCB&E's next meeting on Feb. 4, signatures could still be removed from the petition. Blanton said that they have removed three names from the petition so far from signers, who have had a change of heart. But take-backs are not offered over the phone.

And even though names could be removed, no new signatures can be added to the list after the Jan. 5 deadline.

"That's why every petition group needs to get a lot more than what they need," Blanton said.

This has been the first successful petition for liquor by the drink in Kings Mountain.

Off to Washington



ASHELIN HUNT



photo by Lib Stewart

Ruth and Rufus Parker of Grover are taking their young grandson, Douglas, to Washington, DC for the inauguration of the new president.

Two families prepare to attend historic inauguration

KM student invited to attend after winning presidential award

By ELIZABETH STEWART
 staff writer

Ashelin Hunt is an excited teenager. She's going to the nation's capitol by invitation of President-Elect Barack Obama to attend the presidential inauguration.

Hunt, 12, a 7th grader at Crest Middle School and daughter of Dee and Coleman Hunt of Kings Mountain, got her personal invitation this week extended on behalf of the Congressional Youth Leadership Conference. She and her mother are planning the trip which includes a five day Junior Presidential Leadership Conference which will give students from across the U. S. like the Kings Mountain student a close-up look at the inauguration process.

Ashelin was nominated for the conference by 5th grade AIG teacher Charlotte Teague of Washington Elementary School where Ashelin's father is principal and based on academics and extracurricular activities.

"I am so proud of her," said Mrs. Hunt.

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Obama campaign volunteer to witness historic oath of office with family

By ELIZABETH STEWART
 staff writer

Ten-year-old Douglas Parker is excited. He plans to be a part of history by attending the Presidential inauguration Tuesday in the nation's capital.

His grandparents, Ruth and Rufus Parker, hope the fifth grader will have plenty to tell his classmates when they return home to Grover after five days in Washington, DC. Douglas is already telling his friends "I will be making history next week."

Ruth Parker volunteered with the Barack Obama campaign in Cleveland County. She said that when Obama was running for President she felt a connection with him and her husband was also impressed. "He's a smart man but I would not want to be in his shoes," said Mr. Parker.

Mrs. Parker contacted Rep. Tim Moore for tickets and he contacted 10th District U.S. Congressman Patrick Mc Henry and Thursday the Parkers will pick up the tickets at the Congressman's Hickory office. They plan to drive to Delaware on Saturday to visit for a day with Mr. Parker's sister, Elizabeth Reid before heading for Washington.

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Analysis: Alcohol cheers and jeers over the years

By EMILY WEAVER
 Editor

To sell drinks or not to sell drinks? That is the question. Alcohol has been an issue for the City of Kings Mountain since its inception. The ongoing problem has garnered many headlines in the past 21 years.

The city is born, alcohol banned

Kings Mountain became a chartered town on Feb. 11, 1874 and one of the first items on its agenda was to vote on "license" within 30 days.

The election was not held on schedule, but when the votes were tabulated, it was 13-0 against the sell of spirituous liquor within town limits, according to Bonnie Summers' Kings Mountain: Her Background and Beginning. Even though the first building in town was said to have been a saloon, the first ordinances were set in place with strict punishments to discourage drunkenness, among other things.

Even before the thirst of the 1920s

Prohibition, Kings Mountain remained a "dry" town aside from the occasional bootlegger's trade.

In 1948, Kings Mountain held another vote on alcohol and again, in 1967 and in 1975. All three elections denied libation sales by margins in the hundreds.

In 1983, the margins were slimmer. The result was the same. Sixty-five percent of the registered voters turned out then to turn down a request for off-premise sales of beer, wine and liquor and the establishment of an ABC store.

But the city's "wet" issue was far from dead in the waters. On Jan. 20, 1987, Kings Mountain voters cast their ballots addressing: "off-premise sale only of malt beverages; on-premise sale of malt beverages by Class A hotels, motels and restaurants and to permit off-premise sales by other permittees; on- and off-premise sales of unfortified wine; and operation of an ABC store."

The headline of that week's Herald read, "Alcohol votes pass by narrow

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Bargain shopping a growing demand

By ELIZABETH STEWART
 staff writer

Looking for a bargain?

That's a growing demand by Mr. or Mrs. Shopper as the public feels the pinch of an ever-threatening flagging economy. And Kings Mountain people are no different from others in the country who are looking for incredible deals.

Resale and pawn shops seem to be booming and first-time customers are finding their buying habits are changing. They like the feeling particularly if their pocketbooks have cash left over for groceries and car payments.

"People are settling for less and finding less-costly items, not new ones," says Gail Garrett of Jack's Jewelry & Loan, a Kings Mountain business on Cleveland Avenue for nearly 25 years and owned by Jack Stringfellow. James Parker, also an employee of the business, agrees. They say newcomers to their business prefer to trade at home instead of driving to Charlotte, Shelby or Gastonia because of the high cost of gasoline. Gas is an issue now, a biggie, says Gail, and shoppers are looking for bargains and making decisions.

A pawn shop is a store that offers money for a variety of different items. Such stores have existed as far back as Ancient Greece, with differing rules for how they operate.

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