

What happens in Kings Mountain on Friday nights?

By EMILY WEAVER
Editor

Editor's note: This bi-weekly series will take a look at some of the weekend nightlife in and around Kings Mountain.

"BINGO!" It's a word every player yearns to yell, but cringes to hear on Friday nights at the Otis D. Green American Legion Post 155 in Kings Mountain.

But whether "Bingo" turns out to be a harbinger of good luck or no luck, that same word has resounded through these halls for decades.

For many, Friday night Bingo at the Legion has become more than a favorite pastime. It's become a tradition.

Wayne Russell has been the chairman of Bingo at the post for the past 15 years. He has seen players come and go, win and lose and the crowd sizes expand and deflate.

There was a time, not too long ago, when the Legion's ball room would be packed with contestants and Bingo cards. But lately, the average number of players from 6:30-10 p.m. each Friday is down to about 100 - still a good crowd, just not as loud.

The iconic image of a busy Bingo parlor capped by a layer of cigarette smoke and headed by a man turning a wheel of lettered and numbered balls, while elderly players stare intently at the cards before them, is outdated.

The Legion installed a fan filtration system to defeat the smoke cloud. The numbers are still called by an announcer. But the turning ball of "fortune" has been replaced by an electronic marquee board and four television monitors. And the age of players may vary.

Mary Swafford met her husband Pete Swafford at the Legion's Bingo hall. Now, married nine years, they

haven't missed a Friday. They often leave with little or no winnings, but whether they hit the jackpot or not the Swaffords have fun.

"We have people coming here regular all the time," Russell said.

The jackpots vary. The Legion had two \$500 jackpots on March 6. Around Thanksgiving and Christmas the jackpots are often bigger.

The Legion used to sell fresh-cooked meals to Bingo contestants each Friday night. Although snacks and refreshments seem to be the norm now, the hot plates of delicious cuisine are resurrected for the major holidays.

On St. Patrick's Day, Kenny Ray Bowen, manager of the Legion for four years, fixed two different kinds of cabbage and other goodies for players at the Legion birthday party.

"At Christmastime we give everything away (that we fix)," Russell said.

The buy-in package of Bingo cards starts at \$12. Proceeds raised from the games are used to help the American Legion Auxiliary unit pay for tuition to send Girls State delegates to Catawba College, in Salisbury each summer.

At Girls State the delegates learn about government and in a mock session they elect officers, write resolutions and pass bills. Of the nearly 300 that attend the state delegation, two are elected to attend Girls Senator Nation in Washington, D.C.

The Auxiliary usually sends four delegates at a cost of about \$1,000. The goal of the American Legion is to help veterans and their loved ones in the communities they serve.

Do you know of a weekend hot spot you would like to see in The Herald? Contact us at editor@kingsmountainherald.com or call 704-739-7496, ext. 123.



photo by EMILY WEAVER
Front row, left to right, Pete and Mary Swafford, regular players at the Legion's Bingo game nights, sit in front of Legion Manager Kenny Ray Bowen, left, and Wayne Russell, chairman.

STADIUM From Page 1A

The announcement of the lead gift in fund-raising came at Blanton Auditorium's Hamrick Hall and a luncheon honoring Moss was held afterwards in Ritch Banquet Hall in the Dover Campus Center.

"We want to get the stadium up as soon as possible," said Fisher, who said that an additional \$1.3 million is needed and the university is continuing to look for naming rights for most of the new addition. Naming rights have been bought for the new Moss Stadium, \$500,000; Masters Field, \$300,000; Buddy Hamrick family entrance gate, \$100,000; the head coach's office, \$15,000, Dr. and Mrs. Philip Turner; and the assistant coach's office, \$10,000, Dr. Eugene Poston and Nancy Poston.

The upgrade includes a press box; VIP box; lights, concession stand, indoor and outdoor batting cages, coach's offices, umpire locker rooms, new dugouts and stadium chair back seating for 525 people.

Fish said the university plans to break ground as soon as possible with hopes of opening the facility for the 2010 season.

Speakers praised Moss as an icon for his keen eye for promotion of the South Atlantic League, which grew from an eight-team league in Western North Carolina to a 16-team circuit that had played in 43 cities and eight states by 2007, widely regarded as the model of success in baseball circles. President-Emeritus and South Atlantic League President for 50 years, Moss, was honored with a lifetime contract in 1990. The King of Baseball, so named in 1990, also won the prestigious War-

ren E. Giles award for outstanding service. He retired following the 2007 season, reigning over one of the most successful minor leagues in professional baseball history.

As mayor of Kings Mountain (1965-89) Moss earned national recognition for securing more than \$40 million in federal grants. Newsweek Magazine called him "the mayor with the Midas touch." Moss Lake was established in 1974 as a reservoir for the City of Kings Mountain.

Rance Henderson, Kings Mountain native and a former superintendent of the N. C. School for the Deaf in Morganton, talked about Moss' close ties with his late parents and his affection for him as a role model. G-W Head Coach Rusty Stroupe presented Moss a Bulldog red and white jersey.

Numerous speakers alluded to Moss' success in the community, a visionary always busy, saying that no one could ever accuse John Henry of not having giving his all to Kings Mountain and in promotion and development of baseball in the South, a career like "one big de-ja vu moment."

In accepting the accolades, Moss gave credit to his late wife, Elaine. "We were a team," He said he was proud to be a part of a premier baseball facility where no one would be left on the bench and where Gardner-Webb could reach out to sell its top notch baseball program. President of the Cleveland County Sports Commission, Moss said the new stadium won't be ready for big events in the county in May but the new addition could bring future tournaments to Boiling Springs.

Coach Stroupe said players and coaches are excited with the Moss challenge to bring in a new level of energy and excitement for the Bulldogs baseball program.

BBQ From Page 1A

are no plans to demolish the old fast food restaurant, but nearly \$1 million in renovations will transform the lifeless building into a diner's paradise.

The old play area will be replaced with a garden, pond and waterfall that will accentuate an outdoor dining area. Inside, the restaurant will seat approximately 70 people. Outside, Beach says that they hope to be able to accommodate between 40-60 people.

Special steak nights are dreamed of for Fridays and Saturdays, including outdoor grilling and entertainment with live bands. Plans for the restaurant also include a drive-thru and catering services.

Beach said that they hope to complete the nearly \$1.2 million project and open to customers by the first or second week in June. They also look to fill about 20 staff positions in the new restaurant.

"We'll be interviewing for jobs in the coming weeks. We look to hire a local full-time manager," Beach said, adding that they will be interviewing for other staff positions as well.

The big dream is to take the restaurant nationwide via the world wide web. "Our goal for the future is to have an Internet site," he said.

On the site, they would sell their barbecue, sauces and other specialty products

"all over the country." If the demand spurred by the website is great enough, Beach said that they could set up a manufacturing facility in Kings Mountain, creating more jobs.

Beach said that the dream for Big E's BBQ began about two years ago. Pardo has been cooking and competing in barbecue cook-offs for years. "He has won lots of awards for his barbecue," Beach said. "This is truly award-winning (cuisine)."

Pardo, described by Beach as "the barbecue king," will be the head chef and owner of the restaurant. Although the restaurant will take a good portion of his time, Pardo still plans to continue competing and offering his catering services.

In addition to "Big E" going out on shows, Beach said that they may put on a few shows themselves at the restaurant. Beach added that they also look forward to helping local churches through fundraisers.

The restaurant will be open for lunch and dinner Monday-Saturday. Specialty items dreamed of for the future menu, include bite-sized bacon-wrapped chicken, jumbo shrimp salad, barbecue salad, all kinds of barbecue, slow-cooked prime rib, and smoked turkeys, hams and pork chops.

For more information about a job application, call Mark Beach Properties at 704-739-7276.

HINES From Page 4A

mentalists to kind of get a plan on how we are going to develop sustainably and how we're going to protect our environment, promote our economy, create quality of life, and so on," he said.

He was hired by the board in 2003 as the director of projects to coordinate the Catawba Regional Greenway Trail System, which sprouted into the Carolina Thread Trail project, and the 2003 Regional Quality of Life Report.

"We worked on a regional report on water quality, air quality, economic roads, quality of life. We worked with the urban land institute and the urban institute at UNC-Charlotte to develop that report as well the counties and municipalities to collect water quality and air quality data and land use," Hines said. "I did that for a year and that really gave me a better understanding of the big picture for economic development."

From 2004-2005, he served as state consultant for the Michigan Department of

Community Health advising local coalitions on economic revitalization in traditional downtowns. In this capacity, he also served on the advisory board of the Cool Cities initiative for the Michigan Department of Labor, Energy and Economic Growth.

Returning to North Carolina in November 2005, Hines taught at UNC-Charlotte in spring of 2006, while obtaining his residential and commercial real estate brokerage license. He then joined the Concord office of Caldwell Banker United Realtors in May of 2006 where he was named executive sales associate in 2007.

In real estate, brokers are on-call 24/7. Hines realized that he wanted a different lifestyle, a more normal routine so that he can enjoy his family. He is currently teaching basic nutrition at Northeast Medical Nursing Center, nursing college, but plans to finish teaching in May.

"I'm looking forward to life slowing down a little bit," he said. "We're looking for a house in Kings Mountain right now. So the goal is to get out here, get the house, be

done teaching and only use real estate as it pertains to downtown redevelopment and revitalization."

At the age of 27, Hines submitted his will to Jesus Christ in 2001. He married his wife Charity on Oct. 18, 2008. They are expecting their first child in July - a future Kings Mountain native.

The Hines will move to Kings Mountain with their two dogs, "a lazy but lovable five year old basset hound named Cooper" and a "spry, but aging eight year old yellow Labrador retriever named Moody," he said.

Charity's dad worked in

international construction, which took the family all over from Denmark and Norway to Florida and Tennessee. She has lived in and traveled to various cities over the years. "When I met her, the first thing I asked her was where she was from and she didn't know how to answer that question," Hines laughed.

His wife actually grew up in a small town in Tennessee, he said. The idea of settling in a smaller city to raise their family is "almost like a romantic dream," he added.

"We're so excited about it. We really want to become part of the community."

Paper, magazine collection drive begins today

Cleveland County Recycling is beginning a mixed paper and magazine collection drive today (Wednesday) and continuing through June 30, 2009. Catalogs, magazines, junk mail, notebook paper, etc., which must be free of plastic or metal binders and hardcover covers and no plastic bags, will be collected at the recycling sites, including the Midpines site in Kings Mountain.

The magazines and mixed paper should be placed in the newspaper container at recycling centers. Residents and businesses are invited to participate, according to Sam M. Lockridge III, Coordinator of Health Services.

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