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touching reply to a
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HOMEFRONT

Getting ready for Christmas

By **ELIZABETH STEWART**
 Staff writer

With few exceptions Kings Mountain citizens are getting ready for Christmas this week.

The first wintry mix of the year on Friday put a little damper on Friday evening Christmas shopping but by Saturday the stores were crowded with last-minute shoppers. And with only two days remaining

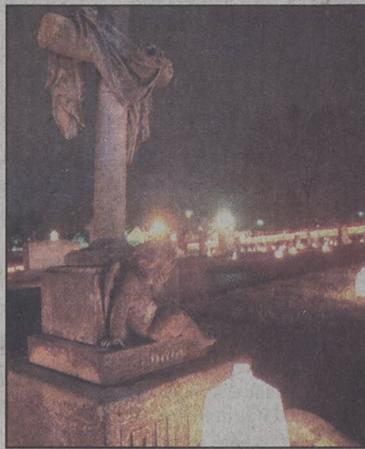
until Christmas, shoppers were scurrying around to make gift selections. Weather forecasters had at first called for some white stuff on Christmas Eve but now are saying there may be rain.

City officials are crossing their fingers that the weather will be perfect for the traditional lighting of candles at Mountain Rest Cemetery Thursday night from 6-11 p.m. City crews and some volunteers have already placed 6,000 milk jugs around the

cemetery grounds and on graves and are preparing to light the luminaries Christmas Eve.

Jim Belt of Belt Ministries started the luminary project 15 years ago. "My back just won't let me work this project any more that I love," said Belt. He said he is overjoyed that the City of Kings Mountain will continue what has become a community tradition. "They (city crews) always worked in

See **READY, 7A**



CHRISTMAS BONUS



Making Christmas merry

By **EMILY WEAVER**
 Editor

Several people have been hard at work lately to make this Christmas more merry for others.

Grace Christian Academy initiated a canned food and dry goods drive to help stock the shelves at Kings Mountain Crisis Ministry. After making it a contest between the classes, children collected 1,232 items in the "Sharing Grace" Christmas project.

The sixth grade class, with only a handful of students, netted over

400 items during the week-long drive. The staff at GCA used the goods to create five small trees, which were set up in the gym.

Principal Rita Toney said that she was proud of all of her students and their exemplified spirit of "grace." Children and teachers from pre-kindergarten through ninth grade participated.

The Kings Mountain Police Department was able to make Christmas brighter for at least 50 local families this year thanks to contributions from the community.

After a rough start with only a

table full of toys, Police Det. Todd McDougal said that they were able to fill the station's training room twice with donations that flowed in before Santa's big day.

The Grover Police Department has been collecting goods to help bring Christmas to families with a total of eight children this year. And inside the Grover Rescue Squad stands a tree, once decked with angels, that now shines with hope.

Folks in the community, including civic clubs like the Grover Woman's Club, and at town hall

EMILY WEAVER/HERALD
 Staff and students at Grace Christian Academy amassed over 1,200 items for the Crisis Ministry in the school's "Sharing Grace" Christmas project.

have been checking off shopping lists, supporting the Christmas drives at the departments. Town Clerk Tricia Willis was busy wrapping some of those gifts on Monday.

"I really felt the Christmas spirit this year," said Grover Mayor Pro-tem Jackie Bennett. "It's hard to pass up all of these good sales."

Along with many others, she hasn't been able to ignore the quiet calling of those angels on the tree. Bennett said

See **MERRY, 7A**



HERBERT G. MOORE

Suspect nabbed in attempted post office robbery

Police say man threatened to blow the place up if he didn't get his money

Give me your money or I'll blow the place up.

That's what a customer at the Kings Mountain Post Office, 115 E. Gold St., told a clerk at the window Saturday morning at 10:45 a.m.

Herbert George Moore, 63, who gave his address as Gaffney, SC, but whom police suspect is homeless and was living in his car, further stated, according to Kings Mountain police, that if his demand wasn't met that he would detonate the device he planted on the post office property. "I need money and I'll do this again," the suspect reportedly told officers.

Everything happened fast, according to Det. Cpl. J.T. McDougal. A postal employee called police and in

See **SUSPECT, 3A**

Main Street staff meets with Partnership



EMILY WEAVER/HERALD

Main Street Dir. Liz Parham talks to members of MPI board.

State officials with the North Carolina Main Street Program discussed the future of downtown over lunch with members of Mountaineer Partnership Inc. last Wednesday in Mauney Library's community room.

It was the first official meeting the board has collectively had with the Main Street team since being accepted into the prestigious state program a few months ago.

"This is a momentous day," said MPI Director Adam Hines, who welcomed the Main Street staff to Kings Mountain.

Main Street Director Liz Parham, who works out of the Office of Urban Development in Raleigh, discussed what the program is about, what MPI can expect from them and what they expect from MPI. Inclusion in the Main Street Program will provide the down-

town community with an investment of about \$150,000 over the next three years.

The investment will be used in the forms of technical assistance, training, program guidance, networking, advocacy and leadership.

Main Street Designer Lauren Malinoff,

See **MPI, 7A**

City gets an A-plus on annual audit

By **ELIZABETH STEWART**
 Staff writer

The City of Kings Mountain got an A+ on the audit of its 2009 financial statements, auditor Shane Fox of Martin-Starns & Associates told City Council last Tuesday.

Fox said auditors found no findings or questioned costs, no significant deficiencies or material internal control weaknesses identified and theirs was an "unqualified opinion."

"This is a perfect audit," Fox said to a standing-room-only crowd at the December council meeting. Fox congratulated the city for a "very healthy fund balance," saying that the city's

fund balance is 18 percent and the N.C. Local Government Commission only requires 8 percent of the last year expenditures by municipalities. "In these tough economic times I have seen few cities that did this," he said.

City manager Marilyn Sellers said the city and all citizens "are faced with tough times in the present

economy" and she took the occasion to thank staff for their diligence and hard work.

The general fund summary showed that revenues were up from \$7,237,744 in 2008 to \$7,381,266 in 2009 and expenditures were up from \$9,375,837 in 2008 to \$9,621,364 in 2009. The increased fund balance (from 15 percent in 2008 to 18

percent in 2009) was based on unreserved undesignated funds of \$1,693,691 in 2009 and \$1,294,505 in 2008. In the general operating fund revenues, ad valorem taxes account for 39 percent, other taxes and licenses 29 percent, sales and services 16 percent and other revenues 16 percent. Property tax revenue accounted for

See **AUDIT, 3A**

Mayor Pro-tem

Gordon reelected as mayor pro-tem

Ward IV councilman Rodney Gordon was unanimously re-elected mayor pro tem by his fellow council members last Tuesday as city council organized for the new term.

Gordon, who will serve a second two-year term, said he is honored, adding, "The mayor (Rick Murphrey) and I have a good working relationship." Gordon com-



Rodney Gordon

mended the mayor for "always being prepared

See **PRO-TEM, 3A**

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