

Meet the new 'Y guy'  
.....  
KM author writes  
WWII love story

Fast Mountaineers  
prove too much for  
Ashbrook  
SPORTS 1B

MLK  
ceremony  
Monday at  
Joy 3A

**Harris Funeral Home**  
Locally Owned  
& Operated Since 1947  
A Family Tradition of Dignity,  
Service & Understanding

108 S. Piedmont Ave.  
Kings Mountain, NC  
739-2591

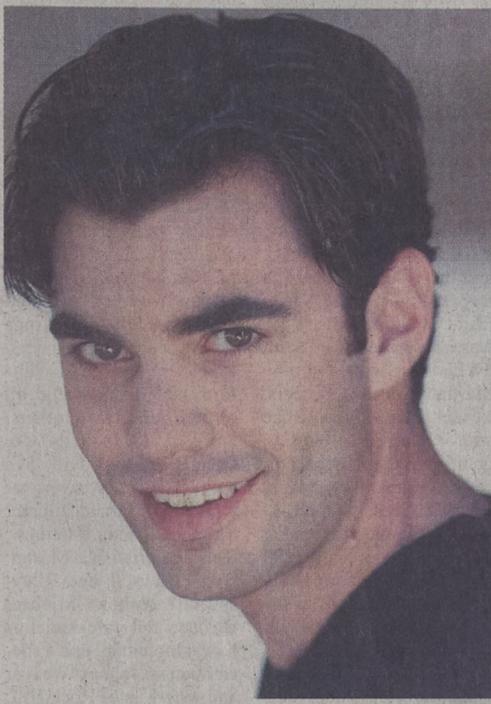


# Kings Mountain

Volume 122 • Issue 2 • Wednesday, January 13, 2010

\*\*\*\*\*CAR-RT LOT\*\*C 003  
307 08-06-10 0024A00 4P 3S  
MAUNEY MEMORIAL LIBRARY  
100 S PIEDMONT AVE  
KINGS MOUNTAIN NC 28086-3450

Star shines on KM



ALEX BENNETT

## Actor comes home from Hong Kong

By ELIZABETH STEWART  
Staff writer

Kings Mountain's Alex Bennett traveled across the world recently to Hong Kong, China, to act in a world-premier suspense thriller and he said last week "I'd go back in a minute."

Bennett, 24, returned to Los Angeles, CA last week after spending the holidays with his parents, Rick and Ann Bennett.

The play, "Hijacking the Northern Star," was a sell-out for six weeks in China. Alex is keeping his fingers crossed that, because of its reception after seven performances, the cast may be recalled for repeat shows in June.

Bennett, one of four actors flown from LA for parts in the drama, had the feature role of Cpl. Randall. In the play Bennett is a US Marine on R&R from Vietnam in 1968. He falls for a girl he didn't know was one of the hijackers, the snipers start shooting and Bennett (as Randall) takes the bullet for the girlfriend. Interestingly, sub-titles were featured on stage to accommodate English, Cantonese and Mandarin speaking theatre-goers. The "hijackers" spoke both Cantonese and English.

"I didn't know what to expect but I loved Hong Kong, it's a beautiful country and sub-tropical temperatures year round," said Bennett. He describes Hong Kong as "very

See ACTOR, 8A

## Families evacuated in Tracy St. gas leak

Although pipe not burst by excavation, public reminded to 'call before you dig'

By EMILY WEAVER  
Editor

Two families were evacuated from residences on Tracy Street Saturday afternoon after natural gas started seeping from an underground pipe.

The smell of a strange odor was reported to the city by a resident around 1 p.m. The Kings Mountain fire and gas departments responded to the scene and discovered a pipe, about four feet under the ground, had ruptured.

Fire Chief Frank Burns said that two families, who reside adjacent to the leak, were evacuated until the pipe could be repaired.

Mike Nicholson, director of the city's gas department, said that they had the leak under control and the pipe repaired about an hour and a half after they responded.

He said it was a "typical leak", but it might not have

been an easy fix. "We had to dig up the street," he said.

There are about 125 miles of gas mains and nearly twice that many of service lines, including water and electric, coursing underneath the city's soil, according to Nicholson.

"Some of those pipelines have been in the ground for years and years," Burns said, adding that sometimes, with age, the pipes develop weak spots and can rupture like this one.

But some of those weak

See LEAK, 3A

## Downtown businesses get \$250K grant for growth

By EMILY WEAVER  
Editor

The city and Mountaineer Partnership found out last week that they have received a \$250,000 grant from the state's Small Business and Entrepreneurial Assistance Program.

The quarter-of-a-million dollar grant will help three small businesses expand their operations in downtown Kings Mountain.

Although the city has yet to receive the formal letter stating the official total of the grant, the mayor and Mountaineer Partnership Executive Director Adam Hines are confident that they have been awarded the full amount they applied for last July.

Hines said that a total of \$1 million was offered to communities across the state through the North Carolina Department of Commerce for the expansion of business and creation of jobs. For us to be awarded a quarter of that is a big deal, he added.

"We are very pleased," said Mayor Rick Murphrey, who said the grant money would bring additional jobs and plans for expansion by downtown businesses.

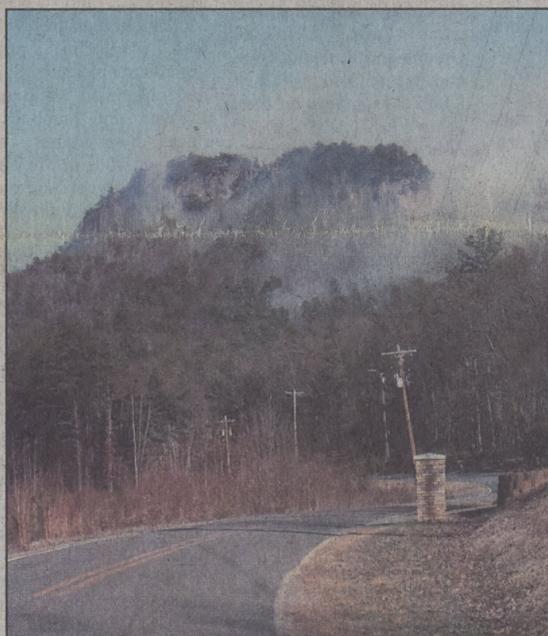
Mountaineer Partnership, working with the city, asked for the full amount of the grant (\$250,000) for Majors Wellness Center, AFAB Promotions and Hometown Hardware and Garden Center. They sought \$175,000 for Majors Wellness Center to reconfigure

their existing space at Majors Chiropractic, on King Street, to create room for a wellness center, adding seven new jobs.

In their application, they also sought \$50,000 for Greg Johnson's advertising business, AFAB Promotions, for the purchase of an embroidery machine and two full-time jobs to expand operations. They asked for \$25,000 for Howard Elmore's Hometown Hardware, at the corner of King Street and Railroad Avenue, for the construction of an outdoor canopy area to allow space for outdoor seasonal products and plants and the creation of one new full-time job. Plans for expansion of the hardware store are designed to promote the ambiance of a

See GRANT, 3A

## Fire on the mountain



Above, a shot of Crowder's Mountain from Lake Montonia. At right, a view of the mountain captured by Abraham Ruff.

### Prescribed burn on Crowder's Mtn

Where there's smoke, there's fire. That's usually true. The smoke that exhaled from Crowder's Mountain last week was due to a prescribed burn.

Park officials set fire to parts of the mountain's upper crest and lower climbs to burn off dead foliage and spark new life. Prescribed burns are carefully monitored and controlled.

The flames control dry brush accumulation, which can fuel wildfires. Some plants grow back stronger and replenish the park with more life. Smoke from last week's prescribed burn on Crowder's Mountain was seen for miles.



## HOMEGROWN

## Proffitt Farms join organic market with grass-fed beef

By EMILY WEAVER  
Editor

The Proffitt family has found something more important than profit. It's quality that counts.

On their farm, at 150 Home Place, the family is raising and selling grass-fed beef. Their cattle, over 100 head spread out on three plots of land, graze freely on grass the Proffitt family says is untainted by chemicals and pesticides.

No corn or grain is mass-produced for these herds. No "feedlot" awaits them in the future. They are not confined in barely-moveable cells and they will not be injected with hormones or antibiotics. Ammonia, to protect from E-coli, will not touch them.

One day, these cows will all face slaughter, but not as



EMILY WEAVER/HERALD  
Shelley Eagan, left, greets the cattle with her father Steve Proffitt.

soon as their genetically-enhanced cousins. The slogan here is not "faster, fatter, bigger, cheaper" in order to satiate the ever-hungry consumer. It's all about getting back to the basics.

The Proffitts strive to be

good stewards of the land while producing a healthy, safe product for the consumer.

Even better, this grass-fed, hormone-free, antibiotic-free, ammonia-free beef can be purchased locally on

a farm not veiled from the public.

The Proffitt family, who held its first Family Farm Day on November 26, at its headquarters ranch in Kings Mountain, welcomed the

See FARM, 4A



Happy Customers  
are Our Business!

209 S. Battleground Ave., Kings Mountain • 704.739.5411  
www.alliancebankandtrust.com • MEMBER FDIC

**Alliance**  
Bank & Trust  
Building Communities