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A new chapter

Mauney Library seeks new KM home

ELIZABETH STEWART
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Should the city's Jacob S. Mauney Memorial Library move or renovate?

The nine-member board of trustees has been mulling the question for several years and says a new building is the way to go.

Mauney Memorial Library trustees pitched the idea for a new library to Kings Mountain City Council Tuesday during a work session.

"We know the city is strapped for funds right now but we wanted to share with you a presentation of what we picture a library of the 21st century," said Chairman Dr. Jeff Mauney. The cost could range between \$7-\$8 million.

City Manager Marilyn Sellers said she was pleased that the library board "understands our constraints in the budget."

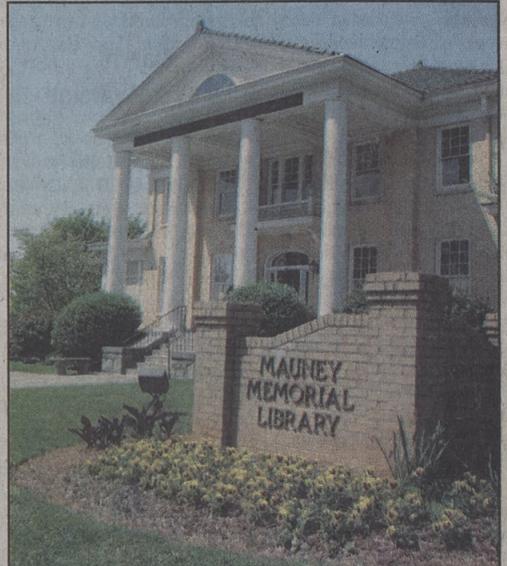
Librarian Sharon Stack added, "There is true passion that exists in Kings Mountain for our library service," noting that the library served 88,000 visitors last year.

Mauney said the library board visited 14-plus libraries recently. Next step in the process is a site analysis, securing 3-5 acres of land, drawing a building plan/conceptual rendering, and ultimately starting a major funding campaign.

Other members of the library board of trustees include Robert Curry, vice-chairman; Stella Putnam, secretary; Marie Brinkley, Miriam Goff, David



KYRA ALEXANDER/HERALD
 Tillie Hogue of Kings Mountain reads a book at Mauney Memorial Library while her son plays during his Spring Break.



Children's Librarian Christi Conner, and assistant librarians Ann Gamble, Summer Kelly, Margot Plonk, Mari Slaughter, and Susan DeVane, Mary Lou Ware, Dr. Larry Allen and Susan Champion. Officers are Director Sharon Stack, Children's Librarian Christi Conner, and assistant librarians Ann Gamble, Summer Kelly, Margot Plonk, Mari Slaughter, and Susan DeVane. Officers are Director Sharon Stack, Children's Librarian Christi Conner, and assistant librarians Ann Gamble, Summer Kelly, Margot Plonk, Mari Slaughter, and Susan DeVane.

See LIBRARY, 7A

Senate takes aim at gun law

Concealed weapons class open to public this Saturday

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The Second Amendment to the United States Constitution says it simply: "the right of the people to keep and bear arms, shall not be infringed." But for many years in North Carolina, firearms have been banned from public premises.

That may change soon. Rep. Kelly Hastings (R-Cleveland, Gaston) co-sponsored a bill with Rep. Mark Hilton, a police officer in Conover, Rep. Jeff Barnhart, CEO of Cabarrus Community Health Centers, and Rep. Fred Steen, a consultant in Rowan County, to allow concealed weapons in parks and restaurants.

The bill has passed the House and is coming up for its second reading in the state Senate. House Bill, 111, allows those with concealed handgun permits to "protect themselves and their families in restaurants" and to "carry a handgun in a park".

But would the extra presence of firearms pose a risk to public safety?

Some lawmakers and law enforcement officers don't think so.

"Criminals don't care what the law is. They will carry weapons anywhere they please," Hastings said. "I hope it will prevent law-abiding citizens from being charged and prosecuted and I hope it will allow people to protect themselves."

"I don't foresee a spike (in crime) or reduction if it's passed," said Sheriff Alan Norman. "But there again, the people

A concealed weapons class, which teaches firearm safety, handling, responsibility and usage, was held on April 9 and will be offered again this Saturday, April 23, beginning at 8 a.m. at the firing range off of Alex D. Owens Dr. The course is open to the public. For more information, call city hall at 704-734-0333 or the Kings Mountain Police Department at 704-734-0444.

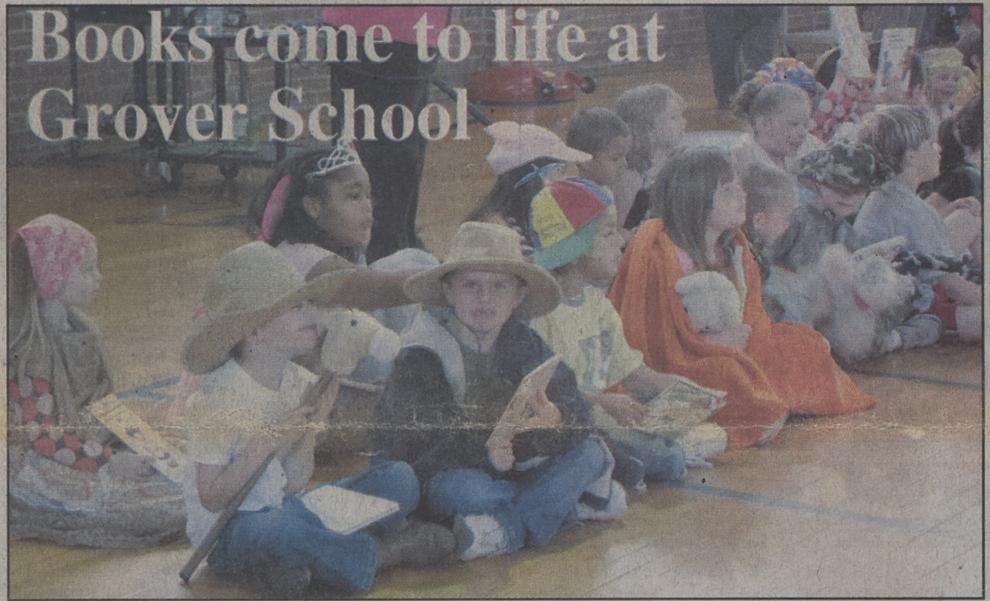
See GUNS, 7A



EMILY WEAVER/HERALD

Kings Mountain Police Cpl. Keith Davis, specialized firearms instructor, coaches Christina Hill, daughter of KMPD Officer Thomas Bell, in a concealed handgun class at the Kings Mountain Firing Range.

Books come to life at Grover School



KYRA ALEXANDER/HERALD
 First grade students at Grover Elementary watch book characters parade in the gym on Friday. MORE PHOTOS, 1C.

15th Annual Firehouse BBQ Cook-off Early signs of 'deadliest storm' doesn't wash away good times

EMILY WEAVER
 Editor

The grills were hot. The competition was fierce and so was the weather.

The city welcomed the most teams it has ever hosted at the 15th Annual Firehouse BBQ Cook-off last weekend.

But this memorable event didn't come without memorable challenges. Mother Nature's whims saw to that.

Fifty-two teams from as far away as Florida, Ohio, Tennessee and Virginia, migrated to the city's walking track off Cleveland Avenue Friday. They rolled out grills, set up camp and got ready for a great contest. On Friday night, the clouds rolled in, too.

Pyro Pigs of Indian Trail, Ga., came to the Firehouse Cook-off for the first time this year. The team captained by David Pressley, a firefighter of 35 years, was praying the storm would miss them Friday night.

"Who's in charge of this weather?" joked Pressley.

Hours after day gave way to night, the winds picked up



Alex Ranucci of Ranucci's Big Butt BBQ walked away from the Firehouse Cook-off Saturday with the Mayor's Choice Award and the top prize for the Anything Butt (meat) contest.

and the rain started falling first in drips, then in sheets. Heavy rain and strong gales stormed down on the contenders who camped by their grills.

Many sought comfort in campers or vehicles, but some braved the storm in tents.

The cooking team of Ranucci's Big Butt BBQ,

manned by Alex Ranucci, passed the night in a tent.

The wind and the rain was pretty heavy last night, the Ranucci team said on Saturday. But they managed, even with some occasional raindrops permeating the tent's rain guard.

Kings Mountain Fire Chief Frank Burns said that he pulled an all-nighter at the

track too on Friday, checking on the teams and keeping a "weather-eye" on the radar.

See COOKOFF, 6A



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