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They knew the risk, but believed in service



photo by LIB STEWART
 Faith Prine, 4, waves a flag and places a red poppy in Veterans Park of Mountain Rest Cemetery Monday morning at the Memorial Day community service of remembrance. Prine attended the service with her grandmother, Yvonne Furr.

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For many Americans Memorial Day is a welcome day off, the unofficial beginning of summer vacation marked with family barbecues and sporting events on big HDTV's.

But for families and friends of those men and women who died in our nation's service May 30 it is a day of remembrance - a solemn reflection of honor, sacrifice and duty.

American flags on the graves of fallen heroes at Kings Mountain's Mountain

Rest Cemetery Monday morning and the red lapel poppies made by hospitalized veterans and distributed by American Legion Auxiliary Unit 155 reminded the crowd that freedom is not free.

"We will never forget those men and women who knew the risk but believed in duty, honor, personal courage and loyalty," said Mayor Rick Murphrey, the speaker for the community-wide ceremony planned by the City of Kings Mountain. "Each one is a life

See MEMORIAL, 7A



photo by KYRA ALEXANDER

Jane Gulden plays "Amazing Grace" on the bagpipes while the KMPD Honor Guard stands at attention.

Family, friends mourn loss of great lady in wake of tragic wreck

EMILY WEAVER
 Editor

Cup and Saucer Tea Room owner Mary "Alice" Armstrong loaded her car with one of her mouthwatering homemade cheesecakes and other freshly-baked desserts Thursday morning and headed out to her mailbox. It would have been a morning like any other, except...it wasn't. Before she crossed the street her life came to a tragic end.

The many people whose lives she touched in her 74 years were shocked and saddened by the sudden loss of such a dear woman. She was the "muffin lady", the "card lady", the tea queen, and the "prayer warrior".

Alice brought food to the sick and to the grief-stricken. She comforted the weary and called out to the lost. She rooted for the underdog and became a fan among inmates she cooked for and prayed for in Lincoln County. Alice was a great cook, a friend to many and a wonderful mother, whose heart seems to have been devoted to service and whose strength was emboldened by faith.

There is no doubt in her sons' minds where she is today. Alice is with the Lord they said and they should know - all three of her living sons are pastors.

Alice was crossing the street in front of her Bessemer City home, when George Burgess, 56, of Kings Mountain came around the curve on Kiser Road. He was on his way to a relative's house when he saw Alice in the street. She froze. He swerved to miss her, but it was too late. The back tires of his Chevrolet truck caught her. She died at the scene.

The often busy Cup and Saucer Tea Room was quiet on Thursday. A bouquet of white flowers was posted near the door taped with a sign that read: "We are closed due to a death."

Alice opened the popular downtown lunch destination in 2000 after retiring from 34 years of service at Home-rite/John Deere.

"Sitting around was not her thing," said her granddaughter Kellie Duvall. "When she got this house it had a pool. You would've thought she would retire and swim, but it wasn't enough."

"She just had so much energy," said her daughter-in-law, Glenna Mann.

Many of her family members, including Kellie, Glenna and Kellie's mother Lori Mann, came to work at the restaurant over the years. Miniature muffins, homemade soups, made-from-the-best-scratch desserts, sandwiches, fresh fruit and, of course - tea - flowed from the kitchen to many happy tables.

Alice loved the Tea Room and although many customers graced the dining halls on regular occasions, the business wasn't immune to hard times. In the past



photo by REG ALEXANDER
 Mary "Alice" Armstrong inside the Cup & Saucer Tea Room.

few years, food prices have soared. Gas prices have climbed. Even the Great Recession came for tea. Barely making ends meet Alice was faced with tough decisions: shut down the restaurant or raise prices. Some of the customers, who knew of her situation, pleaded with her to stay.

"It would have been beneficial for her just to stop, but she would not stop because of the people," said her son,

See ALICE, 7A



\$34.7 million budget

City sets public hearing on budget June 20

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Kings Mountain City Council Tuesday night set a public hearing on the proposed 2011-2012 fiscal year budget for Monday, June 20 at 6 p.m. at City Hall.

Meantime, the \$34.7 million budget - an increase of \$1.5 million, is on the table for review by citizens. It calls for no increase in the tax rate, no electric increase, no water and sewer increase and no natural gas increase.

City Manager Marilyn Sellers said at last week's budget work session that no COLA or merit pay increases are projected for the 200 employees but the benefit package for employees will continue with health insurance and retirement benefits in spite of insurance increases and a 0.53% increase to the city in retirement contributions for regular employees and 0.63% for law enforcement personnel. She also said that no city employee has been furloughed in spite of a sluggish economy.

Sellers described the proposed budget as "lean and very conservative." She said the increase in the budget is due to increased costs to the city which are not being passed on to citizens.

See CITY, 6A

Baccalaureate service Sunday

Commencement exercises for 310 Kings Mountain High School graduating seniors will begin Sunday, June 5, with the ecumenical Baccalaureate service at 7 p.m. in B.N. Barnes Auditorium and culminate on June 9 at 8 p.m. with final exercises in John Gamble Football Stadium.

Rev. Eddie Gray, former pastor of East Gold Street Wesleyan Church and currently serving in Shelby, will deliver the sermon for the Class of 2011, which includes his daughter, Sarah.

"The Baccalaureate is a service of worship that gives thanks to God for the milestone that our seniors have reached and allows our churches and community the opportunity to honor the senior class and their families at this important time in their lives," said Rev. Jeff Hensley, pastor of Kings Mountain Baptist Church and chairman of the planning committee of the Kings Mountain Ministerial Association for the worship service.

The community-planned and mostly student-led event will feature students who volunteered to help lead the service, including Jessica Burton, Anthony Cedillo, Ashley Gilmore, Tanner Ross, Zach Smith and Brandon Sturgis. In addition to the three hymns that are a standard part of the service, the senior members of the Kings Revue will sing two selections.

"The annual Baccalaureate service is an important part of the graduation season here in Kings Mountain and we invite the seniors, their families and the community at large to come and worship with us," said Hensley.



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