

# Kings Mountain Herald

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## Suspicious fire under scrutiny

City firemen and police are investigating a suspicious automobile fire which happened Thursday night in a garage at 210 N. Piedmont Avenue.

Kings Mountain Fire Chief Frank Burns said the fire was "totally involved" when firemen arrived at the scene and found two vehicles and the garage on fire.

Burns estimated damages to the two cars and garage at \$15,000-\$20,000.

No injuries were reported. Firemen put out the blaze in about 10 minutes, the chief said.

A wood stove apparently sparked a fire and destroyed the kitchen at the Ronnie Philbeck family's home on Cleveland Avenue in Grover Friday morning at 11:30 a.m. Family members were not at home at the time. Four pets were rescued by firemen from Grover and Bethlehem Fire Departments.

## New kidney, new day for a happy Blanton

ELIZABETH STEWART  
lib.kmherald@gmail.com

Each day is a new blessing, says Freida Blanton, 51, a week after her successful kidney transplant.



FREIDA BLANTON

"I feel the best I've felt in years." The Kings Mountain woman said the years she waited for a transplant provided the most meaningful moments of her life. She appreciates the things she may have rushed through or put off before her life-changing experience. "I'm grateful for each new day."

Blanton is counting the days until she can get back to her activities at True Gospel Holiness Church and

See BLANTON, 7A

## 12 may face charges after recent sweep

House calls, a "knock and talk," is how Cleveland County Sheriff Alan Norman described the nearly two days that 14 officers spent in late January at 210 different locations in the county visiting registered sex offenders.

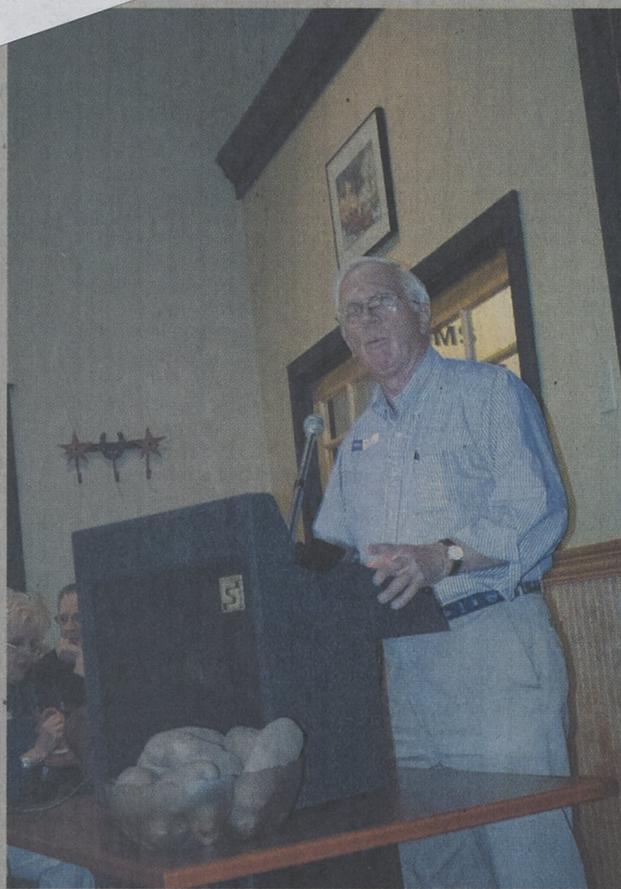
Norman said that 12 registered sex offenders could face charges based on the operation. They found several homes vacant where the offender was supposed to be, a person answering the door said the sex offender no longer lived there, or a listed address was a homeless shelter.

"We will be going back to some of the residences," said Norman. He said a similar operation will be conducted again in the Spring.

Deputies went to the homes unannounced and made sure that registered, sex offenders were living within the

See SHERIFF, 7A

## Feeding the Hungry



EMILY WEAVER/HERALD  
Doug Sharp, of the Cleveland County Potato Project, addresses a crowd at Western Sizzlin.

## Potato Project a growing blessing

EMILY WEAVER  
Editor

An idea that sprouted in a Sunday School classroom - to feed the hungry with locally-grown potatoes - is maturing into a cause that has spread far beyond those first few potato patches. Rooted in volunteerism and philanthropy, the Cleveland County Potato Project has touched the lives of thousands and its impact continues to grow.

Nearly 100 people crowded into

side rooms of the Western Sizzlin in Shelby Friday night to hear an update and give thanks to the project, now going into its third year.

In 2010, a volunteer labor force produced 30,000 pounds of potatoes and delivered them to the Kings Mountain Crisis Ministry, Greater Cleveland County Baptist Association, U-Can and the Salvation Army for distribution. Last year, the project raised 84,000 pounds of potatoes.

See PROJECT, 6A

## 64-year tradition

## Thanks started with a fire, continued with a fire

EMILY WEAVER  
Editor

For 64 years now, Kings Mountain men have been offering thanks to law enforcement and firemen over dinner. The annual tradition, often held around Christmas time, was started by the late L. Arnold Kiser in 1948 after a fire at his home.

Larry Hamrick, Sr., the late Senator J. Ollie Harris, and the late W.K. Mauney, Jr. carried on the tradition now continued by their sons, Larry Hamrick,

Sr., Johnny Harris and Kemp Mauney, and organizer Ronnie Hawkins. On Thursday night at Central United Methodist Church, the tradition that began with a fire was interrupted by a fire call.

Getting the call, KM firefighters left their plates and rushed to another rescue. And that's why we're thanking them, said Debbie Mauney, wife of Kemp Mauney.

See DINNER, 7A



## RECORD BREAKER

Eleven-year-old Caleb Sears broke a record last year, selling \$10,145 worth of popcorn for the Boy Scouts of America. - Page 6A

## Have you seen this man?



## Police seek help in nabbing suspects from two armed robberies Monday night

Kings Mountain Police need the public's help in apprehending suspects in two armed robberies that happened Monday night within a two hour period - one at a residence and one at a convenience store.

Det. Cpl. K. L. Hamrick said that police were called to a home at 125 N. Railroad Avenue at 9:10 p.m. Monday night where the occupant answered a knock on the door and permitted a man to enter to use the telephone. Inside the house, the black male brandished a handgun and demanded money. The victim gave the man money, was unhurt and the man left on foot. He is described as a 30-35-year-old black male 5'8" to 5'9" tall, approximately 175 pounds wearing a blue or black coat.

The second armed robbery happened at 11:30 p.m. at One Stop convenience store at 2120 Shelby Road. Police said the store clerk reported that two black males entered the store and one of the subjects produced a black handgun and demanded cash from the register. The clerk complied with the demands and both subjects left the business on foot, running toward the East 74 Bypass. There were no injuries.

Suspect No. 1 is described as a 20-30-year-old black male approximately 5'9" to 6 feet tall wearing a red shirt under a black coat with a brown fur-lined hood, blue jeans and tennis shoes.

Suspect No. 2 is described as a black male 5'6"-5'7" tall wearing a pink or red dress shirt with a red tie, dark colored pants and white dress shoes.

Anyone with information is asked to call the Kings Mountain Police Department at 704-734-0444.

## ANYONE'S GAME

## Perdue is not running, governor seat up for grabs

Politics is beginning to pick up steam with Governor Beverly Perdue's sudden announcement last week that she won't seek re-election in 2012.

Although no candidate has emerged as a front-runner in the Democratic Party,

Republican Pat McCrory of Charlotte opened his official campaign for Governor in Greensboro Tuesday. McCrory lost a close race for governor in 2008 to Perdue and has emerged as a front-runner for the GOP.

Democratic Lt. Governor Walter Dalton and Rep. Bill Faison have announced they are gubernatorial candidates in 2012 and several other

prominent Democrats have been mentioned in the media as possible candidates.

Filing for all local and legislative offices opens Monday, Feb. 13, at noon and closes Feb. 29 at noon in board of elections offices across the state.

May Primary elections are slated for Tuesday, May 8 with a second Primary election date of June 26. Voter registration deadline is April 13.



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