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HEY SANTA - Isabella Laughridge, 2, is awestruck with Jolly Ole Saint Nick at a local day care visited by Santa's Firetruck Express.
See more Sights of the Season on page 8A

Photo by ELLIS NOELL

A joyful season turns mournful

Area schools: emergency safety plans in place

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Due to the Connecticut school shooting, Cleveland County school leaders will be re-evaluating system-wide emergency plans at the next district work session.

"Any time something like this happens we get additional advice from law enforcement and review what we already have in place," Supt. Dr. Bruce Boyles said at Monday night's board of education meeting.

All Cleveland County schools have safety plans in place designed specifically for use in emergency situations.

Local school officials work with the county schools administration to develop emergency plans and they practice them throughout the year so that students and staff will know what to expect.

Schools work closely with local law enforcement agencies, including Kings Mountain Police, Shelby Police and the Cleveland County Sheriff's Department, all of whom are aware of the individual school's safety plans.

Security entrances have been created at all of the schools that include a patrolled access door controlled by staff. Each school and its entryway is also monitored with cameras.

Along with law enforcement officers stopping by some schools on

Monday, Kings Mountain High School students were signing a banner and cards of sympathy to be sent to the families of the Sandy Hook Elementary School shooting victims. At 7:15 a.m. today (Wednesday) the students and staff at KMHS released a balloon for each of the 26 victims on the front lawn of the high school on Phifer Road.

The Cleveland County Board of Education opened its Monday night meeting with a moment of silence in memory of the victims of the horrifying Friday morning attack by 20-year-old Adam Lanza, in a killing frenzy that also included his mother and himself.

"We work hard in our schools to keep all our children safe, and in Cleveland County we have incorporated best practices to do that by working with individual schools and with law enforcement agencies," said Supt. Boyles. He added, "We don't know why this tragedy happened but our prayers and thoughts are with the people in Newtown, Connecticut, we know they are hurting and we are hurting with them."

Funerals for two of the young victims were held Monday and more are planned this week.

The Associated Press reported that families in Newtown were already taking down Christmas decorations in this joyful season turned mournful.

Prayer vigil Saturday

A prayer vigil for the victims of the Connecticut school shooting will be held Saturday, Dec. 22, at 2 p.m. at Central United Methodist Church in Kings Mountain.

Harris Funeral Home and Central United Methodist Church are sponsoring the service to which the public is invited.

Rev. Rex Gibbs, Central Methodist pastor, and Rev. Tom Jolly, El Bethel-Grace United Methodist pastor, will lead the service.

Twenty-six candles will be lighted at the altar in memory of the 20 elementary school children, ages six and seven, and six teachers who were gunned down Friday morning at Sandy Hook Elementary School in Newtown, Connecticut, in the second worst school massacre in American history.

"We strongly believe that the faith community should come together for prayer for these bereaved families," said Eric Wright of the staff of Harris Funeral Home. "We don't know them but we know their hearts are broken."

The public is invited to participate in the memorial service.

Harris Funeral Home is also opening a register book for sharing your thoughts with the bereaved families in Connecticut. You can also share condolences by clicking on the website www.HarrisFunerals.com

The register book will be mailed by Harris staff to Honan Funeral home in Newtown with your messages and forwarded to families of the victims.

Christmas Eve services planned

Christmas Eve church services will highlight the Christian celebration of Christmas.

Three Kings Mountain Lutheran churches, Advent, Resurrection and St. Matthew's Lutheran, are planning traditional 11 p.m. candlelight services. The Advent congregation worships at H. Lawrence Patrick Senior & Conference Center.

The chancel at St. Matthew's will be decorated with a pair of Chrismon trees, white poinsettias, and an Advent wreath with a Christ Candle in the center, lighted at the point in the reading of Luke 2 when the Christ Child is born. Pew torches will be used. Holy Communion will be celebrated around the manger at the altar rail. Special music will be provided by the choir and familiar carols will be sung by the con-

gregation. Candle lights will be passed down each pew at the end of the service symbolizing the Christ Child coming to each of us. Pastor Setzer's sermon will be on "The Wondrous Gift." "Visitors are warmly welcome to join the congregation on this Holy Christmas Night," said the pastor.

First Presbyterian Church will hold candlelight communion service at 9 p.m. on Christmas Eve. Special music will be presented by the choir.

Dixon Presbyterian Church will hold candlelight communion at 5 p.m. Christmas Eve. Allysa Newton will sing "Happy Birthday Jesus."

Boyce Memorial ARP Church will hold Christmas Eve service at 7 p.m. After Lessons and carols, the congregation will light candles around a circle in the sanctuary and sing "Silent Night."

Amendment okayed

By a 7-0 vote Kings Mountain city council took the planning board's recommendation last Tuesday night and okayed a zoning text amendment which regulates permitted and conditional uses for public commercial multiple recreational and entertainment uses.

The amendment specifies for recreational/entertainment use, under residential setbacks, that public streets and right of ways edge shall be a distance of 100 lineal feet.

Councilman Tommy Hawkins made the motion to approve the text amendment, seconded by councilman Rick Moore.

Businessman Mike Brown, who is developing Hounds Campground, requested the amendment because currently there is no provision for multiple recreation in city ordinances.

The minimum standards for a private recreational complex of at least 40 acres includes: 50 foot setbacks along any commercially zoned property or a 100 foot setback along any residential property, or a 400 foot setback from any existing church or residence from any motorized vehicle (go-carts or ATVs) activity; screening; six foot fence around any go-cart course or track; any cabin occupancy restricted to no more than 21 consecutive days; hours of operation for any go-cart or ATV activity restricted to Monday through Friday from 9 a.m.-11 p.m. and Sunday from 1-11 p.m.; and parking as required in Article IV of the Kings Mountain Zoning Ordinance.



Ready to shine Christmas Eve

The 15th annual lumina service at Kings Mountain's Mountain Rest Cemetery is scheduled for Christmas Eve from 6 p.m.-midnight.

City staffers with the Kings Mountain Public Works Department will place 6,000 luminaries on graves in the cemetery and 1,000 luminaries on roads leading into the cemetery on Thursday and Friday.

Ricky Putnam, city public works director, said that volunteers are needed to help city workers light the luminaries beginning at 2 p.m. Christmas Eve.

Last year's event drew thousands of visitors to the cemetery to celebrate the Christmas season and to remember loved ones.

Admission is free but donations are accepted to defray expenses.

Luminaries shine around a statue of an angel during the 2011 lumina service at Mountain Rest Cemetery in Kings Mountain.

Library celebrates 75th anniversary

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Mauney Library took on a festive air Friday as head librarian Sharon Stack, her staff and visitors celebrated 75th years as a city department.

Cupcakes, balloons and party hats were being enjoyed by students from Heart 4 Homeschooling, directed by Cheryl Vagnozzi. The kids spent part of their

weekly community time attending the party.

Laid out to peruse—with protective gloves—were historical scrapbooks from the 70s, 80s and 90s, the original guest log book from the 1947 opening of the library, and the 1924 brochure of Mountain Rest Cemetery.

The Jacob S. Mauney Library is housed in the Hord mansion, built in the early

See LIBRARY, 6A



Historical Museum director Stephanie Walsh looks through the original 1947 guest log.
Photo by Wendy Isbell

Help needed to nab robbery suspect

Kings Mountain police are asking for the public's help identifying a man who robbed a drug store over the weekend.

Police said an armed man walked into the Rite Aid at 601 East King Street on Saturday and demanded a controlled substance (prescription drugs) from behind the pharmacy counter.

The man grabbed the medication and jumped into an older, dirty, white vehicle with dark paneling down the side and possibly a hubcap missing on the driver's side of the vehicle. Police said another white male was driving the car which left on Cleveland Avenue traveling north.

The suspect was described as a white man in his late 40's to 50's standing 5'7" to 5'9" tall and weighing 150-180 pounds. He was wearing a red baseball cap, black hooded sweatshirt and blue jeans, and brandished a



KMPD photos

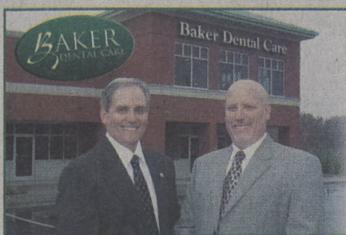


black in color semi-automatic handgun.

The suspect left with an undisclosed amount of medication from the pharmacy area, police said.

Anyone with information regarding this robbery is asked to contact Det. Cpl. K. L. Hamrick with the Kings Mountain Police Criminal Investigations Division at 704-734-0444.

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