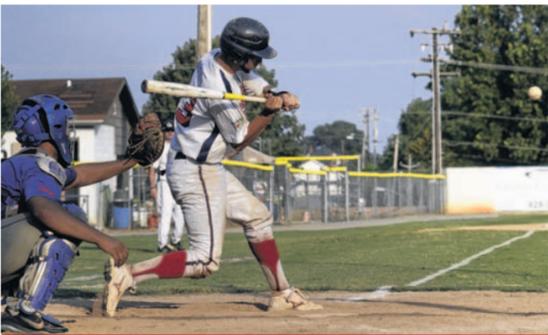


# HOW CAN YOU HELP A LOCAL INFANT WITH A BRAIN TUMOR?

Find out on Page 3A

# THE STAR

FRIDAY, August 3, 2012 SHELBY, N.C.



Post 100 looks to advance in state tournament **PAGE 1B**

75¢ Published for Kings Mountain's Carolyn Watkins and all our devoted Cleveland County area readers for 119 years.

## Longtime hardware store closing doors



Ben Earp/The Star

Betty and her son, Neal McSwain, owners of G.T. McSwain True Value furniture and hardware, stand in front of their store that is closing after 65 years.

### G.T. McSwain's says goodbye after 65 years in Boiling Springs

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Bright orange and pink stickers are splashed around the store advertising sales on everything from antifreeze to bug spray. Some shelves are already empty. After 65 years of doing business in Boiling Springs, G.T. McSwain True Value furniture and hardware store will no longer sell gardening tools, kitchen appliances or other odds and ends. The store, which has been run by three generations of McSwains, is scheduled to close by the end of August.

Neal McSwain, co-owner of the business with Betty McSwain, his mother, said low sales contributed to the decision to close. He said increased state and federal regulations have also made it more difficult for small businesses to thrive. The small town store remained busy Thursday afternoon with a steady stream of customers. Other loyal patrons expressed dismay on *The Star's* Facebook page about the closing. Barbara Little, a customer for more than 25 years, said she was shocked when she heard the news. "It's like family," she said. "Everybody knows G.T. McSwain's." Little said she first started coming to the store with her grandmother and mother back when

she was a child. She remembers when McSwains sold meats and other groceries. "I'm going to miss it," Little said. Neal McSwain said the business was originally owned by G.T. McSwain Sr. and his wife, Bertha. "They had a business before the depression in uptown Boiling Springs in the area where Webb Hall is now at Gardner-Webb," he said. During the depression years, the couple filed for bankruptcy. The McSwains didn't give up on owning their own business, and in the 1940s, he said, they re-opened on a corner in uptown Boiling Springs. When G.T. McSwain Sr. died, his son, G.T. McSwain Jr., and his mom, Bertha, opened up at the

current location in 1965. When his father died several years ago, Neal McSwain and Betty took over. He said people in the community will miss buying hardware at the store. "A lot of folks in the community are dependent on us," Neal said. The items carried in the store range from gardening tools and nuts bolts and screws, to heaters and sleds in the winter. "A lot of customers said they hated to see us go," he said. "It's been real pleasure serving the community." "I don't know how to express it, but we would like to thank the public," said Betty McSwain. She said leaving hasn't been easy. Alice Cullinan, retired Gardner-Webb University professor, said when she moved to the area to teach at GWU, she began shopping at G.T. McSwain. "I have bought furniture, lawnmowers, and appliances and everything in between," Cullinan said. "It has been so handy to be able to go there instead of driving all the way to Shelby. They have been a blessing to our community in so many ways."



#### READER RESPONSE

Readers on The Shelby Star's Facebook page shared their thoughts on G.T. McSwain's longtime service and closure. To join the conversation, "like" the Facebook page and follow @shelbystar on Twitter.

"Over the years I have bought furniture, appliances and odd and ends. It used to be half grocery store with a meat counter and that was especially convenient when my children were very small. I didn't have to drive all the way to Shelby to get what I needed! They knew me when I came in and called me by name. You don't get that at the chain stores."  
**Stella Rome Carroll**

"G.T. McSwain's has been an anchor store for years and years in Boiling Springs. That was the one place you could always go to find the things nobody else had in stock. Over the years, I have purchased groceries, furniture, appliances, hard-to-find hardware parts, lawnmowers and have even had my lawnmower serviced there. What will I miss buying there? I will miss everything about G.T.'s. I will especially miss the family-owned and -oriented business with that personal touch. It will leave a huge void in our town!"  
**Sally McGill Blanton**

"I will miss the personal touch you received at G.T. McSwain's. I really preferred it over any other hardware store. I hate to see it go."  
**Christy Hudson**

"We used to shop there when we attended GWU back in the early '70s. We lived in the duplexes behind the Methodist Church and used to walk there. Always wonderful service and people. Sorry to see them go. When I'm in town, I usually stop in."  
**Hammond A. Coates**

## Woman faces 55 counts of animal cruelty

Rescued cats, dogs, rabbits await vet's evaluation

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A 62-year-old woman who kept dozens of animals on her property near Boiling Springs has been charged with 55 counts of animal cruelty, according to Cleveland County Animal Control. All the charges Carolyn Kirby faces are misdemeanors. Animal Control officers hauled away 29 cats, 17 dogs and three rabbits from a College Farm Road home this week. At least one of the dogs removed from one of the outdoor kennels appeared to be suffering from heat stroke. Tripp Bowling, Animal Control supervisor, said Thursday the animals seized will be evaluated by a veterinarian. Bowling said none of the animals had died as of Thursday. Bowling said Animal Control's investigation is paused until a veterinarian examines the dogs, cats and rabbits and completes a report. Until the case goes to court, Animal Control will retain all 49 pets.

### Numerous animals, bleak conditions

Kirby is charged with keeping all the cats in various cages and carrying crates inside two

>> See ANIMALS/Page 11A



Brittany Randolph/The Star

A beagle mix sits inside a Cleveland County Animal Control truck as other dogs are taken from lots on a property near Boiling Springs on Wednesday.

## County's students improve but trail statewide marks

### State ABC report shows growth

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More of Cleveland County's students are meeting the state's changing expected growth standards and more are graduating. But compared to the state average, fewer Cleveland County public schools met expected 2011-12 growth standards in the state's final ABCs of Public Education report. Twenty-one of the county's 29 public schools achieved expected results for last school year, with 12 of those schools recognized for "high growth." More than 80 percent of schools statewide met expected academic growth. In the 2010-11 school year, 15 of Cleveland County's 29 public schools met growth standards, with eight classified as "high growth." "We're making good gains," said Cleveland County Schools Superintendent Dr. Bruce Boyles. "We had pretty good results in the past year." For the first time last school year, North Carolina posted an overall high school graduation rate higher than 80 percent. Cleveland County's overall four-year graduation rate also increased 4 percent to 77 percent, with Burns, Crest and Kings Mountain high

schools all posting increases. Shelby's graduation rate decreased by less than a half percent. "That's something we've really been working on in the last five years, the graduation rate," Boyles said. "We're at about 125 more students that are graduating now than were graduating five years ago. We still have too many (dropouts), but we're still making progress. You start with freshmen and work with them for four years." Nearly all the system's schools scored at least 75 percent or higher on a performance composite that measures how students perform in relation to what they should know based on their grade level. Three of the county's schools — East and Bethware elementaries and Cleveland Early College High — had more than 90 percent of their students score at or above grade level. The ABCs that have established reputations for which schools were failing and which were considered excellent is being replaced by a new accountability model, online testing and school ratings based on skills students need for college or work. Also starting next year, schools will be graded like students on an A to F scale. *The Associated Press contributed to this report. Reach Matthew Tessnear at 704-669-3331, at mtessnear@shelbystar.com or on Twitter @MatthewTessnear.*

#### GRADUATION RATES

North Carolina's public schools posted a collective graduation rate at 80 percent for the first time in 2011.

#### HOW DOES CLEVELAND COUNTY COMPARE?

- Cleveland County, 77 percent, up from 73 percent in 2010
- Burns High School, 82 percent, up from 77 percent in 2010
- Crest High School, 81 percent, up from 78 percent in 2010
- Kings Mountain High School, 86 percent, up from 78 percent in 2010
- Shelby High School, 75 percent, the same as 75 percent in 2010

#### COUNTY GROWTH RECOGNITIONS

- **Honor schools of excellence** (made at least expected growth, had at least 90 percent of their students' scores at or above Achievement Level III, and met all designated Annual Measurable Objectives)  
*Bethware Elementary, Cleveland Early College High, East Elementary*
- **Schools of distinction** (made at least expected growth and had at least 80 percent of their students' scores at or above Achievement Level III)  
*Grover Elementary, Kings Mountain High, Kings Mountain Intermediate, Kings Mountain Middle, Marion Elementary, North Elementary, Springmore Elementary, Union Elementary, Washington Elementary*
- **Schools of progress** (made at least expected growth and had at least 60 percent of their students' scores at or above Achievement Level III)  
*Burns High, Casar Elementary, Crest High, Crest Middle, Shelby Intermediate, Fallston Elementary, Shelby High, Shelby Middle, Township Three Elementary*

#### DEATHS

Lois Wilson, 86, Fletcher  
Ola Ruppe, 82, Rutherford  
Freddie Towery Sr., 68, Cherryville

Earl Dople, 64, Shelby  
Mary Wehunt, 90, Cherryville  
Marguerite McKee, 89, Kings Mountain  
William Berkowitz, 52, Hickory

Betty Navey, 80, Plainfield, Ill.  
Marvin Lee, 89, Newton  
Phillip Gordon, 57, Kings Mountain  
Cole Tate, 75, Shelby

■ See Obituaries, Page 4A

#### INSIDE TODAY

FAITH: Fiery new voice takes over Southern Baptist Convention **Page 6A**

Dear Abby	3B	Television	4B
Puzzles	4B, 7B	Debate	5A
Comics	4B	Classifieds	5-8B

#### TODAY'S WEATHER

HIGH LOW  
90° 70°

DAY OF YEAR  
216

NUMBER OF DAYS LEFT  
150

2 Sections  
20 Pages  
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