

# Bikers' Toy Run Gives Foster Children A Special Christmas

BY ERIC CARLSON

Santa Claus doesn't always wear red velvet and ride a sleigh pulled by reindeer.

Local foster children will tell you that he sometimes rumbles into town on a big shiny motorcycle, wearing a helmet and black leather.

About 50 "Cycle Santas" made Christmas a little brighter for 27 foster kids last weekend by taking them on \$100 shopping sprees with money raised during the second annual Brunswick County Motorcycle Toy Run.

Another eight children who couldn't attend the event will get their "wish lists" of Christmas presents later this week, said toy run organizer Jerome Munna of Shallotte.

"I was really overwhelmed with the support we got this year, especially from the business community," Munna said. "They were giving me checks without blinking an eye."

In all, the toy run raised about \$5,000 to help foster children and needy families throughout Brunswick County. Extra funds not spent during the shopping spree were put in a special bank account to help foster families with emergency needs throughout the year, Munna said.

Brunswick County's Department of Social Services and the Volunteer Information Center will identify recipients for the donations. Jamie Orrock, the county's DSS director, said the extra money couldn't come at a better time.

Foster care families get no additional monthly allowance from the state at Christmas time, so holiday spending is often tight. The Brunswick County Toy Run and the Fraternal Order of Police "Shop With a Cop" program in Southport are helping fill an important need, he said.

"I think this is one of the greatest things to happen for foster children in Brunswick County," Orrock said. "A lot of these kids didn't have a Christmas until they came along."

Money for the shopping sprees was raised through donations by 120 local businesses, entry fees from the motorcyclists and sales of commemorative T-shirts depicting Santa Claus waving from the seat of a Harley Davidson motorcycle. The back of each shirt displayed the names of business sponsors.

The bikers met at the Wal Mart parking lot Saturday morning for in-



**MOTORCYCLIST and Ocean Isle Beach Police Officer John Goodwin (at left, above) joins a local foster child for a snack after taking him on a \$100 shopping spree funded by the second annual Brunswick County Motorcycle Toy Run Saturday. About 50 bikers took part in an 80-mile ride that ended with a parade down Main Street, Shallotte (pictured below). About \$5,000 was raised for foster children through donations from participants and local businesses.**



structions and a moment of prayer before joining formation for an 80-mile ride to Southport, Belville, Supply and back to Shallotte. Officers from the Brunswick County Sheriff's Department and Shallotte Police controlled traffic at major intersections.

Returning to the starting point, the riders were met by DSS workers and foster families. Each of the 27 children was paired with a biker for a shopping trip through the department store's toy and clothing aisles. Each child was treated to free hot dogs and drinks at the store's snack bar.

"I think they did an excellent job," said foster care worker Iris Derrick. "They were very respectful of the foster families and the children's need for anonymity. The kids enjoyed not only the shopping, but also seeing the bikes and being with the bikers."

Derrick recalled chuckling at the sight of a big bearded biker with long hair and tattoos, wearing black leather and boots while holding several frilly dresses for a little girl making her shopping selections.

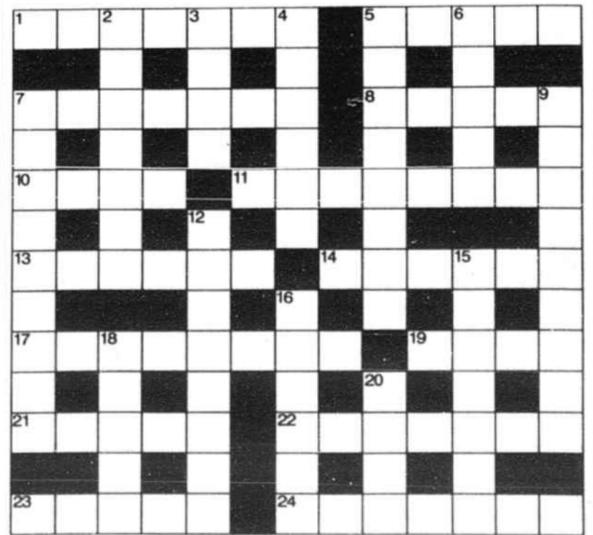
Some of the children were put into foster care with little more than the clothing on their backs, Derrick said. The foster families get only a limited clothing allowance, so new shoes and a few pairs of pants were sometimes more important to the children than toys and games.

"These kids don't live in extravagant circumstances and wouldn't get much extra for Christmas otherwise," Derrick said. "All of the money raised (by the toy run) goes straight to them. I just think it's great and I hope they do it again next year."

Munna said he has every intention of having the toy run become an annual holiday tradition. He plans to meet with co-sponsors from the Concerned Bikers Association of Brunswick County and the Blue Knights police motorcyclist organization to make next year's toy run even bigger and better.

"I just want to thank the entire community for all their support," Munna said. "It just goes to show how a small community can group together to do something that's really needed. They helped us all realize that the true reason for the season is giving. That's what the Lord asks us to do."

## WEEKLY CROSSWORD



### CLUES ACROSS

1. Endanger
5. Fire-raising
7. Recieve gladly
8. Inexpensive
10. Wreck
11. Nomad
13. Odium
14. Goad
17. Earthquake
19. Seaweed
21. Sinned
22. Model of perfection
23. Assisted
24. Shoulder piece

### CLUES DOWN

2. Fortuneteller
3. House cover
4. Lost time
5. Mishap
6. Blaspheme
7. Storage building
9. Fine china
12. Sent back to custody
15. Unlawful
16. Specimen
18. Leased
20. Region

(Answers are on Page 6-C)

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## Board Member Offers Tips For Teaching Professionals

Maintain a portfolio to depict professional development, document disciplinary actions and be very careful about unsupervised students.

Those were the suggestions new Brunswick County Board of Education member and retired teacher Pat Brown asked representatives of the Brunswick County Association of Educators at their Dec. 6 meeting to relay to all BCAA members.

Superintendent Ralph Johnston and acting principals' representative Ed Lemon also attended the meeting.

Brown said documenting disciplinary actions will protect the teachers and help administrators and the school board ensure proper procedures are followed, a BCAA news release said.

President Mary Yates, in her closing remarks, stressed the importance of keeping open lines of communication between the newly-elected school board and the association.

Johnston suggested he begin sending each school "board notes" after each board of education meeting to keep staff better informed.

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