

## A Miracle!

### Jack Jackson's Severed Arm Mending

By GARY STEWART  
Editor

Sherrill "Jack" Jackson, a 19-year-old Kings Mountain man who had his right arm literally twisted off when he caught it in a wrapping machine June 8 at Carmet Industries, considers himself lucky.

The accident, of course, was unfortunate, but Jackson said he's lucky to be alive and lucky to have his arm re-planted and in the healing process.

Jackson returned home over the July Fourth weekend after a month's stay at Duke Medical Center, where he has already had eight operations. The surgery to re-plant the arm following the accident took 12 hours and 10 minutes.

Jackson, who faces at least two more years of periodic trips to Duke for treatment and further surgery, recalled the accident and the past four weeks Monday while resting at the home of his parents, Stoney and Peggy Jackson.

He had just returned to work from a lunch break on Tues-

day June 8 when he reached above the spindle wrapping machine to get a hammer. The welding glove he was wearing on his right hand somehow was caught by an Allen bolt and jerked into the machine.

He couldn't reach the switch to shut down the machine, so he wrapped his legs around a bar on the lower part of the machine to keep it from pulling his entire body in.

A man who was working with him attempted to turn the machine off, but he slipped and was slightly injured. Another man working nearby saw what had happened and hurried over and turned the machine off.

Luckily, Jackson was running the machine at its slowest speed. "I had it in first gear," he recalled. "If it had been in second or third gear, it would have jerked me all the way up in it and killed me."

The machine caught Jackson's arm just below the elbow and in its wrapping motion was literally twisting his arm off. Luckily, his shirt acted as a tourniquet and

kept him from bleeding to death.

What transpired afterward—good timing and fast action of rescue personnel, physicians and nurses and the help of a good friend who loaned the family a helicopter and pilot—saved Jackson's arm.

Kings Mountain Rescue Squad personnel quickly came to the scene and cut Jackson out of the machine. From the time of the accident until the time he was rescued was 45 minutes.

Jackson, who remained conscious throughout the ordeal, could see that his arm was barely hanging by some skin. "The first thing I told the man from the rescue squad when he came in was that I was going to lose my arm," he recalled.

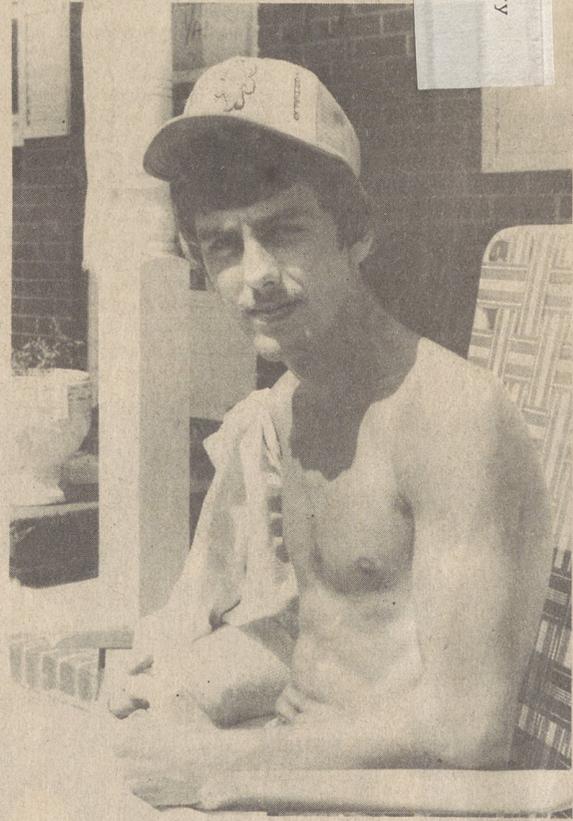
He was rushed to Kings Mountain Hospital, where Dr. George Plonk finished taking the arm off and stopped the bleeding. In addition to having his arm twisted off, he also suffered severe breaks in the shoulder area and had every muscle and leader damaged from the shoulder down.

Dr. Plonk also contacted Duke Hospital and got instructions on how to package the arm for transport there.

Meanwhile, Carl DeVane of Kings Mountain, who works for Reeves Brothers, offered the use of his company's helicopter to fly Jackson to Durham. Jackson left Kings Mountain at 3 p.m., met the helicopter in Gastonia and was in Durham at 4:15. He went into surgery at 5:35 p.m. Tuesday and returned from surgery at 5:45 a.m. Wednesday.

"To me, the doctors at Duke, the good time that the Kings Mountain Rescue Squad made, and Carl DeVane and the pilot by getting him up there, are going to make the difference in whether or not his arm is saved," Stoney Jackson said.

One of the rear seats in the four-seat helicopter was removed so the stretcher could be placed. Vickie Putnam, a nurse at Kings Mountain Hospital, was instructed by Dr. Plonk to make



Jack Jackson

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## City Clamps Down On Late Payments

By GARY STEWART  
Editor

When Melva Huffstetler of Kings Mountain came home from work Tues., June 29, she had no power.

She went to the breaker box, flipped several breaker switches, and nothing happened. She checked with neighbors to see if they had power, and they did.

She then called her husband, Roy, to see if he'd paid the power bill, and he said no. He had written the check two weeks earlier when the power bill was received, but had laid it on the mantel and forgotten about it.

The Huffstetlers were one of several families in the city which had their power cutoff last week. And most of them were upset about it.

Mrs. Huffstetler, who acknowledged that she had made a mistake and the city had a legal right to disconnect her power, was upset that she wasn't contacted personally beforehand and that, after going to city hall and paying the \$111.32 bill, she had to return home and get \$10 more and go back to city hall and pay that money before hav-

ing power restored.

The \$10 fee is a penalty which the city charges to cover the costs of two trips—to disconnect and re-connect power.

Mrs. Huffstetler was also upset because she said she called the office of Mayor John Henry Moss twice Tuesday and three times Wednesday, leaving word for him to call her, but that he did not return the calls until Thursday afternoon.

Mayor Moss and City Treasurer Joe McDaniel said late payment of utility bills is an old problem in the city, and because of demands of early payment from its power suppliers—Duke Power and Transcontinental Gas Pipeline—it has become necessary for the city to more strictly enforce its policy.

City utility bills are mailed on the last day of the month and received by customers on the first day of the month, McDaniel explained. All payments, as specified on the bill, are due by the 15th.

McDaniel said all persons who have not paid their bills by the

15th are put on the power "cutoff" list and are subject to having their power disconnected. Before disconnecting power, however, the city places a yellow ticket on the door of the customer notifying the customer that he has four days to pay or power will be disconnected.

"That doesn't mean the power will be cut off in four days," McDaniel said. "By the time the man tickets all the doors and then goes back and starts disconnecting power, many of the customers come in and pay their bills. But it does mean that if your door is ticketed, you are subject to having your power disconnected."

Last month's cutoff list—which was for power consumed in May—contained 40 8½ by 11" pages of names with bills amounting to \$260,000. Bills for the month came to \$700,398.22.

"I'd say 80 or 85 percent of our customers pay on time," McDaniel said. "But if everybody wanted to wait until the 25th to pay, we'd never be able to make payroll."

McDaniel estimated the city loses \$7,000 to \$9,000 a quarter

because people move away without paying their utility bills.

"Basically, I think most people can pay their utility bills," McDaniel said. "But we hold bills for sickness and a lot of reasons. If someone has extenuating circumstances, all it takes is for them to come by or phone us and explain the situation."

Many of the customers on the cutoff list have been "carried" for several months, but with good reason, McDaniel and Moss said. Businesses had late bills totalling from as little as \$50 to more than \$2,300.

The business which owes the \$2,300 is currently operating in chapter 11 of bankruptcy, and the city cannot collect that bill until the courts act. All power the company consumes since the date of bankruptcy is payable, they said.

Another business with a bill of \$1,239.46 is being allowed to pay some each month until the debt is paid, through an arrangement with Mayor Moss.

McDaniel said he is willing to work with any individual or company facing a hardship, but in matters where someone "simply doesn't want to pay his bills, I send him back here to the mayor."

"The only thing we want to do is to keep the cash flow going," McDaniel said. "If we're billing \$750,000 a month and everybody wants to wait until the 25th to pay, we can't meet our payroll and pay our suppliers."

"Everybody that comes in is listened to," Mayor Moss added. "We have never refused to talk to anyone."

As for persons like the Huffstetlers—who McDaniel called good customers who just happened to forget to mail their power check—having their power cutoff, the city can only apologize.

"It's possible our man for some reason did not ticket their door, or for some reason it was ticketed and was lost before they got it," McDaniel said. "I wish I could say 'don't ticket this house, because they're good people', but it doesn't work that way. If we concentrated on one area of town or didn't ticket some people because they're good people, we'd really be in for problems."

Mrs. Huffstetler said if this had happened a year ago, she probably would have paid the bill and penalty and not said a word.

But, she said, she has a baby which suffered brain damage at birth, and its formula must be heated to a certain degree, and when she couldn't heat its food last week because of a lack of power, she couldn't keep quiet.

"I'm heartsick over this," she said. "It was just a simple matter of forgetting. It's not that we couldn't pay. It made me sick to know that we live in a town that would be this heartless."

McDaniel, who was out of the office when Mrs. Huffstetler came in to air her complaint and pay her bill, was contacted later by Mr. Huffstetler, who explained the situation. "I offered right then to have the power restored, but by that time Mrs. Huffstetler had already made the payment and the power was back on."

"This is one of the most unpleasant jobs on God's earth," he went on. "Believe me, we don't like to turn people's power off. If everyone paid on time, we'd have the easiest job in the world."

Mayor Moss said the city's policy of hanging tags and giving a four-day cutoff notice is a good one. "But we've learned that some people just aren't going to pay until you hang the tag."

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## Citizens Don't Appear For KM Public Hearing

By CATHY MCDANIEL

A public hearing was conducted Wednesday, June 30, in the Commissioner's Chambers of City Hall for the purpose of allowing Kings Mountain citizens the opportunity to express their opinions on how Community Development Block Grant funds the City has applied for should be spent.

Mayor John Henry Moss read the four categories under which the City is considering spending the funds to an empty Councilroom, however, as no citizens attended the noon hearing.

The four categories being considered by the City and examples of eligible projects under each of them are as follows:

**Community Revitalization Projects**, designed to improve, preserve or develop residential areas. Examples of activities being considered under this category include housing rehabilitation; development of open space; comprehensive treatment of neighborhood deficiencies; and neighborhood centers.

**Economic Development Projects**, designed to promote the creation of jobs, enhance income levels, provide opportunities for local ownership or support economic services essential to the vitality of the community. Examples of activities being considered under this category include provision of public facilities for employment, training, and business development; financing working capital, machinery or buildings for profit-making businesses to create new jobs; and capitalizing a local development corporation to help expand existing businesses.

**Development Planning Projects**, designed to help develop projects that can be considered for future funding through CDBG. Examples of this include economic development and energy conservation.

**Urgent Needs**, designed to meet certain community development needs that have a particular urgency because there is a threat to the health and welfare of the community.

Grants given under this category must meet needs that demonstrate unusual or pressing needs not addressed in other categories or that demonstrate creative approaches to community development needs that can serve as a model for other North Carolina communities.

In a budget-amending action also taken up at the hearing, the Board voted unanimously to distribute \$330,283 from debt service fund to the following accounts in the utility fund: gas bond principal \$10,000, gas bond interest \$2,610; water and sewer principal \$189,000 and water and sewer bond interest \$127,673. Interest income of \$1,000 was also transferred.

An additional public hearing will be held July 12 at 7:30 p.m. in order to accommodate those citizens unable to attend the June 30 hearing. Mayor Moss expressed his hopes that citizens will attend this hearing, and added that he is willing to discuss the projects with citizens and take their suggestions at any time.

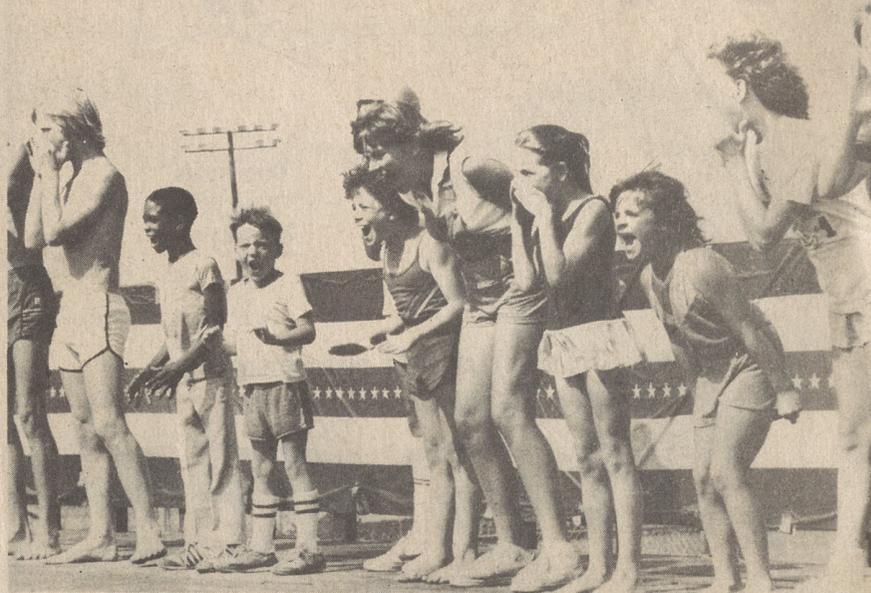


Photo By Gary Stewart

**FOURTH FUN**—A group of area youngsters pictured above competed in a hollering contest during the city's Fourth of July celebra-

tion Saturday at the Community Center. More photos are on page 10-A.