



Fred Kirby And The Little Rascals

In This Area, Fred's A 'Star'

Got a letter just this morning,
It was postmarked Omaha.
It was typed and neatly written,
Offering me this better job.
Better job and higher wages,
Expenses paid and a car.
But I'm on TV here locally
And I can't quit I'm a star.



Gary Stewart

I come on TV agrinning,
Wearing pistols and a hat.
It's a kiddie show and I'm a hero
Of the younger set.
I'm the number one attraction
In every supermarket parking lot.
I'm the king of Kansas City.
No thanks, Omaha, thanks a lot.

Change the names of the towns and the two verses from Roger Miller's country hit of several years ago, "Kansas City Star", would be the perfect description of Fred Kirby.

The ageless singing cowboy from WBT and WBTV in Charlotte has spent his lifetime (up to this point) entertaining youngsters on his weekly TV show on Channel Three, fighting the Indians at Tweetsie Railroad and doing charity work around the Carolinas.

Mention the names of world leaders and some people in this part of the country might have a puzzled look. Mention the name Fred Kirby and they'll all know who you're talking about.

Kirby's entertainment career began on WBT with the "Briarhoppers" even before television came on the scene. For over 20 years he brought us the Little Rascals on Channel Three and most recently has hosted Fred Kirby's Ricochet Roundup each weekend.

"I brought you up," Kirby told me recently when he paid a visit to the Kings Mountain Convalescent Center to entertain while patients there held a Rock N Roll Jamboree, "And everyone else under 50."

Indeed.
A weekend wouldn't be complete for a youngster if he couldn't get up early, turn on Fred Kirby, and

sing along as Fred strums his guitar and gives the high-sign.

Back in my Little Rascal days, Fred had a Little Rascal's Club. Just for the writing, one could get an official membership card and an 8 x 10 picture of the Little Rascals, and both, signed by Fred.

The only thing that could top that was Fred's Saturday morning visits to the local theatres. He'd sit at a table in the lobby and sign autograph after autograph and spoil every child that came by. Later, he'd jump up on stage with his old guitar and sing about his horse Calico, the Little Rock Candy Mountain, Atomic Power, and other goodies. And, after that, several Little Rascal films.

His Saturdays now are spent at Tweetsie Railroad where youngsters get just as big a kick out of seeing him fight the Indians and sing while riding on the back of the train. And, to have your picture made with Fred is a priceless possession.

Fred is a genuine hero. There's nothing phoney about him. His true colors come out just as bright in his charity visits as on his TV programs.

"I'm a Christian," Fred said during his visit here. "If I weren't I wouldn't be here. I love everybody. I might not approve of someone's ways, but I still love everybody."

He went on to tell of his younger days as the son of a preacher, and how many of his songs, especially the religious numbers, were inspired by God.

He's truly a "star."

EDITORIAL OPINION



Reallocation Of Tax Money Would Put Burden On Towns

Just about every municipality in Cleveland County, including Kings Mountain, has registered displeasure and resolutions of protest with the county board of commissioners about a recent suggestion by Chairman Jack Palmer that the county look into distributing the sales tax differently.

Mayors throughout the county say the proposed change, which, in effect would send a big hunk of sales tax money the towns are now getting into the school system, would leave their towns in a mess.

Towns in Upper Cleveland could lose their only source of revenue. Kings Mountain currently receives \$40,000 annually from this source.

Under a 1972 law, N.C. counties can either distribute sales tax revenue to their communities on a population basis or on a basis of how much local property tax the communities collect. Cleveland County opted to distribute the money by population, as do 63 other counties, including Catawba, Gaston, Iredell and Lincoln counties. Some 36 of the state's 100 counties, including Mecklenburg, Cabarrus and Union counties, base distribution on local taxes.

The switch would mean that Cleveland County could make a bundle at the expense of the communities.

If the commissioners make the switch, state law requires them to notify the N.C. Revenue Department in April if the change is to become effective this year.

Reallocation of tax money is an important step which we hope the county board of commissioners will take a long, hard look at before switching a long-standing policy which is an incentive for growth for our small towns and municipalities a change would put a burden on all of us.

Weather Good For Sailing Into Wild Blue Yonder

The calendar says it's mid-February, but nobody believes it! Hasn't the past few days of summertime weather been a well-deserved change? T-shirt weather, short sleeve weather, spring fever weather, whatever the label, I hope it stays around a while longer.

If there ever was a day for perfect flying weather, Saturday was it and I couldn't back down from a story I had planned for this week's Herald on Kings Mountain's two newest women pilots, April Brown Morris and Tencie Eubanks Rhea. What better way to do a story than to take a ride in a two-seater Cessna which students use at Shelby Aviation School to learn to fly? Ronnie Hawkins, of Harris Funeral Home, and a veteran pilot himself, had given me the story tip and had offered to take me up when I got up enough nerve. Saturday's beautiful weather helped me decide to take Ronnie up on his offer to soar the wild blue yonder.

It was quite nice, actually, and I was amazed that a small plane can fly so smoothly and that the pilot can take off and land so smoothly. I have been on much rougher rides in a big jet.

We flew below 3,000 feet around the Shelby-Kings Mountain area, over our farm in the Dixon Community (nobody came out to wave at us because they didn't believe it was me and over the KM Country Club Golf Course where our General Manager Darrell Austin and other golfers were enjoying the sunshine. ("D" didn't wave either). We got a good view of the entire area and if we had taken a picture the scenery would have been magnificent. However, my brother, Gary, who is the expert photographer on the staff, had told me that a pilot would have to dip the wing in order for someone in the co-pilot's seat to get a picture from the air. There was no way I'd try that! When I fastened my seatbelt, I had warned Ronnie that if we hit any bumps or he made any fast turns or maneuvers in the air, he might lose his passenger.

I've never experienced air sickness but I could envision the door of that little plane coming open and Lib falling out over muddy Moss Lake.

The fact that the pilot uses his feet so much in the operation of a



Lib Stewart

plane was fascinating. April Morris was explaining that in the air the wheel controls the wings and the pilot uses his feet on the ground when the control wheel is not effective. She also told me, after I was back on the ground, that her door actually came open to her second lesson in the pilot's seat.

Ronnie explained that the student pilot has to learn there are air-waves for pilots just like road maps for those operating ground transportation.

Flying in a small plane at a low altitude gives the passenger a chance to enjoy the scenery. Saturday's first ride in a small plane made me realize I felt no different than I do in a big plane which Arlene Barrett and I plan to take to Washington, D.C. Tuesday. I always feel better after I get back on the ground.

Next time we'll take Gary along and he can make the pictures.

LOOKING BACK

From the Thursday, Feb. 26, 1953 edition of The Kings Mountain Herald.

The city planning board has unanimously asked Cleveland County Rep. B.T. Falls, Jr. to introduce legislation to provide a special municipal election on the question of adoption of a city manager form of government.

Mrs. J.C. Nickels was honored by the Park Grace Elementary School P-TA for 26 years service to the school at the regular Monday night meeting of the group at the church.

Kings Mountain Radio Station WKMT will tentatively go on the air March 11, according to announcement by John C. Greene, co-owner and manager of the station.

Mr. and Mrs. Marriott Phifer announce the birth of a daughter, Tuesday, Feb. 25th, Gaston Memorial Hospital.



PHOTO BY LIB STEWART

ENTERTAINS LIONS - Kathryn Hamrick of Boiling Springs, newspaper columnist, is pictured with Lion Edwin Moore, right, and

District Governor Rudy Topping at the recent Valentine ladies night banquet of the civic club.

Kings Mountain Herald

PUBLISHED EACH THURSDAY

GARLAND ATKINS
Publisher

GARY STEWART
Managing Editor

DARRELL AUSTIN
General Manager

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MEMBER OF NORTH CAROLINA PRESS ASSOCIATION

The Herald is published by Herald Publishing House, P.O. Box 752, Kings Mountain, North Carolina, 28086. Business and editorial offices are located at Canterbury Road-East King Street. Phone 739-7496. Second class postage paid at Kings Mountain, N.C. Single copy 25 cents. Subscription rates: \$10.40 yearly in-state, \$5.20 six months, \$11.44 yearly out of state, \$5.72 six months. Student rates for nine months, \$7.80. USPS 931-040.