



Gary and Rene Bingham stand in front of Bingham's race car which won big recently in two drag races.

KM's Bingham big hit in drag racing

Fourteen years ago Gary Bingham built his first race car, a 1969 Chevy II, from scratch and got the racing fever.

Since then, Bingham has won big in racing and most recently took first place in the Omaha, Nebraska Mid-American Nationals and first place in the Ohio World Nationals in his 1989 Cavalier Chevrolet.

"It's exciting," says Bingham, who races almost every weekend, accompanied by his biggest boosters, his wife, Rene, and their daughters, Christy, a seventh grader, and Lisa, a third grader.

Bingham's career took off at Burns High School, where he graduated in the auto mechanics class and fixed cars until 1984 for several dealerships before he opened his own shop with Len Hutchinson off St. Luke's Church Road. The firm is appropriately called C.A.R.S. for Complete Auto Repair Service. Hutchinson encouraged Bingham to race locally and go for the big time.

The years since have seen Bingham participate and win hundreds of races. The trophies and the cash go to the fastest cars. Gary estimates his speeds at 165 to 170 miles an hour in 32-car events which at times don't finish until the early hours of the morning.

Gary's parents, E.A. and Letha Bingham, expect to be tuned to ESPN September 18 to see the finish of the recent race at Larue, Ohio.

Bingham's major sponsor is Doug Herbert of Performance Parts. Associate sponsors are Eaker's Auto Parts, Phil's Starter and Alternator and Plonk Tire.

Bingham says that racing and keeping his car in shape takes most of his time off from the garage. He works nights to prepare his vehicle for the races, saying he feels safe behind the wheel of his car because he knows it's in top shape.

His wife agrees that Bingham is safer in a race with all the safety equipment and safety precautions than when he is on the highway.

Gary started drag racing at Mooresville and local tracks.

The multi-color Chevy he drives now was built by Bingham and Hutchinson who plan to race this fall in Chattanooga, TN, Eppings, NH, Bristol, TN and Darlington, S.C.

Gary says he has been lucky that only two accidents occurred during his long career and neither occurred on the track. Traveling home from a race in April 1987, Gary's tow truck was hit by a drunk driver. No one was hurt but the property damages were high. A second traffic accident that year totaled his tow truck and heavily damaged the enclosed trailer but the race car sustained only minor damages.

In 1990 Bingham made the Top 10 in racing, emerging as No. 1 in the Southeast.

A life-long resident of Bingham Road in the Mary's Grove Community, he is active in Mary's Grove United Methodist Church.

Dedicated, determined and persistent are three essential traits he would recommend to potential drag racers. He works at all three.

"Drag racing is a great sport. I believe in it," he says.

Recreation Activities

Kings Mountain Parks and Recreation Director David Hancock announces that the city will sponsor a number of programs in the coming weeks. Interested area residents may call 739-9631 or 734-0449 for more details on any activity.

Aerobics - Monday, Wednesday and Friday from 8:30 a.m.-9:30 a.m.; Monday, Wednesday and Thursday from 5:30 p.m.-6:30 p.m.; Monday, Tuesday and Thursday from 6:30 p.m.-7:30 p.m. Fees are \$10 for inside city residents and \$15 for outside city residents. Registration is between the first and 5th of each month.

Water Aerobics - Monday, Wednesday and Friday from 11 a.m.-12 noon; Tuesday and Thursday from 6:30 p.m.-7:30 p.m. Senior citizens pay \$10; inside city

residents and general public \$15; outside city residents and general public \$22.50. Water aerobics are held at Neisler Natatorium.

Holiday Decorating - Each class will consist of two hours of instructions in various items such as wreaths, swags, and table arrangements. Tim Hord of KM Florist will instruct and registration fee is \$15, plus cost of supplies. Preregistration is required. Dates of classes: September 15 from 6-8 p.m., September 22 from 6-8 p.m., September 29, 6 to 8 p.m.

Western Line Dance - The class from 7 p.m.-9 p.m. is held every Tuesday in October. New class members are welcomed each week. Cost is \$6 weekly. Instructors are Gene and Pat Brooks. Sign-up by calling 734-0449.

See Rec, 7-A

Henderson scores first hole-in-one

Rick Henderson of Kings Mountain scored his first hole-in-one last week, and didn't even see it.

His ace came on the 97-yard, par three 16th hole at Pine Mountain Golf Course. He used a pitching wedge.

"As soon as I hit the shot, I walked off the tee," he said. "One of my playing partners, Curt Gaffney, said 'that ball went in the hole.' He was the only one of the four that saw it."

Playing with Henderson and Gaffney were Charles Wilson and Marion Flowers.

KM volleyball team loses two matches

Kings Mountain High's girls volleyball team dropped matches to North Gaston and Mooresville last week.

The Mountaineers fell to North Gaston 4-15, 5-15, 15-5, 15-7 and 15-8; and lost to Mooresville 15-3, 15-10 and 15-13.

Coach Diane Bridges takes her ladies to Charlotte Latin Friday for matches against Latin and Country Day. They return home next Monday for a 4:30 match with North Gaston.

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Rodriguez Cherokee winner

Veteran sprint car driver Sammy Rodriguez blistered a field of 28 sprint cars to win the Bojangles American Winged Outlaw Sprint Car Association feature Sunday night at Cherokee Speedway.

At the drop of the green Taylor Andrews jumped out front for the early lead. Rodriguez came from his fourth starting position to pass Andrews on lap eight.

Andrews held on for second with Robbie Smith third, Willie Stauffer fourth and Red Stauffer fifth.

Rodney Goins held off a determined Lewis Clayton for the Bomber victory. Clayton crossed the stripe in second, followed by Johnny Hipp, Bobby Caldwell and Chuck Pearson.

Scott Spangler won a wild Stock Four race which saw over half of

the field taken out by wrecks and attrition. Mark Blackwell was second with Scott Ellis, Jimmy Hicks and Steve McIntyre completing the top five.

Saturday night's Labor Day doubleheader was rained out and has been rescheduled for this Saturday night.

FOOTBALL

From Page 4-A

"They have a good passing attack, but their philosophy is similar to ours. They throw it when they want to and not when the defense

dictates it."

Friday's contest is the first of three straight home games for the Mountaineers. After East Lincoln, they host Crest and Lincolnton before beginning their conference slate.

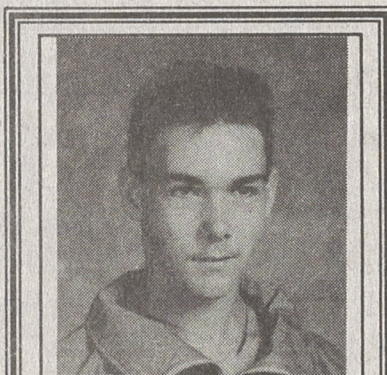
GOLF

From Page 4-A

Becky Johnson's 210 won second flight honors. She was followed by Debbie Sanders at 218, Susan Cloninger 232, Wanda

Howze 233 and Debbie Van Dyke 291.

Debbie Sanders and Susan Cloninger won the longest drive contests, and Shirley Austin and Mary Leigh Broadwell won closest to the hole honors on the par three holes.



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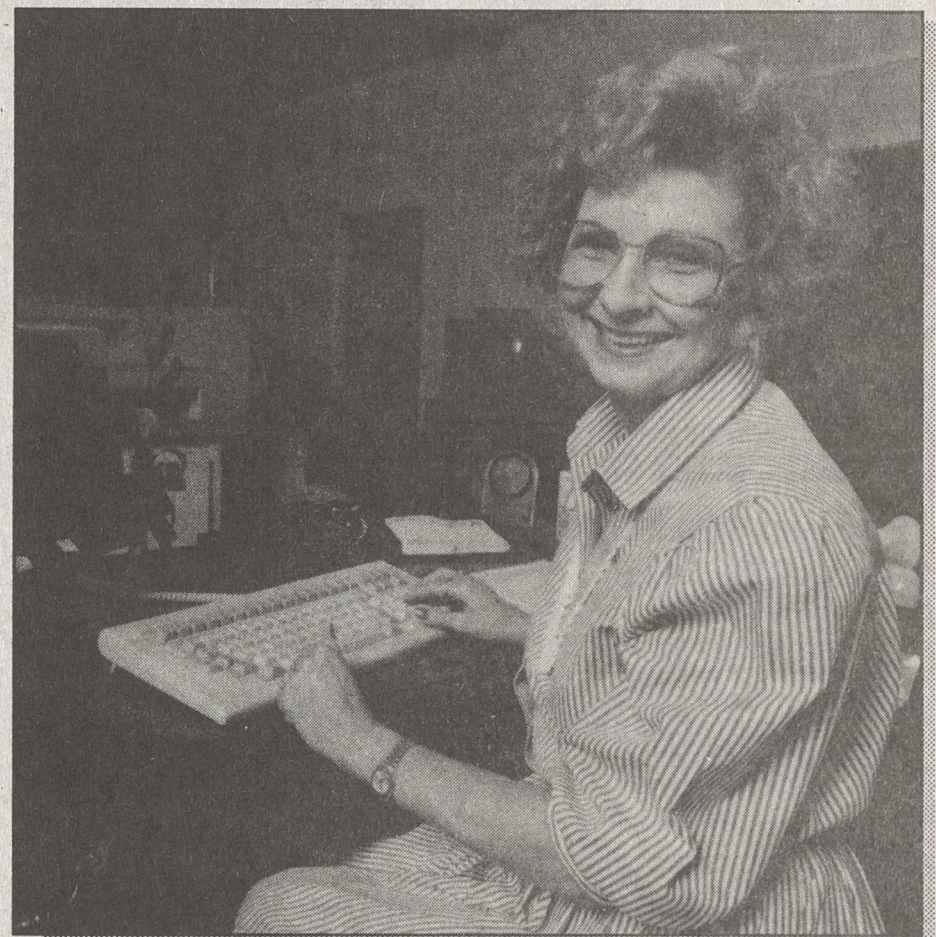
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