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Kings Mountain's cop dog Tank helps nab bank robbery suspect

Man's best friend turned out to be a bank robbery suspect's worst enemy last Thursday in Bessemer City.

Kings Mountain Police Department's four-footed cop, Tank, a German Shepherd trained by Ptl. Rena Rikard, flushed Fravier Ezekiel Clay, 22, from a drainage pipe under Ninth Street at Lee Street after a nearly six-hour chase.

"The suspect kept yelling for police to keep the dog away," said Rikard, who has been Tank's partner for 18 months. Rikard and Tank were called by Det. Rick Beaver of Bessemer City Police after a man robbed the First Citizens Bank a block away from the police station in downtown Bessemer City about 9 a.m. last Thursday morning.

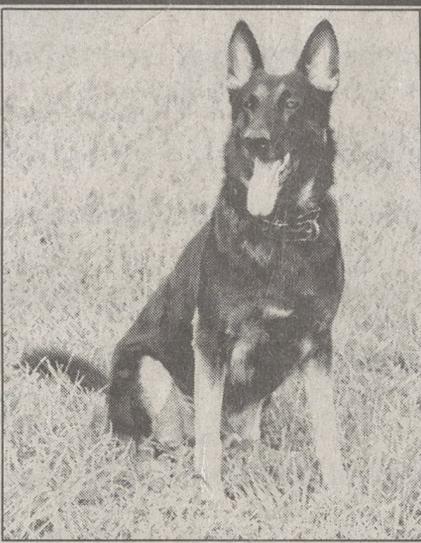
Rikard praised her canine for his work in helping nab the suspect but she had high praise for the two dozen or more Bessemer City people and the bank customer who helped hunt the man down.

Rikard said that the suspect fled, chased by a bank customer and off duty security guard Gary Grant who shot at him, city employees, police from three departments and Tank.

"The suspect ran, littering a trail of money," said Rikard. She said the man stopped at a woman's house three blocks away from the bank to telephone his mother and ran into the woods.

Rikard said the dog tracked the suspect to the creek and into the woods and followed the trail past an abandoned house through more woods, ending at a big drain pipe.

"He was more afraid of the dog than he was of us," said Bessemer City police chief Ken Hunsucker. When Tank started climbing through the long drainage pipe to reach the suspect the man started hollering to keep the dog away from him.



TANK

See Tank, 3-A

Hancock resigns recreation post

City Recreation Director David Hancock submitted his resignation to the City Parks & Recreation Commission in a letter Friday and formally at a meeting Tuesday night.

After five years in Kings Mountain, Hancock is returning to Elkin September 15 in a similar position. Hancock was recreation director of the City of Elkin, population 4500, for five years before accepting the position here.

"David has done a good job and started many new programs which we hope to continue," said Mayor pro tem Norma Bridges, Recreation Commission chairman. "We wish him well."

Bridges said the city will begin immediately to advertise in the North Carolina League of Municipalities Newsletter for a successor. She said the city is also advertising for a Community Center Supervisor to replace Tom Harris, who left two weeks ago after 5 1/2 months to take a teaching job at Shelby Middle School.

"The city has been fortunate to have had a director of David's experience to upgrade significantly both the physical appearance of our parks and the recreation programming," said Mayor Scott Neisler. The mayor said that during Hancock's tenure the city has upgraded and moved the playground equipment at Deal Street, put in a walking track, a restroom at the walking track, a concession/restroom facility at City Stadium and practice fields at several elementary schools.

The mayor said that the Deal Street pool has undergone repairs, the lake office procedures improved, including collections, and an agreement entered into with the KM District Schools for joint use of facilities, including Neisler Natatorium. Under Hancock's di-



DAVID HANCOCK

rection, the city has studied its fees and charges in depth and established clear policies on how the costs should be unwritten, said Neisler, who said the level of funding from Cleveland County increased to \$47,000.

In a memo to City Council August 19, City Manager George Wood announced Hancock's resignation. He said Hancock contributed to resolving the long-term versus short-term camping issue at Moss Lake and negotiated a contract for a restaurant located in the lake concessions building. He said the recreation department, under Hancock's leadership, coordinated the successful July 4 activities, Mountaineer Day, and the annual Christmas parade. He said the department was successful this summer, in the span of three weeks, to host both a district youth baseball tournament and the state tournament for the 9-10-year-olds in Dixie Youth Baseball.

See Hancock, 4-A

Jake Dixon is retiring

After 36 years with Home Federal Savings Bank, Jacob Dixon, 57, is retiring to make a full-time business of his picture-framing hobby.

The Kings Mountain native will end his service with the Bessemer City Branch, of which he is branch manager and Assistant Vice-President, on September 30.

"We are going to miss Slick," said Executive officer Nancy Scism. Scism said Dixon's expertise in the loan department and his long experience in banking has endeared him to customers and employees.

Dixon, son of the late former Mayor Kelly Dixon and Mrs. Dixon, joined Home Savings & Loan Association August 1, 1957. He was hired in the association's first office in Kings Mountain by the late A. Hunter Patterson. He was the only employee in the Bessemer City office for eight years after he became the branch manager in July 1958. He worked in three of that bank's branch offices in Bessemer City. It was during his tenure that the new building was constructed in 1972. He supervises a staff of four.

Dixon, who started off in the building and loan trade as a clerk, worked his way to the top of his profession. But, now he says he is ready to get into a field that has been his hobby for years, picture framing and calligraphy. He operates the business from his home on

See Dixon, 4-A



Five of the seven children in a happy Biddix family get together with their mother at the home of Teresa and Mark Lyons in the Bethlehem Community. Left to right, seated, Lisa Adkins and Regina Humphries; Back row, Teresa Lyons, Rodney Darrell Biddix, Faye Biddix Bell and James Donald Biddix Jr.

KM siblings reunited after 17 years

"Are you sitting down Mama?" the voice over the telephone shout excitedly a message that Faye Biddix Bell had prayed to hear for 17 years.

"We've found Jimmy and Darrell," said an emotional Teresa Lyons. "They're coming home."

Saturday was a joyous homecoming day for a Kings Mountain family separated 17 years ago when three of seven children of Faye and James Biddix were adopted. Lisa Atkins, now 25, lived in Hickory but kept in touch with her mother. Her two brothers,

James Donald Biddix Jr., now 23, and Rodney Darrell Biddix, now 22, were adopted by a family from Raleigh.

"We lost touch with the boys but I never stopped loving them and prayed every night that we would be reunited," said the tearful, happy mother.

"Our family's story has a happy ending even though we've had our share of tragedy," said the 49-year-old Bell. Her children's father died July 19 and her granddaughter one-month-old Alisa, daughter of Lisa and James Adkins, died July 22

while the family was in town from Lakeland, Ohio for the funeral of Mrs. Adkins' father. The Adkins family is residing with Faye and her husband, Isaac, on Route 3, Mary Grove's Church Road.

Lyons, of Bethlehem Church Road, continues the reunion story.

"Ten years ago we started searching for our brothers but got no where. After Daddy's death, we hired a private investigator and got a name and I made the call to Raleigh. I was so shocked when I got the person to person call from Darrell and Jimmy Friday night

that I was speechless," said Lyons. "I couldn't wait to tell my sisters and my mother who had gone fishing. I left word for her to call me no matter the hour when she returned home."

Lyons and Adkins and their sisters, Donna Camp of Shelby, Regina Humphries of Kings Mountain, and Debbie Slaughter of Charlotte quickly told other relatives who joined the family for a welcome home party Saturday afternoon.

Mark and Teresa Lyons and their four boys, Josh, Chris, James and

Nicholas put up a big sign at the entrance to Lyons Trailer Park and cousins baked a huge cake for a picnic hosted by Oscar and Eloise Jones at Lake Montonia. Before the boys arrived, their sisters made plans to entertain them in each of their homes.

"Those were hard times when my children were babies," said Bell. "I never wanted to lose any of my children but one day it happened."

Bell said some of the children

See Reunion, 3-A

Sale of paper rumor is false

Rumors circulating in the area that the Kings Mountain Herald has been sold and will cease to exist are totally untrue, according to Herald Publisher Bob Rop.

The Herald has received numerous phone calls from concerned citizens during the past week stating that a daily newspaper in the area has begun a circulation drive in Kings Mountain, and that one of that paper's representatives has stated that the Herald has been sold and will be closing its operation.

"The Kings Mountain Herald is not for sale and we have no intentions of selling the newspaper," Rop said. "We are proud to service the Kings Mountain area and plan to remain a vital news product of this community for a long, long time to come."

Republic Newspapers, Inc. has owned the Kings Mountain Herald since February of 1989. Republic also owns four other community newspapers in the area including the Belmont Banner, Mount Holly News, Cherryville Eagle and the Bessemer City Record.

Kings Mountain People



Former music teacher and Central United Methodist Church organist Myrle H. McClure is pictured at the church organ. McClure, who is moving to Virginia, will be honored by the church congregation at a reception Sunday afternoon.

Popular KM musician McClure retiring, moving to Virginia

Myrle H. McClure, retiring after 37 years as organist at Central United Methodist Church, was packing up her piano and her sacred and classical music this week.

The popular teacher and musician, who retired in 1980 as Kings Mountain public school music director, is moving September 8 to Chambrel Retirement Village in Williamsburg, VA to live near her two daughters. Nancy McClure is coordinator of secondary mathematics for the Virginia Beach School System and Joan McClure, formerly of California, is a technical publications manager.

The church congregation will honor McClure at a reception, open to the public, Sunday afternoon from 3-5 p.m. Earlier this month, her Sunday School Class, Daughters of Wesley, and the Choir honored her at special events.

Widow of Lithium Corporation mining engineer Joe McClure, the native of Middlesboro, KY was ed-

ucated at Virginia Intermont College in Bristol, VA and Oberlin Conservatory of Music, Oberlin, Ohio. She taught 10 years in Sweetwater, TN before the family moved to Kings Mountain and built a home on Crescent Circle and immediately became active in the Kings Mountain community and in Central Methodist Church. She directed the Central Choir for 27 years and before that was organist and choir director for two years at Resurrection Lutheran Church. She directed the Central choir of 18-20 members in special music every Sunday for 27 years. She has probably played the organ for nearly 2,000 worship services plus special events, weddings and funerals.

Myrtle Hubbard McClure started playing piano at the age of five and never stopped. Classical music is her favorite. Daughter Joan will sing two of her mother's favorite sacred selections, "How Beautiful

See McClure, 2-A