

Midwife Julia Roberts celebrates 86th birthday

3-A

Stop insanity in schools

4-A

Mountaineer sweep R-S Center

8-A

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HAPPY BIRTHDAY BILLY

Terminally ill boy spends third birthday in Charlotte hospital

Little Billy Bridges' Barney birthday cake was topped with three candles Tuesday and colorful balloons and Valentines made his Carolinas Medical Center hospital room a festive, party setting.

But the terminally ill boy didn't get to eat any of the cake baked by local nurse Jean Martin.

Billy's grandmother, Helen Barnette, said the boy enjoyed a brief celebration with her and her husband, Clarence, her daughter, Teresa Blake, and a few close friends.

"Billy has come a long way but he is very pale," said Barnette.

Billy Bridges' fight for life despite the odds have captured the attention of many people. His grandparents said doctors gave the boy little chance for survival when he was born three years ago.

Billy's most recent health problems began December 7 with an ear infection. He went into the hospital with double pneumonia and a contagious res-

piratory synthetic viral infection. Because his condition has required strong antibiotics to treat, Helen says Billy now has "slick bowels." Barnette said antibiotics cleared the bacteria from the bowels and that condition has complicated other problems.

Billy had been home only briefly since he went into the hospital January 16. "We took him home on a Wednesday and had to rush him back by ambulance on Thursday," said Barnette.

"He's been a really sick, little boy."

Barnette has taken a leave of absence from her nursing job at Kings Mountain Hospital and lives with Billy in a room for terminally ill patients and their families that the hospital makes available on Pediatrics' seventh floor. Barnette said a couch makes a double bed. A TV set, VCR and refrigerator are also provided for the patient's comfort. When Billy isn't sleeping Helen plays the Barney tapes he loves.

See Billy, 12-A



BILLY BRIDGES

Budget battle is heating up

Kings Mountain City Council has called a special meeting to discuss reductions in the budget for Tuesday at 7:30 p.m. at City Hall.

At the urging of City Council, department heads of the City of Kings Mountain are looking at their budgets and costs of running their individual departments with an eye toward trimming them.

City Manager George Wood said he is meeting with Department heads Friday to go over their suggestions for making cuts in their individual departments to come up with a shortfall of \$118,000.

Wood said at last week's City Council meeting that a delay in upping water and sewer rates to industry would cost the city about \$20,000 a month in revenues.

City industry has been singled out for the increase because it represents the largest share of Kings Mountain's water and sewer usage.

Representatives of Spectrum, the city's biggest user, have been most vocal in their objection to the hike.

Councilman Rick Murphrey, who is Vice-President of Sales for Spectrum, spoke against the rate increase at last week's meeting at which Council voted 7-0 to table a 9 percent rate hike to industry that was strongly recommended by Mayor Scott Neisler. The mayor's recommendation came after Wood presented three options for hikes to industry.

Murphrey suggested that Council take a hard look at every aspect of every job to make sure it is being run efficiently and make the reductions so that utility increases would not be necessary.

Neisler stated his support for the increase to close the gap and for an internal management study which he said should be handled by an outside professional. Council rejected the mayor's idea 6-1, saying doing a study was their job.

Adding to the controversy this week was the circulation of an unsigned letter from the Conservative Voters Organization to the mayor, city commissioners and the area media. The letter writer said cuts could be made by charging higher fees to Moss Lake residents, by assessing lake residents the cost of patrolling the lake and by cutting out payment of Council's insurance premiums.

The letter writer asked the Council to show citizens of Kings Mountain that they represent all the people, a campaign promise the letter writer said the new members of the board made when they were recently elected.

"Get a city map and review the city limits and the limits of your district," said the last line of the two-page flyer.

Spectrum '93 bill: \$2.3 million

"The public doesn't understand and I hope other industrial leaders will speak out at Tuesday's meeting of Council."

-Hubert Johnson

Spectrum Corporate Engineer Hubert Johnson said the industry pays the City of Kings Mountain \$2.3 million annually for utilities and another projected rate by Kings Mountain for water will raise what the company pays annually to \$162,000 for water alone.

"We can't stand any more rate increases and there are other industries in the same boat who will probably speak out at the next meeting of City Council," said Johnson.

Johnson said he has no "vendetta against the city over past business" but that companies must be competitive and industry has been raised by the city in double digits the past three years.

Johnson said Spectrum is a major natural gas customer of the city and spends \$1.16 million annually with the city for gas.

Spectrum, the biggest water user, spends \$1.18 million with the city annually for water, Johnson said.

"We are also a tax-paying citizen and paid over \$42,000 last year," said Johnson, who also is corporate engineer of Spectrum plants in Belmont and Hickory.

Johnson spoke against the proposed rate increase at last month's meeting of the city utility committee meeting. He was in the audience at last Tuesday's City Council meeting but did not address the issue.

"This is not an issue between Spectrum and the City of Kings Mountain," said Johnson, who says he has been bombarded with calls of criticism about his industry fighting the increases.

"The public doesn't understand and I hope that other industrial leaders will speak out at Tuesday's budget reduction meeting of Council."

"Spectrum plans to stay in Kings Mountain and remain a good customer and industrial citizen but it isn't fair that the public sees our concern for higher rates as an issue between just one company and the city," he said.

Walk America drive to begin

Kristen Gillespie's mother was told June 3, 1988 she was stillborn, by a doctor who was sure the baby would die.

But then the tiny preemie, one pound six ounces with feet the size of paper clips and eyelids fused shut, unaccountably started to breathe.

That was just the beginning of the miracle for now five-year-old Kristen, the first child ever to be named National "Special Ambassador" of the March of Dimes.

Kristen, daughter of Johanna and Richard Gillespie of Shelby, helped kick off the Cleveland County Walk America campaign for funds Thursday at a luncheon at Days Inn in Shelby.

Walk Day is April 30 but Honorary Chairman Jim Rennirt, plant manager of Kings Mountain's Eaton Corporation, said there's much work to be done between now and then. Theme of the

Cleveland County campaign, of which Isaiah Russell is 1994 chairman, is "Putting Our Best Foot Forward."

Rennirt said that Cleveland County citizens have an extra special reason to walk because of the spunky, healthy, normal Kristen. Mrs. Gillespie has been asked to testify before Congress for the new health care reform plan. Kristen and her mother will also travel for the March of Dimes and her parents will tell Kristen's story of how she beat the odds.

Volunteers from area business and industry at Thursday's kickoff watched a video presentation and heard Kristen's Story. Back in 1970s the March of Dimes spearheaded the effort that led to the development of intensive care units like the one at Carolinas Medical Center's Neonatal Intensive Care Unit that saved Kristen's life. That research and equipment was made

See Walk, 12-A



Jim Rennirt, Plant Manager of Eaton Corporation, and five-year-old Kristen Gillespie kick off the annual March of Dimes Walk America campaign.

Biddix Miss Teen finalist

Kings Mountain High School senior Jayda Biddix says she is looking forward to the opportunity of a lifetime when she competes in Los Angeles, California February 12-17 for the title of Miss Teenage America 1994.

The 17-year-old blonde, blue-eyed beauty was picked from 10,000 plus entries for the Teen Magazine-sponsored scholarship pageant which awards \$15,000 to one of 12 finalists.

Biddix won an all-expense-paid trip to Los Angeles and will be rooming at Beverly Hills Hotel Nikkop with Sharon Houle of Prospect, Ct. In addition to the pageant finals and interviews, she

will be treated to sightseeing and a trip to Disney World.

Although there is no talent competition, Jayda will be judged in formal wear. She will wear a black velvet sheath dress. The finalists will wear suits for judging sessions and press interviews. Her photograph will appear in the June issue of Teen Magazine.

Jayda has been a Teen Magazine subscriber for about five years and that's how she learned about the upcoming competition and sent in her entry. She watched for the mail every day and submitted more answers to questions when she was told she was in the top 300 and then in the top 46.

After writing an essay on "violence in the schools," she was interviewed by telephone and learned last week that she was one of the 12 finalists for the title. She received her airplane tickets and pageant information this week and had a call from her roommate and letters from the other contestants.

The recent earthquake in Los Angeles and its after-shocks have made Jayda's parents, Brenda and Jay Biddix, nervous about their only child making a trip 2,125 miles away. Jayda admits to some anxiety herself, after talking to pageant chaperones this week who told her

See Biddix, 12-A



JAYDA BIDDIX

Candidate filing ends Tuesday

Candidate filing for local and state political offices ends Tuesday at noon with the Cleveland County Board of Elections except for the office of Superior Court Judge, which has been extended to February 18.

This week three more Democrats entered the race for two seats up for grabs in November on the Cleveland County Board of Commissioners.

Incumbent Ralph Gilbert of Fallston was joined by political newcomers Bill Weaver and John Laughlin, both of Shelby.

Biggest interest in Cleveland County could be a toss-up between the race for sheriff of Cleveland and the two seats on the county commission.

The fate of the county commission race is now in the hands of a federal judge, who could order filing to be suspended.

Contenders for Sheriff Buddy McKinney's job are Shelbians Roy Blanton, Dan Crawford, J. D. Fish, Willie B. McIntosh Jr., Ron McKinney, J. C. Sanders and David H. Ware, of Lawndale, all Democrats, and Ward Kellum, of Shelby, and David C. Morrow, of Earl, Republicans.

The two-at large seats on the county board are now held by Democratic incumbents Joyce Falls Cashion of Kings Mountain and Gilbert. They are being challenged by Democrats Jerry Adams and Gene Willis, both of Shelby, and Republicans Norris G. Hastings of

Shelby and Robert Morgan Jr. of Kings Mountain.

In the N.C. House District 48 the three seats up for grabs are now held by John Weatherly, Republican of Kings Mountain, and Dr. Jack Hunt of Lattimore and Edith Lutz of Lawndale, Democrats. The challengers are Debbie Clary of Shelby and Jeanne Kincaid of Mooresboro, Republicans, and Andy Dedmon of Earl and John Eaker of Cherryville, Democrats.

In the N. C. Senate District 37, five people are vying for the seat now held by Kings Mountain's J. Ollie Harris, who is retiring. They are: Bobby Rogers and David Teddy, both of Shelby, Billy Williams of Lattimore, Dean Westmoreland of Grover, all Democrats, and Dennis Davis, of Lattimore, Republican.

In the U. S. House of Representatives, District 9, Republicans Sue Myrick, David Balmer, Neal Williams, all of Charlotte, and Neal Howes of Huntersville, and Rory Blake and Roger Dale Dixon Charlotte Democrats, seek the seat now held by Republican Alex McMillan of Charlotte, who is not a candidate for reelection.

In the U.S. House of Representatives, District 11, Charles Taylor, Brevard Republican, faces opposition from James Richard Queen, Democrat, of Waynesville.



RENOVATION UNDERWAY - Construction workers from Morrison Construction Company of Shelby are putting up petitions in the old Central School, the future home of the Kings Mountain District Schools' office. Left to right, Wolfe Buehner, Jimmy Morgan and Ace Morrison work on the second floor of the building.