

Labor Day celebration planned in Grover

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Kings Mountain baseball team in pursuit of state championship

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Life Enrichment seeks home

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Play time is happy time for Tabitha Byers, 5, on her favorite rocking horse, assisted by her Mom, Patricia.

Brother and sister battle rare disease

By ELIZABETH STEWART
of The Herald Staff

Theirs is a love story that warms the heart.

Billy Dean Byers Jr., 9, and his sister, Tabitha Rashae Byers, 5, are battling Battens disease, a rare genetic illness that struck the boy when he was three and his sister when she was four.

Before that the only children of Patricia and Billy Byers Sr. were normal, happy, active kids. There were no worries.

In August 1989, a month before Tabitha was born, Billy Jr. was diagnosed at Duke Medical Center with late infantile disease, a genetic illness that at first resembled epilepsy and began with seizures.

In 1993 Battens disease struck Tabitha.

"Moms and Dads are expected to be able to fix any hurt but it breaks our heart that we can't and we must keep our faith strong, although it's hard not to question, why us?" said the 32-year-old mother who quickly learned that she could qualify as an around-the-clock nurse, playmate, teacher, and homemaker all at the same time.

"We are so thankful to have our children and I am so thankful for my wonderful, supportive husband," said Patricia of 37-year-old Bill Sr. "He always knows what to do and say."

For sometime now the children have been homebound with a nurse visiting monthly from Cleveland Home Health, regular, quarterly checkups at Duke Hospital, and a homebound teacher.

Before Billy Jr.'s illness worsened, he attended a special school in Shelby. In September Tabitha, who will be five August 27, will be tested for school at Bethpage but her mother may keep Tabitha at home. The spunky little girl requires help to walk and often must be carried. Billy Jr. is in a wheelchair and is fed through a tube.

Wanda Albea, the Byers' next door neighbor, is a respite worker who helps with "Beaker," the family's pet nickname for Billy, and "Peanut," the family's pet name for Tabitha. She adores the children.

Peanut weighs 34 pounds and is a beautiful little girl with long auburn hair in a pony tail who likes to wear red, carry big pocketbooks, eat macaroni and cheese and watch Barney and other cartoons.

If Minnie Mouse is nearly as nice in person as she is on TV, Peanut may want to stay in Disney World next week when she makes the trip, compliments of the Make A Wish Foundation.

Tabitha's room is filled with Minnie Mouse memorabilia, dolls, a rocking horse and stuffed animals but her favorite spot in their comfortable home on Plantation Drive is the family room in front of the television set with her family. She is a Daddy's girl.

Beaker weighs 52 pounds and smiles and laughs at his sister. His bed-wheelchair can be taken all over the house wherever the family is together.

In 1992 the Byers family went to Disney World for Sesame Street Live and that was a happy time for them. Next week the whole family is going, along with Mrs. Albea, to see Mickey and Minnie Mouse at Disney World. They will be picked up by limousine and fly from Douglas Airport to Orlando, Fla. on Monday for a week's vacation.

"This time we won't leave Peanut's security blanket behind," said Patricia about the first time they all went to Disney World. "It took three days to get that blanket mailed back to us and that was the longest days of our lives. The baby cried and cried."

See Disease, 10-A

Grover without a cop

Former officer to file lawsuit

GROVER - Fired Grover police officer Robbie Sides said he will file a lawsuit this week against the Town of Grover, Police Chief Paul Cash, Mayor Ronald Queen and four members of Town Council.

Sides said the papers will be filed in U.S. District Court by his attorney Rob Deaton by the end of the week.

Sides claims his constitutional rights were violated when Council refused to give him a public name clearing hearing and that he was wrongfully discharged from his job. He is also asking for relief from "slanderous communications, intentional and negligent infliction

of mental and emotional distress and discrimination."

Each of the five claims for relief seeks in excess of \$10,000 plus Sides is seeking back wages, reimbursement of medical and dental bills not covered in insurance and payment of all attorney fees.

Sides is asking for a jury trial.

Sides was fired by Cash on March 18 after what Cash called an internal investigation into Sides' role in a March high speed chase of a man suspected of robbing and assaulting a cab driver at Cleveland Mall parking lot. The chase ended in a wreck that sent both men to the hospital and totaled Grover's police car.

A closed hearing into the firing was conducted by Town Board July 11. Council sided with the Chief and voted unanimously not to overturn the termination of Sides.

The former officer is serving his first term on Town Council.



SIDES

Town Board terminates chief

GROVER - The Town Board fired Police Chief Paul Cash Monday after going behind closed doors for 2 1/2 hours.

Mayor Ronald Queen said the board voted 5-0 in open session to give Cash the option of submitting a letter of resignation to Queen but said Council wanted him off the job Tuesday.

Reporters had already left the meeting when Council reconvened at 10:30 p.m. Council member and former policeman Robbie Sides, who was fired by Cash March 18, said the Council had agreed to keep the personnel matter among themselves until Queen spoke with Cash and informed him of the board's decision.



CASH

Queen, however, apprised Tuesday of Open Meeting Laws by reporters covering the meeting, made the announcement of the action taken by the board.

Queen said he talked with Cash at 9:30 a.m. Tuesday and informed him of the board's decision and Cash offered but was denied to work a 30-day notice.

Queen would give no reason for the termination.

Cash was unavailable for comment.

Cash has worked with the Town of Grover for five years, after 20-plus years in Mecklenburg County law enforcement. He and his wife have operated a karate and exercise business in Grover for several years.

Queen said that the town has asked the county to provide law enforcement until a new policeman is hired.

School Board to meet

Kings Mountain District Schools will hold a public hearing on its proposed Policy JCD, Code of Student Conduct, during Thursday night's meeting of the Board of Education at the Superintendent's office.

The meeting begins at 7 p.m.

The policy deals with possession of weapons on school campuses, and the consequences of such actions. The Board heard first reading of the proposed policy at last month's meeting and will vote on the policy following the public hearing.

"We haven't heard much from the community at all," said Supt. Bob McRae. "But we want the public to know that if they have opinions about weapons on campus and the consequences that this is the last opportunity to speak before the Board takes action."

In a related matter, the Health Council will recommend that the Board approve an at-large representative as well as two non-voting students members to the council.

Other agenda matters Thursday include:

■ A report from Barbara Long, representing the Substance Abuse Task Force of the United Way of Cleveland County, including recommendations for addressing substance abuse problems in the county.

■ A presentation by Tom Sees regarding the Family Life curriculum.

■ An update on the renovation of Central School and a recommendation that it be declared a smoke-free facility.

■ Numerous student transfer requests and personnel items.



City Councilman Jim Guyton, left, welcomes new City Manager Charles Nance and Mrs. Nance after the City Council officially hired Nance Friday.

City Manager officially hired

By ELIZABETH STEWART
of The Herald Staff

Charles "Chuck" Nance, 34, was officially hired Friday night as Kings Mountain's new City Manager at a annual salary of \$46,000 at a special 6:30 p.m. meeting of City Council.

The vote was 6-1. Councilman Jim Guyton cast the lone dissenting vote because he objected to the Council's agreement with Nance that allowed him to delay moving to Kings Mountain until May 1.

"We need him to be active in the community before May," said Guyton.

Council members Phil Hager and Norma Bridges were absent but the minutes will record both voting affirmatively, according to Interim Manager Maxine Parsons.

Mayor Scott Neisler called the meeting a momentous occasion for the city and welcomed Nance and his wife, Sheila, who greeted City Hall staffers and other visitors after the meeting.

See Nance, 11-A

In our own back yard

By ELIZABETH STEWART
of The Herald Staff

Apparently the best man for the job of Kings Mountain City Manager in the eyes of City Council was right here in the back yard of the city.

Charles "Chuck" Nance, 34, lives in neighboring Spindale, a short drive from Kings Mountain.

"I appreciate the opportunity and I believe that we can move positively and make our town work," said Nance, after the special meeting at which Council hired him Friday night.

Fielding questions from reporters, Nance declined specific comment on Kings Mountain's recent political and financial woes. He acknowledged that the city's finances were one of the first things he intended to look into.

See Back Yard, 11-A

Missing man a wanted man

Kings Mountain Police have ruled out foul play in the disappearance of Waco contractor Edward Warlick White, 45, but would not confirm rumors that his suspected drowning in Moss Lake Monday could be a hoax.

Goforth said White was wanted on federal warrants for failure to surrender to authorities and was to report to Butner Correctional Institute at noon Monday to begin an active 20-year sentence for continuing criminal enterprise, illicit drug sale and money laundering.

Goforth called off the official search Tuesday at 8:30 p.m.

Wednesday morning Goforth and a U.S. Marshal flew over the lake to spot-check the area for the



Rescue boat docks after search for missing man at Moss Lake called off Tuesday.

missing man.

White's fishing boat was found Monday at 6:45 a.m. by a caller who saw a boat with its lights on floating unattended in the middle of the lake near the main boat launch on Camp Creek Church Road.

White's truck was found in the parking lot at the lake with the keys on the dashboard, officers said.

More than 75 volunteers joined local officers to search the lake Monday and Tuesday.

Goforth said that when police arrived on the scene they found a boat unoccupied with the ignition

See Search, 12-A