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Kings Mountain Men who wanted to serve others gunned down in Gastonia

YOUNG LIVES CUT SHORT

Raymond Sean Garris, 23, wanted to follow in his father's footsteps

Since he was a small child, 23-year-old Sean Garris wanted to follow in his father's footsteps and be a police officer.

He had recently completed his Basic Law Enforcement Training at Cleveland Community College and was to enter Gaston College today for advanced training.

But early Saturday morning, his dreams and his life were snuffed out in what his policeman father called a "useless" shooting on a Gastonia street.

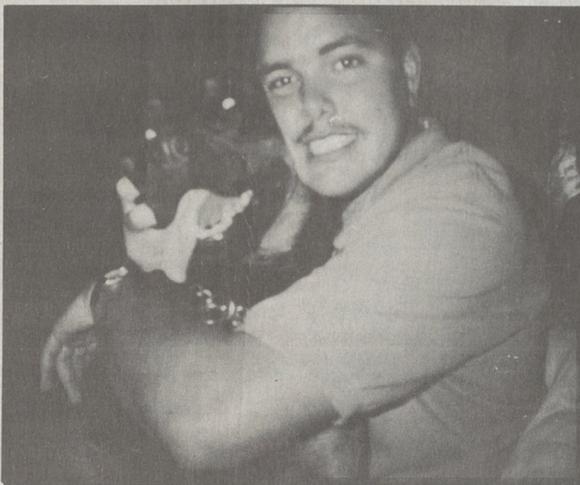
The death was devastating for Sean's father, Sgt. Raymond Garris, a training officer for Kings Mountain Police Department and Sean's instructor at Cleveland Community College.

"It's tough," said Sgt. Garris. "I don't see any reason for anyone to go and take somebody's life over a

little argument over girls. For someone to take a weapon and just shoot people like he shot them is just useless."

Sean and three friends reportedly went to Gastonia to eat after attending a football game at Kings Mountain High School Friday. About 1:50 a.m. they pulled into a service station to get gas and apparently argued with occupants of another car. After being told to leave the premises by police, the occupants of the two cars reportedly took their disagreement to the parking lot of a closed service station on West Franklin Blvd. near Bessemer City Road, where the shootings took place. Eighteen-year-old Shannon Oneal Skumanick of Gastonia was

See Garris, 12-A



Sean Garris, pictured with his dog, Dallas Irving.

Jason R. Dover, 24, had dreams of becoming a probation officer

Paul Dover hasn't been able to talk much since the shooting death of his 24-year-old son, Jason, and his friend, Sean Garris.

on a Gastonia cruising strip early Saturday morning, but there is one thing he wants the public to understand: Even though the young men were killed in a cruising section by cruisers, the Kings Mountain men were not cruisers.

"It has been very disturbing listening to television reports and reading the papers since it happened," Dover said. "They keep

saying they were cruising. They absolutely were not cruising. They were in Gastonia on completely legitimate reasons. They were killed by cruisers but they weren't cruisers."

Gastonia police have charged 18-year-old Shannon Oneal Skumanick with two counts of murder in the shooting deaths of Dover and Garris, and he also faces two counts of assault with a deadly weapon in the injuries of Dentis Mark Crawford, 24, of Kings Mountain, and Larry Mark Williams, 20, of Gastonia, who were treated and released at Gaston Memorial Hospital.

According to reports, the three Kings Mountain men and Williams got into an argument with the occu-

See Dover, 12-A



DOVER

School office move set for next Friday

Kings Mountain School offices will move several blocks east Friday, Sept. 16 to the renovated Central School on East Ridge Street.

Old Davidson School on Parker Street has served as the school offices since the late 1960's. Central recently got almost a million dollar face lift and its spacious quarters should serve the system well for years to come.

Supt. Bob McRae said the system initially hoped to make the move during the summer, and had hired a crew of students, teachers and others to help make the move. When the time schedule had to be delayed, the system hired a moving firm at a smaller cost which can make the move in one day.

"I think it will take a few days to really get to full efficiency, but we should be answering the phone by the next Monday," McRae said. "We would just ask the community to be understanding. We will try not to lose service any more than absolutely necessary, but if anyone has any pressing problems and can't get through to us we hope they will call the principal of the school that's involved."

The superintendent's office, finance office and School Board room will be located on the main floor. Most of the instructional offices will be located on the third floor, and Head Start will be located on the ground floor.

Renovation is basically complete, but architects and workers are making corrections and minor repairs.

Mary Accor principal of alternative school

Mary Accor, assistant principal at Kings Mountain Middle School, has been named principal of the new Alternative School which will open at the beginning of the second semester of the current school year at the current office of Kings Mountain District Schools

ACCOR A six-person committee comprised of representatives of the Kings Mountain, Shelby and Cleveland County school systems interviewed 11 applicants and "strongly" recommended Accor for the post, according to Kings Mountain Superintendent Bob McRae.

Accor began her teaching career at Kings Mountain's Central School. During the first half of the 1993-94 school year she served as interim principal at Bethware School.

Lynda Stewart will fill Mrs. Accor's post at the Middle School for the remainder of the current school year, then the Kings Mountain Board of Education will advertise that position.

Supt. McRae said the next step in organizing the school, which will serve troubled students from all three county systems, is to hire a staff and work toward imple-

See Accor, 11-A



Youngsters and adults alike enjoyed train rides at Grover's pre-Labor Day celebration Saturday. Story and more photos on page 1-B.

Mountaineer Day celebration set for October 8

Kings Mountain Parks and Recreation Department is planning one of its biggest Mountaineer Day celebrations in recent years Saturday, Oct. 8 in downtown Kings Mountain.

Activities will begin at 10 a.m. and run until midnight, with a gigantic street dance which begins at 8 p.m. capping off the celebration.

Monty Deaton of the Recreation Department said many new events are being added this year which should make the event more attractive to local citizens.

Traditional activities such as arts and crafts, food, and entertainment will remain a part of the program, but many new activities are sure to create some excitement.

One thing that should attract a good crowd is a dunking booth which will feature Town Councilmen and department heads from 12 noon-4 p.m. Anyone with a grudge to settle should begin loosening up their pitching arm. At other times the dunking booth targets will be high school students.

Sports activities will be a big feature. Pop Warner football games will be played beginning at City Stadium beginning at 9:30 a.m., and at halftime all ages will be invited to compete in punt, pass and kick competition.

Cheerleading competition featuring middle and high school teams from Gaston and Cleveland Counties will be held at the entertainment stage which will be set up at the corner of Cherokee and East Gold streets.

A 3-on-3 basketball tournament will be held at the Community Center gym, and horseshoe tournaments will be held at the Community Center pits.

Another event which should attract a lot of participation is a 5-K run.

Persons interested in competing in the punt, pass and kick events must register at the Community Center. Registration for the basketball tournament is \$40 and registration for most of the other events is \$10. The registration fee includes a T-shirt. There is no charge for the

cheerleading competition.

From 4-7 p.m., bingo will be played inside City Hall. Kings Mountain Fire Department will sell barbecue in the parking lot of the old Western Auto, and will host a car show at the Fire Department.

Tickets will go on soon for cow pasture, bingo, which will be held at Jake Early Field.

Shaggers will perform all day in front of Sagesport, there will be a tea contest for area restaurants, rocking chair events, raffle for \$50 in food, Boy Scout exhibits, putt-putt, kiddie rides, moon walk, and other activities.

Booths for non-profit organizations will be free and booths for food vendors will rent for \$50.

Other activities will be added between now and October.

For more information on the events or to volunteer to help, call the Parks and Recreation Department at 734-0449.

Banana trees sprouting up all over Long Branch

By GARY STEWART
Editor of the Herald

His acquaintances call him by his childhood nickname "Tiny," but when it comes to gardening J.D. Lefevers of Grover thinks big. Especially when it comes to growing bananas.

That's right. The tropical banana trees thrive on Lefevers' two acre farm on Long Branch Road. Plants he got from Dan Bagwell several years ago have matured and are bearing bunches of huge, ripe bananas.

Growing bananas in North Carolina is not as difficult as you might think, explains Lefevers and his wife, Hilda. They take their plants up each fall before the first frost, store them in the basement and set them back out after the last frost of spring.

"It takes about four to five years for the trees to mature and have bananas on them," Mrs. Lefevers noted. "We've had some little bananas in the past but this year every tree has about three bunches of big bananas on them."

The Lefevers fill a huge hole with compost prior to planting the trees, and then just water them occasionally.

"They're no trouble at all," Mrs. Lefevers said.

The couple gets a kick out of breaking the young sprouts off the trees and giving them to their friends and neighbors. You'll likely see a lot more banana trees in the Grover area because of that.

"The bananas mature in hot weather - around July and August," Mrs. Lefevers said. "They are really good. They smell and taste just like the bananas you buy in the store."

The Lefevers plan to try some lemon and mango trees next spring. "I had a mango tree once and it had little mangos on it," Mrs. Lefevers said, "but I forgot and left it outside and the frost hit it. They taste wonderful in salads or just to eat them off the tree."



Tiny Lefevers and his banana tree