

**ROAMIN'**

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featuring barbecue, chicken, fish, etc. Today, though, the restaurant has become more of a fast-food snack shop offering French fries, hot dogs, popcorn and soft drinks.

The local drive-in was one of the first anywhere to offer admission by the carload, and that may be one of the secrets of its success.

"When we first opened we had an admission - I think it was 40 cents a person for a few years," Stinnett noted. "Then after a couple of years we went to a dollar a carload."

The admission price now is \$6 a carload - still a bargain considering that's the same price one person would pay for admission to an indoor theater.

Stinnett said drive-in attendance fluctuates, depending mostly on the movies that are available and the weather. The local complex can accommodate 450 cars.

"I think one thing that hurt the drive-ins was when they had the daylight savings time change," Stinnett said. "It made the movies in the middle of the summer not get started until after 9 o'clock."

Stinnett said the drive-ins still attract a large span of age groups. Needless to say, the outdoor movies are still popular to young people in love whether they're interested in watching the movie or not. But because of the affordable rates, it is also popular for large families who can save money versus the indoor theaters.

Right now, Stinnett said, the movies begin at 7:30 p.m. but as the days grow longer and when daylight savings time begins in April the starting times will be later.

**GHANTT**

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Campbell, demonstrated a significant increase in his spending habits and cash deposits which began on October 6, 1997," the affidavit stated. Chambers is a former FBI informant who, in the past, provided information on a then future Loomis armored car robbery which never materialized. There is documented telephone relationship between his residence and the residence of Payne and Campbell, according to the court affidavit.

"Within 24 days Chambers went from owning a mobile home to purchasing a \$635,000 home in Cramer Mountain Country Club area of Gaston County," according to the court papers. His criminal record includes a 1997 state conviction for felonious larceny and for multiple counts of feloniously obtaining property by false pretenses.

"Wire taps implicate him in the overall Loomis theft, countless money laundering transactions and allegations that he attempted to have Ghatt killed," the FBI alleged in court documents.

Court documents also state that Michelle Chambers demonstrated a significant increase in spending habits and cash deposits with three known bank accounts. She drove a 1998 BMW purchased on November 11 and there is no recorded lien for this vehicle on record with the N. C. Department of Motor Vehicles, indicative that she purchased the car with cash. Since the time of the theft she has obtained breast implants, according to court documents.

Until Feb. 21, 1998 Payne was employed at a printing business located adjacent to the location where the Loomis van was found. He worked for one shift following the theft for four hours and then took a three week vacation. Court records say he demonstrated notable increase in spend-

ing habits since the theft and has a documented ongoing telephone relationship with Chambers. He was convicted in 1996 for DWI.

Campbell was employed at Loomis from December 1995 through November 1996. She is currently the only known person who had contact with Ghatt in Mexico. She denied any involvement in the crime and purports to have no past romantic relationship with Ghatt, although expressed her love to him during their last intercepted conversation on Feb. 23, 1998, according to court records.

The FBI alleges that McKinney, hired by Chambers to be his personal bodyguard, is the alleged individual with whom Chambers discussed the attempted murder of Ghatt. McKinney had made a reservation to travel to Mexico on Feb. 24 but was allegedly told to wait until Feb. 26 to go down there by Chambers.

Grant, also known as Spike, booked an airline reservation for Feb. 27, 1998 to fly to Mexico with McKinney to deliver money to or presumably kill Ghatt, the FBI said in the affidavits.

Relatives have told the daily newspapers they are relieved to know that Ghatt has been found. "Thank God he's alive," his father Scott W. Ghatt of Hendersonville told The Charlotte Observer. The senior Ghatt, a retired Carolina Freight truck driver, said none of his family has had any contact with David Ghatt since he disappeared in October.

David Ghatt and his wife, Tammy, lived in a double-wide mobile home in a mobile home park located between Bessemer City and Cherryville in Gaston County. Their mailing address was Maggie Lane, Kings Mountain.

A woman answered the telephone at the Ghatt residence Tuesday afternoon and hung up when a Herald reporter gave her name.

**CITY NEWS**

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strength.

"We pay more for gas than our neighbors in South Carolina and our roads are falling apart," said Councilman Clavon Kelly.

Spangler said there are more needs than the state highway department budget can address. "We push for more money for maintenance," he said.

He said the Shelby bypass is coming but DOT is over its budget and funding could be cut back because of a \$421 million overrun in the state Department of Transportation. Agency officials are in the early stages of drafting a new transportation improvement program, a schedule of road construction priorities for the years 1999 through 2005. The Shelby bypass is included in the state's TIP but Spangler estimated that "we won't have over 75 percent funded and I don't think we'll be able to complete the whole thing as soon as we thought." Design phase for the bypass is expected early next year. He said the increased cost of right-of-ways statewide has impacted the increased costs.

Nye said technology will be the key for future business success in the county. He said a fiberoptic line along the railroad may provide business opportunities for electronic commerce, saying that a person in Kings Mountain could operate a business around the world from his location here using the sophistication of high tech. "It's exciting," he said.

Both Nye and Spangler said Kings Mountain location puts the city in a good position to move forward in the new century.

Other major concerns shared during the session attended by a few residents with City Council, department heads, city staffers and Mayor Scott Neisler included:

**Education**  
Board of Education Chairman Ronnie Hawkins said school officials are looking at property to build either a K-5 school or a 5-6 school to take care of the expected population growth. He said local legislators have been asked to introduce a one cent sales tax increase to fund education in the upcoming short session of the N. C. General Assembly.

Kelly noted that Kings Mountain citizens pay a supplemental tax that is almost half the rate of Kings Mountain's property tax rate of 40 cents. "We passed a \$6.1 million bond issue for schools and we hear there's a \$600,000 shortfall," he said.

"Our bond money in the late 1980's put us in the driver's seat for our school construction projects which we're enjoying today but it went to pay for needs, not wants," said Hawkins.

**Senior Center**  
A new Senior Recreational Center would be shared by the city's aging and recreation departments and the city would probably have to mount a public drive for funds to help pay for it, Aging Director Monty Thornburg said.

Thornburg has completed an application for a \$250,000 matching grant but has estimated the facility could cost up to \$1 million.

The proposed 13,240 square feet facility would include a junior gym/dining room and administrative offices in a five acre setting at the corner of King and Watterson Streets.

Thornburg said the new facility would create a level of service necessary for an increasing number of senior citizens.

Thornburg said if the grant isn't approved that he will apply again next year.

**Fire Department**  
Several projects that could be serious needs in the future due to annexation could be the building of a satellite station on both the West and East side of town, Chief Frank Burns said. The 3,600 square feet buildings would require one acre lots and would free up space at the present facility at City Hall. The city recently purchased a new fire truck at cost of \$236,000 with the second of five equal payments to be paid in the next budget year.

**Water/Sewer**

Water/Sewer Department Supt. Walt Ollis said a major need of the city will be the running of an additional larger water line from the Ellison Water Plant to the city but the No. 1 priority in the upcoming budget year will be installing lines, aerators, and mixers in Basin 3 at Pilot Creek Waste Treatment plant, a state mandate. Engineer Al Moretz said the city is currently dechlorinating at the plant to improve capacity. He said the current main water line from the lake to town is 32 years old. City manager Jimmy Maney suggested that the city could phase in the water line construction over a five year period.

"We have to fix the No. 3 basin or our pumping capacity permit will drop from 6 million gallons per day to four million," said Ollis. Both Ollis and Moretz said the new water line into town from the lake would not follow the old route.

Maney suggested that Council tour the city facilities to assess the needs before they starting penciling in costs and nailing down priorities for the budget.

**Davidson Lake**

Maney encouraged Council to make a decision on what to do with Davidson Lake, which he said was no longer the asset it once was. "Market it or lease it for a campground facility," he said. Maney suggested that the mayor appoint a committee to look seriously at the lake property which could generate revenue for the city and more tourism to the area.

**Downtown revitalization**

Kathy Neely of the Kings Mountain Business and Professional Association suggested a task force to actively pursue the creation of more business downtown. "There isn't a store in town who offers souvenirs from the Kings Mountain Battleground," she said, noting that businesses could capitalize on the historical emphasis of Kings Mountain.

**Electric Department**

Savings from the new Peak Generation Plant on Gaston Street totaled \$350,147 through January 1998, Maney said. He said the city will pay off the \$1.75 million generators on time and then will start realizing savings which can be used for other projects. Ken Rada, of Duke Power Company, illustrated how a power pool is providing a market for all customers.

The mayor used a spotlight to time the presenters. A green light meant the speaker was on go, the yellow light meant he needed to speed up his or her remarks and the red light meant time was out.

**Library**

The new children's wing at Mauney Memorial Library will add 1,953 square feet to the existing facility. City Council pledged \$100,000 and the Ollie Harris Sr. family pledged \$100,000 to lead the campaign effort which has already attained 2/3 of the goal.

**Cemetery**

A Redi-built Columbarium of Georgia Marble is proposed at Veterans Garden at Mountain Rest Cemetery. A memorial wall would honor those who died in World War I, World War II, Korean War and Vietnam War. A new entrance gate would duplicate the Suber Gate and would be called H. C. Dwelle Gate. The \$57,000 costs of the improvements would also include resurfacing of streets.

**Capital improvements**

Maney said that the need for capital improvements over the next five years totals \$15.7 million but Council would have to prioritize because the capital needs far outweigh the money. He said the new police department is a big priority for 1998-99 and the new senior center, to be built by city and private funds, would be a five year project, at least. He said he is currently reviewing a first draft of a contract with Cablevision for a new franchise agreement and called the Community Improvements Program list supplied by department heads not "a wish list."

"The challenge before you is to address the mandates and then prioritize the rest," he told Council.

Maney said a big ticket item in the new budget will be \$50,000 for a dam inspection at Moss Lake and he acknowledged that the city may have to look at more lease purchase agreements to fund projects.

"We don't want to raise taxes and we don't want to raise utility costs," he said.

Maney estimated the cost of bringing a new water line from the lake to town would run \$4 million. He said Kings Mountain water rates are low. "We're saying we're in the money now but it may dry up in a few years and it may not hurt to go up a little on water rates and set that money aside for the new line," he told the board.

Maney also talked about accountability in billing and said customers continue to call City Hall to "check on my power bill" since a software error was discovered last week. "We will restore confidence that billing is done properly," he said.

Another big ticket item for the next budget year could be a hefty increase to Kings Mountain for treatment of sewage at the Gastonia Crowders Creek Waste Treatment plant.

**Monday closing date on Ingle's property**

The owner of property on Oak Grove Road that Ingles Super Markets holds an option to buy said Monday is the expected closing date for sale of the property.

"No news is supposed to be good news," said Judy Scism, who said she hoped to hear from realtors handling the sale on Monday.

Planning Director Steve Killian said the city has had no contact recently with Ingles but that the city had authorized the submittal of a community block grant to help the firm to pay for the cost of running sewer to the property. Killian said the city asked Glenn Rhodes of Isothermal Council of Governments to write the grant. The city also rezoned the property and annexed it as part of the city of Kings Mountain.

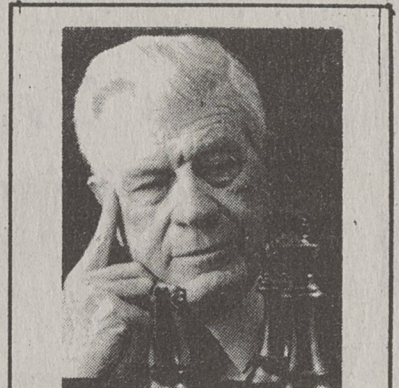
"They are probably waiting on the grant because the cost of sewer installation, right-of-ways and easements could run upwards of \$750,000," Killian estimated.

**KM's Schwantes third in state 3A diving meet**

Kings Mountain's Tim Schwantes finished third in the state 3A diving meet Friday and Saturday at Chapel Hill.

Derek Wilson finished fifth and Chris Wilson seventh. In the girls division, Tiffany Ely was seventh and Abby Haynes eighth.

In swimming action, Naoki Nishiyama placed 14th in the 100 yard butterfly. Drew Thomas and the 400 yard freestyle relay team (Thomas, Marty Goforth, David Angeles and Nishiyama) also participated.



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**RIDIN' THE RAILS**



It's not every day that you see a truck being driven on a railroad track, but this one owned by Norfolk Southern Railway has a right-of-way that other motorists don't have. This truck came through Kings Mountain last week checking the rails and cross ties. Mike Webster of Inman, SC

said he makes the 75-mile trip from Gastonia to Greenville (and vice versa) twice a week. The truck includes all the tools for minor repairs, and major problems are referred to a rail crew. Webster said he doesn't advise other motorists to try traveling the tracks. "That works only in the movies," he said.

**WISH**

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reservations for them at the Gastonia steak house. Mrs. Shirer, other employees of Interim Health Care of Gastonia, Celebrity Limo Service of Belmont, and Chase Tire of Gastonia, along with Outback Steak House, provided the meal and evening entertainment.

Mrs. Putnam said she and her husband married after a short courtship and for both of them it was probably "love at first sight." She had formerly worked at Doran Yarns in Shelby and at Mauney Hosiery Mill.

Mrs. Putnam leaves the cooking and "most of the housework" to her husband. They attend Primitive Baptist Church.

"We're really looking for a miracle from God but right now

we just enjoy each other and are grateful for every day we share together," said Mrs. Putnam.

Says Ricky, "Ruth is a special lady and I'm glad to dress up tonight to go out to dinner with her," as they waited for their driver.

Friday was a happy time for the Putnams. They took turns going to the window at their home on Beech Lane to look for their driver as the sun set and it

grew dark outside. Excited, they hurried out their front door to seat themselves in the limo and listen to music as they were driven to Gastonia.

"Where's the champagne?" asked their excited nurse who had planned the event and left nothing out.

Several hours later the Putnams returned home with memories of a never to be forgotten first anniversary.

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