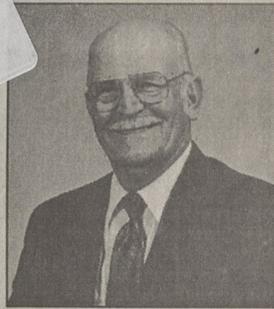


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Thursday, April 5, 2001

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Trail to Amazing Grace

Crosswalk drama Friday, Saturday in downtown KM

Preparations are being finalized for Kings Mountain's dramatic pageant, Crosswalk - *The Trail to Amazing Grace*. This original presentation, developed by David Allen and Reg Alexander, will be on Friday and Saturday, April 6-7. Citizens from various area churches are combining to bring the drama to life. The vocal trio Soul Desire will perform, adding a musical touch to the drama. The downtown intersection of Mountain and Piedmont will be transformed into a series of stages for a unique dramatization of the meaning of Easter, exhibiting various essential scenes of the Passion weekend, from the Last Supper to the Resurrection. The audience will become a tour group that is led from one scene to another by "Joseph of Aramathia". In the scriptures, Joseph is identified as the Jewish leader who provided the tomb for the body of Jesus. Regal Ventures Creative Ministries is organizing this presentation on behalf of the community. "This will be a unique experience for the audience," said Ministry Director Reg Alexander. "Instead of simply passing by and viewing the scenes from a distance, they will literally walk through the scenes, following Jesus and the disciples as they encounter the events of that crucial weekend." While those involved would not divulge specific details, *CrossWalk*, will combine scriptural accounts and creative elements to help the audience identify with the atmosphere of the event. "The purpose of this dramatization is twofold," said Steering Committee Chairman David Allen. "First, to draw the community together in the recognition of the meaning behind the Easter observance of the death and resurrection of Jesus; and second, to reflect the values of the citizens of Kings Mountain."

See Walk, 3A



GARY STEWART / THE HERALD
 Jim Belt will play the role of the Roman Centurion in the Easter drama *Crosswalk - The Trail to Amazing Grace*, Friday and Saturday in downtown Kings Mountain. For free tickets call Regal Ventures Creative Ministries at 704-739-3838.

KM threatens to sue Gaston for school funds

BY ALAN HODGE
 Staff Writer

In a letter drafted Friday, the Kings Mountain District Schools Board of Education asked Gaston County commissioners to reconsider the request by the Gaston County Board of Education to stop funding the 181 students who attend Kings Mountain schools but who actually live in Gaston County.

The request was supposed to take effect April 1 and would put the \$971 each of those students currently receive annually into an escrow fund until the merger matter is decided. The total allotment for the 2000-2001 school year is \$144,991.

"The letter is all we can do at this time," said Kings Mountain board chair Shearra Miller. "The Gaston commissioners will have to make the decision."

The letter was addressed to Gaston commission chairman Heath Jenkins.

The meeting which saw the letter drafted was held in executive session. Though he was still in California attending a conference, Kings Mountain superintendent Dr. Larry Allen took part via speakerphone. Allen signed the letter Monday when he returned.

"I'm very disappointed the people in Gaston County have taken this action," Allen said Monday morning. "I think it's premature."

Allen said he planned to speak with Gaston County Schools superintendent Ed Sadler about the issue.

The letter sent to Gaston County addressed six points. These included the fact that the funds would not be of benefit to the students in any case if they were held in escrow.

Other points touched on the unfairness of stopping the funds in the middle of the school year, the fact that the money actually benefits Gaston County students, the court orders to maintain the status quo until all legal issues connected with merger can be decided, the

"It would be a shame to have to litigate this matter."

Richard Schwartz
 KM merger attorney

fact that the money to King Mountain was based on certification by the State Board of Education dated March 25, 2000, and that the Kings Mountain school board believes it will ultimately prevail in the merger issue.

Miller said she felt as if the Gaston County board was trying to force Kings Mountain's hand in the merger question.

"If we do nothing, and allow them not to pay, it will look as if we are saying the students aren't ours," Miller said.

She also expressed disappointment that the funding issue had come up in what is already getting to be a legalistic morass.

"There are already enough lawsuits out there," Miller said. "This adds another log to the fire."

According to Richard Schwartz, the lawyer representing Kings Mountain in an effort to stop merger, the letter is intended to rectify the financing situation without resorting to yet another lawsuit.

"Once the commissioners see that the reasoning behind the Board of Education's request is flawed, then hopefully there will be no next step," Schwartz said.

According to Schwartz, Gaston County has already appropriated the money for the students in their annual budget. In other words, the cost of the student's educations is paid for whether they are in Kings Mountain or Gaston schools.

"They have to pay one way or the other," Schwartz said. "It would be a shame to have to litigate this matter."

Underscoring that point, the letter's summary stated "the fairest, most educationally sound, and legally correct step is to maintain the status quo until the lawsuits are decided."

KM to be in dark Sunday

Approximately 70 percent of the City of Kings Mountain's electrical customers will be in the dark from 7-8:30 a.m. and 3-4:30 p.m. on Sunday, April 8.

Duke Power Company plans to replace a failing transformer that feeds the city's substation on North Gaston Street.

Areas affected include all the

streets in the vicinity of Meadowbrook, Kings Mountain Hospital, Lackey Street and the Linwood area.

City officials stated that persons whose power does not go off at 7 a.m. probably will not experience a loss of power.

City Manager Jimmy Maney urges relatives of special needs

customers, such as those on life support, to be in constant touch in case the power outage should result in them needing emergency care.

Citizens are also advised that D.O.T. stop lights, city stop lights, alarm systems, commercial loads, and pump stations will be affected by the outage.

The new transformer is already on site and city officials expect the replacement to go smoothly.

However, the above listed times are estimates and any unforeseen problems could result in longer outages.

See Power, 8A

Lake supporters see potential for multi-use, park connection

BY ALAN HODGE
 Staff Writer

With spring in the air, many folk's thoughts are turning once again to Kings Mountain's city-owned Davis and City lakes. Besides the present hours of fishing and nature enjoyment, a lot of people are still working diligently to see that the two watery treasures reach their full future potential of preservation and recreation.

One group that has waded into the lake cause is the Kings Mountain Woman's Club. Taking up a challenge from the National Federation of Woman's Clubs for their local organizations to become involved in community projects, the Kings Mountain ladies chose the lakes.

"Our two-year community improvement project will team us up with the Friends of the Lakes," said Kings Mountain Woman's Club member Karen Roy.

For her part, Roy has crafted a stained glass and cement

bench which will be on display at the This and That shop starting April 17. After that, the bench will be at the Gazebo for the May 20 Jazz Artist Festival where it will be offered. Money raised from the bench will go to the Friends of the Lakes bank account.

Besides the pleasure of community involvement, there's another motivation for the Kings Mountain Woman's Club to get involved with the Federation's program.

"First prize for the improvement projects is \$5,000 from the National Federation," Roy said. "If we win, that money will also go to the lakes and other local community projects."

One of the criteria for the Woman's Club contest as handed down from the national level is that the local project had to involve another group - such as the Friends of the Lake.

With their proximity to the new connector trail that runs between Crowders Mountain State Park and Kings Mountain State and National Military

Parks, it's not surprising that other groups have gotten involved in their future use.

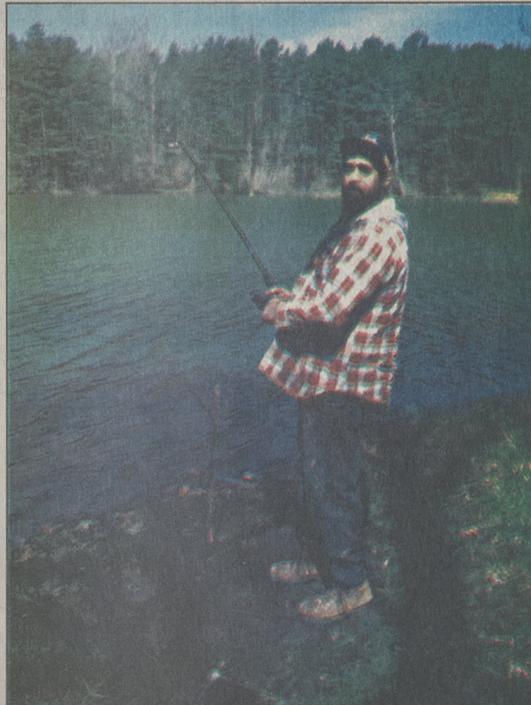
One person who sees great things for the city lakes is Walter Israel of Belmont. Israel is president of the newly formed Friends of Crowders Mountain.

"Kings Mountain has a great recreation department but little in the way of actual parks," said Israel. "The lakes with their nearness to Crowders Mountain would be a good combination."

According to Israel, if Kings Mountain would come up with an organized plan for use of the lakes and put some money up front, matching funds could possibly be obtained from the state's Park and Recreation Trust Fund. That same fund recently helped Gastonia with Martha Rivers Park and Mt. Holly with a park on Mountain Island lake.

"To get the money, the proposed area must be a multi use facility," Israel said. "The funds

See Lake, 3A



ALAN HODGE/THE HERALD
 Vince Montesino spent a recent morning fishing at City Lake near Kings Mountain. Montesino said the lake was a peaceful place to enjoy nature and try your angling luck.

Wal-Mart distribution center planned

BY ALAN HODGE
 Staff Writer

In what is being called one of the biggest business coups in Cleveland County history, Wal-Mart has revealed plans to build a major distribution center near Shelby.

The announcement came during a joint meeting Tuesday of the Cleveland County Board of Commissioners and Shelby City Council. The meeting also saw those same bodies vote unanimously to give Wal-Mart over \$2 million in incentives.

"I hope this is the beginning of a lifelong relationship with Wal-Mart," said commission chairman Willie McIntosh.

The 1.2 million square foot distribution center will be built one mile west of Shelby on State Road 1305. Construction will begin in the fall of this year. Service to stores should commence about a year later.

Initial hiring of up to 600 area residents is expected to start

See Wal-Mart, 2A



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