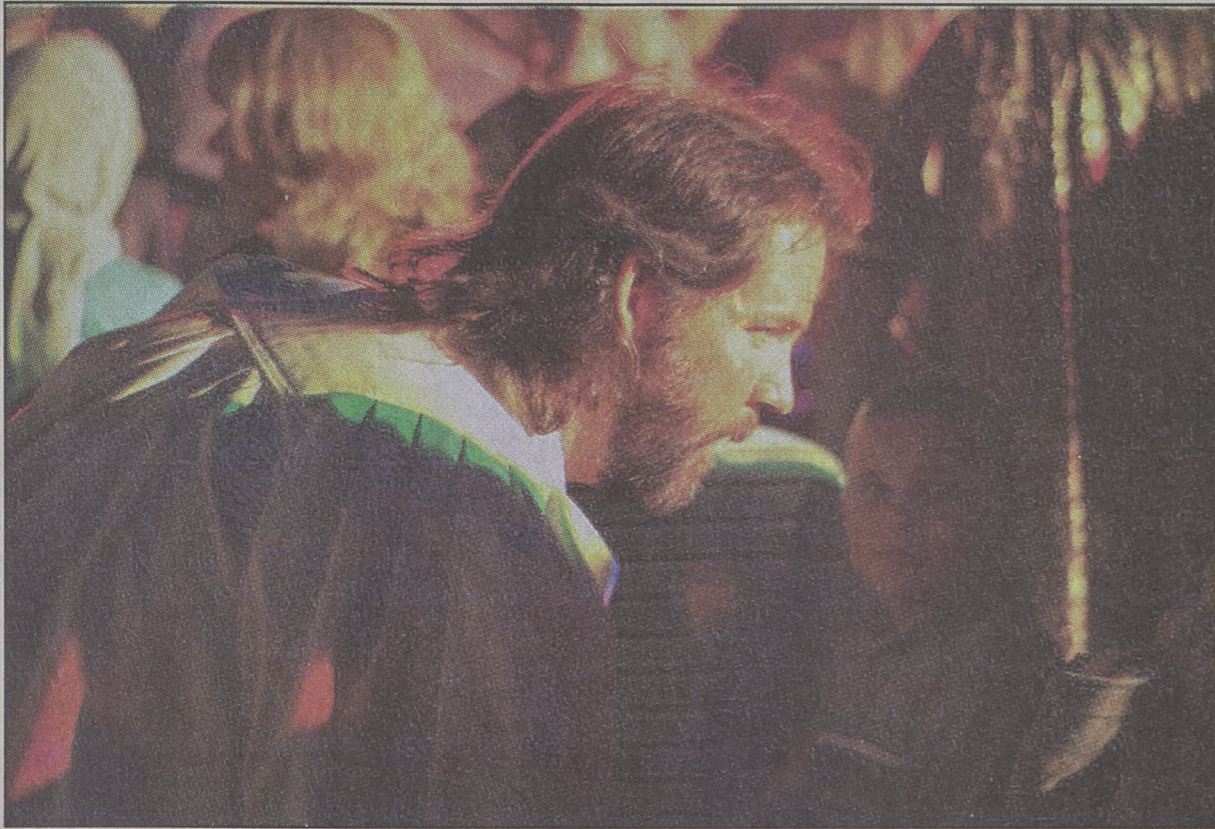


## LOCAL



Jesus (Eddie Parker) takes the walk to Golgotha in Easter passion drama CrossWalk, which opens Friday in downtown Kings Mountain.

## CROSSWALK

From 1A

Regal Ventures.

"It's an humbling experience for me," says Parker, who said that attendees who really want to receive more meaning from the pageant should join the cast. "I got a lot from just walking and observing seven years ago but when I started volunteering and then was asked to play Jesus, it became really real for me," he said.

Like most of the cast members, Parker wears a lot of hats. Last Saturday afternoon he and fellow cast members Blaine Phelps and Don Duncan were building a set for the Lord's Supper scene where Phelps is one of the 12 disciples. Duncan and his wife help with production and Don has been a cantor in the marketplace, among other roles, and Mrs. Duncan describes her role as a goffer. In private life, Parker works for Rutherford Electric, Duncan is a service technician for AT&T, Mrs. Duncan is a speech pathologist for Cleveland County Schools and Phelps is pastor of United Baptist Church in Gastonia.

"Reclining on a pillar with the other disciples and fixing our eyes on Jesus is almost like being

in that Upper Room chamber as the sun sets, it's the most powerful scene and a sermon all in itself that I try to relate to my congregation," said Phelps. Coincidentally, Phelps was invited by Lennie Wright, who was attending his seminary extension class, to attend the drama in 2005. Wright portrays Judas in the pageant and his sister, Donna Deaton, and her family are all part of the cast.

"It has really become a family affair for all of us because we're just one big family," says Deaton.

Mrs. Duncan says the families email throughout the year and it takes about five months of committee meetings to get the show on the road. "This pageant changes us all, the more than 200 hands it takes to put it together," said Mrs. Duncan.

Deaton, who is costume mistress, said a recent example of the spirit of cooperation was last Saturday when 10 women held a sewing party. Six sewing machines turned out 26 adult costumes and 20 kids costumes. Deaton said that over the years cast members had borrowed outfits but now they need more costumes for crowd and marketplace scenes. Deaton portrays Mary Magdalene in the closing weekend of shows. Cindi Alexander Wood portrays Mary

Magdalene this Friday and Saturday. Choir rehearsal was Monday for the large group that sings during the Resurrection scene.

Reg Alexander is quick to praise family members who come together to make the production successful.

Parker's wife, Dorene, and their daughters McKenzie and Kristen are among the cast. Chris Quinn, son of the Duncans, travels from the University of Kettering in Flint, Michigan to assist in taking down the sets on closing night of the event.

This is the seventh year also that the Deaton family has participated in CrossWalk. Tyler Deaton, 21, was the Jesus nailed to the cross the first year of CrossWalk. Tanner, 14, was seven years old when he was a street kid for one of the scenes and has also served as a torch lighter and in other roles as his mother has.

"It's a wonderful experience for our family," says Mrs. Deaton. A walk-through of the entire production will take place Thursday night. Says Deaton, "It's reunion time every year when we see folks we haven't seen in months."

Says Wright of his role as Judas Iscariot, "Somebody has to do it, it's part of the Passion of Christ."

her life."

"She's in a better place than we are," Mr. Golightly said. "We miss her." He told her students that if they wanted to please her they needed to study.

"They shut their mouths and shook their heads. It was the quietest I had ever seen them," said substitute teacher Virginia Ware.

From supporting two staff members just diagnosed with cancer to visiting Hoyle's wife in the hospital, she remained a rock in the throes of her illness. "I think the thing that really made her so special was that wonderful spirit she always had," Hoyle said. "There was no stopping for Dorcas," Wilson said. She was working on lesson plans for Monday before she passed, she said, and one day she fell and broke both of her legs because her bones were so brittle from the cancer. But that didn't stop her from teaching. Her class was just moved into the library where she could wheel herself in and out.

Beasley was 53. "She became very special to me and I'll never forget her," Wilson said.

Her son, Larry Beasley Jr., is a top student at Shelby High School. He is graduating this summer. "Her dream was to see him graduate. That had been her main motivation," said East Elementary Secretary Julie Fortner. Now she will have the best seat in the house, a view from Heaven.



The PTO at East Elementary placed an angel statuette in the garden in front of their school. The angel was dedicated in memory of Mrs. Dorcas Beasley, their beloved third grade teacher, who passed away on Sunday.

every one. She bent over backwards to help other people." He said that she exhibited every one of the fruits of the spirit that are outlined in Galatians 5:22-23 and was highly respected as a teacher, having the highest scoring children in the county.

"You never heard her complain about anything," Wilson said. "She'd told me several times that she didn't feel like she'd last as long as she had if she wasn't teaching. This was

## BEASLEY

From 1A

released at about 2:30 p.m. The children watched in awe as they drifted up to their teacher's new home in the sky. Symbolizing the fighting spirit of this great teacher, some of the balloons lingered for just a few minutes in a nearby tree, then consented to fly.

Her students made a stepping stone, inscribed with the words: "In loving memory of Mrs. Beasley; Class of 06-07." The PTO placed an angel in the small garden in front of the school, dedicated to her memory.

Mrs. Golightly and Beasley's father Elbert Golightly visited with the children before the service. They liked seeing Mrs. Golightly because she looked so much like their missing teacher. The pair of them loved talking to the children that meant so much to their daughter, as if by embracing them they held her one more time.

The first time Principal Hoyle met Mrs. Beasley was about 15 years ago. He said that she had noticed one of her students having trouble walking to school. She told the parents that something was wrong and they subsequently took her to a doctor and discovered that she had leukemia. The family fell on hard times so Beasley took it upon herself to lead a fund raising campaign to help them. Hoyle had heard such positive comments about her over the years and wasn't sure what to expect, outside of a "Wonder Woman." But when they met he said that she was a "very quiet, very humble, very modest lady."

She taught at East for 26 years. She was first diagnosed with cancer in her early twenties. "Not only was she just an absolutely fantastic teacher, but she really lived the Christian life," Hoyle said. "She just loved



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## Educators give A-Plus Act an A+

EMILY WEAVER

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A new act is on the table that could turn the table back to the states for education. US Senators John Cornyn (R-Texas) and Jim DeMint (R-South Carolina) introduced the Academic Partnerships Lead Us to Success Act (A-PLUS) on Thursday. Congressman Patrick McHenry announced on Friday that he is co-sponsoring the act which demands a reform in No Child Left Behind's "one-size-fits-all approach to education."

According to Cornyn's website (cornyn.senate.gov), the A-PLUS Act calls for: all states having the "option of establishing a 5-year Performance Agreement with the Secretary of Education;" states being able to "consolidate funds from a few or all of the federal education programs and redirect them to innovative programs created at the state level;" "in exchange for this flexibility, participating states would be required to meet their state performance objectives for improving student academic achievement and demonstrate a narrowing of achievement gaps;" "if a state fails to improve academic achievement, its Performance Agreement would be revoked and it would revert back to the

NCLB system;" "accountability and student achievement would remain a high priority with A-PLUS, but unlike NCLB, A-PLUS allows states to use a variety of innovative accountability programs;" and "transparency would be ensured by requiring states to submit annual reports on student progress to parents and taxpayers."

Cornyn said that according to the Office of Management and Budget, teachers are now having to spend an extra 6,680,334 hours a year on paperwork with the NCLB Act.

"No Child Left Behind began as a noble idea to improve our nation's educational system but ended up as a poorly implemented government program that hamstring our local schools, teachers and students," said Congressman McHenry. "Teachers and parents, not bureaucrats in Washington, should be empowered with educating our students, offering them preparation and guidance initiated from Western North Carolina."

Cleveland County Schools Superintendent Bruce Boyles said that although he has not read the full text of the act, "as an educator, I do have concerns that the 'one size fits all' approach of the NCLB Act has created some

unintended consequences. It has labeled some very fine schools as inadequate. Because of the No Child Left Behind Act, some schools that are performing at a low level but making progress, are perceived as doing a better job than some high performing schools."

Boyles said that he has met with legislators to discuss his concerns about all children being expected to perform at the same level, at the same time.

KMHS Assistant Principal Jon Fleisher said that he thinks accountability is a good thing for any arena. "The NCLB Act of 2001 definitely outlines provisions for accountability. However, I am not sure how well this particular model (NCLB) has served its purpose," he said. "I don't know what the authors' vision of NCLB was when the Act was drafted and adopted, so I do not believe that I can fully comment whether or not it has been successful. I can say that I like the idea of more autonomy at the state and local level. I can also say that if given the chance once again to be the expert in their classrooms, our teachers would do an excellent job of educating our students. I have faith in the public educational system and the teachers that serve in it."

## Setting goals for county's future

EMILY WEAVER

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Cleveland County Commissioners met in a work session on Wednesday, March 14, to set goals for the county's future. No tax increase, addressing the Medicaid issue, a three percent raise in pay for law enforcement and county employees, and increasing funding for Cleveland Community College made the top of their "Things To Do" list. Economic Development, supporting the upper Cleveland County reservoir, modifying the tarp ordinance and supporting legislation that helps retain fire and EMS volunteers were the top picks for Commissioner's goals.

Going around the table, commissioners addressed the goals they wanted to make priorities for the upcoming fiscal year. Vice Chairman Eddie Holbrook said that he wanted to ask County Manager David Dear to present a budget that retains the current tax rate. Commissioner Jo Boggs agreed with no new taxes and said that they need to prioritize the Medicaid concern. Commissioners are hoping that recent state legislation, intro-

duced by Sen. Andrew C. Brock (R-Davie, Rowan) will free up some of the nearly 13 percent of their budget that is taken out yearly for Medicaid.

Chairwoman Mary Accor said that she hopes Medicaid will come out in their favor to maybe free up some resources that are needed to help organizations that are in need. But she added that right now it is like making a Christmas wish list, hoping Santa will come.

Commissioner Johnny Hutchins suggested using capital expenditures to purchase hybrid cars for county employees since they use less gas. Holbrook proposed a three percent pay increase for county employees to help retain more law enforcement officers and to keep good help in the county. Boggs suggested they take a look at Travel and Tourism to attract more people to the county. Holbrook asked the county manager to look at the possibilities of law enforcement and rescue workers getting a cost of living increase. He said that he believes there is a clause that escalates pay for hazardous duty in the military. Hutchins agreed, saying that they need to find a way

to up the ability of promotions. "It's taking law enforcement twice as long to get a promotion as before," Holbrook said, adding that losing eight officers in just a few months is a bad sign.

Commissioner Ronnie Hawkins asked why law enforcement did not address this concern in their budgets that they recently presented to the county. He suggested that they increase their funding of the community college. Holbrook said that they are listed at number 11 for the support they give and should be giving more.

Dear said that they may need a tax increase to finish paying for the county's new 800 MHz emergency system, but worst case scenario the raise would only be about one cent on property taxes. He went over the current expenditures with the commissioners, including \$160,000 for the Shelby Airport terminal and \$30,000 to help with a boat launch and dock for the City of Kings Mountain.

Holbrook said that something needs to be done about the tarp law. To help clean up the county, commissioners agreed to participate in Litter Sweep on the morning of April 14.



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