

## LOCAL

# Alexander's purpose is to serve God

By ELIZABETH STEWART

Reg Alexander's license tag, JOYNSNHIM, implies his life's philosophy: that meaning in life is only found in a right relationship with God.

He says that his purpose in life is to enjoy growing in his relationship with the Lord and to creatively express the joy of that faith to others. "It's not just about going to Heaven," Alexander says, "It's also about living out His purpose down here."

To Alexander, "living out" has to do with all of daily life, even his job. In one seminar that he does called "Taking the Work out of Work," he calls on business people to find more purpose in their routine by dropping the term "work" and beginning to use "minister." "Work is doing something you don't want to do in order to get paid. But ministry is something you do to help someone else's life become better."

Alexander says that one of the best things about "life on earth" for him is going through it a day at a time with his "girls," referring to his wife, Dianne (Deco) and their daughter, Kyra, a senior at Kings Mountain High School.

Kings Mountain native Alexander wears many hats. He is an ordained Baptist minister, event co-ordinator, humorist, banquet entertainer, motivational speaker, writer and graphic designer. His two most recent successful projects - CrossWalk and publication of a new maga-

zine, "Kings Mountain Today" - keep him busier than ever, he says.

"Actually these challenging projects are intertwined," explains Alexander. He started the magazine because he says "it helps us appreciate more where we live and nudges us spiritually to become more what we are." The non-profit endeavor also helps increase revenue to take care of some of the cost of "Cross Walk" which is presented each Easter in downtown Kings Mountain. CrossWalk's aim is not only solid spiritual value to those who participate and attend the shows but solid artistic value to the town and tourism, Alexander believes. The hundreds of volunteers make it happen.

Alexander's creative approach in ministry and Bible study began with his first job out of Seminary. He went back to Gardner-Webb University and was active in a campus ministry, also touring with the ambassador group SON Company. A 1967 graduate of Kings Mountain High School, he holds an AA degree from Gardner-Webb University, class of 1969, a BS degree in 1971 from G-W and a Masters in Religious Education from Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, Ky., 1973.

Alexander's creative ministry formed over 30 years ago in Kings Mountain was headquarters for what he called "a different mix" of programs he became excited about following tours of

the Southeast in a variety of musical programs, drama and puppetry.

"I always liked to venture out in new ideas and Deco and I came up with the name Regal Ventures because of the excitement of our service together in Christian ministry and were surprised after we chose the name Regal that it is the first five letters of my name," said Alexander whose first name is Reginald but everyone calls him Reg.

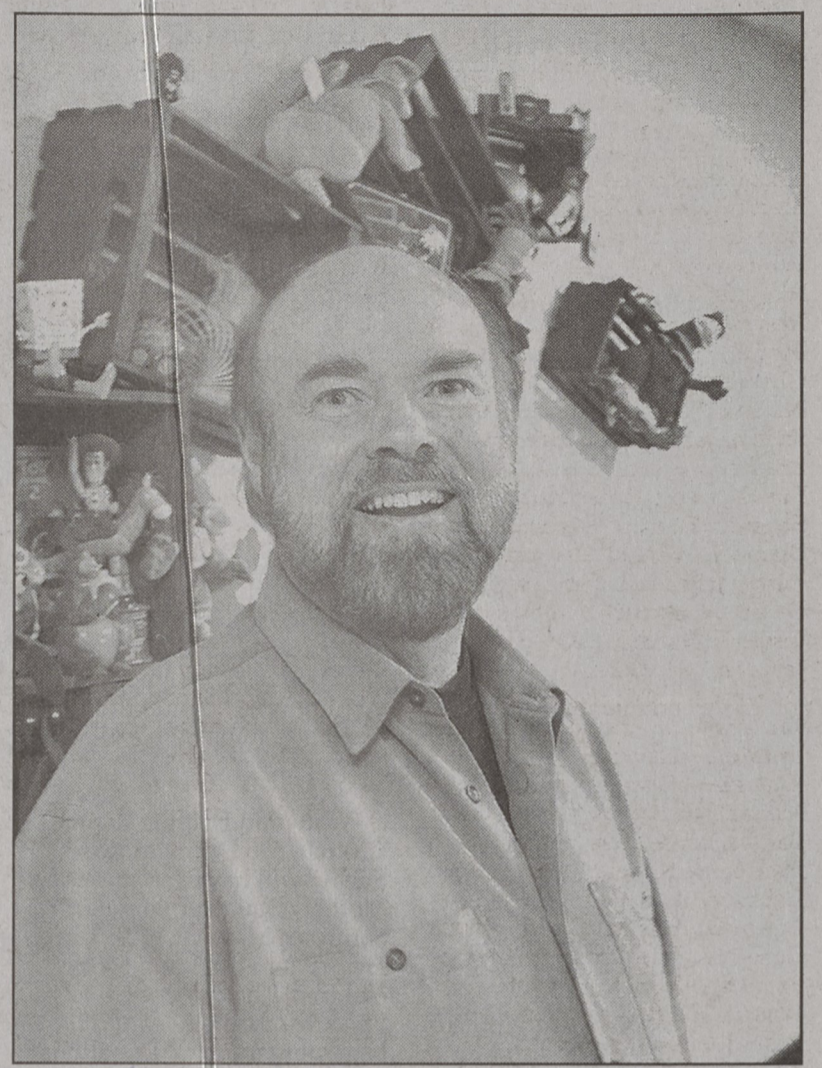
For 20 years the Kingdom Youth Conference Series he founded has provided young people throughout the Southeastern states with inspiration and character development through innovative stage programming and seminars. He worked with Carowinds Amusement Park to develop the ongoing Christian Music Day event which attracts over 10,000 attendees each year and with the development of the Extreme Youth Conference series that brings together thousands of young people to Gatlinburg, Tn. each winter. CrossWalk, the annual outdoor drama that depicts the events leading to the first Easter, was begun by Alexander in 2001 and attendance from all over the country has swelled as CrossWalk has been hailed as the Southeast's Most Unusual Passion Play.

Long active in First Baptist Church where he has also worn a lot of hats in ministry, he is active in the community. Kings Mountain Rotary Club cited him multiple years for service, he

served on the KM Patriots Park renovation committee, and is founding member of KM Historical Drama Development Committee which is in the process of establishing a continuing theatrical attraction depicting the Revolutionary War Battle of Kings Mountain. A certified presenter with Carolina Health and Humor Association, he is a member of the Religious Conference Meeting Association, a charter member of North Carolina Center for non profits, designed the Kings Mountain city flag and contributed that design to the city, served on the publicity committee for the city's Kids Park Project, and was honorary chairman of KM's Relay for Life in 2001.

Currently he is developing a training conference for youth entitled Student Leadership and Ministry (Slam) to be presented in June by Tomorrow's America Foundation and Broyhill Leadership Conference. He is handling the national scheduling of author/speaker Cindi Wood, his sister, and developing the organization's first regional women's conference, Frazzled Female Break-Away, in Gatlinburg, Tn. this September.

Son of retired Kings Mountain Postmaster Charles Alexander and the late Ruby Moss Alexander, he counts his close-knit family as his support network. In 2005 he was honored as Distinguished Alumni at Gardner-Webb University and he was the first Kings Mountain businessman to receive the



Reggie Alexander's creative approach to ministry includes CrossWalk, seminars, Bible studies, speaking, music and more.

Region C Citizen of the Year Award, a four-county recognition by the Criminal Justice Advisory Committee.

What is his primary vocational

and life's goal? "To creatively communicate the joy of being a member of God's family through a relationship with Christ."

## Melinda Canniff Teacher of the Year at East Elementary

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Melinda Canniff has been teaching kindergarten at East Elementary for nine years. But this year has been a trying one succeeded with the noble honor-Teacher of the Year.

She knew something was wrong near the end of last school year, but didn't want to be tested until after her vacation at the beach. Over the summer, doctors told her it was breast cancer. She went to Principal Jerry Hoyle and told him she may need to take a little time off this year.

The school was very supportive, she said, and they worked around her schedule, trying to get the same substitute to cover her class when she was out so the kids wouldn't get confused. Canniff found that the day of and the day after chemotherapy were not as bad as the third and fourth day after chemo. "So we scheduled them on the weekends. I would be out Saturday and Sunday then I would have a sub on Monday and Tuesday."

She had four treatments like that over an eight-week period. In October, she had surgery. A few more treatments followed after surgery, but it was a different type of chemo. "It didn't knock me out. I was able to keep going," she said.

Throughout her battle with cancer, she looked forward to the time when she could be with her class and stay. "I like to be here with them," she laughed. She wore a wig for a while, but when the weather started getting warmer she put her wig aside and grabbed a handkerchief. "They're laughing at me now because my hair is gray. They think that's funny," she said.



Mrs. Melinda Canniff, East Elementary's Teacher of the Year, stands with her Kindergarten class. Front row, l-r: Halley Lockard, Joseph Ruffalo, Jacob Korch, Logan Webb, and Ethan Timms. Second row, l-r: Brandon Quevedo-Johns, Ty'Lazha Rhodes, Illiana Bryan, Delyah Capps, Evan Rogers, Faythe Thompson, Hannah Oliver, and Abby Davis. Back row, l-r: Christian Pilkington, Alyssa Thompson, Melinda Canniff, and Tyron Thompson.

Canniff said that she did not tell her class too much because she didn't want them to get upset. "I just told them I was going to a doctor and I told them that the medicine they gave me made my hair come out," she added.

Doctors were able to successfully remove all of the cancer and right now she is glad to be in the clear. Beating cancer was a hard battle, but as a teacher she's no stranger to challenges.

"(Being a teacher) you have homework too, just like the kids," she said, adding that there is a constant cycle of planning for what comes next. Before her class of kindergartners leave at the end of the year, the next group has already popped in for orientation and different kids require different lessons.

There is not a lot of money in

being a public school teacher, she said, "but I don't really even think about that anymore. I mean, that's not why I chose this career."

Teaching was her third career choice. But as the saying goes, "the third time is the charm." Now Canniff wouldn't trade it for the world. The path she took to the schoolhouse was a little longer than others, but she made it and her reward is teaching.

"I like doing the arts and crafts with them and all of the hands-on activities we get to do," she said. "I just like that they're still so eager to learn and they're excited to be here. I enjoy the excitement that they have."

Canniff loves it when her previous little ones return for a visit and when she gets to teach their siblings. "I get to see their families grow sometimes and I know

some of them have had babies and I'll say, 'I'm gonna see your little brother or sister in a few years,'" she said with a smile.

The most rewarding thing about being a teacher? "Watching the children's growth from the beginning of the year to

the end of the year...You see them change so much and grow up so much in that one year."

Just as rewarding is making a difference in their lives. "When you come in that morning, I don't think you make or break their day, but you have a big

influence on how their day is going to go," she said, meekly. Just helping the little ones learn about the world and to be able to succeed in it is worth more than a paycheck, she added.

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**Meet Dr. Charles Langley** - After 28 years of practicing internal medicine at Shelby Medical Associates, Charles P. Langley III, M.D., is joining Cleveland Medical Associates, in Kings Mountain. The move, effective April 16, will make Dr. Langley the permanent physician at Cleveland Medical Associates, replacing David Johnson, M.D. "I look forward to working in Kings Mountain and meeting new patients," says Dr. Langley.


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