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INSIDE



Texas Longhorn Coach Rick Barnes takes a minute to show Layla Harris how to do the Hook'em Horns sign at a recent YMCA basketball camp. Read more on 3B.

Kings Mountain Herald
 Issue 55 • Wednesday, August 17, 2011
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CrossWalk may return on 'world's largest stage'

Board denies Brown's plan for RV park



A crowd of spectators gather in the marketplace at CrossWalk.

Contributed photo

EMILY WEAVER
 Editor

"CrossWalk", a nationally-recognized outdoor passion play that came to a halt in Kings Mountain after a nine-year run in 2009, may be coming back in a colossal way! It's return - if all goes as planned - will be legendary.

The last few years of Crosswalk shows (averaging eight a season) brought crowds of 300 - most from out of town - to each performance (1,800-2,400 visits). It's economic impact brought an estimated \$25,000-\$35,000 a year to the city. But that seems to be small change and small numbers compared to the plans "CrossWalk" organizers have in store for the future.

Although the entire scope of the project has yet to be unveiled, released updates say it will be in the "world's first permanent walk-through dramatic facility" incorporating the "world's largest stage". The outdoor Easter drama which led spectators through five city blocks on the "Trail of Amazing Grace" is heading indoors.

"Actually, the dream of entering an indoor facility came about our second or third year," said Reg Alexander, founder and director of Regal Ventures Creative Ministries, the production company that created "CrossWalk". "Being on the downtown streets, we did not have the opportunity of an extended scenery set-up. It took a lot of coordination on the part of our volunteers to be able to construct sets so quickly. And the Spring weather not only played havoc with our presentations, but our set-up and take-down efforts were greatly marred by wind and rain."

He jovially recalled the year when the "Last Supper" lasted over a month. Every time the volunteers in charge of that set could get together to dismantle it, their efforts were drenched by rains, he said.

Adverse weather also led to the occasional canceling and rescheduling of shows. An Ohio-based tour group came to see the show for the first time a few

years ago. They loved it, hailing it as a "highlight of their trip", Alexander said. But the uncertainty of the weather doused sure-fire plans of a next year encore visit.

"This certainly reinforced the direction of our planning toward a fully enclosed venue...as well as the validity of this presentation being marketed as a tour destination event," Alexander added.

During the program's nine-year run, "CrossWalk" welcomed visitors from other states, such as Florida, Georgia, South Carolina, West Virginia, and Tennessee.

"At the beginning of each presentation we asked for a show of hands from those who were from out of town. Each time 70 to 80 percent of those present were from out of town, and often up to 50 percent were from out of state," he said.

Although promotional publicity for "CrossWalk" ended with the final shows in 2009, Alexander said that each March and April he has still received phone calls and emails from people interested in the show.

Unique tour destination

"Having this presentation on the streets of the city was a unique event to Kings Mountain," he added. "Nowhere else in America, as far as we could ever discern, had such a bold Easter presentation on public streets, thanks to the cooperation of the city government and downtown businesses. But even under the best of circumstances, our audiences were still affected by weather, trains, downtown sounds and other elements."

For weeks leading up to the shows, volunteers would gather to build sets, sew costumes and transform parts of downtown Kings Mountain into a 2,000-year-old Jerusalem.

Produced as a street play, the unique element of CrossWalk is that the audience finds itself in the middle of the drama, empathetic participants in much of

See CROSSWALK, 7A

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"This isn't a subdivision I'm trying to build, it's a campground," developer Mike Brown told the city's Planning and Zoning Board last Tuesday after a second lengthy public hearing on rezoning of a portion of his property on Raven Drive.

By 7-1 the Kings Mountain Planning Board denied Brown's rezoning request to put up a RV campground because of "deficiencies in the design and enforceability of the proposal."

The issue, now in the hands of city council, will be decided August 30 at 6 p.m. at a public hearing conducted by city council at the council's monthly meeting.

If city council takes the P&Z board's recommendation to deny a conditional use permit and rezoning from Residential-10 to R-20 of a portion of the property at the former Park Yarn Mill site, Brown can't submit another application for six months.

"The planning board really took a hard look at the proposal, advised Mr. Brown at its July meeting of deficiencies in his design and listed 13 specific suggestions for a revised site plan and voted at its August meeting on four findings of fact," said Planning Director Steve Killian.

Among the major questions asked by the board last Tuesday was: would it endanger the public health and safety?

"I am concerned about sanitation," said John Houze who said a primitive park

See P&Z BOARD, 5A

Six vie for 1 seat, 2 for mayor

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A sixth candidate - businessman Bobby Horne, 52, filed for the At-Large seat open on city council and Gilbert (Pee Wee) Hamrick, 70, filed to challenge five-term Mayor Rick Murphy as filing ended Friday at noon for the fall 2011 municipal election.



HORNE



HAMRICK

The At-Large seat is a "winner take all" in the non-partisan race where no run-off will be held.

Home "free" with no opposition are incumbent council members Howard Shipp, Ward I; Rodney Gordon, Ward IV; and Rick Moore, Ward V.

See RACE, 7A

Police: toddler shot in head improving

Police say a toddler who was critically injured after he was shot at a home in the 1200 block of Shelby Road Aug. 9 is improving.

"His family told me today that he is doing good," said Det. Doug Shockley of the Kings Mountain Police Department. Police are continuing the investigation into the incident but have not released the names of the parents. Shockley, who stays in contact by phone with the parents at the hospital, said no one has been charged.

According to Shockley the two-year-old boy apparently managed to grab a gun and accidentally shot himself. He said one parent and two siblings were in the house at the time. The family did not call 911 from the home. Instead, they drove the boy straight to Kings Mountain Hospital on West King Street which is close to the home. The child was then airlifted with critical injuries to Levine Children's Hospital at Carolinas Medical Center in Charlotte.

Shockley said the child was moved out of ICU on Friday and continues to show improvement.



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Final downtown design phase tackles 'Grease Trap Alley'

EDITOR'S NOTE: In this four-part series, *The Herald* is looking at the Mountaineer Partnership's Design Committee proposals to revamp the pedestrian spaces and pocket parks that line the backs of businesses from Gold Street to Wachovia. This week, could an area referred to as "grease trap alley" be in for a cleaning?
 Part 4 of 4

EMILY WEAVER
 Editor

In a back alley that stretches half-a-city-block from Gold to Mountain streets, the mouth-watering smells of competing restaurants drift over the clutter and crumbling sidewalks. Trash and recycling cans and a deposit box for grease line the pedestrian's way.

Start small, go big

Page 6A - MPI rolls out the first three focus projects of many to come for downtown design improvements.

Citizens have nicknamed this downtown corridor "grease trap alley". But it may soon don a new name...after a bit of scrubbing.

At a recent Downtown Design Summit, the Mountaineer Partnership's Design Committee unveiled improvement projects broken down into three phases of back alleyways stretching from Gold St. to Wachovia. The areas were codenamed the "North



South End improvement ideas call for sprucing up 'Grease Trap Alley'.

See IDEAS, 6A

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