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# Kings Mountain Herald

Thursday

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VOLUME 94, NUMBER 24

THURSDAY, MARCH 26, 1981

KINGS MOUNTAIN, NORTH CAROLINA

## 18 Protest RR Proposal

By GARY STEWART  
Co-Editor

Eighteen Kings Mountain citizens appeared before the City Board Monday night to protest the proposal to close the Hawthorne Street railroad crossing.

Commissioners called for a public hearing on the matter after a suggestion by Southern Railway and the N.C. Department of Transportation to close the crossing.

The DOT, which is

distributing federal money to improve dangerous railroad crossings, lists the Hawthorne Street crossing as one of the 20 most dangerous in the state.

The DOT and Southern Railway want to close Hawthorne, improve Railroad Avenue which runs parallel to the tracks, and upgrade the Oak Street Crossing with signal lights and gates. Both crossings are located on Highway 216 south,

(Turn To Page 2-A)



Lawrence Patrick protests railroad proposal



**FAMILY REUNION** - Pictured are members of the Bill Johnson family who have been reunited after 23 years. From left, Mrs. Mary Rose Johnson, Cynthia Tate, Bill Johnson,

Dana Ann Gerber holding Mikeal, Dave Gerber, Kim Johnson holding Jeremy and Angela Johnson holding Brandee.

## Father And Daughter Reunited After 23 Years

By ELIZABETH STEWART  
Co-Editor

A father and daughter's search for each other ended Wednesday morning in Kings Mountain when Bill Johnson, 45, and Dana Ann Johnson Gerber were reunited after a 23 year separation.

It will be an early birthday celebration this week for Johnson, who will be 46 in May, and friends and relatives were already gathering at the Johnson home at 409 N. Tracy St. as early as 9 a.m. to await the Utah family's arrival. Other family members had gone to Charlotte's Douglas Airport to greet them.

Dana Ann, now Mrs. Dave Gerber of Bountiful, Utah, was eight months old when her father and mother separated and divorced. Mrs. Gerber is now a mother herself, of 21 months old Mikeal and four and one-half months old Annie.

The family lost contact with

each other during Dana's growing up years. Mr. Johnson moved to Bessemer City and remarried and last year the Johnson family moved to an apartment at 409 N. Tracy St. in Kings Mountain. Dana Ann grew up in Utah where her mother, Marianna, married Earl Harris. Her Utah family also includes two brothers and a sister. Bill and Mary Rose Johnson of Kings Mountain are also parents of a daughter, Cynthia Tate, and two sons, Kim Johnson of Kings Mountain and Johnny Johnson of Cherryville. There are six grandchildren.

Mrs. Gerber said she called the Bessemer City Police Department and made four other long distance calls on March 9th before she finally heard her father's voice on the line. "We were so excited we could hardly talk to each other," she recalled.

And, Mr. Johnson was just as excited Wednesday as were all members of the family. The fact that the young Utah couple had endured a long flight with two babies in tow did not diminish their tears of joy and happiness at seeing their new relatives for the first time.

Mr. Johnson, seriously ill with a lung disorder, had about given up hope, he said, that he would live to see his oldest child again. In and out of the VA hospitals for the past year, Mr. Johnson said he considers his life a miracle with his illness only enhancing his efforts to locate his daughter. Dana Gerber considers their reunion a miracle too and gives the credit to God for leading her in the right direction.

"We've both been praying for this moment for a long time," said Johnson.



**VOLUNTEERS** - Assisting members of KM Fire Department in the Wheels for Life Bike-A-Thon Saturday from left, Estelle Graham, Gail McDaniel, Ross Lefevers, Robert Dodge, Betty

Jones, Pete Peterson, Bill Ware, Bud Ware, Ronnie Hawkins, Jerry White, Gene Tignor, Jeff Cloninger and Rick Witherspoon.

## Childers, King Protest But Survey Approved

By GARY STEWART  
Co-Editor

Kings Mountain City Board, over a protest from commissioners Jim Childers and Norman King, Monday night approved spending \$5,000 through the Community Development program to assist the Kings Mountain Downtown Revitalization Committee in a marketing survey.

Mayor John Moss said the Chamber of Commerce-Merchants Association will spend around \$2,500 for the survey which is expected to cost \$7,500.

Childers protested because he said it is not the board's responsibility to "spend money to increase business for the downtown merchants" and King protested because he said it has "been tried by former administrations and didn't work then."

Childers said he was concerned how such a decision by the board would effect "people who live on the other side of the tracks," such as mill workers and others.

"This should be done by the downtown merchants," he said. "Is it going to benefit anyone other than the downtown merchants?"

Commissioner Humes Houston, who is a member of the Revitalization Committee, said the survey is a "program for all businesses in the city. Revitalization of the downtown area is a must. I can't say each individual will benefit, but I hope everyone will."

Commissioner Bill Grissom said the program "will put more competition on the street," but Childers again said "that is not our responsibility. We have already provided utilities and parking lots. Why take \$5,000 away from a target area, where it

can be used to rehabilitate a home?"

King said, "this has been going on for several years. Former administrations have tried it and it has never been successful. This is not necessary."

Grissom predicted it can be a success this time because "there has been a change of hands" in many downtown businesses. "We have new blood with different ideas than the ones in the past," he said.

Commissioner James Dickey added, "We've got a young group and if it can be revitalized, we should do anything we can to help."

Childers also expressed disappointment that the revitalization program is being carried out without the knowledge and assistance of the Office of Economic Development, and its director, Jerry King.

"Why was he not called in and used?" Childers asked. "He's already on payroll, let him do the survey."

Houston disagreed, saying that other towns that have conducted surveys and "their in-house people couldn't do it."

"Find out if he can do it," Childers said. "That's what he's there for."

After a motion by Childers and second by King to deny the request received no support other than Childers and King, Grissom made a motion to approve the request subject to the approval and cooperation of the Economic Development Office. Houston seconded the motion and it passed 4-2, with Childers and King voting against it.

(Turn To Page 5-A)

## Bike-A-Thon Set Saturday

The St. Jude's Children's Research Hospital Wheels for Life Bike-A-Thon is scheduled for a 9:30 start Saturday morning at Kings Mountain High School.

The 20.2 mile route will run through the Kings Mountain state and national park properties, and bikers will be served lunch at noon in the parking lot of the Kings Mountain National Military Park museum.

The route is as follows:

Bikers will leave Kings Mountain High School on Fulton Road and proceed to Margrace Road, and go south to the Southern Railway underpass and hit Highway 216 for the short stretch to Compact School Road. The route will follow Compact School Road to Dixon Presbyterian Church, and bikers will then turn left onto Love Valley Road and proceed to the S.C. State Park Road. After lunch at the KMNP museum, bikers will return to the park road and proceed to Highway 216's intersection with Dixon School Road. Bikers will then proceed to Dixon Church and then retrace the original route back to Kings Mountain High School.

A small track for young riders will be laid off at the high school.

Entry forms may be obtained at Kings Mountain Junior High, Kings Mountain Senior High, and the Kings Mountain Fire Department. Children under nine must be accompanied by an adult.

All proceeds from the bike-athon will go to St. Jude's for research into cancer and other childhood diseases.

The bike-athon two years ago raised over \$4,000 but bad

weather interfered with last year's event.

Bikers raising at least \$25 in donations will be eligible for prizes from St. Jude's and area businesses. The top two awards will be bicycles donated by Western Auto and the Gastonia Bicycle Shop. A number of other good prizes will be presented.

A special attraction for young riders will be brief speeches by professional wrestlers from the Charlotte area, including Paul Jones, Ron Ritchie and Bruno Sammartino Jr.

The Fire Department issued a special thanks to several area individuals and organizations who will be helping with the event, including:

Kings Mountain Rescue Squad, which will make an ambulance available throughout the ride.

Kings Mountain REACT, which will man check points along the route.

Robert Dodge of the Kings Mountain Police Department, who will keep a continuous check on all the participants.

B.J.R. Screen Printing of Shelby, which is donating T-shirts as prizes for some who collect the most money.

Jim Crockett Promotions, for its cooperation in securing the professional wrestlers.

Kings Mountain Herald, WKMT, WAGI, WSOC, WOHS, WLTC, WADA, and WBTV for publicity of the event.

Jonas Bridges, emcee, John Henry Moss, Mayor, and Dale Costner, Sheriff of Cleveland County, for cooperation and all businesses that have donated prizes.

## Second Student Injured

Jeremy Funderburk, fourth grader at Grover School is a patient in Room 415 at Cleveland Memorial Hospital where he is recovering from injuries sustained when his bicycle was hit by a car last Tuesday.

The youngster, who suffered broken ribs and a broken leg, is expected to be in a cast for sometime and out of school for about six weeks, according to Mrs. Gerald Valentine, Grover School Secretary.

The accident reportedly occurred last Tuesday afternoon at 5:30 p.m. on New Buffalo Church Road in Grover. The

(Turn To Page 7-A)