

Community Notes

• **The N.C. Center for International Understanding** is looking for informal ambassadors to Ghana.

The center, a statewide exchange program, is looking for N.C. citizens to go to Accra, Ghana July 24-Aug. 6. Single adults and families with children age 6 and above are encouraged to apply. The cost is \$2,268 for adults and \$1,853 for children under 11, which includes round-trip airfare from New York, visa fees, five-day homestay, tour, hotels and breakfasts.

For more information, call Joanne Woodard at (919) 515-4559 or (919) 733-4902.

• **The Charlotte-Mecklenburg Head Start** program is taking applications for the 1996-97 school year.

Families with incomes below the poverty level can register their 3- and 4-year-old children born between Oct. 16, 1991 and Oct. 16, 1993. Head

Start also serves a limited number of disabled children whose family incomes may be above the poverty guidelines.

For more information, call 371-7420, 371-7421, 371-7436 or 333-0203.

• **The N.C. NAACP** is sponsoring a statewide voter registration campaign for the next two months.

From March 16-May 16, the NAACP is looking for churches, Greek organizations, civic groups and other organizations to participate in voter registration as part of the NAACP's major campaign for 1996.

For more information, call the N.C. NAACP at (910) 275-0851.

• **Charlotte City Council** is looking for people to serve on 14 boards and commissions.

Applications must be received by April 1 and are available at the Office of the City Clerk, 600 East Fourth

St. City Council will make nominations on April 8 for the following vacancies:

Auditorium-Coliseum-Convention Center Authority; Certified Development; Civil Service; Clean City Committee; CMUD; Community Relations; Historic Districts; Historic Landmarks; Neighborhood Matching Grants Review; Parole Accountability; Planning Commission; Sister Cities; Spirit Square Board of Directors and Storm Water Advisory Committee.

• **Mothers of Murdered Offspring** will celebrate its third anniversary March 23 at First Baptist Church Family Life Center, 300 South Davidson St. The celebration starts at 3 p.m. and child care and refreshments will be provided.

For more information, call 334-3249.

Union meets with local ministers' group

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Greensboro in 1992 and employs about 600 people.

Wages range from \$6.75 to \$8.50 per hour. The average wage for workers performing identical jobs in other cities is over \$13.50 per hour, Hensler said.

According to the union's analysis, Kmart distribution centers in cities such as Lawrence, Kansas, Warren, Ohio, Ocala, Fla., and Newnan, Ga., pay workers more though the cost of living is about the same. Workers in Lawrence earn a top wage of \$13.95 and those in Warren, \$13.60. The top wage in Ocala is \$10.20 and in Newnan it's \$14.

Workers have demonstrated

outside K-Mart stores in Greensboro and at the distribution plant. Several have been arrested. Demonstrators halted play at the nationally-televised Greater Greensboro Open, a golf tournament sponsored by Kmart. At that demonstration, 64 protesters were arrested.

Hensler said the Greensboro distribution center has the greatest percentage of African American workers, as many as 60 percent of the more than 600 employed there. It is the only such facility with a majority non-white workforce, he said.

Compton-Holt and four other Kmart employees have filed a lawsuit against Kmart alleging racial discrimination in court and have filed a class

action discrimination complaint with the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission.

In September, 1994, the NLRB ordered Kmart to reinstate four workers and pay \$76,000 in back wages.

Henderson said the workers had contacted Rev. David Baker at Gethesemane AME Zion Church in December.

"He was calling together some pastors for individual efforts," Henderson said. "We decided the best way to do it was to go through the Christian Ministers group.

"We will discuss in our April meeting as to how active we would be. We are real sensitive to their concerns in terms of their treatment at Kmart."

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Barber shop serves up cuts, talk



A.D. Neal, on left, cuts a customer's hair in Neal's Barbershop, in 1946. He's cut hair more than 60 years, starting when he was 13. Styles are about the same, just named differently, Neal says.

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license and got a permanent license."

Neal's first shop was at 1118 Beatties Ford Road. He opened that one in 1946 and except for three months while that one was being renovated, he remained until about 11 years ago. That's when he moved around the corner to his current shop, 2108-C Oaklawn Ave.

The place is not very remarkable. Just four barber chairs, mirrored walls and seating for customers on the opposite side. Neal's chair's in the back, near the cash register. There's the obligatory pictures of Martin Luther King and Jesse Jackson and the Stop the Killing bumper sticker, but there's also a photograph from the Million Man March.

Other than the fact that he's open on Monday, closing

Sunday and Tuesday, his operations are about normal.

Of late, reporters have taken to dropping by Neal's place when issues of major importance arise. The Rodney King incident, for example.

He and his customers spend a great deal of time discussing the issues and even non-issues of the day.

West Charlotte and its football team gets a fair share of the attention. After all, Neal was the school's first football quarterback, back in 1939. The team was 14-1 that year.

He graduated from West Charlotte in 1943, then entered the Army, serving in the Pacific Theater in World War II and attaining the rank of staff sergeant.

He studied some at the now-defunct Carver College. Business courses at night mainly while he ran his shop during the day.

He's seen west side changes

close up.

"There was a baseball field where the (city water) treatment plant is now," Neal says. "It was a cotton field. Then a ball field.

"The street car stopped on the corner. And there was a woodyard where this shop is now."

But now it's time for Neal to slow down a bit. He'll only work Thursday, Friday and Saturday, as soon as he can find another barber.

"That ain't easy," Neal said. "I don't know why young boys don't want to make money."

He adds, smiling slyly, "Young boys don't want to work here because they know I'll make them toe the line."

When he isn't cutting hair or singing with the choir, Neal is a yard man.

"I've got flowers in the yard from back in 1952," he says proudly.

And, he cooks. "I'm a rib man," he says. "I make my own barbecue sauce and seasoning salt."

His biggest meal was an Easter breakfast over at Friendship, country ham and red-eye gravy. "That's the first time I ever cooked for that many people," he said. "I don't know how many people it was."

Looking back on it all, Neal wouldn't change much of his life. He's had to bury two wives, but his children, a son and a daughter, are doing well.

And, so is his barbershop. "You can get too greedy," Neal said. "I could have six barbershops if I wanted them, but I can't work in but one."

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