

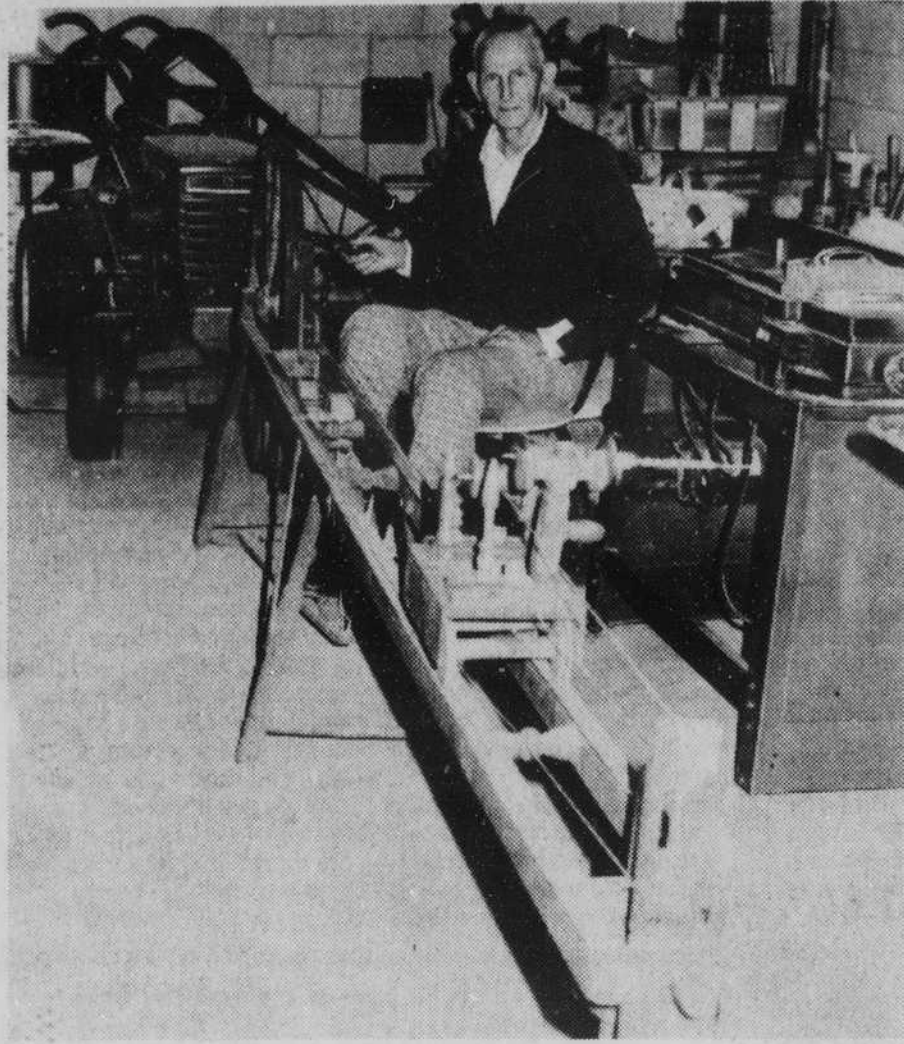
Black MOUNTAIN NEWS

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Hiram McCracken treads the spinning mule.

Spinning mule restored

by Cynthia Reimer

The basic laziness of human nature may be the real "mother of invention." In the early 1800s, the family wardrobe started out on a sheep. The next step, spinning the wool into yarn, was done on a wheel nearly as tall as the woman herself, a walking wheel. It was called that because, as the woman pushed the wheel with one hand and held the newly-formed thread with the other, she had to walk away from the wheel. To wind up the thread, she had to walk back toward the wheel. If she had an average family of eight or nine young-uns, husband and two or three grandparents to clothe, she covered a lot of miles in her spinning days. "Pa, my feet are killing me!" she might have told her husband. She might have complained so many times that her husband began to fiddle with ideas which would put his wife in a chair and let the machine do the walking. What he might finally have been the one to invent was the spinning mule.

Hiram McCracken, Ninth Street, Black Mountain, retired seven years ago and began to repair and build spinning wheels in his basement as a hobby.

A short time ago, a woman from Timberville, Virginia brought him what McCracken calls "a basket case." It was the numerous pieces of something McCracken had never seen before, a spinning mule.

"I don't know of any other in the country like this," McCracken said. "It's 150 years old; could be even older. This belongs in a museum so people could see it."

A carriage travels down a 12-foot track away from the spinner seated beside the wheel of the spinning mule. As the yarn winds up, it pulls the carriage back on a complicated system

of pulleys and string.

"It took a little while to figure it out," McCracken admitted.

McCracken also had to remake parts that were missing or broken. The entire contraption is wood, including the pegs and nuts and bolts holding it together, except for steel pins through the pulleys.

McCracken said the spinning mule, patented in Washington, was the forerunner of the spinning jenny which took hand-spinning forever out of the mills.

McCracken is a native of Bald Creek in Upper Crabtree, Haywood County. In 1936 he left for New Jersey where he worked for the Dupont Company until his retirement. Then McCracken came home with his wife to the mountains.

McCracken made his first spinning wheel for his wife, based on memory of his mother's wheel. Word-of-mouth has him turning out several new wheels and repairing eight or 10 old wheels a year now.

Mrs. McCracken provides spinning lessons to the purchasers of her husband's wheels, if they need it.

His wheels, sturdy and beautiful, are exact replicas of the antiques. Made of oak, they are pegged together with wood. No two are just alike. They are called Saxony wheels, the result of the best features of several wheels combined into one.

Perhaps the most unusual wheel McCracken has made is a "gossip wheel." Two spinners could spin at the same wheel, one on either side, with one treading while they caught up on the latest gossip.

McCracken does no advertising, yet his customers come from many states. He guarantees his work in the old-fashioned way, from times when quality was expected and things were made to last. Says McCracken, "They'll be repaired free as long as I live."

Sobol re-elected mayor; Bartlett leads race for Town Board

Mayor Tom Sobol was re-elected over A.F. Tyson by a wide margin in Tuesday's race. Mayor Sobol finished with 963 votes over Tyson's 374.

Carl Bartlett led the race for town aldermen with 1,083 votes, followed by incumbents Doug Stafford with 1,062 and Mike Begley with 1,038. Newcomers Steve King and Gay Currie Fox will complete the new Board of Aldermen. They received 957 and 910 votes, respectively.

Losing the race for re-election were Margaret Slagle, 459 votes, and Ruth Brandon, 354 votes.

About the new Board of Aldermen, Mayor Tom Sobol stated, "Of course we were very happy. There was a lot of team effort." Sobol also said he was

pleased that "issues were what the election was decided on."

Sobol said one of the first actions the new board will take is to "restore authority to the department heads and

get the morale problem solved," which, he said, would favorably affect all services provided by the town.

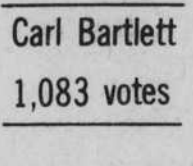
Black Mountain mayor and aldermen are elected for two years. The board will

next meet Nov. 9.

A total of 1,343 out of 2,300 registered voters voted in Black Mountain Tuesday.



Mayor Tom Sobol
963 votes



Carl Bartlett
1,083 votes



Mike Begley
1,038 votes



Doug Stafford
1,062 votes



Gay Fox
910 votes



Steve King
957 votes

Fall colors, friendliness impress German

by Cynthia Reimer

The last time Dr. Karl-Heinz Kroger was in the United States, Germany and the United States were at war, and Dr. Kroger was a prisoner in a POW camp in Texas.

When Dr. Kroger and his wife Gerda returned two weeks ago, it was under very different circumstances.

Black Mountain families were hosts to six visitors from Hamburg, Germany for 10 days through a program called Friendship Force. The Germans, about 130 in two groups, exchanged places with an equal number of Western North Carolinians. The purpose: to foster friendship among the people of different nations.

In a get-together last Thursday, just before their departure for Paris, then home, the Germans described their 10-day experience in Black Mountain. Some spoke English fluently, some haltingly. Most were in the States for the first time.

A variety of activities—from "Meet the Candidates Night" to a trip to Cherokee—were planned for the German guests, but the most important aspect of the Friendship Force exchange was summed up by Dr. Walter Debacher. "People I like to see more than huge buildings," he said.

Living with Americans in a small American town, the Germans saw contrasts and similarities among German and American life.

Since property is very expensive, Germans live closer together than Americans, they said. Americans, they thought, tended to have closer friendships with their neighbors and to be more open in talking about themselves.

Unlike Americans, Germans generally have their large hot meal at noon, with cold cuts, cheese or sausages and

bread in the evening. New foods they sampled here included sweet potatoes, okra, grits, Carolina ham, pumpkin pie and green pepper jelly.

The economic influence of the United States has, however, lessened the differences in the two countries' eating habits, the Germans said. Not only do they eat cornflakes and catsup, but they also call them by their English names.

While there are not many American tourists as far north as Hamburg, the Germans do watch American television programs, such as "Dallas" and "The Rockford Files." German television is taxed, but viewers don't have to put up with commercial interruptions every few minutes as Americans do; ads are confined to five minutes at the end of the program.

Hamburg is a port city, the second largest in Europe, so the view from their city is of the sea. "What surprised most of us," Dr. Kroger said of Black Mountain, "is the really beautiful landscape, the beautiful fall colors. I'll never forget that."

The visitors were made "Honorary Tarheels" at the Biltmore House in Asheville, receiving an impressive document with the Governor's seal in gold. Johann Matthiesen joked, "I will take it home to friends who can't read English and I will tell them I have been appointed Vice President of the United States!"

The Germans were far more eager to speak of what their visit meant to them than they were of differences and similarities in the two countries, and kept returning to that theme.

"I had never hoped to find people in this manner," Dr. Debacher said of the people he met in Black Mountain. "The friendships we made in this time will

continue for all our lifetime."

Said Dr. Kroger, "We are thankful, all of us, to our hosts. I can only hope we

leave behind a fairly good impression." Judging by the spontaneous applause, the "good impressions" were mutual.



Friendship Force participants gathered at the home of the Richardson Rices to talk about their experiences. German visitors were Dr. Karl-Heinz and Gerda Kroger, Dr. Walter and Anneliese Debacher, Johann Matthiesen and Walter Fischer. American hosts were Dr. and Mrs. John Wilson, Mr. and Mrs. Bob Baughman and Mr. and Mrs. Richardson L. Rice. Three Americans, Mr. and Mrs. Ray Baughman and Mary Nyland, who had just returned from Germany, joined the discussion also.

Commissioners delay decision on power rescue tool

With Chairman Curtis Ratcliff on vacation, Buncombe County Commissioners again hedged on the issue of providing funds for a power rescue tool for Black Mountain Tuesday evening.

In a status report to the commissioners, David Cunningham, administrative assistant to the chairman of the board, stated that the "Town of Black Mountain requested assistance."

Ruth Brandon, then liaison to the fire department, told Cunningham in an earlier conversation, he said, that McDonald's would provide up to \$3,300 for the tool.

Commissioner J.D. Jackson, chairing the board in Ratcliff's absence, reported, "I got a call from a (Black Mountain) board member and they said they could raise the money themselves."

A motion was made by Jesse Ledbetter to offer Black Mountain \$2,500 toward the tool and seconded by Jackson. The motion was withdrawn after Commissioner Riddle reported he had also "got feedback that Black Mountain wants to raise its own funds."

Further discussion was again tabled for two weeks with Cunningham instructed to get more information from

Black Mountain officials by the next meeting.

Task Force to tackle problems

Does someone in your family, or someone you care about have a problem with money, finance companies, a husband or wife, housing, heating or electric bills, drinking, children, drugs or retirement? If so, the Black Mountain New Horizons Task Force might have the answer.

Representatives of Buncombe County agencies which deal with these problems and many other every day will speak and answer questions at the Lake View Center on Lake Tomahawk, Black Mountain at 7:30 p.m. Nov. 12. The meeting is free and open to anyone who would like to come.

Speakers will include Lois Nix of ABCCM-East; Lee Dawes, Consumer Credit Counseling of Asheville; Bob Warren of Pisgah Legal Services; and Kit Emory of the Department of Social Services.

For more information, call Kathy Wacaster, 669-6437.

Health programs for older adults

by Paul Lambert

Between 50 and 60, older persons are meeting at Lake View Senior Center to take part in a series of seven presentations of one hour each titled "A Healthy Age." This is an outstanding program of films, group discussion and physical activity dealing with health-related topics of special importance to older adults.

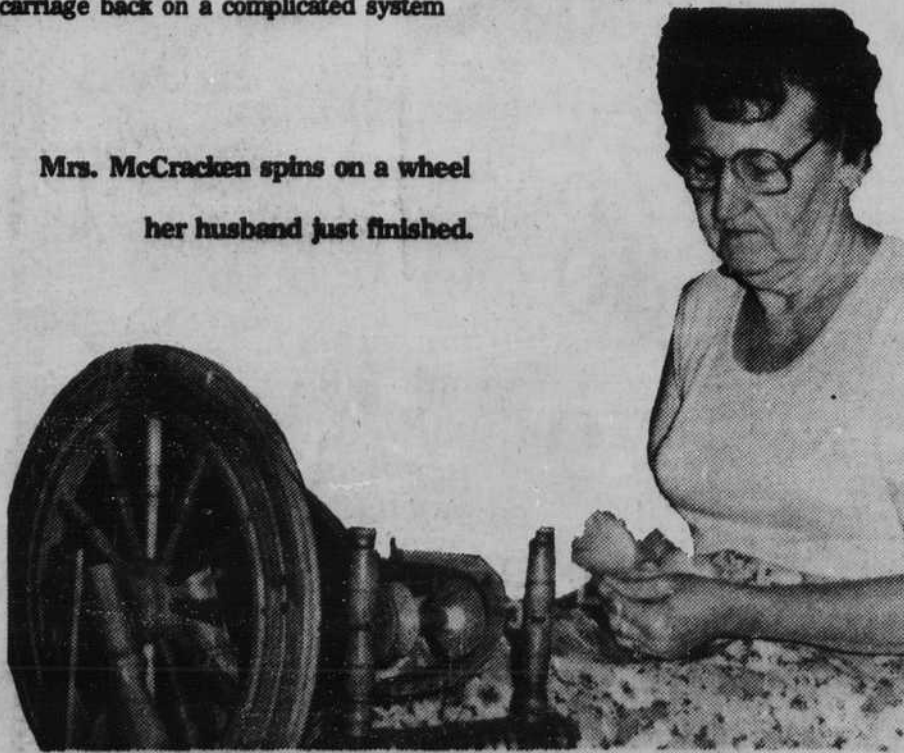
The purpose of the program is to help older people become more responsible for their own health and to point out ways of making the later years of life an experience of health in body, mind and spirit. How to use medicines wisely and how to keep fit are topics already covered; topics still to come will include how to deal with stress, how to talk to your doctor, and how to prevent home accidents.

This program was produced by members of MAHEC (Mountain Area Health Education Center) with a grant

from TVA. The total set of materials is priced at \$700, but each county in the TVA area has received a set free of charge. The sponsoring body in Buncombe County is the Council on Aging. The program is being presented by Richard Patzfahl, Council director. Edgar Torrence of Black Mountain is leading a short round of exercises at each session.

While most of the participants are regular supporters of the Nutrition Program at Lake View Center, other persons from the Black Mountain-Swannanoa area are attending. The program is open to all without charge. The remaining four sessions will be held from 11 a.m. to noon on November 5, 10, 12 and 17. Persons wishing to stay at the Center for lunch should notify site manager Mae Sawyer two days in advance. She may be called at the Club House from 9:30 to 11:30 each morning, 669-2035.

Mrs. McCracken spins on a wheel her husband just finished.



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