

# KINGS MOUNTAIN MIRROR-HERALD

## Remnants Of Living And Dead

# The Hell And Fury Called Fire

By SHARON GOINS CARTER  
Special To Mirror-Herald

Sad faces.  
Angry faces.  
Faces etched in horror.  
And eyes that stare at a book of poetry lying in the mud, at a Cub Scout Handbook, at a seashell mounted in wood and at a couple of well-worn rocking chairs.  
Remnants of two lives. The ones that belonged to Mrs. Nannie Blalock Tinsley and Pink Bell, which were taken in all the hell, fury and smoke that is fire.  
Two human beings filled with sad experiences and happy experiences and memories of tales passed along by others, both gone quickly, too quickly to think.  
The scene first created on January 10 and repeated January 24. First at the W. Parker St. home of Mrs. Tinsley, again at the N. Watterson St. home of Mr. Bell.  
Nannie Tinsley was 79 years old and Kings Mountain was her home most of her life, the home still of her family.  
On January 10 Nannie Tinsley came to town to pay her electric bill and to buy some groceries. A clerk in the store recalled later that Mrs. Tinsley has remarked she was "freezing cold" just before the taxi came to take her home.

At home she placed the groceries on the table and walked into her bedroom to start a warming fire in the open grate. She died there.

On January 24 Pink Bell, 64, visited Mrs. Winnie Neely, a widow who lived next door. Possibly they had talked about the tragedy that took Mrs. Tinsley two weeks before. The incident was much on Mrs. Neely's mind. Mrs. Tinsley had been her sister.

Her sister's death had freshened an earlier tragedy in Mrs. Neely's mind, the accidental death of her own husband, Raymoore Neely in 1951.

When Pink Bell said goodbye he went home and started a fire in his space oil burner. A short time later he died while warming himself. The heater exploded.

Mrs. Neely could not attend the funeral of her beloved friend Pink Bell. She explained she had had too much all at once to be strong.

At each fire scene, both in the predominately black residential community, there were sad, angry and horrified faces of white men. Men who devote their time and skills as city firefighters.

Fire Chief Gene Tignor's face, when he speaks of these incidents, reveals he is a man deeply touched by

these and other such experiences. And he is a man deeply concerned for the safety of other fellow citizens.

Chief Tignor said neither victim had had a chance to save themselves. Mrs. Tinsley had poured an igniting chemical to the coals in her open grate. Combustion of flames took her life instantly. Pink Bell had actually lighted a fuse to a lethal bomb when he fired up his space oil heater.

"Older citizens should not be left alone," Chief Tignor said. "They don't always think through their actions. From experience we have safely assumed Mrs. Tinsley did not consider first the danger in applying a combustible element to an open fire. The swiftness of her death and the place she stood when she died gives a fireman a clear picture of what happened."

Chief Tignor told of the scene in the charred remains of Pink Bell's home. "The space heater was literally torn in half and thrown across the room," he said. "I doubt seriously that Mr. Bell was aware that such heaters are illegal in North Carolina and many other states. They have been outlawed because they are not manufactured with a breathing mechanism. Heat continues to build in the space heater until the pressure literally explodes the unit like a bomb."

The public is battered daily through newspaper stories, radio and TV messages about safeguards that should be taken to prevent tragedy. Chief Tignor said perhaps people just become immune to so much information and tend to ignore it. Not always, but many times ignorance of safeguards leads to tragedy. "If it happened only once it would be too often," Tignor said. "We have information for the asking. We try to inform our citizens through the local newspaper. But it isn't enough. It never is. You just keep wishing you could do more. You can tell people about the dangers of using space heaters, pouring fuel on open fires and a hundred and one other safeguards that can be taken. You can urge relatives and neighbors to help keep an eye on elderly people who live alone. But it's never enough. Not until tragedy occurs do we actually think it can happen to us."

A book of poetry.  
A Cub Scout Handbook.  
A Seashell and a couple of well-worn rocking chairs.  
Sad experiences, happy experiences and memories. All of these things are remnants of the living. But two more human beings are no longer here to enjoy these things, Chief Tignor said.  
It's something to think about.  
And react to.

## Harris Wants Death Penalty

Sen. Ollie Harris is sponsoring a bill to reinstate the death penalty in North Carolina patterned after laws in other states ruled constitutional by the Supreme Court.

Harris is one of the strongest movers of the death penalty in the legislature. Last year when North Carolina's capital punishment law was knocked down by the Supreme Court, Harris was one of the first legislators to urge then Governor James Holshouser to call a special session to draft a constitutional death penalty.

Last week in Raleigh Harris made his strongest plea to date for support of his bill by telling his colleagues on the floor of the Senate the gory details of murders he investigated as Cleveland County coroner.

He displayed a brick and a broken bottle, similar weapons used in murders, and told his colleagues there is a need for a return of justice to North Carolina and justice for the victims.

Two of the cases Harris recounted, which occurred toward the end of his 24-year tenure as the county's coroner, involved a 13-year-old girl who was beaten to death and a 35-year old woman who was stabbed to death.

"I can look back and hear this teen-aged girl and the young mother crying out for justice. I intend to do it," Harris said.

The Harris bill asks for the death penalty to be imposed for first degree murder and first degree rape, but only when a second penalty trial is held following conviction.

## Violations To Be Cited

The Kings Mountain Police Department is beginning to crack-down on parking violations following a lengthy period of "violation warnings."

The violations to be cited include parking in wrong direction on city streets, parking in no parking zones, obstructing sidewalks, driveways and entrances to business establishments.

Officers have been enforcing these parking violations for the past several days and between 80 and 100 citations have been written.

## Senior Adult Week Slated

Senior Adult Week at Second Baptist Church beginning Thursday will feature fun and entertainment for members age 60 and over.

A big Craft Fair is slated for Thursday. Tables will be set up in the Fellowship Hall of the Church where senior citizens will display handmade crafts and prizes will be presented to the winners.

A Gospel Sing and supper will feature Friday evening's program under sponsorship of the Macie Redmond Group. The McAbee Family, Ladies Trio and Neiman will feature the music. The supper is free to senior citizens.

Young people of the church will entertain Senior Citizens on Saturday evening at a puppet show in the church fellowship hall.

Senior adults will fill the Choir on Sunday morning at the morning worship hour and Kelly Dixon, Baptist minister and former Kings Mountain mayor, will fill the pulpit.

## Hospital Gets Grant

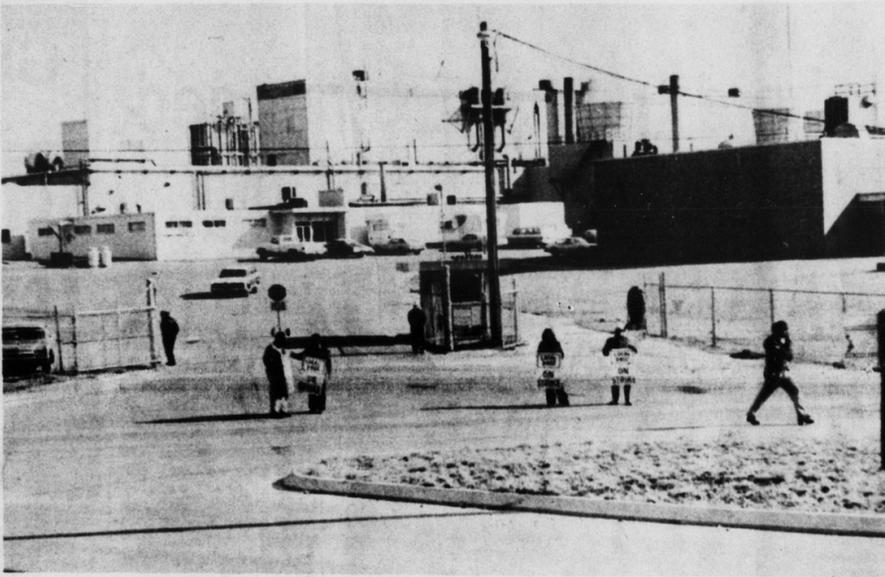
Kings Mountain Hospital, with a grant of \$4,042, is among 234 hospital and child care programs in North Carolina and South Carolina who have received financial assistance this week from the Duke Endowment.

Grants totaling \$1,905,659 have been distributed to 189 hospitals and 45 child care institutions in the two states, according to James R. Felts, Jr., a trustee of the Duke Endowment and the executive director of its Hospital and Child Care Sections.  
Cleveland Memorial Hospital at Shelby received \$14,405.

## Song Service

Penley's Chapel Church on Cherrylville Rd. will sponsor a song service on Sunday night, Feb. 27th, featuring The Hampton Quartet of Blacksburg, S. C.

Services will begin at 7 p. m. and the interested community is invited to attend, said Rev. W. L. Huffstetter, pastor.



ON STRIKE - Striking workers are shown in this photo picketing at the main entrance of Lithium Corporation of America's Bessemer City plant last Wednesday afternoon. But, despite the strike, company

operations are continuing, according to Harold J. Andrews, president of LCA. The company has offered, and the union rejected, an average 12 percent wage hike.

Photo By Gary Stewart

## Crime Prevention Bureau

# Grant Is Approved

By TOM McINTYRE  
Editor, Mirror-Herald

The Kings Mountain Police Department has been notified that approval has been given for the establishment of a crime prevention bureau within the department.

One of five applications made to the N. C. Department of Natural and Economic Resources, Law and Order Division, the crime prevention bureau grant totals \$22,595, which will pay the salary of a fulltime crime prevention officer, a display van, operating supplies and expenses.

Police Chief Earl Lloyd said the supplies include brochures for distribution to the public, public education programs and films on crime prevention for public use. Also two pieces of audio-visual equipment.

Federal and state funds total \$21,465, and the city's share totals \$1,130 in the crime prevention bureau grant. Chief Lloyd said his department was notified the grant has been approved and expects "the contract for the Law Enforcement Assistance Agency grant to be here by March 1."

Chief Lloyd said some minor adjustments had to be made in the application prior to approval. The same request was made of the department in four other applications.

"We have been assured our application for a local records system will be approved, also," Lloyd said.

"There were minor adjustments to be made and have been made and the application re-submitted to LEAA."

The local records system grant will provide a fulltime record clerk and a complete new filing system for police department records. The chief said the new system would be much more efficient and drastically cut down on time spent searching the files.

"The anticipated grant is \$10,934," Lloyd said. "The federal and state share is \$10,386 and the city's share is \$548."

Adjustments to the application for an evidence technician, included deleting request for a salary for a new employee and a color photo lab. The chief said the grant application has been resubmitted for \$15,000, which will include a van and black and white photo lab and other equipment for scene of the crime evidence gathering. This grant, too, is almost assured of being approved.

In an application for a planning grant, some minor supply requests and the request for a portion of the secretarial salary for the planner had to be deleted. This application has also been re-submitted.

The fifth grant application was flatly rejected, according to the chief, because there were no funds available. The application was for a legal advisor for the police department.

"With the exception of the crime prevention bureau, which has been approved, the other grant applications do stand a good chance of being approved for the Kings Mountain Police Department," Chief Lloyd said.

The department was approved for a youth bureau officer, vehicle and supplies in late December. Robert Dodge, a former city patrolman, took over the duties of the youth bureau Monday. This week he is attending classes at the Justice Academy in Salem.

## Bethlehem

## To Sponsor

## Chicken Supper

Bethlehem Volunteer Fire Department will sponsor a barbecued chicken supper Saturday, from 5 until 8 p. m. at the Department headquarters in Bethlehem Community.

The menu will include barbecued chicken, slaw, rolls, tea or coffee, and homemade cake.

All proceeds will be used to purchase a new light and utility truck for the department.

## Lithium Continues Operations

Harold J. Andrews, president of Lithium Corporation of America, announced today that substantial operations of the company are continuing in spite of a strike called by the OCAW on February 16th.

Harassment at the picket line set up by the union on the first day of the strike prevented suppliers and shippers from carrying on normal business. The problem was reduced by issuances of a temporary restraining order.

Mr. Andrews stated that the company offers work to all of its employees at their regularly scheduled shifts. The company has offered, and the union rejected, an economic package which included an average 12 percent wage increase effective February 1, 1977, and 8 percent per year for the 1978 and 1979 contract periods, plus substantial fringe benefits.

Mr. Andrews stated that the offer made was in response to a request from the union for a final proposal and does in fact represent "a best effort" by the company. He further stated that "some of the details may be modified but the total package represents our best offer."

## Waiting

## Period

## In Effect

The one-week waiting period before a jobless worker can receive unemployment insurance payments again was effective in North Carolina Feb. 16.

Suspended from January 29, 1975, through February 15, 1977, by the 1975 General Assembly because of the sudden and rapid increase in joblessness at the beginning of the recession, the waiting period will apply only to workers establishing new claims on or after the 16th.

Workers filing continued claims for benefits, those who already have established their benefit years, will not be affected by the provision.

Restoration of the waiting period means jobless workers will not receive unemployment checks for their first week of unemployment.

The waiting week does not reduce their entitlement to benefits, however. A worker qualifying for 20 weeks of benefits still receives the full amount provided he remains unemployed.

"The payment period is shifted back one week," explains Franklin Ware, Manager of the local Employment Security Commission.

Statewide, the number of workers filing their first claims for benefits currently averages between 10 and 12,000 each week. In Cleveland County initial claims average about 175 each week, reports Ware.