

Textiles a 'Common Thread'

The Kings Mountain Historical Museum features a months-long exhibit about Kings Mountain's most important industry

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No industry has played a more significant role in shaping Kings Mountain than textiles.

From long before the first European settlers came to the area to the early 1800s when the Mauney family built the first cotton mill in town and through the Civil War when contracts with the Confederate Army kept the looms busy and local workers paid, textiles have been at or close to the center of life.

And it was textiles that supported the town's economy through the booms and busts of the 20th cen-

ture. The subject again comes into sharp focus at the historical museum's newest exhibit, "Common Threads: Kings Mountain's Textile Heritage from Prehistory to Today," which opens Saturday and runs through May 24.

The exhibit celebrates the rich textile history of Kings Mountain and the surrounding area, following a timeline from the Native American textiles of prehistory, to the textile mills of the 19th and 20th centuries that were instrumental in the development of this region, to the contemporary local textile manufacturers who continue to thrive in the indus-

try through innovations in textile technology and environmentally sustainable practices. Hands-on activities help children and adults better understand textile technologies and their importance to society — a



Museum curator Adria Focht, at left, and intern Sarah Lynch on Friday worked to organize materials for the upcoming exhibit.

"common thread" in Kings Mountain's culture. Common Threads is proudly sponsored by J.E. Herndon Company, Neisler Brothers, Inc., and Patrick Yarn Mills, Inc.

"The exhibit also takes a look at (textile) mill culture, its music, sports and church affiliations," said Adria Focht, the museum's director and curator.

Focht and the museum's new intern Sarah Lynch spent much of last week inventoring and organizing on-loan items for the exhibit. Lynch, a Florida native, is a sophomore majoring in history at Gardner-Webb University. Her internship runs through the spring semester.

'Dress a Girl' aims to brighten young lives

The Mauney Memorial Library hosted a Dress a Girl Around the World event last Tuesday and got such a strong response that it is considering sponsoring another round in February.

About 40 volunteers came together to help cut and sew together 25 dresses for girls in impoverished communities in the Ukraine. The shipment of new clothes is set to ship to the European country around the middle of March, according to Sharon Stack, the library's director.

In the meantime, the dresses will be on display at the library. The Dress a Girl Around the World event was sponsored by the Shelby crafts and fabric store Rag Bag and the library.

Dress a Girl Around the World has more than 1,600 members sewing in the United States, Canada, South America, Australia and Europe. The organization has dressed more than 100,000 girls in nearly 60 countries, including many cities in the U.S.

Rachel Eggum Cinader,



Measuring elastics and matching fabrics to trims kept these ladies busy, while others cut and pinned fabric for those who took the pieces to each station to be completed.

who founded the group in 2009, travels and speaks extensively.

The organization is beginning to hold Dress a Girl Camps and Kid's Days around the globe in an effort to teach girls to give back. The camps are also open to boys who want to learn to sew and to give back to their communities.

The group's motto is "Because every girl de-

serves at least one dress."

To learn more about Dress a Girl Around the World, visit www.dressagirlearoundtheworld.com.

The Mauney Memorial Library and THE RAG BAG in Shelby are drop off sites for the collection of the following for the ongoing Dress A Girl Around the World effort: fabrics— fleece, flannel, velour and corduroy; accessories — long sleeve shirts and tights, for girls aged 2-8.

Due date is March 15. Dresses and accessories will be sent to the Ukraine.

Mauney Library is located at 100 S. Piedmont Ave. in Kings Mountain; phone 704-739-2371.

The Rag Bag is at 810 W. Warren St; 704-482-6121.



Kaylee Carroll, left, and Kendall Leonhardt line up to have their dresses stitched by Ginger Patterson.

Blanton honored for service

Patricia Blanton worked in five departments at the City of Kings Mountain over a period of 34 years, the longest tenure of nearly 14 years as Human Resources (HR) Director.

"She was a Pat of all trades and we kept promoting her and with all her experience she has been a real asset to the city, always positive and a dedicated employee," said City Manager Marilyn Sellers.

Mrs. Sellers, who is celebrating her 25th anniversary with the city, said that Pat (then purchasing agent) introduced Sellers to her husband, Jody.

"Pat has touched everyone in a special way," said the mayor, who praised her for "always taking time to help an employee." Obviously, Blanton had a special rapport with those she worked with and those who came to her personnel department looking for a job. Her co-workers pitched in to give her some extra cash for a month-long vacation at the beach. Mrs. Sellers presented Pat with jewelry and the city gave her a framed resolution/proclamation and lunch with all her co-workers and family at the Kings Mountain Senior Center Friday.

"This is really the best time for the city that I have seen during my 34 years with the city," said Blanton. "Thank you, each of you."

Present as special guests were Pat's mother, Margaret Dixon; son, Wesley; sister, Jenny Clapp; and friend Nancy Bolin Holmes.

Daughter of Margaret Dixon and the late Ray Dixon, Pat grew up in Asheville and graduated from Lee Edwards High School and Cecil's Business College.



Pat Blanton, right, accepts a proclamation from Mayor Rick Murphrey on Pat Blanton Day, honoring the Kings Mountain woman for 34 years of service with the City of Kings Mountain.

Photo by ELLIS NOELL

"Richard and I married right out of high school in 1969 and he went into the Army," said Pat, who was able to travel with her husband and spend a year in Berlin. They have one son, Wesley, of Kings Mountain; one daughter, Jennifer Hale and husband, Shane; and one granddaughter, Bethany Blanton, 7. She attends Dixon Presbyterian Church.

While her husband was completing active duty, Pat worked at First Union National Bank in Asheville and First Citizens Bank, and after moving to Kings Mountain at the Chamber of Commerce/ Credit Bureau with Lucille Williams and Linda King.

Pat's first job with the city was in 1979 as secretary to Ted Huffman in the Public Works Department for two years. She then moved to the Gas Department as administrative assistant to Jimmy Maney for eight

years; then to city hall where she was purchasing agent for 10 years and worked a short time in the finance department.

"It's been an honor to work for the city but now it's time to spend more time with my family," said Pat. She has already packed for her beach trip and members of her family plan to join her on the coast, especially her little-blonde granddaughter who is the pride and joy of the family.

Gateway Trail Run set for March 1

Mark your calendars for March 1 for the annual Gateway Trail 10K Run and 5K Run/Walk.

The event begins 9 a.m. Saturday at 807 S. Battleground Ave. Registration is \$20 for the 5K and \$30 for the 10K. Late registration (day of race only) is \$5 extra. Entrants receive a T-shirt. Applications are available at Kings Mountain YMCA, the trail kiosk or the Chamber office in Kings Mountain, located at the corner of Mountain Street and Battleground Ave. They should be dropped off at the Chamber office or mailed to P.O. Box 859.

The race will begin on Quarry Road and as the participants spread out the course turns into the greenway parking lot and onto the trail, following the signs through the park. Most of the 5K is paved. The 10K course is all gravel and follows a new three-mile section of the trail.

First aid will be available at the trailhead. Water stations will be located along the course. Medals will be awarded to all Fun Run participants.

For more information about the Gateway Trail Run, visit www.kmgatewaytrails.com.

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