



Photo by Jav Ashley

LIGHT-CROS'T STARS - Terri Dover and W.P. Fulton run through the blocking for the first act of "Come Blow Your Horn", a Neil Simon comedy. The play is being presented by the Kings Mountain Little Theatre, tentatively, the second and third weekends in May. Gene Austin is the director.

Little Theater

Alive And Kicking In Kings Mountain

By TOM McINTYRE
Editor, The Mirror

Kings Mountain Little Theater is alive and well. That's the report from Gene Austin, local businessman and avid supporter of the community theatrical organization.

Austin is now in the throes of directing a new production on the local boards. The show is Neil Simon's "Come Blow Your Horn" and is tentatively set for the second and third weekends in May.

Austin's cast includes only one performer, Pete Young of Shelby, from outside Kings Mountain. The others are KMers W.P. Fulton, Terri Dover, Beth Ramsey, Gerald Lovelace, Boots McDaniel and Nan Jean Grant.

"Come Blow Your Horn" is a comedy about the rise of one brother to the ranks of swinger and the fall of another into the ranks of responsible married man, businessman, getting to these points provides the fun.

The stage at the old Parkgrace School auditorium is being transformed into a luxury New York apartment for the show, according to Austin "and that is expected to take another three or four weeks. Meantime, our cast is working around the props."

The last production staged at the little theater was "not Even A Mouse," a children's show. The one before that, almost a year ago, was "Dial M For Murder." At best little theater activity in Kings Mountain has been an on-again-off-again proposition. And this somewhat mystifies Austin.

"Our last adult show ("Dial M.") was one of the best we've ever done here," he said. "There was a lot of talent on that stage, yet we had to struggle through it with small audiences. Maybe the rescheduled dates and bad weather had something to do with it. Maybe our location had something to do with it."

The Parkgrace auditorium is about a mile and a quarter from the center of the city toward Grover. The auditorium is surrounded by ample parking facilities and good lighting and the theater group uses the building by paying a modest fee for utility costs to the Kings Mountain District Schools.

"The theater is self-supporting," Austin said, "and it is important to the community. It provides a healthy creative outlet to young people and adults who have any aspirations at all toward theater."

"There have been a couple of people from Kings Mountain who were so inclined and through the community theater they were able to really decide to go further with their careers," he continued.

Austin cited, for example, Frances Goforth, who went on to become a professional writer. She wrote a play, which was staged in New York and is now available to community theaters. The play, "Dark of The Moon," is now being prepared for the movies by the same production company that did "The Godfather."

"She was active in community theater back in the 1940s here," Austin said.

Another example, more current, is Hal England. As a youngster he was active in the local theater. Since then he has appeared in Broadway, had a running role in a TV afternoon drama, has ap-

peared in several motion pictures, including "Hang 'Em High" with Clint Eastwood, and TV dramas. He has also been very active in TV commercials, the latest is for Wachovia Bank and he is the chief spokesman for this series.

"Sometimes trying to keep community theater alive is frustrating," Austin said. "I'm sure it's looked upon as being silly by many people. That's sad. I just wish I could talk to people with an attitude like that. I'd like to ask them where they think actors, actresses, directors, writers, people they admire in movies, play and on TV, come from."

"They don't come from Mars or the moon," Austin said. "They come from cities and towns, many of them just like Kings Mountain."

Richard Boone is a prime example of a community theater alumni. In fact Boone, even today, when his duties as "Hec Ramsey" are over for the season, directs amateur theater in his adopted home

in Florida. Ernest Borgnine is another example of amateur theater beginnings. In fact, there are so many more who came from such background and who, today, strongly suggest the community theater be used as a basis for theatrical beginnings.

"No one scoffs at the possibility there is another Joe Nameth, or Hank Aaron or Wilt Chamberlain now playing sports at Kings Mountain high," Austin said. "I see no difference in this possibility in local high school sports than in the possibility of another potentially fine actor, actress, director or writer now interested in the Kings Mountain Little Theater."

There are a great number of Kings Mountain businessmen and industrial officials who have and are supporting the local theater, according to Austin. "And there are a number of local people who support the theater, either as performers and backstage personnel, or patrons. But, it

takes more interest from more people to make any community theater a success."

Austin said recently the theater wiped the slate clean of officers and re-elected a brand new batch in an attempt to instill new blood and new enthusiasm in the project.

"We have a lot of plans we would like to see carried through," Austin said. "And we'll do it if the support is there."

"Perhaps, after 'Come Blow Your Horn,' has been presented we'll have a better look at just which way we are going," he said.

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CONNIE AND ALAN - Or locally known as Terri Dover and W.P. Fulton study their lines for Neil Simon's play "Come Blow Your Horn". W.P. plays Alan Baker in the play while Connie is portrayed by Terri. The KM Little Theatre plans the play for May.

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Cancer Crusade Kicked Off With \$10,300 Check

The 1974 Cleveland County Cancer Crusade was kicked off Mon., Apr. 8 at a luncheon at Shelby's Holiday Inn with a check for \$10,300 from the six mills of the Dover Textile Group.

Burel Harris, personnel

director at Esther Mill, presented the check to County Chairman Bob Kirkendall.

Forty percent of the \$74 goal, \$23,000, will be used in Cleveland County to continue early detection programs, transportation, drugs, nursing care, education, chemotherapy clinics, homemaker services and rehabilitation services for cancer patients. The rest goes to the national research program.

Kings Mountain's volunteers are Roy Pearson, business chairman; Ben Goforth, industrial chairman; and Mrs. Humes (Dot) Houston, residential chairman.

The volunteers are undertaking a massive public education program to alert people to the early warning signs of cancer and to tell them how such signs can be detected and medically treated. In the early stages cancer is one of the most curable of the major diseases.

There are seven warning signals people should look for; a change in bowel or bladder habits; sores that won't heal; unusual bleeding or discharge; thickening or lump in the breast and elsewhere; digestive or swallowing difficulty; obvious changes in warts or moles; nagging cough, hoarseness.

If you have or think you have detected any of these, see your doctor immediately, volunteers say.

Jim Amos To Teach CT Course

Cleveland Tech's Extension Department will offer a 24-hour course in bookkeeping beginning Tues., Apr. 23, at 7 p.m. at the Kings Mountain Community Center.

Classes will meet each Tuesday evening from 7-9 p.m. until the conclusion of the course on July 9.

The course, to be taught by Jim Amos, is designed to familiarize businessmen and other interested persons with proper record-keeping procedures for accounting and tax purposes.

A \$2 registration fee is payable at the first class meeting.

Interested persons may contact Cleveland Tech at 482-4378.

Byers At Seminar

Randy L. Byers of City Floor Service, Kings Mountain, recently attended a three-day Floor Fashion Center Management Seminar in Lancaster, conducted by Armstrong Cork Company's Customer Training Department.

The seminar is offered to management of firms who have recently become authorized Armstrong Floor Fashion Center retailers. Over 2,000 persons from across the nation have attended to date.

Floor Fashion Center retailers offer the public a complete resilient floor covering center designed to provide professional advice and assistance.

The latest management skills and customer service techniques were discussed during the seminar.

CCARC Meets Apr. 18

Mrs. Lonnie Proctor from the Physical Education Dept. at Gardner Webb College will present the program at the April meeting of the Cleveland County Association for Retarded Children.

This meeting will be held on Thurs., Apr. 18, 1974, at 7:30 p.m. at the Cleveland County Memorial Library. Mrs. Proctor's topic will be the Special Olympics, which have been scheduled for April 30th.

The Adaptive P.E. class at Gardner Webb College has been working with the children at Children's Center preparing them for the Special Olympics.

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