



Photo by Lib Stewart

BENNETT WEARS MANY HATS-Luther Bennett, chairman of the city election board and a Phenix Plant employee for many years, wears many hats. He has been active in many phases of community life.

Luther Wears Many Hats

BY ELIZABETH STEWART
Co-Editor

Luther Bennett, 62, Burlington Industries' versatile and personable Employment and Training Manager and a veteran employee at the Phenix Plant for over 33 years, wears many hats.

Kings Mountain Elections Board Chairman since the inception of the municipal elections board, Bennett burned the midnight oil for years when the elections board was formed with its primary duty to supervise election procedures in the city and take the responsibility of obtaining judges, registrars and poll workers for city elections every two years. The city commission is expected to appoint him to another term at the June meeting. The board also appoints two members of the board and a secretary.

Since the city's non-partisan election to choose three commissioners is coming up on Oct. 6th, Luther expects to be busy in the next few months. When candidates file they make their intentions known with Bennett and when citizens have questions about polling places and registration they also call Luther or his wife, Dot, who finds that answering the telephone is a full-time job during the election season.

Counting of the votes should be done in quick order this year since the city will use two new voting machines at the two polling places, Kings Mountain Armory and Kings Mountain Community Center. Luther can remember when it "took all night to count votes in a city election" and some of his most memorable election season experiences were when he was a candidate for then-Ward 3. Luther cut his teeth on city politics by running against veteran councilman T.J. Ellison, a neighbor and fellow church worker at Grace United Methodist Church. "I just decided to file and didn't get out and beat the bushes for votes. Tommy licked me but I came back the next round and beat him and two years after that finished first in a three-man race. The fourth time out Luther was ousted by Ellison who lost by eight votes in a run-off with Corbet Nicholson.

"We don't get as excited in Kings Mountain as we used to do in the good ole days," recalled Luther. Nowadays voters question Luther about voting places and wonder why they have to travel across town from East Kings Mountain to vote at the West King Mountain precinct. Luther says he explains to these residents of Second Street and other areas that by changing the county line will citizens be able to vote in the area they reside. When Kings Mountain utilized the ward system some

years ago with the four "old" wards Luther said there was a polling place in each ward. Citizens used to vote at the old KM Manufacturing clubroom, for instance, and at the old City Hall.

With the six district organization only two polling places are utilized. Citizens want to know why they can't just go to City Hall and cast their vote but Luther reminds them that the whole purpose of the elections board procedure is to get out of City Hall. Luther sees a real need for an update in the county line and has made these suggestions to the proper sources. He estimated that approximately 4,200 people are registered to vote in a city election with a turnout of between 1700 to 2400, depending on whether or not a mayoral race develops.

A native of Kings Mountain, Luther Bennett grew up in the Old Dilling Mill section and is son of the late Henry and Bertie Bennett. After his father's death, Luther went to work as a twister hand in the Old Dilling Mill at age 15, studied in the mornings at Kings Mountain High School and worked the second shift. He worked a year at the Pauline Plant and in 1944 went into the Army and served two years in the Army Medical Corps. For about 18 months he was an insurance salesman for Jefferson Standard Life Insurance Company.

Joining Burlington Mills' Phenix Plant in 1947, Luther has worked in virtually every department. He was in the spinning room for 10 years, worked as a fixer, moved to the shipping department as a clerk for eight years, and worked at Burlington's Pinnacle Plant in Cherryville for over five years. He worked in both supervisory and production jobs and for 10 years was the company's personnel and training manager. Three years ago he was promoted to Employment and Training Manager and in this capacity hires, screens and interviews all employees and supervises two vestibule and on-floor instructors who train the employees on all three shifts. Bennett supervises all new employees from the time they enter the plant until they are placed in a department, whether it is two days or 12 weeks.

"I like people and I enjoy my work very much," said Mr. Bennett.

Recalling the many new improvements and changes over the years in the Phenix Plant, Mr. Bennett said that it was not unusual in the early years for employees to work in 110 degree temperatures, in poor lighting, and do all winding by hand. The biggest change has been in the Cardroom where no lifting is re-

quired of a 74 pound lap. A shuttle feed is used now and a woman can navigate this work easily. Strip daylight lighting is a big contrast in the mills of today, there is air-conditioning, a clean environment, canteens, polished floors, and automatic winders, to name a few of the many improvements of the industry.

A layleader at Grace United Methodist Church, Luther is chairman of the Pastoral Relations committee and on the administrative board. He is the outgoing president of the Kings Mountain Lions Club and has been active in the Lions club for many years.

He served three years as a trustee at Kings Mountain Hospital and from 1957-61 was a Ward 3 City Commissioner. He is a member of the Cleveland County Employment Commission Advisory Board. Luther and his daughter, Linda Burgess, are partners in Linwood Auto Sales.

Mrs. Bennett is the former Dot Barnette, Kings Mountain native. The Bennetts are parents of two daughters, Linda Bennett Burgess of Shelby, who operates Linwood Auto Sales in Kings Mountain, and Gail Bennett Manning, who is executive director of the Gaston County Red

Turn To Page 5



Peggy Davison

KM Military Park Summer Programs Begin

The Kings Mountain National Military Park presents its first evening programs of the 1981 summer season on Friday and Saturday, June 19th and 20th.

Friday, June 19th, at 8:30 p.m., two Revolutionary War soldiers return to tell what happened on October 7, 1780. While the shadows lengthen on the foothills of the Blue Ridge Mountains dare to take a candlelight tour of the 1.5 mile

Battlefield Trail with two participants of the battle—a patriot and a loyalist—who share their impressions of the Battle of Kings Mountain. All who are interested are asked to meet at the National Park Visitor Center at 8:15 p.m. The tour will begin promptly at 8:30 p.m. The participants will be portrayed by Park Interpreters Steve Marlowe and Wes Narron.

Saturday, June 20th, from 6:30 til 9:30 p.m., you can return to the year 1803 as the Park's interpretive staff guides you on an exciting tour of the Howser House by candlelight. This locally famous 178-year old home is a fascinating example of stone masonry and carpentry of the 1800's. The tours will describe how Henry Howser carved a comfortable life in the Carolina back-country as a farmer, stonemason, distiller, and miller. Meet at the National Park Visitor Center for directions to the home. Park Interpreters

Jeanne Gold and Wes Narron host the tour of the home.

Weather permitting, the Living History program will continue on Saturday and Sunday afternoons. A small Revolutionary War campsite will be set up near the Visitor Center and tended by Park employees in Revolutionary period dress. 18th century musket and rifle firing demonstrations will be given at 1:00, 2:00, 3:00, and 4:00 o'clock.

Other ongoing daily activities include:
an 18-minute film "Kings Mountain—Turning Point in the South"
an 11-minute audio-visual museum tour

1.5 mile Battlefield Trail
16 mile system of hiking trails
10 mile Horse Trail

The public is invited and encouraged to attend all programs and activities. There are no admission fees for any of the programs.

Study Bill Under Fire

A bill directing that a study be conducted of the so-called teacher tenure statute before the October meeting of the General Assembly is under fire by the North Carolina Association of Educators.

Dean B. Westmoreland, of Kings Mountain, a past state president of the teacher's group who is a director, said he agrees with Mrs. Loretta M. Martin, a Thomsville teacher serving as NCAE president, that Senate Bill 621 is a "back-door attempt to destroy job security for the state's public school educators and is an unfair attempt by the State School Board Association to do by study commission what it can not do by legislation."

Mrs. Martin said the North Carolina School Boards Association has been promising all this session of the General Assembly that it would sponsor legislation to replace the present Fair Employment and Dismissal statute with a five-year

Turn To Page 5

FREE PASSES

All persons ages 65 and over who reside in the Kings Mountain School District may obtain free passes to all activities at Kings Mountain High School. Interested persons may go by the principal's office and show proof of age.

BLOODMOBILE

The Cleveland County Red Cross Bloodmobile will be at First Baptist Church on June 30 from 12 noon until 5:30 p.m. The visit is being sponsored by civic groups of the city.

Funeral Services Held For Luther P. Baker Jr.

Funeral services for Luther Philip Baker Jr., 67, of 1203 Shelby Road, were conducted Saturday morning at 11 o'clock from Resurrection Lutheran Church of which he was a member.

Rev. Gerald Weeks officiated at the rites, and interment was in Mountain Rest Cemetery.

Mr. Baker succumbed Thursday in Gaston Memorial Hospital.

He was the son of the late Mary Tipton Polyette Baker and Dr. Luther Baker and was married to the former Ruby Hughes.

Surviving, in addition to his wife, are one son, Luther Philip Baker, 111 of Kings Mountain; one daughter, Mrs. N.J. (Mary Ellen) Abernathy of Asbury, N.J.; three brothers, Dr. Robert Baker and Dr. Thomas Baker, both of Kings Mountain, and Richard Baker of Rock Hill, S.C.; one sister, Mrs. Leonard (Peggy) Fulford of Knoxville,



L.P. Baker Jr.

Mr. Baker attended Davidson College. He served as a dental assistant to his father, Dr. L.P. Baker Sr. until 1953.

Tenn. and two grandchildren and two great-grandchildren.

Mr. Baker had retired as a representative for Marine Sales & Service Company.



David Bradley



Lee Neisler



Danna Scism

KM Students In Close-Up N.C.

Four Kings Mountain Senior High students, Peggy Davison, Lee Neisler, Danna Scism and David Bradley, and their teacher coordinator Dean B. Westmoreland, have returned from Raleigh where they attended the fourth annual Close Up-North Carolina.

A total of 300 students and their teachers attended the educational program which was designed to allow students and their teachers to interact with state officials, legislators, representatives from the news media, lobbyist organizations, etc. through panel discussions,

seminars, and question and answer sessions. The program was modeled after the highly successful National Close Up program which provides opportunities for teachers and students to use Washington as a classroom in the same manner that Raleigh is used for the North Carolina program.

Close Up-North Carolina, in its fourth year of operation, is governed and operated by a working advisory committee of teachers and administrators from North Carolina School systems and other governmental agencies and by the Social Studies Divi-

sion of the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction.

Approximately 115 high schools, including the North Carolina Schools for the Deaf, participated in the recent program.

R. J. Reynolds, Inc. provides partial funding for Close-Up North Carolina in which school systems are invited to participate on a rotation basis.

Speakers for the sessions were Dr. Dudley Flood, Assistant State Superintendent; Jim Berry of WBTV News in Charlotte, Ed Williams of The Charlotte Observer, Supreme Court

Associate Justice James G. Exum, Jr., Dr. Jerome Melton, Deputy State Superintendent of the Department of Public Instruction, State Auditor Edward Renfrow, Commissioner of Insurance James Graham, Secretary of Crime Control and Safety Burley Mitchell, Jr., Department of Administration Secretary Joseph Grimsley, Department of Correction Secretary James Woodard, Senator R. B. Jordan, III, Rep. Gerald Fulcher, Jr., former Governor Bob Scott of Haw River, and Harold Webb, director of the Office of State Personnel.