

Kings Mountain Herald

20¢

VOLUME 94, NUMBER 53

KINGS MOUNTAIN, NORTH CAROLINA

THURSDAY, JULY 23, 1981

PRICE 20 CENTS

(Briefly)

BLOODMOBILE

The Cleveland County Red Cross bloodmobile will be in Kings Mountain Mon., Aug. 3 for a visit sponsored by city employees. The bloodmobile will be at First Baptist Church from 12 noon until 5:30 p.m. Goal for the visit is 150 pints.

GRID PHYSICALS

Physical examinations for persons planning to play football at Kings Mountain High this fall will be given at the Gamble Stadium fieldhouse on July 31 at 5 p.m. Coach Dan Brooks said all players should bring tennis shoes, shorts and t-shirts. The Mounties will begin practice on Saturday morning, August 1.

TENNIS TOURNEY

The Kings Mountain team in the Western Carolina Tennis League will sponsor a tennis tournament for local residents July 31-August 2 at the KMHS courts. Anyone interested may obtain entry forms from Rick Henderson any night between 7 and 10 p.m. at the courts, or may call Ed Guy at 739-4414 or Tom Cox at 739-9252.

DRAMA

The outdoor drama "Then Conquer We Must" continues each Thursday, Friday and Saturday evening through August 8 at the Kings Mountain National Military Park amphitheatre. Performances are at 8:30 p.m. each night. Tickets are \$3.50 for bleacher seats and \$4.50 for orchestra seats.

GRID TICKETS

Season tickets for the Kings Mountain High School home football games are on sale at the Principal's Office for \$12.50. The price represents a \$2.50 savings off the regular gate admission of \$3.00 per game.

SEASON PASS

All-sports passes, good for admission into all regular season athletic events on the Kings Mountain High campus, are on sale for \$35 through the Booster's Club. The pass represents a savings of about \$15 off the regular gate admission and also entitles the bearer to membership in the Mountaineer Club. Regular Mountaineer Club memberships are available for \$5. Anyone interested in joining on either plan may contact any member of the club or attend one of its meetings on the first and third Monday night at 7:30 p.m. at B.N. Barnes Auditorium.

FINISH SECOND

E.A. Bingham of Kings Mountain and Dufay Pearson of Gastonia finished second in the Class B doubles division of the 1981 Class A North Carolina Horseshoe Pitchers of America National Tournament in Statesville last Saturday.

YOUTH FOOTBALL

Any area youngsters ages nine through 13 interested in playing football this year for the Optimist Club-Recreation Department teams are asked to meet at 5 p.m. on August 3 at City Stadium.

KIWANIS CLUB

Frank Spencer, Cleveland County Farm Extension Agent, will give the program at Thursday's meeting of the Kings Mountain Kiwanis Club at the Woman's Club building. Suzanne Amos-Grabs of Lifeline Systems, Inc., will be the guest speaker at next week's meeting.

Church Feature Begins July 30

The Herald will begin a new advertising-news feature on church news beginning Thurs., July 30.

The church page will feature a series of articles entitled "Facts About the Bible" and other church-related news events.

The page will be sponsored by area merchants.

Utilities Commission 'Pressures' KM Into Updating Gas System

By GARY STEWART
Editor

Two weeks ago, the City Board of Commissioners approved spending \$222,000 for a gas transmission line which will equalize gas pressure in the city.

But there's another kind of pressure the city knows about, and that's the kind put on by the State Utilities Commission.

The Utilities Commission has been trying to get the city to update its gas system since 1971, according to Tom Dixon, its gas safety engineer. And in the past two years, the Utilities Commission has hinted that if the system was not updated, it might consider fining the town or taking over the gas system itself.

City commissioners say they were not aware of the problem until the past year to year and a half and that they were more than willing to tackle the problem.

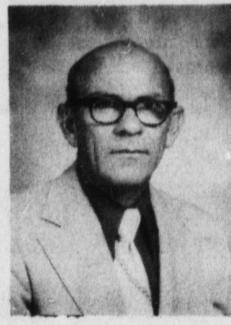
But Dixon said Mayor John Moss and gas superintendents who have worked here over the years surely knew about the problems, but did little about them.

The problems included bad leakage, deplorable conditions at regulator stations, and little pressure, among other things.

"Originally, when inspectors and I went down there from 1971 to 1978, there was a bad leakage problem, environmental protection standards had not been met, there were no records of annual maintenance to speak of, and the regulator stations were in deplorable condition," Dixon said.

"During the winter, the pressure would drop so drastically that you would have zero pressure at the end of the line, and that's a dangerous condition," he went on.

Dixon said he and the other inspectors would cite the conditions to the gas superintendent, "but when we would go back down there six months later that guy had quit and they would have a new man in charge who didn't know about the gas system and previous violations. So we had to inform the new man and we went through that with seven or eight superintendents."



'I was made aware of it in a conversation with an individual in a restaurant in a city outside of Kings Mountain.'

—Commissioner Jim Childers

for each violation."

Jim Childers was the only city commissioner present at the hearing last year. Others present were the mayor, city attorney, Bill Turbush, the city's gas consultant, and employees of the gas system.

Childers, though, did not know about the first meeting, and was "upset tremendously" about the way he heard of the problems in the first place. "I was made aware of it in a conversation with an individual in a restaurant in a city outside of

Kings Mountain," he said.

"That's when I got to looking into it and questioning what was going on and where were we as far as a safety program was concerned," Childers said. "Up until then, I was under the impression that it was safe."

Childers said that conversation took place in late 1979 or early 1980, after the Utilities Commission had already held one hearing on the matter.

"Once I found out about it, I went to looking into it to satisfy my own curiosity," Childers said. "The matter should have been handled several years back. I'm not saying the outcome would have been different, but it would have been taken care of."

Commissioner Bill Grissom said he first heard of the pressure from the Utilities Commission about "a year to a year and a half ago" from the city board.

"I didn't know the problem had been going on for 10 years," he said, "but I do know the Utilities Commission has been on our case to get it done."

Turn To Page 7-A

Clara Merck Killed, Funeral Service Today

A Kings Mountain woman was shot to death Monday in what police suspect as an attempted murder-suicide.

Clara Martin Merck, 51, was dead at the scene of the shooting, according to Bennett Masters, Cleveland County Coroner. Her husband, Charles Merck, 54, of 204 Cranford Drive, Kings Mountain, is listed in critical condition at Charlotte Memorial Hospital.

The shootings occurred at 12:35 p.m. Monday in the front of the home of the couple's daughter, Gail Peterson, at 306 Stowe Acres.

Masters said Mrs. Merck was shot twice with a .38-calibre handgun. One bullet entered the left side of her head and exited out

the right ear and the other bullet entered her stomach.

Police described her husband's wound as "self-inflicted." According to Masters, the bullet entered the right side of his head near the ear and exited the top of his head. Merck underwent surgery Tuesday at Charlotte Memorial Hospital.

The couple was separated.

Funeral services for Mrs. Merck will be conducted at 4 p.m. Thursday at Second Baptist Church by the Rev. Eugene Land, the Rev. Charles Ingles and the Rev. James Sanders. Burial will be in Canaan Methodist Church Cemetery.

Survivors include her husband, Charles Vernon Merck; three sons, Ronnie Merck of Grover and Chuck and Doug Merck, both of Kings Mountain; four daughters, Mrs. Shelia Smith, Mrs. Gail Peterson, Mrs. Sissy Gibson and Miss Tammy Merck, all of Kings Mountain; a brother, Johnny Martin of Grover; two sisters, Mrs. Jeanette Martin and Mrs. Sallie Mullinax of Blacksburg, and seven grandchildren.

Mrs. Merck was the daughter of the late Thomas and Norcissa Hudson Martin and was

employed by Guardian Care Nursing Center in Gastonia.

Weaver Services Conducted

A former accountant with Eaton Corporation was found dead in a motel room in Cleveland, Ohio, recently from accidental carbon monoxide poisoning.

Kent Weaver, 29, was staying in the motel room until his family could join him in Cleveland, where he had been transferred by Eaton.

Weaver's body was found on June 18. Funeral services were held on June 22 in Iowa.

Survivors include his wife, Debbie Weaver, of 510 Ellenvood Drive, Kings Mountain; one son, Brock Weaver, and two daughters, Brenda and Barbie Weaver, all of the home; his mother, Delores Kirk of Omaha, Neb.; his grandmother, Mrs. H.M. Kirk of Griswold, Iowa, and two brothers and one sister, all of Griswold, Iowa.

Dr. McGill Is Elected To Erskine Trustee Board

Dr. John C. McGill of Kings Mountain is one of five persons elected to six-year terms on the Board of Trustees of Erskine College in Due West, S.C.

The new members were welcomed to the board at an orientation dinner last night. Orientation will continue all day today, closing with meetings of standing committees of the Board of Trustees tonight.

Other new members of the board are former South Carolina House Speaker Rex L. Carter of Greenville, James T. Cashion of Statesville, the Rev. J.D. McLurkin of Little Rock, Ark., and Rev. Dr. R.M. Wallace Jr.

William H. Stuart Jr. of Bartow, Fla., is chairman of the Board of Trustees.

Nuzum Joins Wade Ford

Ed Nuzum has been named sales manager at Wade Ford, it was announced today by Wade Tyner, owner.

Nuzum comes to Kings Mountain from Newton, where he operated his own new car dealership for 12 years. He is experienced in all departments, including leasing, financing, and sales and service of new and used cars and trucks.

He is married and the father of four children, and the grandfather of two.



ED NUZUM



RECEIVES CHARTER - Lynn Welborne, left, president of the newly-organized Kings Mountain Sertoma Club, receives the organizational charter from Marshall Wilson of

Durham, the State Director of Sertoma, at the club's charter night banquet Saturday at the Holiday Inn.

Club Gets Charter

Members of the newly-organized Kings Mountain Sertoma Club and their wives attended the club's charter banquet at the Holiday Inn in Kings Mountain Saturday night.

The official charter from Sertoma International was presented by Marshall Wilson, State Director, from Durham.

Among the special guests were Henry Carter, District Governor from Winston-Salem, Bill Parker, Past International Director from Charlotte, Claude Carnes, Past District Governor from Gastonia, Charlie Funderburk, B.A.M.E. chairman from Gastonia, Larry Hamrick Jr., President of the Kings Mountain Chamber of Commerce, Barry Jenkins, President of the Kings Mountain Rotary Club, and Jerry Ledford, President of the Kings Mountain Kiwanis Club.