

Letter To The Herald Editor



COOPERATIVE EFFORT SOUGHT - State Board of Transportation member Marc Basnight of Manteo, standing, explains the need for repairs to Highway-12 during a meeting in Raleigh attended by local, state and federal officials. Pictured are (clockwise from Basnight) Dare County Commission Chairman John S. Bone; Hyde County Commissioner Irvin S. Garrish; Bob Caudle, representing Sen. Helms; Katherine Davis, representing Sen. East; and Dare County Commissioner Thomas B. Gray.

To The Editor:

with reference to the recently reported sentencing of Dr. Lucas, a few comments on the general subject of the Albemarle Family Health Service may be of interest. I don't pretend to know the inner details of the affair, but it is possible that a good many residents share my feeling that the AFHS was an innovative and valuable addition to health care delivery, and its closing has been a loss to the area. In contrast, judging from the vitriolic communications addressed to The Chowan Herald during the formative stages of the new clinic, through which local doctors and druggists attempted to discredit the plan, these individuals must feel a distinct sense of relief at the closing. An economic threat has been removed.

The introduction by the AFHS of a small group of physicians, including board certified specialists, was a boon to area residents. Two have remained here in private practice, and this softens the blow of losing the AFHS clinic, which served as an excellent alternative to the interminable waiting periods in deplorable conditions at Chowan Medical Center.

Chowan Hospital was the unwitting winner while the AFHS operated. The new clinic, with headquarters convenient to Chowan and Perquimans counties, and with satellite clinics in more distant counties, helped to create a high hospital census. This greatly strengthened the position of Chowan Hospital vis-a-vis Albemarle Hospital in Elizabeth City. It has been conjectured that, prior to the AFHS, the Elizabeth City medical-hospital community had been expecting an ever increasing influx of Chowan and Perquimans patients, perhaps to a point where Chowan Hospital might have been closed because of decreasing utilization.

Instead, the increase in patient load brought about by AFHS was instrumental in helping Chowan Hospital to win approval of an increase in bed capacity, enlarged ancillary facilities, and may have been influential in establishing full-time employment of emergency room physicians.

Now, however, all this has changed, and it is quite possible that enlarged facilities at Chowan Hospital are no longer justified. And with hospital personnel already stretched thin, one wonders how additional patients would be handled if they were there.

In another direction, I think we have witnessed a typical twisting of priorities by government officials in prosecuting relatively small game while the big game runs wild. But Dr. Lucas' sentence wasn't small. The same court system that issues little more than a slap

on the wrist to drunk drivers, the number one killers on the highways, have fined Dr. Lucas an amount that would be more appropriate for major embezzlers and full-time racketeers. This is not to condone Dr. Lucas' infraction, although one is led to wonder, since there is nothing new under the sun, where and by whom the example was set. Dr. Lucas, however, was a natural target, because he had stepped outside the medical clubhouse so carefully guarded by the mighty American Medical Association, the rich and powerful political action organization which has sometimes been called the doctors' labor union.

Those who have lived in cities will perhaps recall that it was the AMA which, in its zeal to protect its members from competition and in utter disregard of the public need for health care,

limited the output of medical schools so severely and for so long that hospitals throughout the U.S. had to resort to foreign doctors - many with severe language barriers and some not even licensed to practice - to fill their staff assignments.

The U.S. has so many fine, dedicated physicians that it

seems almost petty to criticize the profession. But I think physicians in general are doing the public and themselves a disservice in resisting the inevitable development of logical and valuable improvements in health care delivery. It is high time, for example, that

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Linwood Morris Completes Season

SWANNANOVA — Linwood Morris, son of Eva Morris of Edenton, has recently completed the 1982 basketball season as a member of the Warren Wilson College men's varsity basketball team.

Linwood, a junior at Warren Wilson, averaged nine points per game and was honored by his selection to the all-tournament team

at the district playoffs. The team ended their season with an outstanding 21-10 record, placing second in the South Atlantic District of the National Little College Athletic Association.

The team also traveled to Oakland City, Ind. to compete in the national playoffs of the NLCAA. Warren Wilson College,

founded in 1894, is a four-year liberal arts college located near Asheville in the mountains of North Carolina. Every resident student works 15 hours a week in the on-campus Cooperative Work Program, thus earning their room and board. The student body comes from 31 states and 32 countries.

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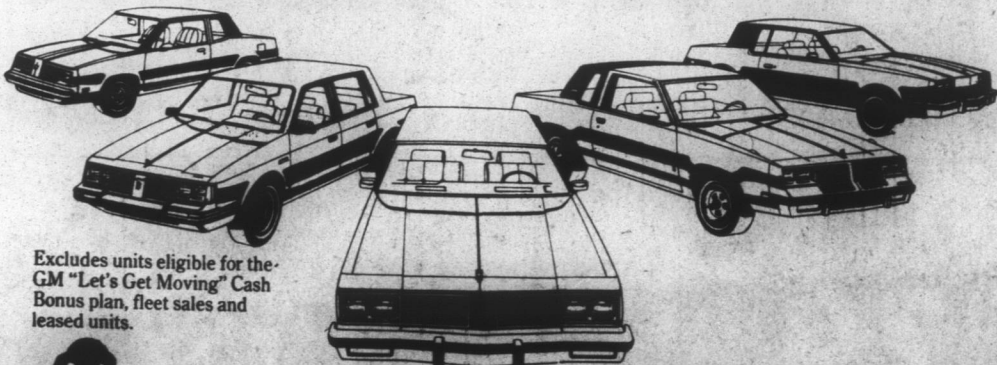
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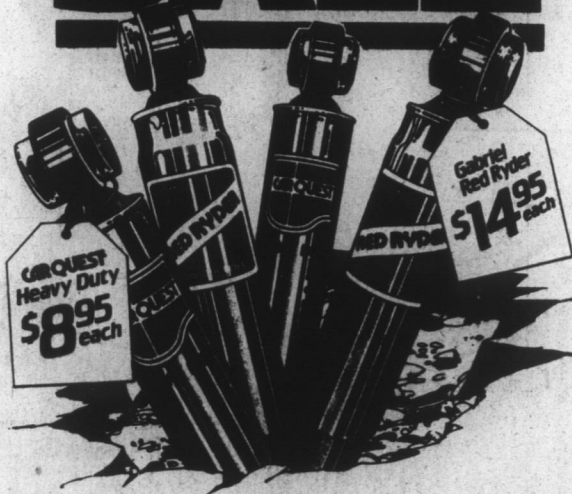
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