

Chapel Hill police chief to retire

By SCOTT GREIG
Staff Writer

The search for a new police chief continues following current chief Herman Stone's announcement last month that he will retire Jan. 31.

Stone, the town's police chief since 1977 and a town police officer since 1949, says he is stepping down in part to spend more time with his family. Stone also will take advantage of a recent change in the state's police retirement system that allocates supplemental benefits to career officers who choose early retirement.

Town officials and fellow police officers agree that Stone will be missed, after 10 years of what Orange County Sheriff Lindy Pendergrass described as "compassionate law enforcement."

Pendergrass, a Chapel Hill police officer with Stone 30 years ago, said he felt Chapel Hill was losing one of the finest police officers and chiefs it ever had.

"Herman Stone is a very compassionate man, always willing to help people," Pendergrass said. "He's understood the community and what it wants."

"He's run a good department that has had the support of the people and has done a good job," he said. Chapel Hill police spokesman Keith Lohmann said no decisions had been made as to who would fill the interim position until the new police chief was named, but said the final decision would be made by Town Manager David Taylor's office and the Town Council.

Ron Secrist, assistant town manager, said his office would appoint the interim chief sometime before Stone's retirement became official on



Herman Stone

Jan. 31.

Secrist said he had no information to release on possible candidates being considered for police chief.

Chapel Hill Town Councilman Jonathan Howes said losing someone with Stone's experience before he must retire by law was a blow to the community.

Howes said the change in the retirement plan, approved last summer by the N.C. General Assembly, had caused many career officers with at least 30 years of service to retire because of the financial benefits.

Howes, president of the N.C. League of Municipalities, said his organization might ask the General Assembly to amend the retirement plan so that veteran officers would be encouraged to stay on as long as possible.



Holiday rainfall washes out water-use restrictions

By MITRA LOTFI
Staff Writer

Students returning from the holidays should be pleased to find that their absence, along with increased rainfall, has allowed Orange Water and Sewer Authority to lift all water-use restrictions in Orange County.

On Dec. 22, with University Lake still 22 inches below capacity level of 349 feet mean sea level, OWASA rescinded restrictions for the county with the hope that the level would continue to rise until full.

As of Tuesday, University Lake

had reached full capacity, spokeswoman Joan Gilgor said.

"Luckily, the lake level kept coming up because of reduced consumption, an increase in rainfall and ... receiving water from Lake Holt in Butler," Gilgor said.

During the second week of October, the water level had dropped to 55 inches below full, the lowest reading during the six-month drought.

This severe drop prompted OWASA officials to reinstate mandatory water restrictions Oct. 16,

restricting activities such as watering lawns, serving water in restaurants and limiting shower lengths.

The lake received 4.12 inches of rain in December, exceeding the normal rainfall of 3.08 inches.

Also, as the ground became saturated, the rain began running into the lake, and this too helped raise its level.

University Lake first went above capacity on Nov. 25, but OWASA officials chose to monitor its level for a month before removing restrictions.

The drought, thought by many to be the worst in this state's history, began in late spring. It destroyed acres of crops and aggravated several large brush fires.

How much precipitation the county receives during the next few months, together with the consumption habits of the community, will determine whether or not restrictions must once again be implemented.

"It's going to be up to the individual to continue to be prudent with water consumption even without formal restrictions," Gilgor said.

NCMH gives breath to second set of quadruplets

By MITRA LOTFI
Staff Writer

Quadruplet babies, the second set ever to be born at N.C. Memorial Hospital, were in serious but stable condition Tuesday, according to hospital spokeswoman Kathy Neal.

The quadruplets' parents, Donna and Amos Wilson of Bullock in Granville County, had been trying to have children for the past four years, Neal said.

The babies range in weight from 1 pound 15.5 ounces to 3 pounds.

Born nine weeks premature and delivered by Caesarean section Tuesday, they are suffering from a respiratory distress syndrome known as hyaline membrane disease.

"This is a very common problem with premature infants; the lungs are

too immature to breathe on their own," Neal said.

"It has to do with the fact that the lungs are one of the last organs to develop fully," she said.

When the babies, who are now breathing with the help of ventilators, will be released depends on how well they do during the next few weeks.

"While they're doing very well for being nine weeks premature, they're still not out of the woods yet," Neal said.

The first quadruplets born at the hospital were delivered on April 13, 1984, to Cheryl and Dan Garner of Durham.

Both Mrs. Garner and Mrs. Wilson had taken the fertility drug

Pergonal to aid in conception.

"Frequently people who take fertility drugs wind up having multiple births," Neal said.

Mrs. Wilson, who has been in the hospital since Nov. 12, is expected to go home at the end of the week.

The babies were delivered when Mrs. Wilson began to show signs of high blood pressure.

"(High blood pressure) can be dangerous to the mom and the babies so the doctors decided to go ahead on Sunday," Neal said.

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