

# THE NEWS RECORD

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## Sewage System For Mars Hill Moves To The 'Near Future'

Despite the needs of some 400 residential dwellers, the town of Mars Hill does not have a town sewage system. And despite the unsuitable nature of the soil around town, these 400 residences depend wholly on septic tanks for disposal of their sewage.

But after 14 years of slow progress and hundreds of questions from impatient residents, construction of a modern sewage collection and treatment system has finally moved from the far future to the near future. The complex studies required to obtain public funding for such a project are now virtually complete, and the arrangement of funding is due

to begin within a few weeks. And according to town officials, a number of agencies can reasonably be expected to help finance the project. The Farmers' Home Administration, for example, has indicated a willingness to loan the town money. And the federal Department of Housing and Urban Development has some funds available for such projects, and Mars Hill is in good standing with that agency because its HUD housing project is one of the three such projects in the state operating in the black.

Finally, the Environmental Protection Administration can probably be counted on to

fund a major portion of the work. Once the town's plans for a sewage system are finally approved, probably by the end of the year, the project should move along at a steady pace. The grant application for design work will take about six months. The design work itself should last another six months. Then a grant application for construction can be drawn up in perhaps four months, with construction itself lasting about 18 months.

It has taken a long time for the town to come this far. As Mayor Bill Powell says, "We started working on a sewage system when I was first elected - in 1965." If a system had been built then, it might have cost about \$350,000. The same system today might cost about \$3.5 million - 10 times as much. And the cost continues to rise.

"The biggest problem all along," said Powell last week, "has been the difference between the grant money available and the total cost of the system. During most of those years, the maximum amount of grant money we could accept was limited by law to 50 percent of the cost of the project. The tax base in Mars Hill was so small then that we just couldn't afford to pay for the other half. We couldn't even come close."

Those situations have now changed somewhat. First, the tax base has broadened considerably since Powell took office, thanks partly to two annexations. Then the state has relaxed its rule to allow 75 percent of a sewage project to be funded by grants - and even more in some cases. The town board is hoping to be allowed to go beyond 75 percent; at today's construction prices, says Powell, paying for even 25 percent of the system "would

## Court Is Disrupted By Family Fracas

Marital discord expanded to a family fight involving nearly a dozen people outside the county court chambers last week, disrupting judicial proceedings and resulting in the issuing of 14 warrants by Sheriff E. Y. Ponder.

In what was described by one witness as "a good old-fashioned brawl," the families of Roger B. Sprinkle and Deborah Reed Sprinkle assaulted one another on the stairway.

During the fracas an elderly member of one of the families fell down the stairs. Fortunately, she was not badly hurt.

All parties involved were then brought into the courtroom and reprimanded by District Judge J. Ray Braswell. He cited seven persons for contempt of court because of the disruption; these cases will come to trial Nov. 7.

Seven additional warrants

were issued for assault resulting from charges and counter-charges by virtually all the participants in the struggle. All are now free on bond.

Sheriff Ponder said he could not remember serving a greater number of warrants on a single occasion.

The trouble arose following a court case in which Mrs. Sprinkle had brought charges against Mr. Sprinkle. The case was extended with the understanding that husband and wife would receive further marriage counseling.

In other business, the sheriff said that Hubert Roberts, 24, and Douglas Presnell, 26, of Madison County, have been extradited from Texarcana, on the border of Texas and Arkansas, to be tried here on charges of breaking and entering and larceny. Both are being held in the Marshall jail, and bond has been set at \$2,500 each.

break the town. We couldn't pay that off in 100 years."

The slow, tortuous process of slogging through red tape toward a sewage system really began in 1973-74, when the town got a small EPA grant to do what is called a 201 plan. This is a series of studies of "everything you always wanted to know about Mars Hill": the current sewage situation, the expected effluent flow, the topography, environment, soil characteristics, erosion behavior, water quality, geology, population forecast, land use, proposed treatment systems, and so on. In summary, a 201 study answers for the state the questions, what's your problem, and what do you propose to do about it?

The firm chosen to do the study is the Harwood Beebe Co. of Spartanburg, S.C. In their two-volume study, and numerous visits and consultations, Harwood Beebe has come up with three possible locations for a treatment plant: one at the site of the present college treatment plant, and two others on Gabriel Creek.

The favored location, according to Robert Whitaker of Harwood Beebe, is the site of the college plant, which the college has offered to donate to the town. "A new site would give us more space," said Whitaker early this week, "and more freedom in design, but there probably wouldn't be a great deal of difference in cost."

Whitaker says he hopes to have the grant application for the design work in the hands of Mars Hill officials "in the next week or two" and that federal and state funding can be lined up this fall. His own firm will do the design work.

Once that work is completed, said Whitaker, grant money for actual construction should be in hand by the fall of 1980. Then bids will be let for the construction work, which could begin in late winter or early spring of 1981.

The final system, according to Mars Hill Town Manager Dennis McCurry, will consist of the treatment plant and two large pumps. The plant will have a capacity of 450,000 gallons per day, collected by a system of 16 miles of 8- and 10-inch gravity sewers. The plant itself will consist of facilities for chlorination, aeration, holding and settling tanks for solids, and a 15,000 square-foot drying bed.

"They'll need the two pumps," said McCurry, "to push sewage from the east side of town over to the treatment plant on the west. There's a ridge running right along Main Street that divides the town area in two, and there will have to be some pretty strong pumps to get over it." Both will be powered by electricity; Robert Whitaker says that the amount of dried solids produced from Mars Hill sewage would not yield enough methane to run the pumps.

The need for a town sewage system has grown more obvious each year. Both Banjo Branch and Gabriel Creek contain large amounts of fecal coliform bacteria which, as the Harwood Beebe report points out, constitute a "potential health hazard."

The pollution comes from two kinds of effluent: seepage and direct discharge. The seepage comes from the septic systems presently used by the town's 400 families. According to the report, "The solids in the area are almost universally unsuitable for septic tanks because of steep slopes, surface stones, flood



**HOMEcoming QUEEN** Peggy Worley Goforth and her escort, J.H. Fender, proudly smile to the crowd at O.E. Roberts Memorial Stadium after her name is announced.

## Hot Springs Gets \$300,000 For Sewage, Water Projects

The Farmers Home Administration has approved a loan of \$204,000 and a grant of \$105,900 to the Town of Hot Springs, Cong. Lamar Gudger announced today.

The funding is for construction of a new chlorination facility; master metering facilities; water lines of eight, six and two inches totaling 12,200 linear

feet for the water system; a 50 GPM pumping station with 1520 feet of force main; a 130 GPM pump station; two large septic tanks; and one sludge holding tank for the sewage system.

Terms of the loan are 40 years at 5 percent. Total number of users to benefit from the project is 249.

## Man Nearly Killed In Tree-Cutting Accident

W.C. Ward of Tillery Branch Road, Marshall, narrowly escaped serious injury and possibly death last Saturday in a tree-cutting accident near his home.

Ward, 35, was pinned between the limb of a falling tree and the trunk of a standing tree. By the time he was freed he had become blue in the face, unconscious, and he had stopped breathing.

could no longer breathe they all became frightened. Finally Harold Reid was able to shift the limb a fraction of an inch, and J.B. Reid picked up the saw to cut it loose.

"That saw never starts on the first pull," recalled Harold Reid. "We were having a lucky day, because it started right up. Then my brother started cutting while I was holding the limb. The saw was right opposite my face and I was breathing mostly sawdust for a while there."

The limb came free at last, and the men saw that Ward was not breathing. They pushed on his chest several times before a few feeble breaths began to come. Gradually the breathing grew more regular and Ward's color began to return to normal.

By this time the men had gotten word back to Ward's wife, Donna, who was hanging out some laundry. "Harold's wife came a-yelling at me," said Donna Ward, "and I thought for sure he was hurt bad. I was so worried they had to tell me to watch out, because I almost ran across the road right in front of a car."

"When I got there they had him standing up. He told me later the first thing he saw when he came to was J.B. standing right over him crying like a baby. I don't know who was the palest of the lot, but they were all real scared."

"I'll just have to say it's remarkable that W.C. is still alive," she continued. "He said he just managed to throw his hands up in front of his face or that limb might have caught his head. If he weren't so stocky - he's 5-foot-9 and weighs about 200 pounds - I don't think he'd still be with us. I guess someone was just watching over him that day."

Ward was rushed to the hospital but remarkably there was no hemorrhaging or broken bones. He was released the same day, suffering only a dark band of bruised where the limb held him and a pattern of bruises and scratches down his back from the tree trunk. Two days later he was back at work at Wilson Art's plastic plant in Fletcher, sore but happy to be alive.

## Superior Court Lists Jurors

The Madison County District Attorney's office has announced the following persons who have been chosen to serve as jurors for the regular criminal session of the Superior Court, beginning on Oct. 29:

Calvin Chandler, Robert Max Rice, Russell Franklin, Levi B. Hunter, Ida Mae Thomas, Josephine S. Ray, Jessie Metcalf Whitt, Rastus Rice, Valerie Wilds Payne, Bruce E. Clary, Dollie Mace Peek, Marie Hilton Shelton, Seth Metcalf, Edward Frisbee, Jane Wolfe Thomas, Ted Mylum Meadows, Brown Ammons, Lillian Harrison Whitten, Allen James Payne, Alvania Ramsey, Patricia Ann Dickerson, Landon Ellis Hensley, Herb Frank Shelton, Charles Ball,

about 10,000 gallons per day (GPD). The other, installed in 1973, is run by Micro Switch. It is also an extended aeration system, with a capacity of 20,000 GPD.

The new town system would achieve more complete treatment of odor and bacteria than the three small ones, as well as eliminating the seepage and overflow of the town's septic tanks.

At first none of the men could move the tree, and when they saw that Ward

He was accompanied by Charles Deaver, J.B. Reid, and Harold Reid at the time. According to Harold Reid, J.B. was cutting a very large oak which, instead of falling downhill as planned, was blown uphill so that its trunk shot off the trunk in a downhill direction. A large limb of the tree swept Ward off his feet, catching him across the chest and trapping him against another tree.

At first none of the men could move the tree, and when they saw that Ward

## The Daniels Family Buy The News-Record

The Daniels family, publishers of the Raleigh News and Observer and three other newspapers in North and South Carolina, Tuesday acquired the Mountaineer and three affiliated companies.

The companion firms are Pisgah Publishing Co., publisher of the Enterprise with offices in Canton and Candler; Madison County Publishing Co., publisher of the Marshall News Record; and Atlas Press, a Waynesville commercial printing operation.

Descendants of the late Josephus Daniels, a former U.S. Secretary of the Navy and ambassador to Mexico, the Daniels family is among North Carolina's oldest newspaper publishers. They own all the stock in the News and Observer Publishing Co. of Raleigh, parent organization for the newly incorporated Mountaineer Publishing Co., which embraces the Mountaineer, Enterprise, News Record, and Atlas Press.

W. Curtis Russ and M.T. Bridges, co-publishers of the Mountaineer since 1931, announced the sale of all outstanding stock in the Mountaineer and its affiliated companies to the News and Observer Publishing Co. The purchase price was not disclosed.

Russ and Bridges will serve as consultants to the new corporation.

Frank A. Daniels Jr., News and Observer Publishing Co. president, announced that Clifton Metcalf, the Mountaineer's managing editor, has been named editor of the paper. He will assume responsibility for its editorial page and continue to supervise its news operations as well as those of the Enterprise and News Record.

Charles Bridges, who has worked in various mechanical department positions, will be production manager.

Jack Andrews, a former publisher of the Cary News, will be general manager.

Frank Daniels Sr. of Raleigh is chairman of the News and Observer Publishing Co. Board of Directors. His brother, Jonathan, who was press secretary for President Franklin Roosevelt, is editor emeritus of the News and Observer; he resides at Hilton Head Island.

In addition to the N&O, the family publishes the Cary News, a weekly newspaper; the Mt. Olive Tribune, a semi-weekly; the Beaufort, S.C. Gazette, a five-day daily; and the Hilton Head, S.C. Island Packet, a semi-weekly.

"The Daniels family is happy to be back in this part of the state," said Daniels.

"No changes in personnel are contemplated in the four operations we have acquired here."

## Farmers Reminded Of Oct. 29 Deadline

Only a few days remain to nominate farmers as candidates in the upcoming ASC community committee elections, according to Claude A. Cody, chairperson of the Madison County Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation (ASC) Committee.

The ASC community committee election will be conducted by mail from Nov. 23 to Dec. 2. By turning in a total of six or more petitions, farmers in each ASC community have the opportunity to prepare the state of nominees themselves.

To submit a valid petition, three or more ASC voters must sign a statement endorsing an eligible candidate. The statement must include certification that the nominee will serve if elected. Petitions must be dated and mailed or hand-delivered to the county ASC office no later than Oct. 29.

The opportunity to nominate, vote, and be elected to office in the upcoming ASC community election is guaranteed to all farmers regardless of race, religion, sex, color, or



**UNDEFEATED FOR THE 1979** season, the Madison High School girls' volleyball team poses proudly before their final match - and victory - against North Buncombe. The team finished first in their conference. Sophomores on the team are

Robin Anderson, Debbie Buckner, Chris Chandler, Rene Cole, Pam English, Robin Hough and Maria Reese. Freshmen are Robin Frisby, Kim Gibson, Amy Knisley, Teresa Norris and Denise Thomason.

## Marshall To Hold Hearing On Use Of Housing Funds

The town of Marshall will conduct a public hearing on Oct. 30 at 7:30 p.m. in the town hall for the purpose of submitting a pre-application for funding to the Department of Housing and Urban Development.

Funds can be used for housing programs, deficiencies in public health and safety, and economic

development. Programs can be designed to be comprehensive in nature or for single-purpose projects. All activities must benefit primarily low and moderate income citizens.

Previously the town of Marshall applied for a comprehensive project for Rollin's neighborhood, \$485,000. Activities include the pre-application w

housing rehabilitation, improvements to water distribution and sewer collection lines, demolition of housing, installation of fire hydrants, street improvements, and water drainage corrections.

Citizens are urged to attend the meeting and present recommendations for the pre-application, which will be submitted on Jan. 6, 1980.