

December 5, 1984

Marshall Uncovers Water Leaks
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Community Calendar

Marshall Pageant Set For Dec. 14



MARSHALL PAGEANT PLAYERS Peggy Bartlett, Sherry Fender, Sheila Fender, Darren Chandler, Sherry Blankenship and Carmen McDaris are preparing for the return of the pageant on Dec. 14 and 15 at 7:30 p.m. The pageant will be held in front of the county court house in Marshall.

Spring Creek VFD Auction

The Spring Creek Volunteer Fire Dept. will hold an auction on Dec. 7 at 7 p.m. Plenty of good tools, toys and small appliances and other items will be offered. Everyone is urged to attend.

Financial Aid Workshop Set

Madison High School will hold a financial aid workshop on Dec. 10 at 7 p.m. in the school library. Representatives from area colleges and technical schools will be present to explain financial aid programs available to Madison County students. All interested students and parents are invited to attend.

Optimists Meet Thursday Night

The Madison Central Optimists Club will meet Thursday night at 7 p.m. at Mary's Restaurant in Marshall. All members are asked to attend to help with Christmas Cheer planning.

Marshall Legion Post Meets

The American Legion Post No. 317 will hold their monthly meeting on Dec. 6 at 6:30 p.m. at the Legion Hall on Back Street in Marshall. All members are invited to attend.

Optimists Plan Holiday Tourney

The annual Madison County Optimist Club Invitational Basketball Post-Christmas tournament will be held December 26th-31st at Madison High School Gym beginning at 5 p.m. for boys and girls, grades 3-8. The Club is now accepting team entries. Call Ralph Baldwin, tournament chairman jkat 649-2968 or Bryce Hall, secretary-treasurer at 649-3515 or 255-7356 for more information.

Laurel VFD Bingo Party

The ladies auxiliary of the Laurel Volunteer Fire Dept. will sponsor a bingo game Dec. 8 at 7 p.m. at the fire station. Everyone is welcome to attend.

Town Board To Meet

The Marshall Board of Aldermen will meet on Dec. 10 at 7:30 p.m. in Town Hall.

Burley Prices Hold Steady

Burley tobacco prices held steady as the third week of sales opened Monday. The leaf continued to command an average price near \$1.85 a pound in North Carolina and Tennessee markets.

Asheville markets reported sales totalling 956,406 pounds Monday for an average price of \$1.8478. Day's Tobacco Warehouse reported sales of 323,890 pounds at an average price of \$1.8404. Dixie Big Burley reports sales of 408,388 pounds at an average

price of \$1.8524 on Monday. Farmers' Tobacco Warehouse reported sales of 109,149 pounds at an average price of \$1.8501.

In Tennessee, Big Burley Warehouse in Johnson City, Tenn. reported sales of 258,576 pounds at an average sale price of \$1.8296. Growers and Star Warehouses in Greeneville, Tenn. did not conduct sales on Monday.

Auctions continue throughout this week.

County Jobless Rate Hits 11.1 Pct.

Madison County's unemployment picture darkened further during October according to figures released last week by the North Carolina Employment Security Commission (ESC). Joblessness among county residents reached 11.1 percent during the month, an increase of seven-tenths of a percent from September.

Madison's 11.1 percent unemployment figure is the tenth highest in the state. The ESC figures released Friday indicate that 100 county residents are currently unemployed.

Madison County's unemployment rate increased from September's 10.6 percent to 11.1 percent in October.

Neighboring counties also saw joblessness increase during October, following a statewide trend that saw unemployment increase in 73 counties. Rutherford County unemployment rose from 5.3 to 5.8 percent during the month. Haywood County unemployment rose from 7.7 percent in September to 8.2 percent in October. In Vance County, joblessness increased from September's 7.1 percent to 7.6 percent in October. In the county, the unemployment rate rose from 10.6 percent in September to 11.1 percent in October.

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WEDNESDAY, December 5, 1984

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Testimony Begins In Johnson Murder Trial

by ELIZABETH D. SQUIRE

Evidence of a "horrendous crime" in which a father used a five-year-old girl to "get back" at his wife — this is what Tom Rusher, Madison County District Attorney, told a jury Monday he would show during the first-degree-murder trial of Richard Johnson, 36, of Hot Springs.

At the trial, in Madison County courthouse, Rusher said he would show evidence that the death of Johnson's daughter, Joyce Johnson, was the father's "ultimate triumph" and that it was no coincidence her death happened on Father's Day.

Defense attorney A. E. Leake asked the jury to remember that, although the D.A.'s witnesses would testify that, the defense expected to show evidence "contrary to what the District Attorney expects to prove," and that his client does not know how the child's death happened, nor bears responsibility for it.

Christopher Lewis Johnson, 12-year-old son of Richard Johnson, testified that on the night of June 16 his sister was in good health and playing and "roughhousing." And another witness, 15-year-old Todd Snelson, told of seeing the two at their Johnson grandparents' house that night.

Next morning, Christopher said, his father gave his sister "medicine" from a white bottle. She protested, saying "No, it tastes awful." Christopher said the medicine smelled like bug poison, a smell he knew because he was sick after breathing some earlier.

He said his father left him to look after his sister and went to town, and two minutes after his father left, white foam began to come out of the girl's mouth. He said her stomach growled "like somebody whispering". He pushed her chest and more "white stuff" came out of her mouth. She staggered around and then lay down and said "Brother, I'm mad at you," and then "I want to go to sleep." Christopher said she then stopped moving. Defense attorney William Patton asked him why he did not call his grandparents next door. Christopher said he thought they

were asleep.

He said his father came back and they took Joyce to the ambulance.

In answer to a question from the District Attorney, Christopher said his sister put nothing in her mouth that morning except the medicine. Defense lawyer William Patton asked Christopher if the medicine bottle was the same one his sister had been taking medicine from for two or three days. Young Johnson said he was not sure but he thought so.

"To your knowledge, would your father ever hurt you or Joyce?" Patton asked. The boy said "no."

Arthur Fowler, Hot Springs emergency medical technician, told of seeing Richard Johnson after he left home the morning of June 17. About 7:20 or 7:30, Fowler said, as he started to leave a restaurant where they were both eating, Johnson asked Fowler where the ambulance was.

The ambulance was not in its usual place because it was being partly repainted, Fowler said. He said an ambulance would be available if needed.

Fowler and Alma Stills, who worked in the restaurant, both testified to a conversation in which Johnson told Fowler he might need an ambulance later. Alma Stills said Johnson was in the restaurant about half an hour because he had to wait for here to make an egg sandwich and she was busy.

Fowler testified that at about 8:20 or 8:25 Richard Johnson brought his daughter to the ambulance. Fowler said she was unconscious, having trouble breathing with white foam "roping" out of her mouth and nose. He said Johnson was calm and unexcited. Fowler said he and Boyd Norton attended the girl on the ambulance while Johnson and Christopher rode behind in a truck.

Norton said he saw the foam "like coca cola when you shake it — a steady flow," and called to get EMS Unit 8 from Weaver-

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Jury Hears Medical Evidence

By ELIZABETH SQUIRE

On the morning of the second day of the Richard Johnson murder trial, the jury of seven women and five men heard more medical testimony from doctors and nurses at Memorial Mission Hospital. The jury watched the state begin to trace the progress of two vials of the contents of Joyce Johnson's stomach from the emergency room at Memorial Mission Hospital to W.A. Williams, Mr. Williams is the pesticide epidemiologist with the Division of Health Services, Dept. of Human Resources in Raleigh.

Dr. David Carl Biggers, who performed an autopsy on Joyce on June 20, said death was due to an enlargement and softening of the brain and perfectly consistent with organophosphate poisoning.

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Hot Springs Broke

By ROBERT KOENIG

The town of Hot Springs is facing municipal bankruptcy as a result of administrative errors made during a housing rehabilitation project during the 1970's.

Hot Springs owes the North Carolina Employment Security Commission approximately \$34,000 for unemployment benefits paid to workers on a Housing and Urban Development (HUD) project in the town in 1978-79. The bill from ESC is over a year overdue, according to Hot Springs Mayor Debbie Baker.

The town received notice of the debt, which was originally \$44,000, in April, 1983. The ESC notice asked for payment by November of last year. Since that time, Baker said, the town has paid the ESC \$15,000.

Alderman Waylon Puryear, delivering a report on the situation, said Hot Springs currently owes "about \$34,000" when penalties and interest are included. Puryear warned that the town could face bankruptcy and that the state Local Government Commission could come in and set taxes and water and sewer rates to retire the debt.

Mayor Baker had no solution to the problem at Monday night's meeting. She said the town is currently negotiating with the ESC to work out a payment schedule.

Hot Springs' financial troubles are similar to those recently faced by Marshall. Both towns have been forced to make substantial payments to ESC for benefits paid to workers on HUD rehabilitation projects. Mar-

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Dayco Promises Assistance

By ROBERT KOENIG

Hot Springs and county officials met with representatives of Dayco Corp. and industrial recruiters Friday afternoon in Weaverville to discuss plans for the vacant plant formerly occupied by the Melville Shoe Co.

Dayco Corporation holds a 17-year lease on the vacant plant. The company cancelled plans to operate a auto radiator hose manufacturing operation in Hot Springs last week after reaching accord with the United Rubber Workers at Dayco's Waynesville facility.

Dayco officials requested the meeting to discuss the company's future plans for the plant which has been vacant since Melville Shoe closed operations in July. The Friday luncheon meeting was conducted in Gerald's Fireplace Restaurant in Weaverville.

The meeting was attended by all three members of the Madison County Board of Commissioners, Hot Springs Mayor Debbie Baker and Waynesville Mayor Puryear and Nancy Ramsey, county planning board

members Don Anderson and Jerry Plemons, Charles Erwin of the North Carolina Employment Security Commission, Tim Richards of the Land of the Sky Regional Council and industrial recruiters Becky Williams and Mike Gouge. Dayco Corp. was represented by industrial relations manager Arnold Robinson and Sam Wiggins, director of manufacturing at the Waynesville plant.

Robinson told the county officials that the decision to cancel plans for the Hot Springs facility were the result of Dayco's agreement with the union. "The union demanded that a settlement in Waynesville would mean no jobs in Hot Springs," Robinson said. "Rightly or wrongly, we had to make a settlement. I think it was a practical agreement for the union and for Dayco."

Robinson later added that the terms of a five-year contract that not lay down how moving an operation into the Hot Springs plant. In addition to reducing taxes, Dayco has another option, which Robinson said, would be to build a new plant. Only several other rubber hose plants would be possible. Robinson said he would be available to answer questions.

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Ledford Elected

By ROBERT KOENIG

The Madison County Commissioners opened their monthly meeting Monday night by adjourning to executive session to reorganize themselves. When they returned some 30 minutes later, they elected James Ledford to serve as chairman of the board. Ledford succeeds Ervin Adams, who replaced Ledford as chairman last year.

The commissioners also voted for Adams as vice chairman of the three-member board and renamed Larry Leake to serve as board attorney and David Caldwell to serve as the board's clerk.

In other appointment made Monday night, the commissioners renamed Maynard Cody to the county Housing Board and hired Bobbie T. Williams as county clerk.

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MEMBERS OF THE WALNUT BRANCH Community Development Club accepted an honor, the members were during presentation ceremony held Saturday in Asheville. At the ceremony, the club was presented with a plaque for its work in the community. The club is a non-profit organization that has been active in the community for many years.