



Photo by Ann Kitchell

The lone patrol car for the town of Hot Springs sits in the yard of an area wrecker service following a New Year's Day accident. Although damage to the vehicle appears to be

minimal, the patrol car has been declared a total loss. Hot Springs Police Chief John Barrett said he was in pursuit of a speeding car when he lost control of his patrol car.

Hot Springs Police Chief Totals Vehicle

By ANNE KITCHELL
Staff Writer
and BILL STUDENC
Editor

The police chief of Hot Springs and a former Madison County commissioner were injured in a one-vehicle accident after leaving a New Year's Eve party in the town's only police car.

Hot Springs officials and insurance representatives say the vehicle is a "total loss."

Police Chief John Barrett apparently lost control of the patrol car on N.C. 209 shortly after midnight New Year's Day.

Virginia Anderson, former county commissioner, was in the car at the time of the accident. She was transported to Memorial Mission Hospital in Asheville, treated for bruises to the face and back, and released the same day.

Barrett suffered minor injuries in the accident and was taken by private vehicle to Memorial Mission Hospital in Asheville where he was treated and released, according to reports.

Barrett entered a private party hosted by Hot Springs Mayor Kenny Ramsey at about 11 p.m. New Year's Eve at the Trail Cafe, Ramsey said. An unidentified person entered the cafe at about 12:10 a.m. and said that the police chief had been in a wreck.

Ramsey said he then called the N.C. Highway Patrol and instructed them to investigate the accident.

State Trooper Calvin Taylor, who responded to the call, said that when he arrived on the scene he found the squad car overturned. Because the accident occurred within the city limits, Hot Springs police officer Terry Gettman told the trooper they did not need his assistance, Taylor

"It was a mistake on my part. She got in, she was riding and she turned on the siren. The mistake I made was not letting her out when I took pursuit."

John Barrett
Hot Springs Police Chief

said. "We'll handle it," Taylor quoted Gettman as saying when he arrived at the accident scene. "They said, more or less, they didn't call me."

No accident report has been filed with either the Highway Patrol or the Hot Springs Police Department.

Barrett said he was in pursuit of another vehicle at the time of the accident, Ramsey said.

But a Hot Springs resident who heard the crash said he heard the

police car, siren blaring, but did not hear another vehicle.

"The car was not in pursuit," said Burlin Ricker.

Barrett denied reports that he had been drinking before the accident.

"No, I did not have anything to drink," he said.

Barrett said rumors circulating through the Hot Springs area concerning the accident are untrue and are "politically motivated."

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Bypass Traffic Halted As Gas Leak Plugged

By ANNE KITCHELL
Staff Writer

Quick action and a keen sense of smell may have averted disaster at the Wash And Dry Laundromat on the U.S. 25-70 Bypass early Wednesday morning.

Marshall police officer Edward "Popeye" McLean reported that he smelled what he thought was propane gas fumes coming from the vicinity of the laundromat at about 2 a.m. Wednesday.

McLean stopped to investigate. "I smelled something, and it was gas," McLean said Wednesday. "It looked like somebody had tore up the copper tubing. We believe it's vandalism."

McLean called the Marshall Fire Department for assistance at 2:04 a.m. When firefighters arrived at the laundromat, they discovered that a trash dumpster behind the building was on fire.

Police and fire officials, fearing

that the fire could ignite the propane gas fumes and cause an explosion, began to stop traffic on the U.S. 25-70 Bypass.

"We started to block traffic for a while, but the fire department found where to turn the gas off," McLean said.

Jimmy Ramsey, Marshall fire chief, said that traffic was blocked for nearly 30 minutes as firefighters

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Marshall Man 1st '87 Fatality In WNC

By BILL STUDENC
Editor

A former deputy with the Madison County Sheriff's Department had the unfortunate distinction of being the first traffic fatality in Western North Carolina in 1987.

The first fatal accident occurred on the first day of the new year, during the first snowstorm of the season.

Carl Shook, 51, of Route 6 Marshall, died of injuries received in a one-vehicle accident on Grapevine Road near Petersburg on New Year's Day.

The accident occurred on a snow-covered road at about 7:15 a.m. last Thursday, according to the N.C. Highway Patrol. Weather conditions contributed to the accident, the investigating officer said.

Patrol Headquarters in Raleigh confirmed that Shook's accident marked the first traffic fatality of the new year in Western North Carolina.

The first fatality in the state occurred more than five hours earlier at

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Steel Company Moving From Woodfin To Weaverville

By C.B. SQUIRE
Contributing Editor

Karpen Steel Products Corp. of Woodfin has purchased the vacant Woodcrafters plant on Reems Creek Road on the outskirts of Weaverville and will use the building as a key element in its expansion plans.

The building belonged to Lane Furniture Co., which has auctioned off most of the equipment and will remove the rest.

Karpen Products will prepare the building for its own equipment, now in the company's building in Woodfin. The move from Woodfin to Weaverville should be completed in July.

Morris Karpen, founder of Karpen Products, said last week.

The Woodcrafters building in Weaverville has been unused for about a year prior to its recent purchase. Karpen Products has not yet decided what to do with the building it will be vacating in Woodfin, but will probably rent the building to another company, Karpen said.

The Weaverville building is considerably larger than the Woodfin facility, he said.

Karpen Products currently employs about 20 workers and does not have any immediate plans to expand its workforce, Karpen said.

That will happen gradually, he said.

Karpen Products is an unusual business, Karpen said, that makes custom steel doors and frames of unusual shapes and ships them out usually within 10 days of receiving an order - something he says large steel products companies can't do.

A family business, Karpen Products began in Woodfin as the result of an extensive marketing survey and is one of the most highly computerized businesses in the area.

Karpen was head of a similar business in New York for many years and decided to retire to North Carolina with his wife Leah, who

grew up in Asheville. They live on Ox Creek Road, off Reems Creek. The New York business is now run by one of the Karpen's sons.

"Retirement" for Morris Karpen, however, proved to be short-lived. He and his wife, who has a master's degree in industrial management, conducted a marketing survey that showed a need for a company to produce specialty steel products - and to do so fast.

On a large construction job with, maybe, 500 to 1,000 door frames, "we may make 10 of them," Karpen said. "They may be the 10 they need in a hurry to get the job started."

The niche Karpen found for his post-retirement business involves design and delivery. "Competitors can touch us on pricing and other things, but they can't touch us on delivery or design," he said.

The company's chief goal of delivering doors and frames within 10 days of the date the order was received and approved is what enables Karpen Products to compete against larger suppliers, he said.

When an order is received and processed in the office computer, the shop computer is already tied in, he said. For computer enthusiasts, Karpen explained that all of the

firm's computer programs are written in-house.

"We've had some of the big people from some of the big shops come in," he said. "They're completely amazed at how far we have gone with our computer."

Karpen, 62, when he started the "post-retirement" company in Woodfin about nine years ago, has been joined in the business by a son, Joe, and a daughter, Rachel.

Karpen Steel Products and its founders were subjects of an article in the November issue of "Doors And Hardware," a trade publication.

Bentley Looks Back At College Presidency

Special to The News Record

At a time when most of us are trying to honor the New Year's resolutions that we just made, Dr. Fred Bentley is looking back on his just-completed 20th year as president of Mars Hill College.

Bentley took over in 1966 as president at Mars Hill College, an institution that was more than 100 years old yet still in its second year of infancy as a four-year university.

Today, Bentley is a little older and a little wiser. But as he looks out from his third office at Blackwell Hall (named in honor of the president he succeeded), he can look down at a campus rich in tradition and history, but a campus that also shows the mark of his parenting.

It is a parenting job he has no intention of soon abandoning for greener pastures. By all indications he is content in believing there are none. It is also a job he readily admits he came into by accident, as a second choice for the hardworking task of transferring Mars Hill from a junior college

into a credible senior college.

When the board of trustees was seeking a replacement for Dr. Hoyt Blackwell, the call went out for John Claypole, a Mars Hill graduate and a minister in Louisville, Ky.

Claypole turned down the offer, electing not to leave the ministry. He did recommend a young man who was then serving as assistant dean of arts and sciences at the University of Louisville - Fred Bentley.

Bentley at first turned down the offer, but was persuaded to at least take a look at the campus.

"I was so impressed with the board of trustees and their visions for this campus that I accepted the post," said Bentley. "It was a period of transition from a junior college to a senior college, so it held tremendous possibility of what it could become. And with that a tremendous responsibility."

Bentley took on the task of orienting the college programs toward a full baccalaureate degree. It also



Dr. Fred Bentley, in an honorary uniform, watches Mars Hill College football from the sidelines.

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Mars Hill Ready For Sewer Repairs

By BILL STUDENC
Editor

The Mars Hill Board of Aldermen agreed Monday night to hire McGill and Associates, an Asheville engineering firm, to oversee a \$145,000 overhaul of leaking sewer lines on the campus of Mars Hill College.

McGill and Associates was one of three firms considered by the town board to oversee the project, expected to get under way in the spring.

Mars Hill officials agreed in May, when the town's sewer system began operations, to assume responsibility for sewer lines located on the college campus.

A later study of Mars Hill College's main sewer lines indicated that some major repair work is necessary, said Mars Hill Mayor Owen Tilson.

"We mentioned at the last meeting that the sewer system we took over from the college is leaking, and we have to have extensive repairs," Tilson said.

"We are treating surface runoff

water, and that is causing the cost of operation of our wastewater treatment plant to be excessive because we are treating all this water that's not supposed to be there," he said.

Part of the problem has been traced to old sewer lines on the Mars Hill College campus.

A recent engineering test, in which smoke was forced through sewer pipes to locate problem spots, revealed several major leaks on the campus.

Tilson recommended that the board hire McGill because the firm is already somewhat familiar with the town's sewer system.

McGill and Associates, owned by engineer Gary McGill, has been conducting a study on a possible joint water system for the towns of Mars Hill, Weaverville and Woodfin, Tilson said. He will also oversee a spillway repair project at the town's reservoir.

Tilson told the aldermen that it seemed to make more sense to have

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