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Hot Springs Police Chiefs Face Charges

Two Teens Say Getman Threatened, Assaulted Them In Traffic Arrest

By BILL STUDENC
Editor

Two Madison High School students have charged Hot Springs Police Chief Terry Lee Getman with assault and communicating threats after a routine traffic arrest Sunday afternoon.

According to warrants filed this week in the Madison County Magistrate's Office, Getman has been charged with communicating threats against Michael Miller and Randy Riddle and with simple assault against Miller.

Those charges stem from Getman's arrest of Miller, 17, on a reckless driving charge at 5:40 p.m. Sunday in downtown Hot Springs. Getman said that Miller was "spinning the tires of a Pontiac Trans-Am in front of

the police department and in broad daylight."

According to one of the communicating threats warrants, Getman told Miller, "If you don't change your attitude I'll knock the f--- out of you." The other communicating threats warrant charges that Getman told Riddle, "If you don't give me your goddam license, I'll knock the f--- out of you."

Getman is charged with simple assault for allegedly pushing Miller into the police vehicle.

Getman turned himself into the Madison County Sheriff's Department Tuesday afternoon, Sheriff Dedrick Brown said.

Getman called the charges "ridiculous," and said he suspects Miller's father, Marshall attorney Rick

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SBI Charges Barrett With DWI In New Year's Eve Accident

By BILL STUDENC
Editor

The State Bureau of Investigation has charged former Hot Springs Police Chief John Barrett with driving while impaired when he wrecked the town's patrol car shortly after midnight New Year's Eve.

The charge stems from a nearly four-month SBI investigation of Barrett's accident, which injured the then-police chief and a passenger, former Madison County Commissioner Virginia Anderson, and totaled the only patrol car in the Hot Springs Police Department.

According to a warrant, obtained Tuesday by SBI agent Ronald Perry, in the Madison County Magistrate's Office, Barrett has been charged with

driving "a vehicle on U.S. 25-70 and N.C. 209, a highway, while subject to an impairing substance."

William Farrell, special prosecutor with the N.C. Attorney General's Office, told The News Record on Monday that, after his examination of the SBI investigation report, he had instructed agents to obtain a warrant for Barrett's arrest on the DWI charge.

"I instructed the SBI agents that did the investigation to present their findings to judicial officers in Madison County," Farrell said from his Raleigh office. "I instructed them to seek a warrant toward a DWI offense."

Law enforcement officials may find it a little difficult to serve the warrant on Barrett, however. He

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Homecoming A Hot Time

By ANNE KITCHELL
Staff Writer

Hot Springs Homecoming '87 was the place to be last weekend as the town celebrated what officials promise will be an annual event.

And, with made-to-order weather, the festivities went off without a hitch, according to organizers of the event, designed to attract former Hot Springs residents back home for a weekend.

"I'm tired and I'm relieved," said Cecilia Champion, Homecoming Committee vice-chairman. "The entire weekend went so smoothly. It was really well organized."

Organized it was, as hundreds of people flocked to Hot Springs to eat, dance and be merry. From hot air balloon rides to river rafting races on the French Broad, Madison County was treated to an extravaganza of sights and sounds.

Homecoming organizers had been hard at work for the past five months pulling together various events to entertain a variety of tastes.

Festivities began Friday night with a beauty pageant with a special appearance by Miss North Carolina, Karen Bloomquist. Girls ranging in age from 4 to 18 competed for awards and trophies.

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BILL STUDENC PHOTO

Workers struggle to keep a hot air balloon in place as it is inflated at Hot Springs Homecoming '87 this past weekend.

Florida Firm May Purchase Most Of Wolf Laurel Resort

By BILL STUDENC
Editor

A Florida real estate group will purchase most of Wolf Laurel Resort next month, if the directors and stockholders of Bald Mountain Development Corp. approve a final sales agreement.

Bald Mountain Development Corp., which owns Wolf Laurel Resort, agreed in principal Saturday to approve the sale of the majority of the resort's assets to the Stokes, O'Steen, Williams Group of Jacksonville, Fla.

If the corporation's board of directors and stockholders agree to the

sale, the Florida developers will purchase the ski slope, golf course, restaurant, Wolf Laurel Inn and approximately 1,800 acres of undeveloped land, said Walter Williams of Walter Williams Realty in Jacksonville.

The firm would also assume, under a contract, management of the ski operation, real estate sales and resort rental management, Williams said.

June 1 has been targeted as the takeover date, but that has not been finalized, Williams said.

"All of this is subject to getting all the details worked out," he said Tues-

day in a telephone interview from his Jacksonville, Fla., office.

"We left the (Saturday) meeting and the Bald Mountain people left the meeting with an agreement that we all felt we could bring to a conclusion that was mutually beneficial," he said.

Williams would not reveal the terms of the transaction.

The Florida firm's purchase of Wolf Laurel, located on the border of Madison and Yancey counties, comes after the resort suffered through financial difficulties last summer.

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Board Puzzled By Refusal To Investigate Finances

By BILL STUDENC
Editor

Madison County commissioners are scratching their heads over District Attorney's J. Thomas Ruser's refusal to investigate possible mishandling of public funds by former county commissioners and their employees.

"We've done everything but get down on our knees and beg," said Robert Capps, board chairman. "I don't know what the hell he's waiting on."

Ruser, in a statement released

last week, said he had found insufficient evidence of any criminal wrongdoing to warrant an investigation of past financial practices in Madison County government.

Ruser, district attorney for the 24th Judicial District, also said that "...short of a specific request that there be a criminal law investigation, then I must leave these matters to be solved by the Madison County Board of Commissioners."

The commissioners are expected to discuss the situation at a special called meeting Wednesday, and may

decide whether to give Ruser that specific request, or simply drop the matter.

"We'll mention this Wednesday," Capps said. "I'll ask them both (the other commissioners) how they feel. If they want to pursue it anymore or ask Ruser to go into it, then I'm with them."

All three commissioners agreed that they would like to put the controversial audit report behind them.

"If there was any wrong-doing, I'd

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Area Merchants Discuss Formation Of A Countywide Chamber

By ANNE KITCHELL
Staff Writer

Once again, Madison County residents and concerned merchants are joining forces, this time to establish a countywide chamber of commerce.

The group, headed by interim chairman Jeanne Hoffman, met last week to organize and discuss the goals and objectives of a Madison County Chamber of Commerce.

Hoffman explained the purpose of county chamber to a group of about 20

area business people. She told the group that an organization serving the entire county would include members from a more diverse cross section of the county, including civic, church and social clubs as well as businesses.

Marshall real estate agent Frank S. Roberts said he believes that a countywide chamber of commerce will deal effectively with the problems facing an economically depressed area - and with the area's potential to solve those problems.

"The merchants' associations will deal with each town individually, but the chamber will work for the good of all areas of the county," Roberts said. "Each merchants' association has its own set of unique problems that don't directly involve other towns. The chamber will deal with a broader range of problems."

Marshall merchants recently formed an association, and Hot Springs has its own chamber. Mars Hill merchants had discussed forming a

chamber, but decided to concentrate on a countywide organization.

Members of the county group agreed there is a need for an organization centered on a spirit of cooperation. They agreed to hold meetings at Madison High School because of its central location.

Roberts told the group that a main concern of the chamber should be to find the right kind of industry for the area.

"We're looking for industry without smokestacks," said Roberts. "We

don't want to spoil the beauty of the county."

Longtime Madison County activist Jerry Plemmons said there are three areas that need to be explored: placing an industry in the vacant Dayco Corp. plant in Hot Springs; completion of U.S. 23 to the Tennessee line; and, reviving the potential of the Hot Springs resort community.

Plemmons said the chamber must also protect the interests of existing

industries and businesses.

The group also discussed how other counties have utilized their chambers to promote their members.

"People will go to the chamber because they have a list of all the businesses in the area and will see what is available in the county at one time," said Hot Springs businessman Jerry Parker.

Organizers of a countywide chamber will meet again June 2 at Madison High School.

Marshall Residents Want Pool Opened

By BILL STUDENC
Editor

Several Madison County residents presented the Marshall Board of Aldermen with a handful of petitions Monday containing some 1,400 signatures asking that the town pool be opened this summer.

Town officials had previously expressed doubt that the pool could be used this year because of on-going maintenance problems and the lack of sufficient insurance coverage.

That prompted some area residents to begin circulating petitions calling for the town to open the pool. The residents say they have collected an estimated 1,400 signatures in one week.

"I'm representing the youth of the town and the parents of the town," said Angie Simpson. "We feel that the Marshall pool should be opened and maintained again this summer."

one of the few recreational facilities we have for the youth of Madison County, and it should not be taken from them."

Simpson and Sherry McKinney, along with several other residents - including a number of teen-agers - presented the board with a stack of petitions.

"I think it's a sad fact that we put the youth of the county on the low level of priorities," Simpson said. "We condemn them for running up and down the road, but we provide nothing for them."

McKinney criticized past town administrations for allowing the pool and other recreational facilities to fall into a state of disrepair. In addition to problems at the pool, town basketball and tennis courts have become unusable, she said.

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BILL STUDENC PHOTO

Mars Hill College graduates, disappointed against an open door in Moore Auditorium, prepare to receive their diplomas during Sunday's commencement exercises.

Mars Hill Seniors Receive Diplomas

Mars Hill College's president, Dr. Fred B. Bentley, presented diplomas to 230 graduates Sunday afternoon as the Baptist-related school brought to a close its 131st academic year.

Bentley then ended the weekend's activities by telling the graduates that he hoped as time passes, the bond that ties them to Mars Hill will only become stronger.

The primary speaker for the commencement ceremony was Dr. J. Wesley Grayson of Laguna Hills, Calif., Mars Hill's most generous benefactor.

Grayson, along with his wife, the former Polly Wall of Mars Hill, established the Grayson Scholarship, a full-tuition grant that is the college's most prestigious.

Grayson outlined his speech "Training Minds, Building Character." He brought out three points in his speech that he believes are essential for a

good college education.

The first point is the accumulation of knowledge to gain expertise for jobs and avocational interests. The second is the development of skills that will allow the presentation of that knowledge effectively. Grayson stressed the need for "good thought sequences which allows accuracy, clarity and brevity."

His third point was the adoption of "certain moral and ethical standards to guide students through college and beyond." He said he believes Mars Hill is helping students achieve this by maintaining a Christian environment in the classroom as well as on campus.

"I firmly believe in this environment," Grayson said. "If I didn't, I would never have provided scholarship funds."

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