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Madison Football Player Is 'Improving'

From Staff Reports

A Madison County High School football player is improving but was still listed in critical condition Wednesday, nearly five days after lapsing into a coma following a bone-jarring tackle in a Friday night football game.

Senior Gary Mace was transported to Memorial Mission Hospital in Asheville by helicopter after he fell unconscious on the sidelines during Friday's game at O.E. Roberts Stadium in Marshall.

Mace regained consciousness late Tuesday night and appears to be steadily improving, according to David Wyatt, principal at Madison High School.

"He has regained consciousness," Wyatt said Wednesday morning. "He has really shown improvement overnight."

Mace was also slightly injured in the Oct. 2 football game at Rosman, he said. "They put a collar around his neck, but apparently found nothing really wrong with him," Wyatt said.

A Memorial Mission Hospital spokesman said Wednesday that Mace, son of Mr. and Mrs. Monroe Mace, remains in critical condition.

"He is listed as critical and he is still in intensive care," Barry Ward said. "I do understand that he is now conscious."

Mace's parents have been at the hospital since late Friday night and could not be reached for comment.

Mace's injuries apparently stem from his head-on tackle of Avery High School football player Charles Barrier on a play late in last Friday night's homecoming game, school officials say.

Barrier took the football on a

reverse play and ran into Mace.

"The Avery player was coming in from one side and Gary was coming in from the opposite direction," Wyatt said. "He took a real hard lick. I think they hit helmets head on."

Madison head football coach Woody Ammons is still not sure exactly what happened to cause Mace's injuries.

"I really don't have any idea what went wrong," Ammons said Tuesday. "I've looked at the game tapes, and you can't see very much. Another kid shields the blow that Gary delivered, and you really can't see anything at all."

Ammons said the tackle appeared to be "normal football contact."

At first, coaches, players and even Mace himself believed the Avery player was more seriously injured. Barrier was transported by ambulance to Memorial Mission

Hospital, where he was treated and released.

"He (Mace) stood there for six or seven minutes while they attended to the other boy," Ammons said.

"While they were still attending to him, Gary came off the field and said he was having trouble seeing, and then he got sick on his stomach," Ammons said. "He just sort of faded away when he lost consciousness."

Madison County emergency workers called for MAMA, Memorial Mission's air ambulance, which transported Mace to Asheville.

Ammons called the injury to Mace the worst football-related injury he has seen in 20 years of coaching.

"I'm very worried. He's a super kid and I love him to death," Ammons said. "The kid can use every prayer he can get."

Mace is one of the team's leaders

and a popular member of the Madison student body, school officials said.

"All the kids love Gary very, very much," Ammons said.

"There is a lot of concern at school. I had a lot of phone calls over the weekend from our students and from different schools in the area," Wyatt said. "We had a moment of silent prayer at the beginning of the day Monday."

Ammons held a team meeting with the Madison football squad Monday to talk about Mace's injury.

"I told them that this was something that just happened and that we didn't know why and that we would resume practice," he said. "I told them if they had second thoughts about playing and didn't want to



Gary Mace
...injured Friday night

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Sheriff, County Remain At Odds On Jail Funding

By BILL STUDENC
Editor

The Madison County Board of Commissioners appears no closer to reaching a settlement with Sheriff Dedrick Brown, who says he will file a lawsuit to get sufficient funds to operate the county jail.

Commissioner Reese Steen said he met with Brown Tuesday to try to iron out a compromise that could keep the county out of costly litigation - but with little success.

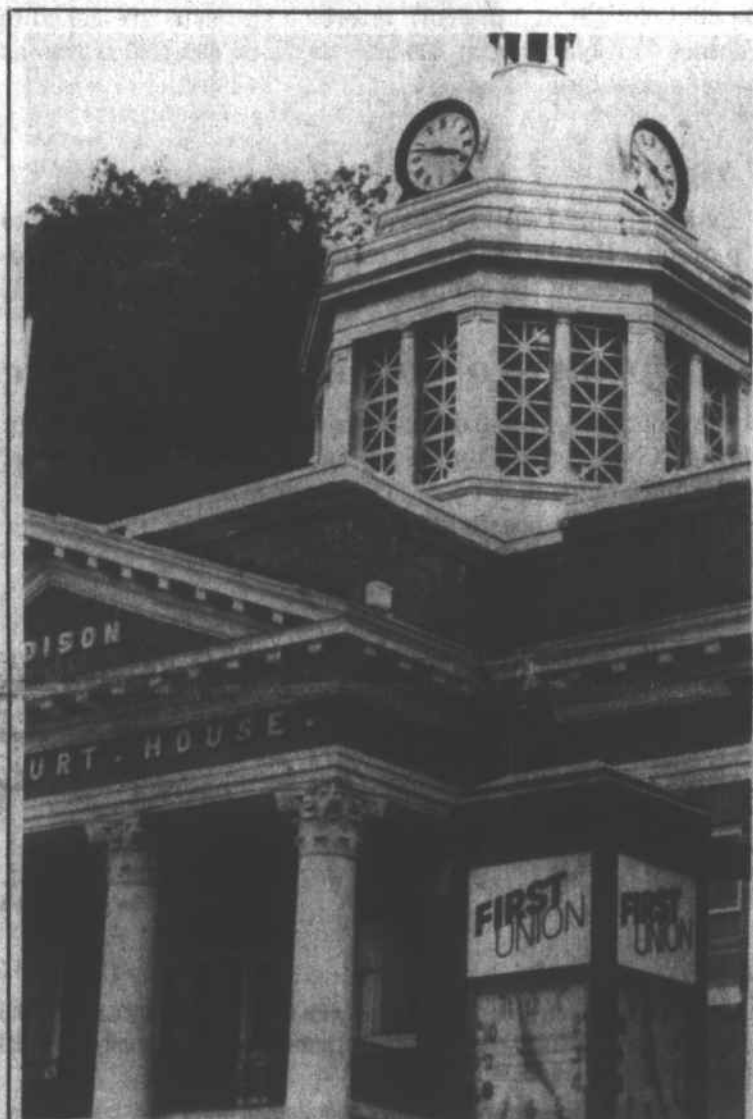
"I suggested that we might be able to give him up to \$200,000, plus any profit that he makes on keeping state prisoners," Steen said Tuesday.

"That would have put us in a real bind, but he was unwilling to accept that."

Brown has told commissioners on several occasions that he needs more money to operate Madison County Jail in compliance with minimum standards established by the state. The sheriff says state standards demand that prisoners be supervised 24 hours a day. With current funding, that can't be done, he said.

The commissioners, on the other hand, have criticized Brown for overspending in his department.

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BILL STUDENC PHOTO

Hands Of Time

After waiting for more than a year for various replacement cogs and gears, the 80-year-old Seth Thomas clock atop Madison County Courthouse was finally back in working order last week. But it has already started to lose time. Phil Gilbert, a member of the Western Carolinas Chapter of the National Association of Clock Collectors, said the clock is plugged temporarily into an electrical outlet, and that someone must be flicking off the switch. A permanent source of power for the clock is in the works, Gilbert said, and the clock should soon be keeping accurate time.

Zoning Vote Set For Saturday In Flat Creek

By BILL STUDENC
Editor

Residents of Flat Creek township will go to the ballot box Saturday to determine whether a proposed land-use ordinance should be adopted in the Northern Buncombe County community.

If approved, the ordinance would prohibit any additional bars or taverns, industries deemed to have a detrimental impact on the environment and high-noise businesses.

The proposed community ordinance arose from the on-going battle to keep Vulcan Materials Corp. from placing a rock quarry off U.S. 19-23 in Flat Creek.

And although most Flat Creek residents seem united in their opposition to Vulcan Materials' plans for a rock quarry, the same can't be said of the proposed land-use regulations.

A group of residents of the community organized late last month as Flat Creek Concerned Citizens and Landowners, and is trying to convince enough residents to vote against the ordinance Saturday.

"If we can get the people out to vote, they'll go against it, and by a big majority," said Johnny M. Roberts, treasurer of Flat Creek Concerned Citizens and Landowners.

The chairman of the Flat Creek Community Planning Council, which prepared the proposed Flat Creek Community Development Ordinance, has a different prediction for the outcome of Saturday's vote.

"We feel very positive about this," said Hensley. "We have had a lot of positive input. The only opponents we have have clouded the issues."

Those opponents are saying exactly the same thing about the Flat Creek

Community Planning Council. They say that council members have deliberately avoided using the word "zoning" in what amounts to a community zoning ordinance.

"This so-called community-based plan developed into a zoning ordinance," James Anglin, president of Flat Creek Concerned Citizens and Landowners, said in a prepared statement. "The Planning Council then tried to cloud the issue by calling it the Flat Creek Community Development Ordinance. The 63-page ordinance does not refer to itself as being a zoning ordinance."

Anglin has also criticized the council for placing a major emphasis on the "Stop Vulcan Quarry" movement.

"If a person speaks out against zoning, he is labeled by some of those who support this ordinance as being in favor of the rock quarry," Anglin said. "This is not true. A person may be against having the rock quarry and still be against zoning."

There are no assurances that the ordinance, if adopted, would have any impact on the proposed quarry in Flat Creek, he said.

Without the restrictions contained in such an ordinance, Hensley said, how can those opposed to a rock quarry expect to do anything about it?

"It is a contradiction in terms to say, 'I'm not for Vulcan, but I'm opposed to the kind of regulation that could keep it out,'" said Hensley.

Both opponents and supporters of the land-use regulations will be trying to get copies of the proposed ordinance into the hands of Flat Creek

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Cioli Re-Enters Hot Springs Race As Write-In Candidate

By BILL STUDENC
Editor

Incumbent Hot Springs Mayor Kenny Ramsey may want to put away the celebratory champagne until after Nov. 3, after all.

Gerald Cioli, one of two mayoral candidates who withdrew last month, has announced that he is re-entering the Hot Springs mayor's race as a write-in candidate.

"I was encouraged to do this by so many people in Hot Springs who told me they were disappointed because I got out of the race," Cioli said Tuesday.

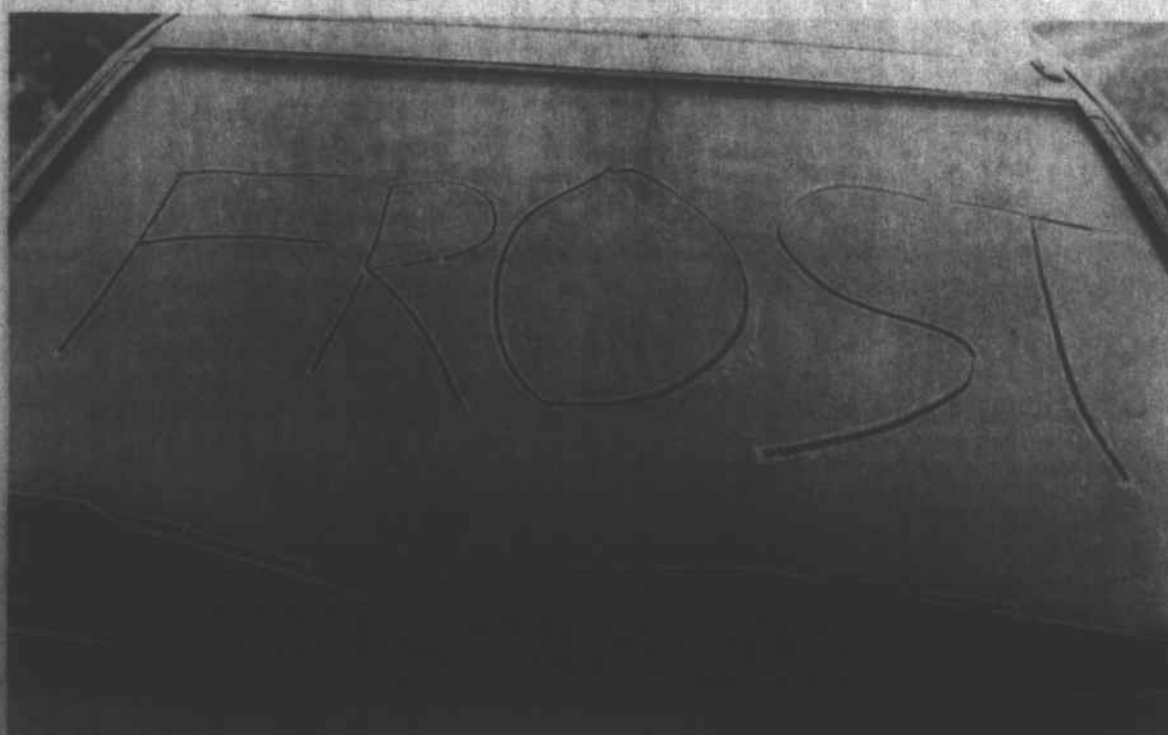
Cioli said he re-registered Tuesday

with the Madison County Board of Elections as a candidate for mayor of Hot Springs.

Cioli dropped out of the mayor's race last month after receiving several harassing telephone calls. That withdrawal came just prior to a hearing called by the Hot Springs Board of Elections to determine if Cioli was a registered voter. Only registered voters are eligible to run for elected office.

On his application for candidacy, Cioli indicated that he had been convicted of a "low-grade felony" in the state of Florida. Anyone convicted of

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BILL STUDENC PHOTO

Ex-Weaverville Police Chief Subject Of State Probe

By BILL STUDENC
Editor

The N.C. Criminal Justice Standards Division is conducting an investigation of former Weaverville Police Chief Darrell Rathburn to determine if his certification as a law enforcement officer should be revoked.

The division, a section of the N.C. Attorney General's Office, is looking into several misdemeanor offenses of which Rathburn was convicted prior to his employment with the town of Weaverville in 1985.

Rathburn, who was fired as Weaverville police chief in August but later allowed by town officials to resign, was convicted of the following three misdemeanor charges in Buncombe County District Court between 1978 and 1980, according to records in the Buncombe County Courthouse:

- Shooting a German shepherd and injuring it (charged Dec. 13, 1978). Rathburn was found guilty and received a four-month sentence which was suspended for one year.

- Disorderly conduct (charged March 20, 1979). He pleaded no contest.

- Assault with a deadly weapon (charged April 14, 1980). He was found guilty and received a two- to three-month sentence which was suspended for one year.

According to Scott Perry, deputy director of the N.C. Criminal Justice Standards Division, anyone convicted of certain misdemeanors should not be certified as a law enforcement officer. Division workers are looking into Rathburn's convictions to see if they are serious enough

to warrant revocation of his certification, Perry said.

"What the commission does is separate misdemeanors into two separate categories," he said. "There are 'Class A' misdemeanors, in which punishment ranges from no time to six months, and there are 'Class B' misdemeanors, which are more serious and carry a punishment of more than six months to two years."

The criminal justice division is checking to see if Rathburn was convicted of "Class A" or "Class B" misdemeanors.

"It depends on what rules were in effect at the time he was employed and certified. Standards have been continually upgraded and changed over the years," Perry said. "That's what we're working on finding out."

A field representative for the division has been collecting information on Rathburn's record, and is working to determine what regulations were in effect when Rathburn was certified as a police officer.

"We are reviewing the situation," Perry said. "We have collected some information, but we have not other things we are doing that have yet to be completed."

Once all the information is gathered, it will be turned over to the division's standards committee to determine whether any action should be taken regarding Rathburn's certification, Perry said.

Perry estimated that a month or so might be needed to complete the probe.

Octo-brrr

What happened to fall? That's what many folks must be wondering these days, as freezing weather and heavy frosts have moved in the

mountains of Western North Carolina. Hold on to your hats — the Farmer's Almanac is predicting a lot of snow for WNC this year.