

The Foothills View

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THURSDAY, AUGUST 6, 1981

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"The Letter"

Ex-Police Chief Bill Ingram, who claims town council forced his resignation June 2, leveled more charges against town officials Thursday and accused a Boiling Springs policeman of sexually molesting two young women.

In an open letter to the town, Ingram made at least 35 separate charges of misconduct against Mayor Jimmie Greene, the police department, and council members. The sometimes rambling five pages listed charges that varied from the trivial - the wearing of cowboy hats - to the serious - sexual assault.

"I can prove everything in the letter," the former police chief said in a telephone interview Thursday. Among the more serious allegations made by Ingram:

• a Boiling Springs policeman twice molested young woman he stopped on patrol;

credentials." A check with his former employers indicates that his record, although very good, is not perfect (see story below).

What Ingram mailed to each council member as his proof of the policeman's misconduct is two notarized statements, one by Ingram claiming the patrolman confessed his misconduct with a 15-year old girl to then-chief Ingram; the second is a first-person narrative by a 20-year old Swainsville woman that the patrolman stopped her at night and attempted to assault her.

But notarized statements cannot be admitted as evidence in a trial, says a Shelby attorney who is unconnected with the dispute; they would be considered as "hearsay," he went on, and without the validity of testimony under oath or a sworn deposition. "A notarized statement has some

Mayor Jimmie Greene answered some questions last Thursday to Ingram's charge that Greene had joined a police chase at speeds exceeding 90 miles an hour. "No I didn't," Greene said. Has Greene joined in police chases at speeds less than ninety? "I've never chased anybody," Greene said. "I've declined further comment on the letter. 'I'm just not going to respond,'" he said. "I'm not going to respond to any part of the letter."

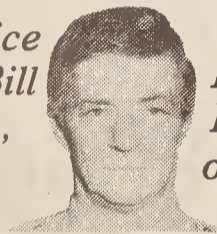
Councilman John Washburn was more responsive. Asked about charges that he threatened to personally fire a policeman, Washburn laughed and interjected: "Why that sounds like Watergate!"

Washburn explained his comparison: "He's (Ingram) making me sound like I just sit around all day and fire people. I can't do that. I don't have the authority to do that. I represent only 20 per cent of

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-Ex-Chief Bill Ingram

Ex-Police Chief Bill Ingram,



The Man Caught In The Middle of Controversy

"I think it backfired on him."

-Councilman John Washburn

• the police department has failed to respond to calls within city limits;

• the mayor has taken part in high-speed chases and allowed patrol cars to be used for private business.

Ingram in his letter urged townspeople to attend the next council meeting August 4 to discuss his charges and, he said, the political pressures that forced his resignation. He has proof, he wrote, of the policeman's misconduct, and has mailed that proof to each council member.

But on examination some serious holes begin to appear in Ingram's statements. Among them:

• Ingram's "proof" of sexual misconduct by the Boiling Springs patrolman would not be admissible in court; and

• in his July 30 letter Ingram states: "When I was hired as your chief in May, 1979, I came to this position with a perfect record of leadership and

sanction," said the attorney, because it indicates a serious intent and a willingness to talk. But "it is a one-sided statement" that does not allow cross-examination; it is not evidence.

Further weakening the allegations against the policeman is the fact that neither supposed victim filed charges; a check with Shelby police and the Cleveland County sheriff's department showed no complaints or warrants issued against the officer. Ingram says the women are afraid to complain.

Boiling Springs police declined comment, but did respond to Ingram's charge of unanswered calls. "To my knowledge we've not missed a call," said patrolman Dan Ledbetter (Calls and responses, as reported by Boiling Springs police as the complete public record, have been printed in the View since July 24).

the council (one member out of five) and my main responsibilities are sewage and sanitation."

Washburn speculated the letter was an attempt by Ingram to divide the council members against one another. If so, Washburn said, the letter failed. "I feel like it backfired on him. We (the council members and mayor) work together just fine."

Ingram said in an interview Friday the letter was an attempt to force the council to state why it requested his resignation. Ingram has maintained since resigning June 2 that he was forced to step down after a patrolman ticketed a volunteer fireman.

Ingram stood at Main Street last Thursday and began handing out his letter to passers-by about 11:30 a.m. By 1 p.m. the letter had circulated among Boiling Springs restaurants, banks, and post office. To townspeople it was simply "the letter."

"Have you seen the letter?" was the common lunch-time question at the down-town Snack Shop.

William David Ingram: An Employment History

In his open letter to the town, ex-police Chief Bill Ingram stated July 30 that his employment record prior to Boiling Springs is "perfect". It isn't.

Telephone calls to Ingram's former employers last Thursday revealed that Ingram is not eligible for re-employment at a former job. This employer stressed, however, that he considered Ingram a good worker, and overall, the policeman's references checked out as excellent.

In a two hour interview Friday, Ingram, unaware that his references had been checked, truthfully included all his former jobs in discussing his work record. He was candid in his likes and dislikes of each job, and how long he worked at each.

From these interviews, a picture emerges of Bill Ingram on the job: a man who worked hard, and was usually well-liked by his boss and co-workers; who has received two major promotions; but who has twice resigned jobs because of what he calls political pressure.

Ingram, 48, worked 20 years at his longest job, an enlistment in the U.S. Navy. He showed a reporter his honorable discharge, as well as nine awards and commendations for service that includes the Korean and Viet-Nam wars. After retirement from active duty in 1971, Ingram worked for two years, 1971-73, as a sheriff's deputy in Mecklenburg County.

In 1973, in what is considered a move

up in law enforcement, Ingram became a Special Agent for the Alcohol Beverage Control Board (ABC). In 1974 he was again promoted to a Supervisor for the ABC, overseeing six agents in 18 counties.

"His work was just fine," said Linda Curtis, whom Ingram hired and who still works for the ABC office in Asheville. She attributes Ingram's resigning the ABC in 1978 to Republican Gov. James Holshouser's replacement by Democratic Gov. Jim Hunt.

On Oct. 2, 1978, Ingram went to work for Southern Railway at Knoxville, Tenn., as a Special Officer for the railway police. There he received the only mar on his work record before

coming to Boiling Springs. The company was asked Thursday if Ingram is eligible for re-hiring.

"No," said J.O. Greenwood, a Southern Railway vice president, interviewed at his Washington office. "But that's a very guarded no," Greenwood added. "Bill Ingram is a good man in the right circumstances."

Ingram said he resigned Southern Railway after being denied transfer to North Carolina. He left the railway in April, 1979; he was hired at Boiling Springs in May, 1979.

These days Bill Ingram is unemployed and stays at home. Again, he blames political pressure. A compact man with greying hair and a youthful

face, Ingram sits at his kitchen table and assembles resumes. Pictures of his children, grandchildren, and ships he served on in the Navy hang from opposite walls. Widowed this year, Ingram seems a man unaccustomed to keeping house for himself; he offers a reporter coffee, then apologizes for having forgotten to buy sugar.

Ingram has applied to police departments in Florida and North Carolina. "I don't know who they'll make chief," Ingram says of Boiling Springs. "God help him, whoever he be."



"When my father was 87, he planted a cotton patch, worked it and he and ma picked it just so he could meet his pledge to Gardner-Webb," recalled Mrs. Dorothy Washburn Hamrick Edwards. Friday the College honored the daughter of those parents with a celebration of Mrs. Edwards' 65th birthday. Dr. Craven Williams, president of the college, pours a cup of punch for Mrs. Edwards, who directs the school's academic records.

Area Briefs

Golfers will get into the swing and students will get the point the next two weeks.

River Bend Junior Golf Association begins registration for Cleveland County's Fifth Annual Golf Championship for golfers ages 7-17. The entry fee is \$5.00, and is paid at the River Bend Golf Club, Shelby.

Immunization records are required for all new students attending grades K-12 in Cleveland County, reminds the Cleveland County Board of Education. School offices will be open 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. to register new students, and the principals ask parents to call or come by the school offices as soon as possible.

Boiling Springs Girl Prettiest of the Peaches

Andra Kay Martin won the crown of Junior Miss Southeastern Peach Princess in that pageant's second annual contest July 27 in Gaffney, S.C. Andra, 10, is the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Jimmy Martin of Boiling Springs.

Andra competed among 20 contestants in the Junior Miss division for girls 10 to 12. Each girl was judged on her personal interview, beauty, modeling, poise, personality, and dress. Andra received a full crown, banners, robe, flowers, and three foot trophy for her win. She was also judged Junior Miss Southeastern Photogenic.

Andra held the title in 1980 of Wee Miss Southeastern Peach Princess for girls 6 to 7, and currently holds the title of 1981 Junior Miss North Carolina.



Andra Kay Martin