

The Progress

Morrisville & Preston

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REVISITING THE SCENE—Wreaths in memory of those who died in the crash of American Eagle Flight 3379 remain at the scene as the first anniversary of the crash approaches. Clasp hands as they revisited the site where they assisted in rescue efforts are, left to right, Martin Howard, Lee Phillips and Sue Phillips, who rushed to the scene in their truck; Capt. David Ferrell, who served as operations officer for the Morrisville Volunteer Fire Department, and firefighters Karen French, Brian Baldwin and Bill Case.

Citizens stick up for mayor

By Bill Kirkland

Morrisville's Board of Commissioners received petitions Tuesday night calling for the board to reverse a decision to convert the mayor's office at Town Hall into a conference room.

The petitions were signed by 134 people in support of Mayor-Elect Margaret E. Broadwell, who will be sworn in Dec. 11. The board, in a 4 to 1 vote, eliminated the office for the mayor six days after Ms. Broadwell's Nov. 7 election.

The petitions did not refer to a second board action that took away the mayor's authority to appoint committee members to the Town Board as well as several state and regional panels.

The board moved into closed session shortly after the public comments portion of the meeting ended. Commissioner C.T. Moore called for the closed session to discuss what he described as a "real estate transaction."

The mayor's office controversy never came up for discussion after the board returned, but as the meeting neared an end, commissioners Moore, Leavy Barbee and Phyllis Newnam offered assurances of cooperation with the incoming mayor.

Acting Mayor Billy Sauls, who was defeated in the mayor's race by a margin of 158 to 125, did not mention the mayor-elect in his comments. "I think every member of the board has done the best job he or she could do," he said.

Commissioner Bill Ufferman, who voted against both measures that would strip the mayor-elect of much of her power, left the meeting early because of a prior speaking commitment.

After presenting the petitions to Town Attorney Frank Gray, Morrisville resident Clyde Williams called for Sauls' resignation. Sauls has two years remaining in his term as a commissioner.

"You have made these wild comments that Ms. Broadwell has set the town back two years," Williams said as he faced Sauls. "You have set it back five years. You are no more use to the town."

"It's malice," Williams continued. "You were a sore loser. I would like for you to resign by Jan. 1."

Three other residents spoke after Williams.

Mark Wisner accused the commissioners of making Morrisville "look like a hick town." He said board action had created "negative public opinion and division within the town."

Wisner asked the board to reconsider its decisions after Ms. Broadwell takes office. "That would help gain respect for our town government immensely compared to what it is now," he said.

Delores Scott, who has often been a spokesperson on issues affecting the Shiloh community, thanked the board for past support and asked for "assurance that you can work harmoniously among yourselves, with the mayor, and with the citizens."

"Make sure what you do makes sense," she said. "We are aware of what you're doing and what you're not doing."

See CITIZENS, page 2

Remembering the fallen Eagle

Anniversary of plane crash unites rescue workers, volunteers who were there

By Ron Page

She walks slowly with the aid of crutches, her spine held rigid by steel rods. While the broken bones in her face have healed, Lauren Anderson still grimaces with pain.

The 19-year-old native of Stony Brook, N.Y., is a sophomore at Elon College, but last year's fiery crash of American Eagle Flight 3379 remains as vivid as her latest college class.

In Crystal Valley, Ill., 36-year-old Ron Lewis, a businessman and father of a 13-year-old daughter, has difficulty talking publicly about the crash. He is still trying to cope with the massive injuries (lacerated liver, almost severed foot, collapsed right lung, bruised left lung) and mental anguish of the same disaster that killed his friend Bill Peters, who was only inches away from where Lewis was found strapped in his seat.

Fifteen people died in that Dec. 13, 1994, plane crash in a thick virgin woodland on the outskirts of Morrisville, four miles from Raleigh-Durham International Airport. It was 6:38 p.m. and foggy,



IMAGES VIVID—Dale and Debbie Powell peruse the newspaper stories they clipped and saved from the coverage of the crash. The Morrisville couple was among a troupe of volunteers who helped the injured passengers.

dark and drizzling when the sleek turboprop commuter plane on a flight from Greensboro suddenly swept down and crashed into the woods some 300 yards from Old Maynard and Koppers roads. Only five people survived what ranks as the Triangle's worst aviation disaster.

The National Transportation Safety Board concluded last month that the pilot made several errors before the Jetstream Super 31 crashed.

As the first anniversary of the tragedy approaches, those who were first on the scene reflect on

their actions and the manner in which some 150 volunteers responded to a disaster that will remain forever in their minds.

It all began with this telephone call:

Dispatcher: "911 Emergency."
Caller: "Yes, ma'am. This is David Stanley. I'm in Carpenter, North Carolina. There's a plane down out here."

Dispatcher: "Where?"
Caller: "I don't know how far away. I see smoke and flames."

Stanley lives on Old Maynard Road, and minutes after making that initial call he and his wife were in his pickup truck at the house of his neighbor, Edmond Badham.

Badham had heard the crash, but thought it might have been the television he was watching. He grabbed a lantern and the three raced toward the flickering glow that could be seen only faintly through the fog and dense woods. Two more explosions followed.

When Badham and Stanley reached the crash site after leaving Mrs. Stanley behind, they found the plane smoldering in two sections, the smell of jet fuel saturating the air, and one of the passengers walk-

See RESCUERS, page 2

Painful injury a reminder

By Ron Page

It was Tuesday, Dec. 13, 1994. What was planned to be a time of joy for the Anderson family in Stony Brook, N.Y., became a nightmare that may never end.

Marie Anderson was on the Grand Central Parkway headed for LaGuardia Airport to pick up her daughter, Lauren, who was flying in for the Christmas holidays. She was happy. The family would be together to celebrate.

The news bulletin on the car radio told of the crash of a commuter plane near Raleigh-Durham International Airport. It was a connecting flight to LaGuardia. Lauren, a freshman at Elon College, had a connecting flight that originated in Greensboro, Mrs. Anderson thought.

Marie Anderson drove to LaGuardia and went directly to the front desk. She asked the staffer to check the computer for the flight. The woman behind the desk hadn't heard of the crash, but the computer verified that American Eagle Flight 3379 had gone down in North Carolina just outside the airport. That was all.

Meanwhile, Lauren's father, Richard, a teacher at Newfield High School in Seldon, N.Y., had gone out of town as a chaperone for the basketball team. He was to pick up his

See PAINFUL, page 2

Witness shares diary of tragedy

EDITOR'S NOTE: American Eagle Flight 3379 crashed near the Old Maynard Road home of Edmond Badham. Badham and his neighbor, David Stanley, were the first to arrive at the crash scene. Here is his personal account of what happened the night of Dec. 13, 1994.

By Edmond Badham

It was a Tuesday night. I was eating supper and watching the CBS Evening News. There had just been a story about the letter bomber and they had a simulated explosion. Next came a story about war in the breakaway republic of Russia. They had said something about the use of percussion grenades. I heard a loud pop. Since I live in a rural area four miles from the airport and I see many airplanes each day, I thought of a plane crash. I got up and went to the window, looked out and didn't see anything. I sat down to finish my dinner. I thought that it must have been the TV but that the pop had been awfully loud for that little TV. In less than two minutes David Stanley drove up with his wife in a pickup truck. I immediately had stomach butterflies which lasted the next two days. I knew something very serious was up.

David said he thought that there had been a plane crash. We went to the backyard and we could see a small fire in the woods to the southeast. I ran back into the house to call 911. I gave my name and ad-

dress and they asked how close I lived to David Stanley, who had already called in the first report. I said I was two doors down. I said we were headed to the site. I put on my shoes without tying them, grabbed a lantern and headed through the woods with David. He said he didn't know if he wanted to see this. I expected the plane to be a two-seater, single-engine plane. I was expecting to find two dead and dismembered people.

It was drizzling and about 40 degrees with some fog. The normally spacious hardwood forest became more dense as we approached and forded a creek. On the other side were pines of varying sizes. On the way to the fire I heard two explosions. We ran through the woods until we came upon a low area and momentarily lost sight of the fire. I told David to turn off his light so we could get a bearing. He did so and we were off again. In less than eight minutes we arrived at the site from the northwest. The first thing I noticed was a large piece of fuselage approximately eight feet high and 20 feet long. A man was standing beside it. This incredibly lucky man had walked away from the crash! I was hopeful. I asked him how he was. He didn't answer. I asked him how many people were on the plane. Again he didn't answer. I suggested that he go off to the side and sit down, that help was on the way. I believe David helped him off to the

See DIARY, page 2



FIRST TO ARRIVE—After the American Eagle commuter flight crashed near the Old Maynard Road home of Edmond Badham, he and his neighbor, David Stanley, were the first to arrive at the crash site. Badham, who wrote a personal account of the tragedy, is shown as he points out several areas where he saw survivors.

Delivered expressly to the residents of Morrisville and Preston

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