

The Progress

Published Monthly

Serving the communities of Morrisville, Carpenter

and Preston

May 27, 1999

State vetoes Civil War battle marker

Sons of the Confederate Veterans endorse historic site

By Mary Beth Phillips
Staff Writer

On May 10, a committee of North Carolina historians voted unanimously not to fund a historic marker commemorating the Battle of Morrisville.

Ernie Dollar, who had spent at least four or five months researching and preparing the request, (and who had started researching the battle in 1992), said he still hopes to have a marker erected privately.

"I probably won't rest until a marker goes up," Dollar said last week. "I think it's important enough to history in this area. Once I saw how much progress is starting to take over things, I decided somebody needed to bring it to the forefront. The history of this area starting to disappear."

The state will send Dollar a list of all the groups who endorsed his application, including several Civil War groups, such as the Sons of the Confederate Veterans and the United Daughters of the Confederation, and town groups such as the Chamber and the Better Morrisville Association. He said he may approach them privately for donations.

"In between sobbing fits, I'm not quite sure what to do next," he said.

Dollar had been told it would be difficult to get state approval, that the state feels most of the major battles have already been designated. But he had hoped that some new diaries and first-hand accounts he found in April would help his case. "It was basically everything I could find," he said.

Dollar has found rifle pits on property near Town Hall, and his research indicates that the surrender papers between General Joe Johnston and William Tecumseh Sherman were delivered in Morrisville.

He said it will cost about \$1,600 to erect the marker. An ideal spot would be on a town picnic site on N.C. 54.

For more information, or to make a donation, call Dollar at 833-3651.

Day at the park June 12

By Mary Beth Phillips
Staff Writer

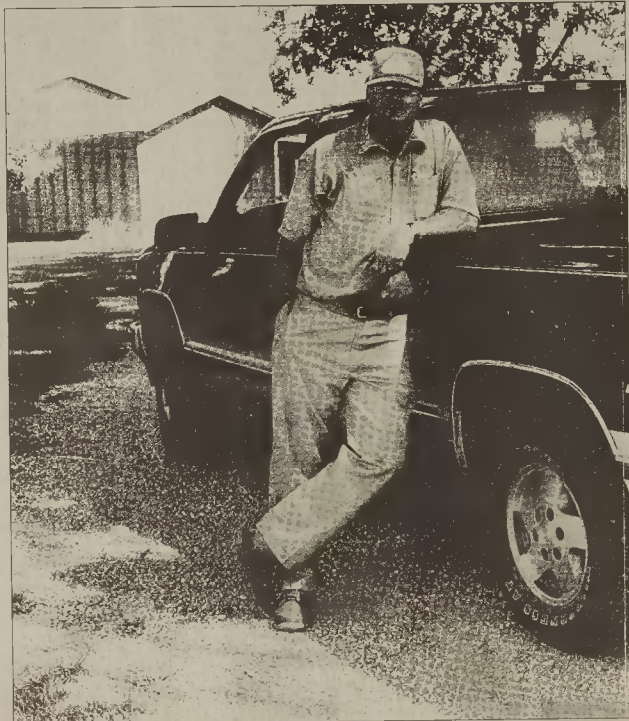
General Johnson and the Chairmen of the Board will be the featured band at the Morrisville Day at the Park June 12, a fun-filled day of free carnival rides and entertainment held at Morrisville Community Park off Morrisville Parkway.

Arts and crafts, games, a dunk tank, an AH-64 Apache Helicopter, and concessions of every description will be featured at the day-long event.

"We're looking forward to a great

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The end of an era



Lee Phillips, who had grown tobacco his whole life in Carpenter, decided to give it up this year.

Local tobacco farmer calls it quits Lee Phillips family farmed tobacco for 75 years

By Mary Beth Phillips
Staff Writer

When Lee Phillips was a young boy, he helped his father farm tobacco, and when his father took a break for a few years, he was at a neighbor's tobacco field helping.

"I was always there, in the way maybe, but I wanted to be there," he said.

"In high school, I loved tobacco. I didn't go to college. I had a counselor who said you need to go to college. I always told her no, I'm gonna farm."

Phillips' farm in the Carpenter community has been in his family for about 75 years.

This year, for the first time since he graduated from high school, Phillips does not have a tobacco crop.

"I just didn't love it anymore," Phillips said.

"The last three or four years, I didn't enjoy it any more," he said. "I had enjoyed the challenge, the struggle, because there was something in it, when it got worse, that made you drive that much harder. I don't know what happened, but I lost that drive. It became a job."

Phillips grew some setting tobacco for other farmers this year and delivered most of it in late April and early May, so in the past few weeks, he just started feeling the void of not having tobacco in his fields.

"It feels weird, but it's a good weird."

He planted rye in his fields. He is still finishing up the annual strawberry crop, which he has had on the units for years. He is getting rental income from the sites that used to house the migrant workers that helped him in his tobacco fields. Now he is doing all the field work himself. He has done some odd jobs,

'The last three or four years, I didn't enjoy it any more. I don't know what happened, but I lost that drive. It became a job.'

—Lee Phillips,
farmer

mowing and baling. And he rented his allotment to another farmer, so he has some income there.

"I'm just as busy now as I was when I had 100 acres of tobacco," he said. "I don't know how I did it."

He will really feel the void in the late summer, when it's harvest time.

"That's when you have about 10 weeks when you're up every morning before daylight, wondering if you have help that day," he said.

The labor situation was a big factor in Phillips' decision.

"They are paying a dollar or two more an hour for people holding signs at the road at construction site. Why make a dollar less when you can go out there and not do anything," he said.

The growth in the area was another factor.

"In this area with all the development going on,

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Morrisville mourns one of its leaders

Commissioner Moore was friend to the town

By Mary Beth Phillips
Staff Writer

The Morrisville Board of Commissioners passed a resolution last Tuesday in honor of Commissioner C. T. Moore, 61, who died unexpectedly May 9 of a heart attack.

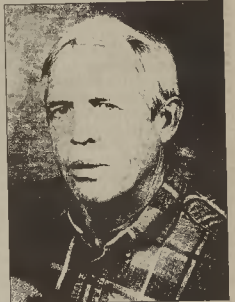
At his funeral, the Rev. Myron Yandle held up his life as that of a peacemaker, and it certainly seemed to be true as two commissioners had words at the first meeting held since his death on Tuesday, May 18. It was the first sign of dissension on the board in many months.

A large white bow was attached to his place, and no mention was made of replacing Moore, who would have been up for re-election this November.

"He's irreplaceable," Mayor Gordon Cromwell had said earlier.

Moore's wife Almeria said, "He loved his family too, but he loved this town with all his heart. He worked for the citizens. The man gave every minute of his time that he possibly could to the town. He was very dedicated. He always went to every site plan, and he would walk it off, and he read every blue print from top to bottom."

"There was so much more he wanted to get done," she said.



C. T. Moore

"There is a big map in here he drew of how to get water and sewer up in Shiloh," she said. And he had already filled his agenda with notes for the May 10 meeting which was cancelled.

She said he received many phone calls at home. "He never refused any."

"He's the one that sort of kept it all together," said Town Manager David Hodgkins. "The divergent views on the board were well noted.

See MORRISVILLE, page 2

Morrisville considers \$9.6 million budget

By Mary Beth Phillips
Staff Writer

Eighteen new positions, 16 new cars, a direct connection with the Durham water system, upsizing the Indian Creek sewer outfall which serves Parkside, water metering and valve replacement on Chapel Hill Road and Airport Boulevard and miscellaneous thoroughfare improvements are among the new items in the proposed 1999-2000 budget, and they will be totally funded by the town's growth.

"Our tax base went up considerably this year," said Town Manager David Hodgkins. "We will pick up about 20 percent total value between the current year and next year, and that's not taking in account revaluation (which will be done by the county in 2000). That's just new construction," Hodgkins said. He said the town's tax base is approximately \$600 million this year, up from about \$515 million last year.

Consequently, the town will hold the line on the tax rate and water and sewer rates, although some fees increased recently, not as part of the budget process, especially in the planning and zoning and utility departments. The tax rate will remain at 60 cents per \$100 property valuation. The water and sewer rates will remain at \$3.23 per 1,000 gallons of water and \$6.06 per 1,000 gallons of sewage treatment.

The total budget of \$9,623,494 is made up of \$7,050,284 from the general fund and \$2,573,210 from the water and sewer fund. Revenues in the water and sewer fund are up, Hodgkins said, compared with expenditures. As the town has grown, it has begun to realize economies of scale, operating with the same staff and about the same costs.

Twelve of the proposed new full-time positions will be added to the fire department. "We will still have

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Shiloh Park looking for relief

By Mary Beth Phillips
Staff Writer

Plans to put a restroom facility at Shiloh Park have been tabled until the town negotiates a long-term agreement with Shiloh Baptist Church for use of the land.

The town board held off on approving the restroom plans until it hears back from a church committee that is negotiating a lease with the town. The town currently has a 10-year lease with the church, which expires in August of 2000.

The town has asked for a 99-year lease for the approximately two acres of land, which includes the baseball field and the Luther Green Center.

Esther Dunningan, a member of the church committee, said they have met several times but are not yet ready to sit down with the town.

"We need to sit down and talk about a number of things, not just the number of years," she said. "We need to consider the growth of our church and the growth of the town," she said. The committee's goal is to schedule a meeting with town officials for early August.

If the committee meets with the town in August, they will still have a year to work out any additional matters that might come up.

Plans for the restroom have been drawn and money is set aside in the proposed 1999-2000 budget.

The building is proposed at 621 square feet and is estimated to cost \$50,000 to \$60,000, with an additional \$5,000 to \$6,000 architect's fee. It will be brick and built near the picnic shelter. The architect is Surapon Sujavanich, P.A.

There are currently two port-a-johns serving the town park



PHOTO BY MARY BETH PHILLIPS
Mike Ballard and Shannon Godwin of the Morrisville Police Department's new bicycle patrol.

Morrisville police start bike patrols around town

By Mary Beth Phillips
Staff Writer

If you see someone ride by in a bright yellow nylon shirt with POLICE in big letters and black bike shorts, stop and say hello. And if they turn on their blue light, pull over.

It will be Mike Ballard or Shannon Godwin, who are the Morrisville Police Department's new bicycle patrol.

Accessibility is one of the main reasons why the town implemented the patrol.

"You are more visible on a bicycle. People like to stop and talk to you more," Godwin said. Another advantage is that bicycles can get in heavily trafficked areas more quickly than cars.

Godwin and Ballard learned how to go up and down stairs, how to

bounce off a wall, how to fall safely after a crash, and how to stop speeders, among many other things during 40 hours of training held during May.

They are now certified as Police Mountain Bike Officers by the Law Enforcement Bike Association and they have already hit Morrisville's streets.

They will be patrolling business areas such as the mall, the new apartment complexes, and single-family areas.

"Morrisville lends itself to a bike patrol," Ballard said. "It's a small municipality with new shopping centers and apartment complexes. We can go where a car can't. We can see, hear and smell things we can't in a car."

There are a lot of recreational bikers in Morrisville. Ballard joked that

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