

Harnett County News

News & Advertising
Deadline: Monday Noon

Published Continuously Since 1919

VOL. 62 THURSDAY, JANUARY 4, 1979 TWENTY CENTS

Board of Education Tops 1978 News Stories

by LORRAINE MIZE

1978 is over. It went out with the torn wrappings and wilted tree, the college bowl games and pro football playoffs, the realized ambitions and unfulfilled dreams. But in its place comes another year, 1979. A year sure to be as full as the last. Before we close the final chapter for 1978, let's take one last look at the news stories in Harnett County that made this such an interesting year.

EDUCATION

The news in Harnett County during the first six months of 1978 was dominated by the school board and the two new consolidated high schools.

Western Harnett High School was dedicated on May 7, with Harnett Central High School's dedication one week later.

Sen. Robert Morgan was the keynote speaker at both ceremonies. The two new schools were ten years in the planning and cost an estimated eight million dollars.

Competency tests were given for the first time to all juniors and seniors in Harnett County schools. Reading scores were reported as above average, while scores in mathematics were somewhat below average.

For the Western Harnett girls and boys basketball teams, the year was one of triumph. Both teams became District 3-A tournament champions in their first year.

With the many fine accomplishments enjoyed by the Harnett County Board of Education during the year, there were also several conflicts to be met and resolved.

A group of concerned parents confronted the board, after attempting to get help from the superintendent and principal, with cases of abuse and sexual assault on the buses. After several heated meetings between the board and the parents group, the situation was tentatively resolved by the hiring of eight adult bus drivers.

The hearing for North Harnett Elementary School principal Tommy Davis, which was brought about by his refusal to resign the position, ended when Davis voluntarily resigned with compensation

of one year's salary. Davis was asked to resign by the Dunn Advisory School Board who cited personal reasons for the request. Leonard B. Arnold of Erwin was named principal of the school to replace Davis.

ELECTIONS

1978 was an exciting election year, with many local races coming down to a run-off, including the race for sheriff and county commissioner.

Lewis Rosser became the new sheriff after beating Ralph Barefoot in a close race, while Rudy Collins unseated incumbent commissioner W.J. Cotton, by only a few votes. Cotton had been a member of the commissioners for nearly 15 years.

The vacant seat on the Board of Education in District 2 went to Gerald Hayes and in District 4 to Johnnie Taylor, who defeated incumbent Rebecca Mann. Retiring from the board was Ed Turlington.

Georgia Lee Brown remained the Clerk of Superior Court and Bob Etheridge, making his political come back, and Fletcher Harris to the N.C. House of Representatives.

State senate seats went to incumbents Bill Chreech, I. Beverly Lake Jr. and Bob Wynne.

Congressman Charles Whitley retained his seat as did Senator Jesse Helms, after a controversial race with democrat John Ingram.

PCB SPILLS

The chemical PCB was found dumped along many North Carolina roads and highways in the late summer of 1978.

Harnett County roads affected by the spills were N.C. highway 210 near Angier and N.C. highway 27 in Western Harnett.

After much deliberation, officials in the N.C. Department of Transportation decided the only way to rid the state of the chemical spills was to cover them with tar and eventually bury the affected ground somewhere in the state.

The clean-up should be completed during 1979.

HARNETT COUNTY AIRPORT

A grant was approved by the FAA on May 12 in the amount of \$255,600 to begin construction on a site selected for an airport in

Harnett County located between Erwin and Bulks Creek. An additional grant of \$521,800 was awarded Dec. 13 to bring the total to over \$800,000. The additional money will be used to construct runways and tower facilities.

TOWN GROWTH

The growth of Lillington was evidenced in 1978 by the annexation of 310 acres southeast of the city. This annexation alone will bring in an additional \$17,000 in tax revenues to Lillington.

The Lillington branch of Southern National Bank moved into a new building during 1978. The new facility has three drive-in aisles, parking space for 40 cars and six teller locations inside.

Lillington also acquired its first radio station during 1978, station WLLN AM, 1320 on the radio dial.

The 2,500 watt station is located on Prison Camp Road and will begin operation sometime after the first of the year.

NEW JUDGES FOR HARNETT

Harnett County acquired a new judge during 1978 but lost two faithful members at the same time.

Judge Robert B. Morgan Sr. retired after 22 years on the bench. Elton C. Pridgen was named as his replacement for chief district judge of the 11th Judicial District.

Assistant District Attorney William A. Christian of Sanford was appointed judge on Sept. 21 in Morgan's spot. Judge Woodrow Hill's last day on the bench was Jan. 1, 1979, as he retired after 18 years of service.

MEDICAL CENTER

A drive was begun in April by approximately 100 citizens of the Boone Trail area of western Harnett County to obtain funds for building a medical center for the area.

A grant request was approved Dec. 6 by the Cardinal Health Agency of Lumberton and forwarded to the Rural Health Initiative Program in the amount of \$199,950. If approved, remodeling of the Boone Trail teaching, to be used by the clinic, could begin sometime during 1979.

DOROTHY DOLLAR

Harnett County lost one of its most popular citizens during 1978, despite a valiant fight against cancer.

County librarian Dorothy Dollar died June 30, after several months of surgery and chemotherapy in an attempt to alleviate the condition.

To show their love and concern for Mrs. Dollar, several citizens of Lillington established a fund for the "traveling story lady" to help combat the rising hospital costs facing the family.

When news of Mrs. Dollar's plight became known through the local media, statewide coverage was given and money started pouring in from all across the county and state.

From pig-pickin' in her honor to the selling of handcrafted items during the month of May, money for the fund reached \$14,200 at the time of her death.

Though the loss of Mrs. Dollar greatly saddened the county, it proved the love and kindness in the heart of its people.

ERWIN MILLS

The Erwin Mills division of Burlington Industries ran into some hard times during 1978 when the work force had to be cut by 500 employees during May.

Officials said the reduction in force was caused by an overabundance of denim on the market but the situation was only temporary.

Finally, after eight months, rehiring for the plant was started in December.

TOBACCO SEASON

The 1978 tobacco season was one of tragedy and triumph for the county.

Two weeks before the market officially opened, the oldest warehouse in the county, Lee's Planter, burned to the ground. Loss was estimated at one million dollars.

This didn't deter the Harnett County tobacco farmers, however, from making this the best season in several years.

Over \$24 million was reaped from this year's crop, including 40,000 pounds sold at \$1.50 a pound on the first day of trading.

Yes, 1978 was an interesting year. Although it was filled with tragedy and conflict, the progressive and determined spirit of the people of the county provided growth and paved the way for a hopeful new year.

Mrs. Drane Suggested For Magistrate's Post

The name of a retired educator and prominent member of the Harnett County Democratic Party has been added to the list of persons interested in succeeding the late Wyatt McDonald as a Harnett magistrate.

A letter to the editor that appeared in the Dec. 28 issue of the Harnett County News endorsed Mrs. Annie Drane, vice president of the Harnett County Democratic Women, who retired recently after 42 years in the educational field.

Joseph Bowden of Rt. 3, Lillington, an unsuccessful candidate for Clerk of Superior Court earlier this year, said in his letter that although Harnett County has never had a black magistrate before, the majority of people he has talked with "agree that it is past time for the county to have a black magistrate."

Bowden said in his letter that Mrs. Drake is "one applicant who has contributed greatly to

the education of young people... and has also been active in politics. She would be an asset to our county in this position."

Mrs. Drane said last week she "would love it" if the position were offered to her. She said she had applied for a magistrate's position before one became open.

"I filed my application, and when I was a juror in August, I talked with (Superior Court) Judge (Harry E.) Canaday about my interest in the job," she said.

Mrs. Drane said she also discussed the post recently with Georgia Lee Brown, Clerk of Superior Court. Under the law, the clerk must submit, within 30 days of an opening, three names to the resident Superior Court judge. He can appoint either of the three or he can ask her to submit other names. The judge is not bound by the clerk's recommendations. Although Mrs. Brown declined

to discuss the names she is considering for the post, she did say the appointee would assume McDonald's fulltime position and would be placed on the same shift, that of nights, holidays and weekends.

Among those reportedly interested in the Lillington vacancy are former Harnett Chief Deputy B.E. Sturgill of Lillington and Clyde Patterson of western Harnett.

The office pays a starting salary of \$9,100 for part-time magistrates and goes to \$12,000 for those with seven years experience. The pay is based on the length of time served.

Harnett is allotted a total of 10 magistrates, eight full-time and two part-time. Judge Canaday announced last week his plans to reappoint each of the present magistrates to another two-year term. When the McDonald vacancy is filled, the county will have its full quota of magistrates.



REMINISCING - Judge Woodrow Hill and his wife, Ida, (center) share memories with Judge Derb Carter, Judge of the 12th District in Cumberland County (left) and Jo Lee, Clerk of Courts (right), at Hill's retirement party Friday night at the Acapulco Club. He stepped down from the bench December 31st after 18 years of service. Many of his friends

and colleagues were at the party to wish Judge Hill good luck in his retirement and to reminisce about his years on the bench. "He may be getting out of the courtroom," said Mrs. Hill of her husband, "but he will never retire from politics!" (Daily Record photo by Tim Ledford)

Judge Hill Honored With Acapulco Party

More than 150 dignitaries and public officials turned out Friday night to wish Judge Woodrow Hill good luck in his retirement and to reminisce with him about his 18 years on the bench.

High praises were heaped on Harnett's respected jurist whose retirement became effective December 31st after almost two decades of service.

Judge Hill began his career as a Judge in Dunn's Recorder's Court in 1960. Eight years later, the 13th District was formed and he became one of only a few North Carolina judges without a law degree.

Over the years, Hill earned the reputation of a strict, but fair judge who could be counted on to make a just decision.

He was escorted down from the bench last week with much fanfare and a string of retirement parties and festivities.

The Acapulco Club party Friday climaxed the week of tributes to the popular judge. "Everyone has been so good to us," said Hill's wife, Ida. "So much has been done for Woodrow. He'll never forget

his retirement or the people who made it so special."

Harnett County's clerks of courts and attorneys hosted the big event. Mrs. Hill and Clerk Jo Lee greeted the guests at the door while a band played dancing music and snacks and hors d'oeuvres were served at decorated tables.

Harnett Sheriff Lewis Rosser, Representative Bob Etheridge, Dunn Police Chief B.P. Jones, and Sanford Clerk of Superior Court Will Crocker were just a few of the honored guests.

Judge Derb Carter of Fayetteville-Chief Judge of Cumberland's 12th district, heaped high praises on the party's guest of honor. "A layman judge has to study very hard and put out a lot more effort because of his lack of training," he said. "Judge Hill has put in that extra effort. I respect him for his high morals, integrity, and determination."

Other praises were sung by Attorney Gerald Hayes who called Hill an "honest judge, one we could always count on to give a fair judgment regardless of public sentiment or his own

reputation."

A special guest was John Hooten of Kinston, Judge Hill's nephew. The Hill's three children, Woody Jr. of Fayetteville, Jonathan of Raleigh, and Mrs. Larry Godwin of Raleigh and their families also attended.

The party hosts presented Hill with a rod and reel and their best wishes and congratulations. Hill, 65, said that the rod and reel would get plenty of use because he was going to spend his retirement fishing and working in his garden.

Attorney Eddie Greene of Dunn who was officially appointed Friday by Governor Hunt to fill Hill's unexpired term congratulated the judge at the party and told him how hard it would be to fill his shoes.

"The whole thing was such a success," smiled Mrs. Hill. "I can't think of when we've had a better time. My daughter even called the next day to tell us what a great party it was. The food was delicious - they really prepared a feast. Everything was just right!"

Area Break-ins Reported to Police

Recent reports from the blotter of the Lillington Police Department indicate that while traffic incidents were at a minimum during the holiday week, police stayed busy investigating several break-ins.

Police were called to Disco Dizway on N.C. highway 27 early Christmas Eve by the owner, who discovered the door standing ajar when he arrived for work that morning at about 9:15.

Investigating patrolman Jeffery Raynor reported that upon entering the building, they discovered that the rear window was broken.

Upon investigation, the owner, who was not identified in the report, listed as missing the following items and their value: 203 record albums, \$418; 101 eight-track tapes, \$655; and one AM/FM cassette tapeplayer, \$69.95.

While making his rounds Dec. 28, patrolman Raynor discovered at about 5:50 a.m. that one of the rear doors at Speedy's Restaurant on Main Street had been pried, but not opened, while glass had been broken out of another rear door.

Raynor reported that after he called owner Neil A. (Speedy) Stewart, a search of the building was conducted. Stewart discovered that the cash register drawers had been searched, but nothing was reported missing.

Raynor reported that whoever entered the building apparently left by unlocking the front door.

Patrolman T.E. Dickerson investigated a break-in and larceny of a television Dec. 31 at the home of Althea Mooney on Washington Street.

Ms. Mooney told Dickerson that she discovered the theft when she returned home at about 2:45 p.m., having been gone since about 5:30 p.m. the previous day. A broken bed room window was the apparent means of entry, Dickerson reported.

The television was described by Ms. Mooney as a 19-inch Sony color with remote control, valued at \$699.

A Lillington woman was charged with a safe movement violation Dec. 28 after the car she was driving struck another vehicle, resulting in over \$3,200 damages to both cars.

Patrolman Raynor reported

that at about 2:40 p.m., a 1979 Ford driven by Janice Leigh Arnold, 26 of Rt. 1, Lillington struck a 1976 Dodge station-wagon in the passenger side after the driver had swerved to avoid the collision.

According to the report, the Arnold vehicle was heading north on Ninth Street when it stopped for the stop sign at the Front Street intersection. The car proceeded forward into the path of the second vehicle, driven by Charles Fulton Atkins, 29 of 613 Lakeside Drive in Sanford, causing Atkins to swerve.

Damages to the Atkins vehicle were estimated at \$200, while the Arnold vehicle, owned by Tommy O. Arnold of Rt. 1, Lillington, sustained about \$3,000 damages.

Speedy's For Sale

Neil A. (Speedy) Stewart, owner of Speedy's Restaurant in Lillington for about five years, will put the business up for sale in a public auction to be conducted there Saturday, Jan. 13 at 10 a.m.

Stewart cited health reasons as the major consideration in his decision to sell the establishment. He has been hospitalized several times in recent years and is afflicted with arthritis.

Stewart said his family and his doctor have urged him to cut back in his work load for some time. In addition to operating the restaurant, he is a sales representative of Sexton Motor Sales Inc. in Lillington and also serves as the town's mayor pro tem and police commissioner.

The restaurant has been closed for the holidays since the week before Christmas, but Stewart said it reopened Jan. 2 and will remain open until Jan. 12, the day before the sale.

"The people around here have been good to me," Stewart said, "and I appreciate that, but my doctor says I just about have no choice anymore."

Although Lillington has several "fast-food" businesses and a recently opened barbecue establishment, Speedy's and Wade's are the only full-course restaurants in town.



EDDIE GREENE



JUDGE GERALD ARNOLD