

American Heritage Campground Sold To Penn. Firm

By KAY HORNER
Staff Writer

American Heritage Campground, a 74-acre facility located on Lake Gaston near Littleton, was sold last week by the family of the late John T. Nelson, Sr. to Outdoor World, a Pennsylvania-based corporation with campgrounds in Pennsylvania, New Jersey, and Williamsburg, Va.

According to John T. Nelson, Jr., president of Lake Gaston Properties, Inc. which handled the transaction, the selling price of the Warren County property was in excess of \$1 million.

Barry Panchetti, marketing director for Outdoor World, said yesterday that the campground, which

in the past has been open to the public, will now be operated on a private membership basis.

Members pay a one-time fee of \$6,995 which entitles them to privileges at any of the corporation's six campgrounds.

Panchetti said the staff of approximately 30 employed by American Heritage will be retained, and an additional 40 or so jobs will be created by the acquisition.

Outdoor World also has plans for what Panchetti termed "cosmetic" improvements this year amounting to \$150,000.

"The Nelson family did a splendid job in development of the campsite," Panchetti said, noting that

Outdoor World planned no major changes in layout of the campground.

The marina and restaurant will continue to be open to the public.

American Heritage Campground, which opened Memorial Day 1972, was begun as a family venture by Nelson, Sr., his wife, Lorena, and children, John T. Nelson, Jr. and Peggy Nelson Light.

"It was purchased as a raw tract of land on a dirt road and developed completely by the family," Nelson said last week.

Nelson, Sr., who was a mechanical contractor from Chesapeake, Va., died in 1979. Mrs. Nelson continued to operate the business with the assist-

ance of her son and daughter.

Nelson indicated that the decision to sell was based primarily on his mother's desire to retire, and his own involvement with his real estate business.

He said that his sister will continue as campground manager with Outdoor World, and that he has been retained as a consultant for the campground.

American Heritage was one of the first campgrounds on Lake Gaston, and Nelson estimated that as many as 1,200 people have been served by the facility on capacity weekends.

Includes Seven-Cent Tax Raise

Norlina Budget Finally Wins Approval Of Board

The Norlina Board of Commissioners — unable to muster a quorum at their first attempt to pass a new budget almost two weeks ago — Monday night saw a 1983-84 municipal budget proposed by Mrs. Mae Gums, town clerk, enjoy smooth sailing en route to unanimous passage.

The new budget, which calls for a seven cent tax increase, the first raise since 1978, includes a five percent across-the-board pay hike for municipal employees.

Mrs. Gums said the budget will require a rate of 67 cents per \$100 valuation. It is based, she said, on a valuation of \$8,678,995 and a collection rate of 90 percent, based on the experience of collection in 1982-83.

Following the brief budget summary by Mrs. Gums, Commissioner Jimmy Overby made the motion to adopt. Commissioner John Dore seconded the motion and the budget was passed as delegation of townspeople, none of whom spoke on the budget, filled the small municipal building where Monday night's regular session was held.

In other action taken Monday night, the board learned of the resignation of Kenneth Severance as chairman of the town's Board of Elections. The board quickly moved to name Mrs. Nita Fuller to take Severance's place, and voted to retain the two

elections judges, Mrs. Dot Bobbitt and Leon Knight.

The board unanimously agreed to sell license stickers once again in 1984, despite a complaint from Mrs. Gums that there is no enforcement of the ordinance which requires display of the stickers.

The matter of non-payment of personal property taxes by Police Officer James Champion was brought up as Mayor Kenneth Davis produced a copy of a newspaper legal advertisement from the mid-1960s which showed that Champion owed delinquent taxes.

"I think town employees ought to pay their taxes," Davis told the board. "Everyone else has to pay them."

Commissioner Ben Lloyd concurred with the mayor, and Commissioner William Leonard said he under-

stood that Champion now planned to pay the amount of back taxes.

Mr. and Mrs. Ted Gray, owners of a local restaurant, appealed to the board to help find Greyhound Bus Lines a stopping point in Norlina. They said that passengers awaiting the bus filled their parking lot and caused inconvenience for their regular customers. The bus stop was formerly next door to the Gray's restaurant and the Gray's said that they had been unsuccessful in their application to have a bus stop, although the stop was no longer made at the next-door Norlina Bus Station.

Commissioners expressed concern that there is no longer a bus stop in Norlina, and instructed Mrs. Gums to write Greyhound officials in an effort to (Continued on page 5)

Bill Would Give Town State Financial Help

Chances of Warrenton collecting expenses from the State in the amount of \$2,058 incurred by the Warrenton Police Department during anti-PCB marches in the county are bright with the introduction of a bill by State Representative John Church asking for payment of the town bill, Mayor B. G. White told town commissioners on Monday night.

Mayor White said that

he had received a copy of the bill on Thursday but did not know if it had yet been ratified. He said that he had a long telephone conversation since then from Senator Julian Allsbrook, during which Allsbrook said that he would help the town recover its expenses from the state emergency fund.

A copy of Representative Church's bill was submitted to the commissioners.

Delbridge May Fight ABC Ouster

The unexpected removal of two members of the Warren County ABC Board by county commissioners at their regular meeting on Tuesday of last week came as a surprise not only to the board members involved, but also to the state ABC Commission.

Controversy has surrounded the county commissioners' decision to accept a resignation from Bill Delbridge of Norlina offered six months ago, but not accepted at that time, and to unseat John Henry Palmer of Macon from the local ABC Board.

Delbridge's resignation was offered last January after a report from Bill Hester of the state ABC Commission that the local ABC operation was not making the profit it could, and that the system employed too many clerks for the number of stores.

However, the board did not act on the resignation, and Delbridge said yesterday that he did not consider the resignation valid and that he had no desire to leave the board.

Hester, in a telephone interview yesterday said that he felt problems within the county ABC system had been worked out, and that recommendations on modernizing the system had already begun.

"I had hoped that with the line of communication I had opened with the commissioners in which they had asked me to come up and help them would have meant that they would have let (Continued on page 10)

Kearney Murder Trial Guilty Plea Entered

By KAY HORNER
Staff Writer

A Norlina man on trial this week in Warren County Superior Court in connection with the shooting death of his stepson last March yesterday changed his plea from not guilty of first degree murder to guilty of second degree murder after his wife, mother-in-law, and stepdaughter testified Monday for the prosecution.

In the plea bargain arrangement, assistant district attorneys Randolph Baskerville and Robert Weathers agreed to accept the plea of guilty by David Son Kearney, 37, to the lesser charge of second degree murder in the death of Randolph Suite, Jr., 26, also of Norlina.

Kearney faces a possible maximum sentence of life imprisonment.

Monday, the jury heard testimony from Kearney's wife, Annie, that her son, Suite, had come to visit her and her mother, Mary Watkins, both of whom were not well, on the night of the shooting.

She testified that her son inquired about their health, and that her husband, Kearney, came into the room where the three were and told Suite that he was "tired of all your questions." Kearney then went upstairs, she said, and returned with a shotgun, turning on Suite and shooting him.

In addition to Mrs. Kearney, other witnesses for the prosecution, Mrs.

Watkins, and Mary Silver, Kearney's stepdaughter and Suite's sister, testified that they were in the room at the time of the shooting, which occurred around 10:45 p. m. at the Kearney-Watkins residence on U. S. 158 North of the Norlina city limit.

Sheriff's Deputy Harold Seaman, who investigated the shooting, testified Monday that he

was standing over the deceased when Kearney tapped him on the shoulder and said that he had shot Suite.

Seaman testified that he advised Kearney of his rights, and that Kearney voluntarily said that he had "done wrong and would take any time he gets."

In his opening statement, defense attorney Marty Rooker of

Warrenton said that he intended to show that Kearney acted in self-defense.

He charged that Suite had a reputation for being a "violent, vicious, fighting man" when drinking and that Kearney had on previous occasions been attacked and assaulted by Suite.

It was established on (Continued on page 3)

Driver Held On \$10,000 Bond

Officers Converge On Car Stolen In Winston-Salem

A highway patrolman, a wildlife officer, and a deputy sheriff had a part in the arrest of a 34-year-old Asheville man in Warren County on Saturday and charged with the theft of a 1979 Buick automobile valued at \$3,500 in Winston-Salem July 8.

As Highway Patrolman A. M. Bennett drove down the Manson ramp off I-85 on Saturday he was accosted by Conley Mangum, wildlife protector, who told him that a motorist with paper plates was at the foot of the grade. Bennett said the man would not talk, so he got the number of the car from its engine and found that it had been stolen in Winston-Salem.

While Patrolman Bennett was examining the car, Warren Deputy

Sheriff Harold Seaman came up and fingerprinted the man, who was carried before a magistrate by Patrolman Bennett.

It was learned at the sheriff's office Tuesday afternoon that the man refused to give his name or talk, and as a result he was placed in Warren County jail under \$10,000 bond. He was given a 96-hour hearing on Tuesday morning but refused to talk and was returned to jail to await a preliminary hearing in Warren County District Court on Wednesday morning.

Tuesday afternoon Highway Patrolman Bennett told a representative of The Warren Record that he had visited the man in the Warren County jail and that he had talked freely to him.

The prisoner gave his name as Harry Lee Johnson of 25B Pisgah View Apartments in Asheville and his date of birth as July 9, 1913. He told the officer that he was without a cent in his pocket when he visited a parking lot in Winston-Salem where he found the Buick car parked with the key in its lock. Taking the car, he drove to Virginia and was returning to Winston-Salem and had posted a written notice to the car saying that the license tag had been lost when he stopped in Warren County.

Bennett said that Johnson indicated that he had served time for breaking, entering and larceny, and when he had finished his sentence he could not get his job back, and as a result had neither job nor money.

Church Has Ambitious Designs For Old Afton School Building

By KAY HORNER
Staff Writer

If all goes according to schedule, the old Afton schoolhouse in Warren County will next month become the place of worship for the Universal Mission Apostolic Church.

The Warren County Board of Education approved the sale of the school to the church at its June 13 meeting. The church bid \$36,275 in a recent public auction for the facility.

Carlton Terry, a trustee of the church responsible for the project, said that the congregation is considering operation of a child care center and camp at the site beginning next summer.

The church, which has been meeting in a leased facility in Macon, has about 30 members, Terry said. The church also has congregations at Auburn, Ala. and Brooklyn, N. Y.

The school, built in 1950, was a county elementary school until consolidation of schools within the

system in 1970.

After that, it housed offices for federal education programs, including those implementing ESEA (Elementary and Secondary Education Act), and two or three rooms were used for kindergarten and second grade classes from South Warren Elementary School, according to James Jordan, assistant superintendent of Warren County schools.

Jordan said Monday that the building was no longer needed when enrollment stabilized at South Warren and offices for a federal program were moved to the county education administration building on Cousin Lucy's Lane in Warrenton.

The schoolhouse was leased by the Afton-Elberon Ruritan Club for awhile, but Jordan said the club chose not to renew its lease.

The building, on a 4.85-acre site, has a total of 11,142 square feet, and was built on land purchased by the county in 1919.



Vacant Afton-Elberon School