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Ben Kearney of Rt. 2, Warrenton and friend Nick Williams look over the damage to Kearney's car after a giant tree limb fell on the vehicle during a Saturday afternoon thunderstorm. Strong storms

last week brought much-needed relief to drought-stricken Warren County and surrounding counties. (Staff Photo by Howard Jones)

Not Guilty Verdict Returned In Warren County Rape Case

A 23-year-old Warren County man was found not guilty of first-degree rape during a term of Warren County Superior Court which ended on Wednesday of last week.

Bobby Alston was found not guilty of the rape charge, and additionally was found not guilty of a charge of aiding and abetting in first-degree rape.

A six-man, six-woman jury deliberated only 35 minutes before returning the verdict.

Alston was arrested in connection with the alleged rape which occurred on May 4, 1985. His brother, Lawrence Alston, 29, resident of Twin Oaks Trailer Park in Franklin County, was arrested on identical charges. Judge J. Milton Read, Jr. of Durham ordered the cases against the elder Alston continued.

The younger Alston, a resident of Rt. 3, Warrenton, was defended by a court-appointed attorney, Ronnie Reaves.

In other cases called for trial last week, the following dispositions were made:

James C. Alston, Jr., driving while impaired, ordered to prison for one year, sentence suspended and defendant placed on supervised probation for two years upon condition that he serve 16 days in jail, report to jail in sober condition and without the odor of alcohol on his breath, obey all rules and regulations of the jail, obtain an abuse assessment and pay the \$25 fee, attend the Alcohol and Drug Education Traffic School and pay the \$100 fee, pay a \$500 fine and court costs under the supervision of the probation officer and not operate a motor vehicle until allowed by the Department of Motor Vehicles; defendant to be switched to unsupervised probation upon payment of all monies and completion of the Alcohol and Drug Education Traffic School.

Joseph John Lee, Jr., breaking and/or entering, ordered to prison for one year, sentence suspended and defendant placed on supervised probation for two years upon condition that he pay \$750 to Vessa Lee Silver and not go upon her residence without her permission and consent, and pay costs under the supervision of the probation officer; arson, voluntary dismissal.

Stephen Owens, assault with a deadly weapon inflicting serious injury, ordered to prison for 30 days, sentence to run consecutively with all prison sentences now serving.

Ronald Wayne Guill, larceny and breaking and/or entering, called and failed, order of forfeiture and arrest order issued, bond doubled.

Derrick Lanier Davis, breaking and/or entering and larceny, called and failed, arrest order and order of forfeiture issued, bond doubled.

David Russell, breaking and/or entering and larceny, voluntary dismissal. On additional charges of breaking and/or entering and larceny, the defendant was sentenced to five years in prison as a committed youthful offender, with a condition of his parole that he be jointly and severally liable for \$2,433.14 restitution to Cedric Tant doing business as Tant's Shoe Store and that he pay costs, including attorney fees. The court recommended that in the event work release is granted the defendant be required to pay to the Clerk of Court \$206 costs, \$165 attorney fees and \$811.05 to Cedric Tant.

Leroy Hargrove, breaking and/or entering and larceny, ordered to prison for three years as a committed youthful offender, with a recommended condition of his parole that he be jointly and severally liable for \$2,433.14 restitution to Cedric Tant doing business as Tant's Shoe Store and that he pay costs, which include attorney fees of \$165.

Vernon Kearney, possession of stolen goods, dismissed; breaking and/or entering and larceny, ordered to prison for five years as a committed youthful offender, with a condition of his parole that he be held jointly and severally liable for \$2,433.14 restitution to Cedric Tant doing business as Tant's Shoe Store and that as a condition of work release he pay

into the clerk's office \$120 attorney fees and costs, including restitution. On a charge of probation violation, the court found as a fact that the defendant had willfully violated the terms of his probation and that he was convicted of an offense while on probation. He was sentenced to three years in prison as a committed youthful offender with a condition of his parole that he pay court costs of \$167, attorney fees of \$220 and \$498 restitution in Vance County case, sentence to run concurrently with the previously stated Warren County charges.

Gill Michael Fleming, driving while impaired, entered a plea of guilty of careless and reckless driving, ordered to pay a \$100 fine and court costs.

Richard Hargrove, driving while impaired, entered a plea of guilty of careless and reckless

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Redesignation Period To End

The first redesignation period for tobacco farmers to designate or redesignate warehouses where they wish to market their tobacco will end this Friday, Aug. 1.

There were several tobacco farms in the county that the operator did not designate a warehouse during the initial designation period. This needs to be done no later than Aug. 1.

The next opportunity to designate will be Aug. 29 through Sept. 5.



A pile of discarded Norlina fire hydrants awaits a truck which will carry them off to the scrap heap. Replacement of a number of hydrants throughout

town has been carried on this summer as part of a municipal improvement program. (Staff Photo by Howard Jones)

Half-Cent Tax Increase To Be Pondered Locally

Board Plans Discussion On Monday

By MARY C. HARRIS
Staff Writer

Warren County could add more than a quarter of a million dollars to its sales tax revenues if the county commissioners decide to levy the additional half-cent local sales tax authorized recently by the N.C. General Assembly.

County Manager Charles Worth said last week it is difficult to pinpoint the figure but he estimated from \$300,000 to \$400,000 could be produced by the new tax during its first year.

Consideration of the additional tax levy for Warren County will be on the agenda when the county commissioners convene for their next regular meeting on Aug. 4, Worth indicated.

If the commissioners approve the new tax, it would raise the total tax on retail sales in Warren County to five percent, three percent state and two percent local. The total tax is currently four and one-half percent, of which one and one-half percent comes to the county and town governments.

Warren County's municipalities as well as the county would share revenues from the extra half-cent tax, which would be distributed on a per capita basis.

The legislation which authorized the new tax also requires that 60 percent of the county's share the first year be spent on public school capital expenditures and/or schools debt service. Over a period of 11 years the percentages will decline, ending with 20 percent, the legislation stipulates. County commissioners could elect to maintain school construction appropriations without cuts from year to year if they chose to do so.

A similar proportion of the towns' share is to be spent on water and sewer capital outlay or for water-sewer debt service, according to the legislation.

Revenues from the initial half-cent local option tax in Warren County carried similar but not identical restrictions.

The additional tax levy has been eyed as a means of offsetting the losses dealt to the counties by the legislature's recent repeal of the household property tax. Tax Supervisor Janice Haynes estimated Warren County stands to lose more than \$59,000 in annual revenues from household property taxes.



Warren County Sheriff Theo Williams looks over part of the marijuana taken last Wednesday during an aerial and ground search which netted more than \$3 million worth of the illegal substance. The plants were kept in temporary storage at the Warren County jail prior to burning. (Staff Photo by Howard Jones)

Air And Ground Search Leads To Marijuana

An aerial and ground search last Wednesday by Warren County sheriff's deputies and SBI agents uncovered more than \$3.8 million worth of marijuana in what may be the largest such discovery ever in the county.

The search, conducted by local and state agents along with Halifax County agent Garland Bunting, netted more than 1,600 sinsemilla plants near Arcola, Sheriff Theo R. Williams said.

Four SBI agents took to the air about noon in three N.C. National Guard helicopters based in Warren County and other officers conducted a ground search, the sheriff's report indicated.

Several plots of marijuana, the largest near Arcola, were discovered during the four-hour search.

The SBI figured the value of the plants, ranging from two to seven feet, at \$2,400 each, Chief Deput-

ty Bobby Dean Bolton said. The plants were in varying stages of maturity, he said, and none were ready for harvest.

Bolton said the plants were planted in a manner similar to tobacco. They were in long, winding rows in about five different cut over plots in the county, he said.

Bolton noted the particular care which the marijuana grower had given the plants. Chicken wire had been put up to protect the plants from rabbits and fertilizer was found nearby, he said.

The sheriff's department had received some reports of marijuana in the area, Bolton said, but there was nothing to indicate a crop of that proportion existed.

The plants were burned late last week.

There have been no arrests and officers have no suspects.

Large Suit Filed Here Against Local Residents

A half-million-dollar suit against three Warrenton businessmen and a former Warren County manager has been filed in Warren County Superior Court.

The action, filed by Robert M. Clay and wife, Marie M. Clay, of Wake County, names as defendants Mr. and Mrs. W. Monroe Gardner, Mr. and Mrs. Charles A. Hayes, James C. Harris, Jr. and Walter M. Gardner. All are now residents of Warren County except Hayes, former Warren County manager and industrial recruiter who is now economic development director for Moore County.

Additionally, the action has been brought against Warrenton Insurance Agency, Inc., Warrenton Insurance and Realty and The Warren Group.

The suit, according to documents filed July 18, grows from efforts by the Clays, dating back to October of last year, to take possession of a house which defendants had under construction in Lyons Creek Estates on Lake Gaston.

The Clays contend that they agreed to purchase the property for \$93,500, and paid The Warren Group the sum of \$1,000 as earnest money.

The plaintiffs now charge that The Warren Group was a sham corporation "set up by the defendants for the purpose of defrauding the public and creditors" and that it had no assets or capitalization, never issued stock, never had officers, stockholders or directors, and never had any "right, title or in-

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