

THE NEWS - RECORD



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Wells Charged With Murder Of Son-In-Law

Troy Wells, of the Big Pine section of Madison County, is in the county jail here charged with the murder of his son-in-law, Harry Haun, also of Big Pine, Sheriff Ponder announced Tuesday morning. Ponder said the shooting occurred at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Haun about 8:40 o'clock Monday night. Ponder

said that one shot entered Haun's left side and he died in a few minutes.

Ponder said the incident occurred during a family argument.

Bowman Funeral Home is in charge of arrangements which were not made at press time.

Jury Enters Verdict On Assault Charges

Charles Taylor, 43, of Shake Rug Road in the Grapevine section was acquitted Friday of two counts of charges of assault with a deadly weapon. He was, however, convicted of a third charge of assault with a deadly weapon, a misdemeanor.

On that count he originally had been charged with assault with a deadly weapon with intent to kill, a felony.

The verdicts were rendered by a Buncombe County Superior Court jury before Judge Harry C. Martin.

Taylor was acquitted of assaults against Joe R. Wilson and Jimmy E. Wyatt. He was convicted of assault against Michael Worley.

Sheriff's deputies said Taylor was arrested after an exchange of gunfire on Jan. 9 in the parking lot of Larry's Tavern in Flat Rock.

County

Donates

\$1,118.10

A county-by-county report has been issued by the Western North Carolina Lung Association in Asheville, which indicates that Madison county residents have made donations totaling \$1,118.10.

According to Burnitt Beale, Executive Director of WNC Lung Association, "This deficit of \$5,865 will mean that much less to meet the needs and offer services for people of our own area." He urged everyone who had not returned the Christmas Seal letter received in the fall to do so now, and to make a second contribution if at all possible. "We don't want to trim any programs or services," he added.

Money received from residents of this county help support research programs in lung disease, and professional training for medical specialists and paramedical personnel, provide educational programs and materials for all schools in the county, make films available without charge on loan to school classes and other interested groups, and provide services to patients from this county at WNC Hospital in Black Mountain. "It's a Matter of Life or Breath!"

Madison County Democrats are planning for the county convention which also includes the County Democratic Executive Committee's Organization Meeting. The event will be held at the Marshall School on the Island on Saturday afternoon, March 6, beginning at 1 o'clock. It was also announced that a hearing concerning the controversial Hot Springs Precinct meeting will be held at this meeting. All Democrats are urged to make plans to attend.



THE MASSIVE AND BEAUTIFUL home pictured above is the original residence of Judge and Mrs. Jeter C. Pritchard and was located on the Walnut Creek Road. The 16-room house was later resided in by Mr. and Mrs. George Pritchard and family. The house was purchased by the late J.F. Redmon in the early 1890's. Mr. Redmon donated the Pritchard Cemetery to the Town of Marshall. The picturesque house was destroyed by fire in 1935. The present home of Mr. and Mrs. Joe Rowland and family is located on the same site as the original home. (Picture courtesy of Mrs. Stella B. Nechling, of Asheville.)

Flood Sweeps 4 To Death In Newfound Section Sunday

By MARION ELLIS and PATRICK O'DONNELL
Wayne Mahaffey, 30, watched with horror early Sunday as a 15-foot wall of water swept four of his neighbors in the Newfound community to their deaths.

Mahaffey, a landscaper, was returning from a bowling night out in Canton about 2:15 a.m. when he found his pickup truck's path blocked by rising water in front of the home of Leonard "Bud" Ledbetter. An earthen dam atop Bear Wallow Mountain had burst after a heavy rain.

"I honked the horn, and I hollered, but no lights came on in the house," Mahaffey said. "Then it came all of a sudden. There was no way to do anything about it. Rocks half as big as a car were flying through the air."

As the headlights from his truck beamed onto the scene Mahaffey watched the water from the swollen Newfound creek batter the Ledbetter

house and sweep away a 7,000-pound tractor.

The body of Ledbetter, a 43-year-old tobacco farmer, was found hours later about a mile down the creek, which normally is less than a foot deep and about three feet wide. The bodies of his wife, Mickey, and his mother, Mrs. Savannah Ledbetter, 77, were found nearby. His son, Leslie, 15, was found about a half mile away.

No other injuries were reported, although about 100 homes were evacuated. Residents were being allowed to return home late Sunday after officials had been assured that no more immediate flooding from the dam was expected.

Newfound is about 15 miles northwest of Asheville.

The only other member of the Ledbetter family, Allen Ledbetter, 20, had spent the night with friends and survived. He was under sedation from the shock late Sunday and unable to talk to reporters.

Another eyewitness, Sam Worley, 26, who was half a mile down the creek, said the rushing water sounded like "15 freight trains running wide open."

Just why the dam, about two miles up from the Ledbetters' five-room frame house, gave way was under investigation Sunday, but neighbors said they had been concerned for years about the possibility of such a flash flood.

"I've always had kind of a fear of that lake," Mahaffey said.

According to area residents, the three-acre lake was built about 15 years ago and stocked with fish, but it hasn't been used for years.

No one was sure Sunday night who owned the lake property. Area residents said it had changed hands at least twice in the last few years.

Officials said a preliminary inspection showed that the

bottom portion of the dam was water-logged all the way

through and it had shifted forward during the night, causing about 15 feet of the top portion to fall away. The dam was about 50 feet high and 75 feet wide.

The column of water that rushed down the mountain was only about 40 to 100 feet wide and narrowly missed other homes, although it did severe damage to farmland. Several farm animals, including the Ledbetters' 6 pigs and some of the 60 head of cattle, apparently perished.

"It took about half my yard, and I had a few things washed away," said Wayne King, the Ledbetters' next-door neighbor. "It just gushed down and took everything in its path."

King, who had heard Mahaffey's warnings, put his wife and two sons in the family car until the wall of water had gone.



"We're tired from being up all night, but we're okay," he said. "I just wish they (the Ledbetters) had woke up."



New Democrats Register In County

The Democratic Party has added 154 registrations in the past 60 days; the executive secretary of the Madison County Board of Elections said Thursday of last week.

Of this number, said Sharon Ray, 90 were registered at the Hot Springs precinct and the remaining 64 at the county's other 10 precincts.

In the same two months period, she said, there were eight more registrations of voters as Republicans.

The present total registration, the board official said, is 6,079 Democrats, 3,350 Republicans, 185 independents, and 115 with no party affiliations.

A Hot Springs hardware dealer, Bobby Ponder, said the registration figures for Hot Springs are significant and show an effort by Republicans to take control of the precinct party machinery from active Democrats.

Ponder, who presided at the Democrats Plan For Convention

Madison County Democrats are planning for the county convention which also includes the County Democratic Executive Committee's Organization Meeting. The event will be held at the Marshall School on the Island on Saturday afternoon, March 6, beginning at 1 o'clock. It was also announced that a hearing concerning the controversial Hot Springs Precinct meeting will be held at this meeting. All Democrats are urged to make plans to attend.

Feb. 12 Precinct 6 organizational meeting at the request of chairman Howard Tino, out of town that date, challenged 53 persons at the Hot Springs school meeting.

The Ponder faction among the 300 persons present elected one slate of delegates to the County Democratic Convention to be held in Marshall on March 6. An opposing faction headed by Larry Phillips also elected a slate of delegates.

The county convention's

acceptance of one group of Precinct 6 delegates over the other could result in an appeal to the State Democratic Convention later in Raleigh.

Regarding the new Democratic registrations in Hot Springs, the election board reported that the Democratic precinct official, Bernice Wright, had handled 13 of the applications, and the Republican precinct officials, Tony Gamble and Irene Roberts, had processed the other 77.

Hot Springs Leadership Contested

By JAY HENSLEY
Citizen Staff Writer

Larry Phillips, a Madison County school teacher, has taken his claim for leadership of the Democrats in Precinct No. 6 to the State Democratic Executive Committee in Raleigh.

The claim by Phillips is contested by Bobby Ponder, Hot Springs hardware dealer and a member of the Madison County school board.

Phillips, in a letter to the executive committee, charged that Ponder took charge of the meeting in the Hot Springs school house Feb. 12 in violation of the Democratic Plan of Organization, since the first vice chairman of the precinct was present and should have presided.

Ponder said the woman is quite elderly, and that authorization to preside was bestowed upon him by Howard Tino, the incumbent who was out of town.

Ponder's faction re-elected Tino and others on that slate by what Phillips calls an at-

mosphere in which Ponder was "blatantly biased" in favor of that group.

Phillips, in his letter to headquarters, charged that Ponder arbitrarily disqualified 53 of the 148 votes cast in favor of his ticket.

Ponder said he peeled off 53 of the names voting for Phillips because they were Republicans who switched their registration to sandbag the Democratic precinct election.

"This decision was made by him 10 to 15 seconds after he had been informed that the total vote was 148," Phillips said of the head count for his side in the power struggle.

The vote for Ponder's slate was 135. "We feel that it is absolutely impossible for him to analyze the registration status of 148 voters in this short length of time," Phillips told the executive committee.

The Phillips faction said they have asked Ponder to produce names of disqualified Democrats.

Ponder said a story published by The Citizen Feb. 20 quoting the executive secretary of the Madison County Board of Elections as saying that 90 of the 154 Democrats added to the registration in the last 60 days were from the Hot Springs precinct backs up his claim. Ponder was quoted in that story as saying that the



LARRY PHILLIPS

registration figures for Hot Springs are significant and show an effort by Republicans to take control of the precinct party machinery from active Democrats."

There was nothing in the report from Sharon Ray, the board's executive secretary, to indicate that the new Democratic registrations are switchovers from the Republican party rather than residents not previously registered however.

Ponder Monday described as "hogwash" a charge in the letter by Phillips that he (Ponder) adjourned the meeting when he saw they were outnumbered and reconvened at some other location to finish their business.

Ponder, who is the nephew of Zeno Ponder, chairman of the Madison County Democratic Executive Committee, said he adjourned the meeting and members of his faction went to their homes.

An official with the State Democratic Executive Committee said Monday that Phillips' letter has been referred to the Council of

Review, which probably won't consider the matter until sometime just before the state convention in June.

A number of such complaints are received following precinct elections, and the committee tries to get them all in before the council is called together to make a recommendation, a state Democratic official said.

Blue Ridge Shoe Company Names Plant Heads

It has been announced that Bennett C. Byrd has been appointed Plant Manager of the new Blue Ridge Shoe plant in Hot Springs. Byrd joined Blue Ridge Shoe Company in December 1963, as a Heel Seat Lasting operator at the Boone, N. C. plant. He worked his way up to Department Manager-Trainee in September 1965, and was sent to Sparta, N.C. Since then, he has held several management positions at Wilkesboro, Boone, and Mtn. City, Tenn. He has been plant manager of the Mountain City plant since February 1971.

He resides at Hot Springs, and his wife, Mary A., and son, Kevin, and daughter,

Michelle will join him as soon as school is out.

The remainder of the management staff will be composed of: Juanita B. Phillips, Officer Manager; Thomas D. Davis, Department Manager Stitching; Rudolph A. Stout, De-

Hot Springs Tomato Co. Under New Ownership

Fred Shelton, well-known resident of Route 3, Marshall, announced this week that he is the new owner and manager of the Hot Springs Tomato

Company. Mr. Shelton has been the owner and builder of the Laurel Tomato Co., and has had vast experience in the tomato business.

"Anyone in the Hot Springs area who wishes tomato plants may contact me by calling 656-2338, or are invited to visit my home," Mr. Shelton stated.

More definite announcements concerning the opening of the Hot Springs tomato shed will be published in this newspaper.

Harrell Succeeds Mrs. Ramsey

At the regular meeting of Madison County Board of Social Services held on Monday, February 23, Donald F. Harrell of Mars Hill, was appointed Director Trainee of the Department of Social Services to replace Mrs. Frances G. Ramsey, who will retire as Director at the end of this month.

Mr. Harrell joined the staff in March 1973 as a Social Worker.

Madison FFA Wins First Place

The Madison High FFA procedure team won first place in the Parkway Federation in competition at A. C. Reynolds High, at Thursday, Feb. 23, 1976.

Members of the team and President, Billy Ramsey, vice-president, Warren Ramsey, and Secretary, Warren Ramsey.

Donald Ramsey Now Marshall Alderman

Donald J. Ramsey, owner of Don's Auto Parts on Main Street here, has been appointed an alderman for the Town of Marshall. Mr.

Ramsey is a graduate of Marshall High School, is the son of Mr. and Mrs. Jack Ramsey, of Marshall.

Mr. Ramsey was a member of the board of directors of the Marshall Housing Authority prior to his appointment as alderman.

He succeeds Charles "Burr" Crowe who recently resigned as alderman.

Mr. Ramsey is married to the former Miss Sheila Roberts. They have two children, Kasey, 4, and Christian, 6. They reside on the Walnut Creek Road in Marshall.

Local American Legion Post Congratulated

The American Legion, Department of North Carolina Headquarters in Raleigh indicates that Marshall Post No. 317 has conducted a highly successful membership drive.

Don West, Commander of the Post, has received a letter from Department Headquarters reporting that Post No. 317 has exceeded its Legion Membership Incentive Goal for 1976. The Department Commander expressed congratulations and thanks to the Post leaders and mem-

bership workers for their effort.

Steve Carver, State Commander said, "The membership of every Legionnaire makes it possible for The American Legion to maintain service for the sick and disabled in hospitals. Memberships make possible all the Legion programs, such as care for needy children, Baseball, Boy's State, Boy Scout Troops, Oratorical Contests, Community Service,

Law and Order and all the others. I am proud to congratulate Post No. 317 upon this notable achievement."

Post Commander West explained that "Raise Your Sights To Serve", the theme of this year's drive, was to encourage all citizens to raise their sights to greater service of their fellow citizens and their local community, thus becoming an important part of The American Legion's

ongoing motto - "For God and Country."

"We are accepting dues payments now from Legionnaires and eligible veterans whose membership is essential if the local organization is to continue its service programs." Commander West stated. Also, he reported that the Post is planning to expand its local programs and activities, depending on the final results of the 1976 membership drive.

DAILY LIGHT

Being justified by faith, we love Jesus with God through one Lord Jesus Christ.