

Volume 75, Number 5,

Marshall, N. C

15 CENTS PER COPY

February 26, 1976

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 Rine, Sheriff Ponder an-

nounced Tuesday morning. Ponder said the shooting occurred at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Haun about 8:40 o'clock Monday night. Ponder

Haun's left side and he died in a few minutes.

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 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 dichael 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 ns totaling \$1,118.10.

According to Burnitt Bealle, Executive Director of WNC ng 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 ut 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

Ponder said the incident occurred during a family

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

During the alleged gunfight, deputies said, Worley, who was a bartender at the tavern

at the time, shot and killed Doyle Peek, 21, of Rt. 2, Weaverville. Peek was a Worley has been charged

with manslaughter in Peek's death and will be tried later. Judge Partin continued judgement against Taylor to a

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

> 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

"I honked the horn, and I

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 neigh-

bors in the Newfound com-

Mahaffey, a landscaper,

was returning from a bowling

night out in Canton about 2:15

munity to their deaths.

after a heavy rain.

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 7,000pound tractor.

The body of Ledbetter, a 43year-old tobacco farmer, was found hours later about a mile down the creek, which normally is less than a food 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

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 reporAnother eyewitness, Sam

Worley, 26, who was half a mile down the creek, said the rushing water sounded like "15 frieght 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

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

Flood Sweeps 4 To Death In Newfound Section Sunday

through and it had shifted forward during the night, causing about 15 feet of the top portion to fall way. 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 nieghbor. "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



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. 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

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

Feb. 12 Precinct

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

Hot Springs Leadership Contested

By JAY HENSLEY Citizen Staff Writer

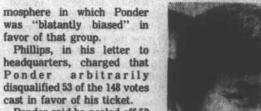
Larry Phillips, a Madison County school teacher, has taken his claim for leadership of the Democrats in Precinct No. 6 to the State Democratic Executive Committee in

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-



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

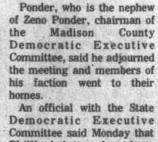
produce names of disqualified Ponder said a story published by The Citizen Feb. 20 quoting the executive secretary of the Madison County Board of Elections as saying that 90 of the 154

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 Democrats added to the (Ponder) adjourned the registration in the last 60 days meeting when he saw they were from the Hot Springs were outnumbered and precinct backs up his claim.

Ponder was quoted in that story as saying that the reconvened at some other location to finish their



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

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, sometime just before the state

plaints 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.

Names Plant Heads

Michelle will join him as soon

The remainder of the

management staff will be

composed of; Juanita B.

Phillips, Officer Manager;

Thomas D. Davis, Depart-

ment Manager Stitching;

Donald J. Ramsey, owner of Don's Auto Parts on Main

Street here, has been ap-pointed an alderman for the

Town of Marshall. Mr.

Donald Ramsey Now

Marshall Alderman

Rudolph A. Stout, De

as school is out.

Review, which probably won't 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 busine "Anyone in the Hot Springs area who wishes tomato

plants may contact me by calling 656-2328, or are invited Blue Ridge Shoe Company to visit my home," Mr. helton stated. More definite

nouncements concerning the opening of the Hot Springs tomato shed will be published in this newspaper.

partment Manager Stitching; Paul N. Lovin, Jr., Depart-Harrell Succeeds ment Manager Cutting; Dennis B. Freeman, Department Manager Bot-Mrs. Ramsey toming; Newland L. Reese, Department Manager Supply; Bill Willett, Department

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 second.

this month.

Mr. Harrell joined the staff
in March 1973 as a Socia

Madison FFA

Local American Legion Post Congratulated Law and Order and all the

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 bership workers for their

Steve Carver, State Com-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 Scoul, Troops, Oratorical apon this notable

Post Commander West explained that "Raise Your lights To Serve", the theme of

at community, thus programs and activi

ongoing motto - "For God and Country." "We are accepting dues payments now from Legionaires and eligible

Ramsey a graduate of Mar-shall High School, is the sun of Mr. and Mrs. Jack Ramsey, of

