

# THE NEWS RECORD

SERVING THE PEOPLE OF MADISON COUNTY

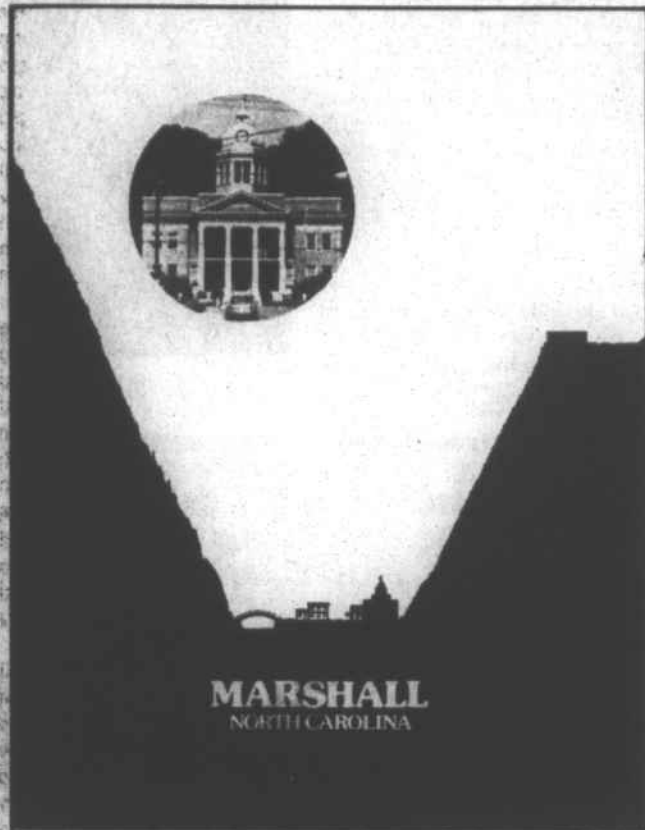
On the inside . . .  
Mars Hill Upsets  
NAIA Power Elon  
... Turn To Page 6

78th Year No. 37

PUBLISHED WEEKLY IN THE COUNTY SEAT AT MARSHALL, N.C.

THURSDAY, September 20, 1979

15¢ Per Copy



A PROFILE OF MARSHALL was designed by Stephen McConnell of the Land-of-Sky Regional Council. It is used on the cover of the brochure prepared to describe the town and its environment.

## Here's Looking At Marshall!

### Town Will Host State Judges Friday In Effort To Win Excellence Award

This Friday, Sept. 21, the Town of Marshall will receive its final review by state and local government officials for its entry into the Community of Excellence Award Competition.

The purpose of the Governor's Community of Excellence Award Program is to assist North Carolina communities to become more attractive for the location of industry and related economic development. The program has been established to help those communities in North Carolina that need assistance most - the smaller towns.

In order to receive the community of Excellence Award, the town must meet guidelines established by the North Carolina Department of Commerce. These include the

development of a County Industrial Bond Authority, appointing a community Industrial Development Team, Town Planning Board, and Industrial Visitation Team, the development of a community brochure and slide show, and the keeping of a scrapbook which details all community development activities.

The review will be held at 10 a.m. at the Housing Authority Building on Walnut Creek Road. Community members participating in the meeting include: Ervin Adams, chairman of Madison County Commissioners; Lawrence Ponder, mayor of Marshall; Ed Mashburn, chairman of the Marshall Township Development Board; Dr. Don Anderson, chairman of the Madison County Planning

Board; Bryce Hall, chairman of the Industrial Visitation Team; James Allen, chairman of the Marshall Planning Board; Bill Stump, manager of Arbee Manufacturing; Helen Rudisill, manager of the Merchants Association; Ed Morton, of the Madison County Health Department.

Following the presentations, the slide show will be shown and the Town Scrapbook presented by Jean Taylor. The final event will be a tour of the Marshall area to inspect prospective industrial sites and community projects.

Members of the judging team include: Herman Anderson, Director of Area Development, Blue Ridge EMC; Matthew Bacote, member of the N.C. Board of Economic Development; Mac McGough,

Western North Carolina Development Association; Bob Shepherd, executive director of the Land-of-Sky Regional Council; Bill Cook, Recreation Consultant, Department of Natural Resources and Community Development; Alan Lang, Chief Planner, Department of Natural Resources and Community Development; Tom Jones, Regional Development Specialist, Department of Commerce; Roger Scott, Regional Development Specialist, Department of Commerce; and Jack Stuart, deputy director of the Small Communities Program, Department of Commerce.

Awards to each North Carolina Community of Excellence will be made by Governor Jim Hunt at the Annual Economic Development dinner in Raleigh on Nov. 15.

After the briefing at the Housing Authority building the group will pass along Main Street to see the Housing Authority units for the elderly, the drainage and paving work being done on the street, the modification of First Union Bank, the library window displays, and various buildings and sights along the way. They will then visit the elementary school and the Conover Glove Co. and move back up Skyline Drive.

Above the town the group will see the water reservoir, the new cable TV tower, the recreation park, Arbee Manufacturing Co., Deringer Manufacturing Co., Madison

High School, and the bypass shopping center.

After a visit to the Mashburn Industrial Site and the health and mental health buildings, the group will drive to the new REA building site and then to the day care center and the site of the Marshall Industrial Park.

The community members participating in the inspection met last Monday for a final discussion of plans and a

review of the brochure prepared for the inspecting team. Everyone seemed relieved and a little surprised to have all preparations in order, after several months of hard work.

"If we win this award," said Mayor Lawrence Ponder, "we want to kind of relieve this inspection day. We'd like to show the whole community what we've prepared - the

(Continued on 8)

### James Minnix Named Pastor At Marshall

James Michael Minnix, formerly pastor of the Wakemister Baptist Church in Raleigh, has been called as pastor of the Marshall Baptist Church Marshall.

The Rev. Minnix attended



JAMES M. MINNIX

Gardner-Webb College in Boiling Springs where he was selected for the dean's list in 1970-71, chosen by the president of the college as the Greek Honor Student in 1971, elected president of the Biblical Languages Club in 1972, and graduated with honors in 1972 with a degree in Greek, Hebrew and Aramaic. He also attended Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary in Wake Forest.

He is married to the former Jayne Lloyd of Shelby and they are the parents of two children, a daughter, Sherry, who is 15 years of age and a son Christopher who is 9 years of age. They will reside in the Marshall Baptist Church Pastorial on Walnut Creek Road in Marshall.

The Rev. Jimmy Buckner, of Walnut, has been serving as interim pastor.

## Obray Ramsey And The Chestnut Tree

By ALAN ANDERSON

I paid a brief visit to Obray Ramsey last week at his home on Walnut Mountain and though he played not a single note, I came away with a better understanding of where his music comes from. Most Madison County folks know Obray for his songs ("Little Sparrow," "Pretty Saro," "Cold Rain and Snow," "The Driver's Boy") and his virtuosity on the five-string. Perhaps fewer people remember his lifelong love of nature - his knowledge of mountain trees and flowers, his skill at fishing and hunting, his collections of minerals and birds' eggs.

I knew a little of these interests, so I was not surprised when he called to report discovering a sprouted chestnut tree bearing full, healthy chestnuts. The nearly complete obliteration of American chestnuts by blight some 50 years ago has been one of the great sorrows of the century. Its wood, its fruit, and its grandeur are irreplaceable, and we can only cheer from the sidelines as botanists struggle to find some vaccine or other antidote for the disease that kills off the new shoots nearly as fast as they sprout from old roots.

So it was with great pleasure that Obray Ramsey came across these chestnuts, high on Walnut Mountain, on beyond the end of Lonesome Mountain Road, beside a dead-end dirt track with no name. We got out of his pickup and he posed for the camera beside a couple of rich, green chestnuts, and I asked him if he remembered the coming of the chestnut blight.

"Yes, I remember when we lived on the old home place, my granddad had a big chestnut orchard; the trees were so big; so many chestnuts. I was there until I was 10 years old, and the blight started to come in. It hit the smaller trees first, and they cut them and made power line poles. They called them phone poles, and these were so much in demand that they started calling any poles they cut phone poles.

"We moved then, and by the time I was 18 the blight was really hitting fast. The old chestnut timber was going and then it was all over; all the chestnuts were gone, just like that."

Obray remembered eating chestnuts all the time - raw, boiled, roasted. He recalled that the Indians made bread out of chestnut flour. "They'd

fall in the autumn," he said, "and on hillsides they'd roll against a log into a pile, and this pile would be covered by leaves, and in the spring you could go and find them there, still good. We'd just rake them up. You really couldn't starve to death in those days if you lived in these hills and knew enough to look on the uphill side of a log."

We got back into the truck and wound slowly down the road with no name where the remains of a number of old farms could be seen through the second-growth timber. A skeleton of a barn; a well-preserved house with a tin roof; the jungly remains of an apple orchard planted long ago by a man named "Lump." The area is abandoned now, except for occasional visits by those who live nearby, like Obray. We came across a second chestnut tree sprouting about 12 feet high - healthy and full, but without chestnuts.

"We sold ours," Obray went on, passing from story to joke to story without pause, "for 2 or 3 cents a pound. My granddad had a little country store where he sold 'em. A lot of bartering went on in a store like that; you might have a lot of chestnuts and trade them for soap or matches.

"This one fellow kept coming into the store and he'd buy matches from my granddad. Matches cost 5 cents, but he'd say that all I got is 4 cents, is that all right? and my granddad would say yes. But this got to happening over and over, and finally he had to call 'im on it. The guy made photographs for a living, with one of those old tripods and black hoods and so on, and he complained that we wasn't doing well enough. He was making photos of a woman who was trying to keep him down in price. She was complaining that the pictures were no good, and he said, 'Lady, before you can make a good picture, you've got to have a good subject.'"

This reminded Obray of the story about the car: "Guy up in Laurel saw the first car he'd ever seen comin' up the road. He ran into his house and got his shotgun, came out and let 'em have it. Well, that car stopped real fast and the fellow who was driving it hopped out and ran for his life. The guy's wife heard the shots and asked him what he was shooting at. He said, I don't know, but whatever it was I

(Continued on 8)



OBRAY RAMSEY tosses bread crumbs to a swarm of brim and a few smallmouth bass. "I like to talk to 'em," he explains.

### 8 Madison Fire Fighters Dispatched To California

U.S. Forest Service personnel from Hot Springs were dispatched Sunday afternoon to fight forest fires currently burning throughout Southern California.

Joe Wallace, district ranger of the French Broad Ranger District, reported that the crew was alerted at noon Sunday that they might be dispatched. At 2 p.m. they were notified by the forest supervisor in Asheville that they were being sent to the Los Padres National Forest near Los Angeles, Calif. The crew departed Hot Springs at 3:30 p.m.

They traveled by bus from Asheville to Knoxville where they boarded chartered aircraft with other crews from the south. "They will probably be on a fire in less than 24 hours" Wallace said.

The crew consisted of Ken Olsen, Willard Swaney, Eddie Ricker, Tracey Rathbone, Buck Norton, Jackie Moore

and Wade Strom of Hot Springs and Joey Fore of Marshall.

In addition Shirley Brooks, district clerk from Hot Springs, traveled to Atlanta to assist regional personnel in handling arrangements and dispatching crews from throughout the southern United States.

"Western fire fighters have had a rough season with little rest since the fire season started in early June. Large fires have burned throughout Idaho, Montana and California," Wallace said. "Needless to say they are probably exhausted and are now requesting southern fire fighters for relief."

Southern California is regarded by many fire personnel as being one of the most dangerous areas in the country, due to very dry weather, variable winds and explosive fuels. Physical requirements

for fire fighters are high and all are required to have completed training in fire behavior, weather, equipment and tactics in addition to having actual fire fighting experience.

Dispatch of crews to the west during bad fire situations is not unusual to the French Broad District employees. Earlier this year John H. Lamb Jr. and Mark Holt of Hot Springs worked on the Mortar Creek fire in Idaho. In 1977 fourteen men from Hot Springs worked three weeks on five forest fires throughout California and Oregon.

"It is a rough assignment," said Wallace, "with crews often working 14-hour days and living outdoors." The combination of hard work and living conditions takes such a toll that generally three weeks is as long as the best physically conditioned people can take.

### Chicken Dinner To Benefit Mars Hill Library

Come to a fried chicken dinner on Sept. 23 from 12 to 2 p.m. at the Mars Hill School cafeteria. It will be sponsored by the Mars Hill Community Development Organization to benefit the Mars Hill Public Library Fund.

The charge for adults will be \$2.50, and for children under 12 \$1.50. Dessert will be available.

The Mars Hill Library, which began as a bookmobile some 15 years ago, is present-

ly housed in a small room in city hall. The library sponsors have been working for several years now to raise money for a larger space and storefront. This benefit will be another step toward that goal.

### Manpower Course Helps Drop-outs Get Back In

54 Madison Students Have Graduated At Hot Springs, Walnut And Greater Ivy

Last Friday was graduation day for 54 Madison County residents who completed the eight-week Asheville-Buncombe Tech Manpower Program.

The program was offered at three locations this year - at Greater Ivy, Walnut and Hot Springs. This represents an increase from last year's limited program, which was offered only at AB Tech in Asheville. Few students, especially from the western areas of the county, could afford to attend from such a distance.

The purpose of the program is to build both skills and confidence in students who have failed to finish high school, and who have had difficulty finding steady employment.

"I think the program is of tremendous value," said Linda Biggers, an instructor at Hot Springs. "Some of the students have been out of school for several years and this helps them pick up their confidence again. We're really positively oriented, and for anyone who shows any desire at all we'll do everything we can to get them on their feet."

Students are paid \$2.90 an hour to attend the course. This money comes from a number of public programs, such as the Comprehensive Employment and Training Act. For many of the students this reimbursement is crucial.

"That \$2.90 an hour makes a great difference," says Linda Biggers. "It would always be an incentive, of course, but beyond that, many of these people just have no income and nowhere to turn; they are really broke. And without this support they would not be able to come

here. Some of them have families to support. They have to pay the rent, and so on.

"Here they have a chance to be paid for eight weeks to help them decide what to do and to help them learn some skills."

Locella Lewis, an instructor's aide in the Manpower program, says that in many cases the program seems to make all the difference between giving up and trying again.

"I've been just amazed by the progress some of these students make," says Lewis. "They start out thinking they are worth just nothing, and end up really thinking they can get somewhere."

In fact, the success of the program in placing its students is the best testimony to success. Seventeen have found jobs already, ranging from nursing to waiting on tables to working for the Forest Service, and this is no small achievement in job-scarce times like these. Ten more are going on to A-B Tech to develop a technical skill, and 20 have completed their requirements for a Graduate Equivalency Diploma.

As a further mark of the desire of these students to take full advantage of the course, 23 of the 54 had perfect attendance records for the full eight weeks.

During the course, part of the students' time is spent on what is called the Basic Skills program. The routine here varies from student to student, depending on individual need. If a student failed to graduate from high school because he or she had difficulty with math, there would be intensive coaching in math. The same would be

true for English, science and so on. If possible, a student is helped to complete the requirements to graduate. Several will return to high school to finish on their own.

A second part of the course is called Human Resources Development, or HRD. Here the instructors discuss with students what kind of job they think they want, what kinds of skills they might need, what skills they have already, how to get an interview with an employer, how to conduct themselves during an interview, what kinds of questions to expect, and so on. There is a general orientation to the whole job market and the kinds of jobs that exist today. Finally, the instructors try to bring out each student's motivation and encourage an optimistic attitude about themselves.

The last, and newest, part of the course is called Skills Training, which offers more practical instruction in such techniques as mechanics, carpentry, and welding. This is the first year that this segment has been presented in the county, and it will probably be expanded next summer.

The students have had guest speakers from such agencies as the health department and the mental health department. The speakers have discussed topics such as drug and alcohol abuse, venereal disease, and birth control.

The students have also toured local industries, such as the Blue Ridge Shoe Company, where company personnel discuss with them what is needed in the way of job skills. This "real-world" exposure lends extra authenticity to the program.

(Continued on 8)