

THE NEWS RECORD

SERVING THE PEOPLE OF MADISON COUNTY

On the Inside . . .

Wrestling Returns
As A Patriot Sport

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78th Year No. 48

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

THURSDAY, December 6, 1979

15¢ Per Copy



THE THAVICHITH FAMILY poses in the warmth of the meeting room at Mars Hill United Methodist Church. They were more

than pleased to be inside; since their arrival, the cold has been their biggest problem.

Refugees Reach Mars Hill

After several months of waiting, the people of Madison County at last had the opportunity last week to welcome a Laotian family who had spent three years in a refugee camp in Thailand.

The family, including Phengphomma Thavichith, his wife, five children and a brother and cousin of Thavichith, arrived in Mars Hill on Nov. 29. They will live in a house maintained by members of the community.

The Board of Global Ministers arranged for the family to come here; Madison County was chosen partly

because of its proximity to Newton, near Hickory, where other members of the same family have already settled.

"The biggest problem for them since they arrived has been the cold weather," said the Rev. Jim Boles, pastor of the Mars Hill United Methodist Church. "They are keeping the heat in their house up at 75 and 80, and still they wear sweaters and overcoats to keep warm. The children have had trouble with nosebleeds."

The most urgent need at the moment is for money to buy food. In addition, kitchen im-

plements, bedding, and miscellaneous items needed by the Thavichith family. Donations can be made through Rev. Boles, Diane Hill or any of the churches in the Mars Hill area.

The family is originally from Vientiane, the capital of Laos. They were not employees of the U.S. government there but were deemed friendly to American interests and therefore forced to leave the country in 1975 when the Pathet Lao took control.

Thavichith is 42 years old. From 1960-75 he worked as a

policeman in Laos. Mrs. Thavichith is a weaver and cook; the family owned and operated a food shop and a weaving shop while in the refugee camp. Their children range in age from 5 to 15. Their religion is Buddhism and their native language is

Laotian. Thavichith indicates that he speaks Thai "fairly well" and his brother has some knowledge of French. None knows English, although the cousin in Hickory speaks English well and will help settle the family in their new country.

Greater Ivy Wins First Place -Again

At the annual meeting of the Western North Carolina Development Association on Dec. 1, Madison did itself proud, winning five awards for four communities throughout the county.

The Greater Ivy Community surprised even its own members by capturing the first place award in Division C (more than 200 families), earning a \$400 check from the Asheville Citizen-Times. This is the second year Greater Ivy has won since the program began five years ago. Mrs. Martie Young accepted the award from Cong. Lamar Gudgeon.

The Sleepy Valley Community won the second place award for Division A (communities with less than 100 families). The award for Sleepy Valley was accepted by Marie Osteen.

Sleepy Valley was also one of three communities in all of Western North Carolina that was singled out for a "Helping Hand" Award - designed to reward communities "that played a major role in organizing another community club in the WNC Community Development Program." Sleepy Valley was cited for helping Hot Springs.

The youth program for Mars Hill was found worthy of an honorable mention prize, which Elaine Randolph accepted for her community.

In the Division B category (100-200 families), Walnut won an honorable mention award of \$50, which was accepted by Juanita Treadway.

In addition, two individuals were singled out for their continuing efforts on behalf of the county - far beyond the call of duty. They are Vernon J.

Ponder of Upper Laurel Community and Lucille Burnette of the Walnut-Brush Creek Community. Each received a framed certificate of recognition signed by Richard J. Wynne, president of the WNCDA and publisher of the Asheville Citizen-Times.

The community awards were made by U.S. Sen. Robert Morgan, who was also the featured speaker at the event, the 30th Annual Awards Meeting. "I want to congratulate you on all the work you have done here," said Morgan to several hundred county representatives and officials at the Asheville Civic Center. "What I think is most important about this work is that you have done it without asking for federal dollars or state dollars. You have done it in the great American spirit - by yourselves." The program

is the largest single volunteer effort of any kind in Western North Carolina.

Sen. Morgan added: "The biggest prizes will not be presented on this platform today. They have already gone to the communities which are now better places to live because of this program."

The other first-place awards were won by Balsam Grove in Transylvania County for Division A, and Ashford in McDowell County for Division B.

In Division A, after Balsam Grove and Sleepy Valley came Dix Creek #2 in Buncombe County for third place and Culberson in Cherokee County for fourth. Honorable mention awards of \$50 went to Norton in Jackson County, Snowbird on the Cherokee Reservation, Bethlehem in McDowell County.

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Randy Tweed Acquitted In Second Trial

Last week, for the second time in less than a year, Randy Kim Tweed was tried for the involuntary manslaughter in causing the death of Janet Elaine Brady.

This time he was acquitted. The first proceeding was declared a mistrial.

Elaine Brady died in a car accident on the Marshall Bypass, just south of Sprinkle-Shelton Wholesale Grocers, just after midnight on Oct. 5, 1978. Also in the car were Tweed, then 22, and Bobby Jack Fore, 20. Miss Brady was also 20.

Testimony by Fore and by State Highway Patrolman Tony Dudley indicated that the car, a brand-new Datsun B-210 owned by Miss Brady, was traveling far in excess of the 55 mph speed limit at the time of the accident. Dudley said that skid marks at the accident scene could be traced and measured along the road and the rocky bank beside it for 810 feet.

Bobby Jack Fore testified that as the vehicle moved south on 25/70 he looked at the speedometer and saw that it was moving at 90 mph. He also said that he and Elaine both pleaded with Tweed, whom he said was driving, to slow down.

Ronald Brady, Elaine's brother, of Route 2, Marshall, testified that the Datsun involved in the accident was "the first car Elaine had ever owned. She was real particular about who drove the car."

According to the testimony of Kathy Chandler Roberts, of Tillery Branch Road, Marshall, there had been beer drinking before the accident among a group including Tweed, Fore, and Brady, but that she could not be sure who was doing the drinking.

Roberts, who went to school with Elaine Brady, said that she and two other young people, Bobby Fisher and Wayne Fore, had been talking and driving around earlier in the evening with the three involved in the accident. She also said that the three had left from the picnic tables near Sprinkle-Shelton on the ride that led to the accident, but that she could not be sure in the darkness who was driving.

Bobby Fore testified that he had not been drinking during the evening, but said he could remember little of what happened.



STILL SMOLDERING more than a day after it started, a fierce fire destroyed the home of Mr. and

Mrs. Wayne Ramsey, just south of Highway 213.

Ramsey Home Destroyed By Fierce Fire Nov. 29

The home of Wayne and Fay Ramsey on Hazelwood Road was totally destroyed Nov. 29 by a fire so fierce that firemen could not put it out, and so tenacious that it was still burning more than a day later.

The home, located just south of U.S. 213 mid-way between Marshall and Mars Hill, had been remodeled and expanded recently. It was pronounced a total loss by insurance investigators.

No one was injured in the fire. Both Mr. and Mrs. Ramsey were away at the time it began. Mrs. Ramsey's mother was at home and saw the first smoke, alerting the Marshall Volunteer Fire Department at 4:35 p.m.

"When we got there," said Marshall fireman Maurice McAlister, "there was some fire downstairs, but the problem was that most of it was upstairs and we never could find out how to get up there. The smoke was so thick you couldn't see your hand in front of your face. The only way we could go in at all was by wearing breathing apparatus."

"We got up to the head of the stairs but there didn't seem to be any door or any way into the upstairs. Even if there had been a door, I'm not sure we could have gone any further. The heat was really intense. We could have broken through the wall there at the head of the stairs, but when you do that you ventilate the fire from a new direction and it can blow right back on top of

you." The firemen soon ran low on water and called the Mars Hill Fire Department for assistance. The Marshall group had only the two smaller pumpers; the large truck cannot be taken beyond the city limits to fight a fire. One crew was sent to Petersburg to reload at the creek. Even by reloading and securing the help of Mars Hill, the raging fire could not be extinguished. Firemen fought the fire until 8:30 p.m.

Marshall is expecting a new

fire truck some time this month. Presently, its largest truck has a capacity of 1,000 gallons; the two smaller trucks hold 550 and 250 gallons.

The fire is thought to have begun around the chimney, possibly by malfunction of the oil furnace. The Ramseys had bought a wood stove to use for heating, but the insurance investigator said he had been told the stove had not yet been used. The only items saved were a freezer and one or two pieces of furniture.

Major Changes Listed In Food Stamp Rules

Major changes in the food stamp program that took effect in January and March of this year have resulted in a 21 percent increase in the number of low-income people in Madison County participating in the program.

In July, 1979, there were 2,314 residents of the county participating, compared to only 1,915 in July 1978. The total value of the stamps issued in July 1979 was 79,143.

Even with this increase in participation, there are still 2,640 people in the county who are not participating based on estimates from the Division of Social Services of the N.C. Department of Human Resources.

Many changes have taken place in the program this year as a result of food stamp reform legislation enacted by Congress in 1977.

John Kerr, chief of the Food Assistance Section of the division, cited two changes, however, as the most significant in determining the number of participants. "The elimination of the requirement that people have to pay a certain amount of their money in order to get a larger amount of food stamps became effective on Jan. 1. Participants now receive a smaller amount of stamps at no charge. Lowering the eligibility level to the federal poverty level on March 1 had little effect on the

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Novelist Visits Marshall School To Discuss The Writer's Craft

Sue Ellen Bridgers, the popular author of the novel "Home Before Dark", came to the Marshall Elementary School last Friday to tell the eighth-graders what it is like to be a writer and how she came to write the book.

Mrs. Bridgers, who lives in Sylva with her husband and three children, was accompanied by Arnold Sgan of the regional education office in Canton. She spoke to the combined English classes of Juanita Boone and Don Banks.

She is a short, dark-haired woman with a quick smile and outgoing manner. She was dressed in a red Mexican-style smock and dungarees.

"There might be any number of people right here," she told the students in the school library, "who can write a book. You don't have to grow up and go to school in a big city. I grew up in a small town myself, in eastern North Carolina. What's important is to learn how people feel about each other, and I think you can learn that better in a small town than in a city."

The writer gave a brief history of her first book (she has since published another, "All Together Now") before answering questions from the students.

"The idea for 'Home Before Dark' came on a hot night when I and my husband and children were driving east to my mother's house. The air conditioning didn't work and it was so hot we had all cried at least twice. It was an eight-hour trip and we had long since drunk all the Cokes in the cooler."

"Just as everyone was about to explode we turned off into the road I had known all my life, the place I had grown up. We were almost home; I had a sense of being almost there; I was expectant."



TERESA GRIFFIN pins a corsage on Mrs. Bridges as class

president Greg Wilde looks on, in the Marshall School office.

I got to thinking about the comfort of homecoming, going into the kitchen where grandmother is, knowing I'll get my favorite foods, knowing it doesn't matter whether I've been bad or good recently. And right there, in the car, as we were getting close to home, the book was born, and I spent most of the weekend writing the beginning. I'm afraid I was a very poor guest at grandmother's house because of the book."

The central figure of the book, a girl named Stella, is a child of migrant farm workers who never knew the kind of home and security Sue Ellen Bridgers took for granted. Stella herself was modeled on a migrant girl Bridgers knew near her home when she was young.

The author also had words of advice on her craft:

"A story must have conflict, struggle - but it doesn't

have to be sad. There is always struggle when something happens worth writing about."

"Characters are more important to me than conflict, but it is only through what happens to characters that we find out about them."

"Sometimes I can't make the characters do what I want them to do. Sometimes they

tell me what they will do, and I can't do anything about it."

In preparation for the author's visit, the class read her book and then wrote short letters to Mrs. Bridgers giving their reaction to it. "I really enjoyed your book," wrote Susan Dillingham, "because the characters seemed to be real. I felt like the characters were really you."

County Gets \$17,668 For Recreation Work

A grant for \$17,668 has been awarded to the Madison County Recreation Commission for the Ivy/Laurel Park, congressman Lamar Gudgeon announced on Tuesday.

The grant came from the Department of the Interior's Heritage, Conservation and Recreation Service for

development at Upper Laurel Park, consisting of the installation of lights for the community ball field, and at Greater Ivy Community Park, consisting of grading and lighting the ball field, two dugouts, two sets of bleachers, a backstop, a concession stand and restrooms.