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Even With Drought

Burley Crop OK

Portions of Madison County have been hit hard by weeks of drought, but the county's largest money maker, burley tobacco, may survive to reach 80 percent of a "normal crop" according to Wiley DuVall and Bill Zink of the Agriculture Stabilization and Conservation Service office located in Marshall.

The burley tobacco situation is "better than last year, even with the drought," said DuVall during a recent interview. "We had less blue mold this year, and that has made a lot of difference," he said.

In addition, the recent rainfall in the county will benefit the tobacco that has not already been cut because of the long period of dry weather. Several farmers have reported the plants remaining in the fields are beginning to revive and are "looking much better." There is about a month left in the growing season for burley in Madison.

Burley tobacco accounts for about 60 percent of the farming industry in the county, and with the growers reaching 100 percent of a "normal" crop of five million pounds the county stands to make over \$7 million

in farm income annually. These figures are based on an average price support rate of \$1.40 per pound.

Zink explained that the government price support increases "about seven to nine percent each year," and the average support rate is 145.9 cents per pound for the 1980 crop a figure which is up 9.4 percent over last year.

However, if 80 percent or less of the burley crop is worth harvesting, the county will see an income of only five to six million dollars in tobacco revenue for this season.

DuVall, who has travelled most of the county during this growing season, said the south and eastern portions of the county have suffered the most from the dry weather. "The area from Marshall to Mars Hill and down to the county line has been the driest," he said. But farmers who have been able to irrigate their fields have not been hurt too severely by the lack of rainfall in that area.

The drought has not been as widespread as some had thought in the county, and some predictions of a crop

disaster have been unfounded, according to the ASCS agents. To the north in the Laurel section, and west along Spring Creek, the burley crops seem to be fairing well. DuVall pointed out growers on Big Pine were also having notable success with this year's crop. A visit to William Shelton's farm on Big Pine revealed broad, healthy leaves growing on the bottom land next to the creek.

Where the moisture has been plentiful, there have been some cases of extensive blue mold damage as in the case of one farmer who is hoping to get 2,300 pounds of tobacco from four acres of land this year. Ordinarily, one acre of land should yield 2,300 pounds, according to Zink.

"There are just so many variables that can make or break a farmer," Zink said. "A season that's too dry or too wet. Fungus or other plant diseases. It's all a gamble."

"Some people talk about Las Vegas as being the gambling capital of the world, but they haven't taken a good look at the average farmer," he said.



SHERIFF E.Y. PONDER disposes of 1,500 marijuana plants on the island in Marshall. The illegal weed was confiscated earlier during this month, but had to be stored and dried before it would burn properly. (Photo by N. Hancock)

Absentee Ballots Available

Beginning Sept. 5, Madison County residents who qualify to vote in the General Election to be held on Nov. 4, 1980, but who will be out of the county or those who are unable to go to the polls because of physical disabilities may request an absentee ballot by coming to the Board of Elections' office in the Ramsey Building on Main Street or by having a near relative apply for them at the board's office.

If a voter cannot get to the office and does not have a near relative to apply for him, the voter may send a written request to the board at P.O. Box 142, Marshall, N.C. 28753. An application will be mailed for the voter to complete. After the application is returned to the Board's office the ballots will then be mailed to the voter.

The deadline for issuance of absentee applications is Oct. 29. The deadline for receiving absentee ballots is 5 p.m. on Nov. 3.

The Board will begin meeting Sept. 5, at 10 a.m. to consider applications and will meet each Friday at that time during the month of September.

A Note On Football

Effort Needs Support, Encouragement

The 1980 football season is upon us, and the Madison High School Patriots and the ninth grade Freshman Patriots are all geared up to kick off the season this Friday evening and on Sept. 4 respectively.

It's a time of year most of us look forward to; crisp cool nights, the excitement and anticipation of the pending game, trumpets blaring and drums a-thumping as the band marches out onto the field at half-time.

Thoughts of "we're the best," "We can do it," and "we can be number one" creep into the minds of players and spectators alike as they enter stadiums at schools everywhere.

The big moment arrives, the game is on, and after four quarters of sweat and bruises and yelling encouragements it comes to an end for that night. Some walk away with shouts of laughter and joy; others walk away carrying disappointment and discouragement. So it goes. That's all part of this game called football.

But there are other elements involved which lead up to the Friday night clashes, and which go undetected by the average fan or observer. And, these are the

events and efforts which make the gridiron battles and the half time entertainments possible. They often go unnoticed and little rewarded by those of us who sit in the bleachers and demand victory or pout at defeat.

Specifically, these elements are practice and work put in by the team players, the band, the cheerleaders, the coaches, directors and sponsors here at Madison High.

Every member of the Patriots team endured the dust and heat of preseason practice. The quarterbacks threw hundreds of passes, the receivers ran miles to be in the right spot. All of them went through the school of trial and error and the college of aches and pains on their way to the opening game.

And the band played on. And on, and on, and on, until the notes began to blend and sound like the music on the sheet before them. And, they marched. Time and time again until footsteps became synchronized and everybody was where they were supposed to be at the end of it all.

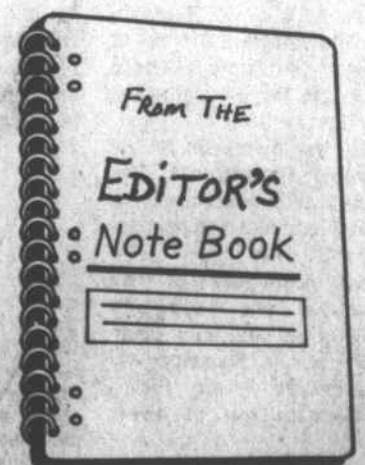
These are the things which make the game what it is. These are things we as spectators, parents and friends should en-

courage and support during football season.

When a game victory is with us, it's easy to be a "backer of the Patriots". But when the loss is ours, or a season shows more defeats than wins, we tend to forget that these young people are still working. Still trying to perfect their skills out there on that field.

We should be proud of, and support, their efforts. A winning score is gravy.

By G. Nicholas Hancock



School Board Met In Closed Session

The Madison County Board of Education met Sunday night at 7:30 in the school superintendent's office in what was termed a workplanning session by members of the board.

School board attorney, Larry Leake explained at the beginning of the meeting that he had some matters to discuss with the board which would fall into the attorney-client relationship category, and recommended that the board hold the meetings as an executive session.

Board members indicated that they anticipated taking no action on any matters presented by attorney Leake.

Board chairman Bobby Ponder said no business other than that business presented by Leake would be under consideration for discussion.

Town Board Meeting Changed

The regular monthly meeting of the Town Board of Marshall will be held Monday, Sept. 8, at 7:30 p.m. The meeting has been rescheduled from Sept. 1 to Sept. 8 because of the Labor Day holiday.

Band Expects Good Year

"I am looking forward to working with the Madison High School Band this year, especially the marching unit," Bill Stell, director, stated in an interview last week.

Stell, who founded the consolidated high school's band in 1974 with the first marching season in 1975, is pleased with the enthusiasm of the 53 students who currently are practicing for the coming football season. Nine of the members are seniors which means that the future of the band looks great with 44 musicians remaining.

In addition to the instrumental

members of the band, Stell is also thrilled at the members of the flag corps which number nine students at the present. Judy Buckner is Captain and Commander is Vicky Kidd. The popular director explained that the flag corps is "a vital part of the band." "The practices of the flag corps is just as rigid and demanding as that of the instrumentalists."

Stell pointed out that 24 members of the marching band graduated last year. "This means that over half of this year's members have never marched before," he stated. Even so,

Stell expects to have an excellent year.

Stell, who has directed the band for six years, is a 1969 graduate of Newberry College in South Carolina. He earned his Master's Degree from Western Carolina University in 1973, and is a member of the 246th South Carolina Army National Guard Band.

One of the highlights Stell is looking forward to will be at the Homecoming game with Mitchell on October 10, when members of the Madison High School from 1975 to the present are urged to attend and sit in the band section.



BROAD LEAVES are the mark of successful burley growing on William Shelton's farm on Big Pine Creek. This specimen was in the crop growing in bottom land along the creek. (Photo by N. Hancock)



PROGRESS CONTINUES on the press box at the Madison High School stadium, and on the work to fill, regrade and saw the bank above the rock wall behind the press box. Target date for completion of the rock veneer press box is September 10.