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Photo by N. Hancock

LITTLE MAC CHAMPS — The Madison High Lady Patriot track team recently became the first track team in MHS history to win the Little Mac Conference Championship. The final team record was 29-9 having won their last 15 meets in a row. Six girls qualified for the Western Sectional meet on May 7. The 1982 team consists of 4 seniors, 2

juniors, 2 sophomores and 5 freshmen. Front row: (l-r) Lisa Shelton, Charis Mahy, Rene Cole, Penny Stanton, Mary Rice. Back row (l-r) Coach Ricky McDevitt, Karlyn Ammons, Debbie Spears, Heidi Worley, Rachel Ammons, Laurie Melvin, Cindy Buckner, Katrina Worley and Nancy Holcombe.

Parents Request Principal's Removal

By NICHOLAS HANCOCK
Editor

Parents who want Laurel School Principal Vernon Ponder transferred next term and others who want him to remain at Laurel appeared before the Madison County Board of Education last week to find out what action the board plans.

The board left the matter hanging saying principal assignments would be made after the final state teacher allotments are received.

Leonard Gosnell, spokesman for 73 parents who signed a petition in April asking for Ponder's removal, told the board, "we are not asking that Ponder or anyone be fired." He said the group only wants him moved to another school in the system.

"We just want to know if the board has taken any action on our request," Gosnell said.

BOARD CHAIRMAN BOBBY PONDER told Gosnell and the 40 parents with him that the board had received only a tentative state allotment for teachers and that no teachers or principals had been assigned for the next school year. "We won't do that until we receive the final allotment," Ponder said.

"I can assure you that our decision will be in the best interest of the children," Ponder said.

The group petitioned the board last month for the principal's removal, citing lack of leadership and unsanitary conditions at the school as reasons for their wanting another principal assigned to the elementary school containing grades K-8.

Approximately 20 people, apparently attending the meeting on the principal's behalf, sat across the center aisle of the Madison County courtroom from Gosnell's group of dissenting parents.

HARVEY FRANKLIN, a teacher at Laurel School, told the board that the principal "has suffered unjustly" since the petition to remove him surfaced, and he called Vernon Ponder a "fine man."

"I see so many good things about our school, and one of the best is our principal," Franklin said.

Mary Brooks, who said she was speaking as a concerned parent of three children in Laurel School, said, "Mr. Ponder is just a super person, and the teachers are just great." Saying she once attended Laurel School herself, Mrs. Brooks countered the petitioners' allegations about unsanitary conditions saying, "the food is just great. I've never seen nastiness in the bathrooms, lunchroom or anywhere."

"I'm proud of Laurel School," Mrs. Brooks said.

Speaking for the petitioners, Gosnell emphasized to the board that none of the parents were seeking to get the principal or any of the school's teachers or employees fired from the system. He repeated a request made last month to hire Charles Cutshall, a native of the Asheville community and teacher in the Asheville city schools, to replace Ponder.

GOSNELL SAID "it is appalling and distressing" that the group, as taxpayers, couldn't seem to get one position filled at the school when, he said, 13

members of school board member Floyd Wallin's family are employed by the system.

Gosnell said Wallin's wife is employed as a cafeteria cook and two sons, Kenneth and Jerry, are employed as bus drivers while one is a teacher's aide at Madison High and the other works as a school bus garage mechanic. Gosnell named the other 10 relatives and their jobs in the system and pointed out that superintendent Robert L. Edwards is Wallin's nephew.

"We pay taxes. We have a right," Gosnell said, indicating the group wants some say in who is assigned to Laurel.

Chairman Ponder, requesting to Gosnell's statements about Wallin, said, "An assumption has been made that Mr. Wallin has hired his own people." Then, Ponder solicited testimony from Franklin who said Wallin's wife has been working in the system for over 30 years. Ponder said Wallin has been on the board for only three years.

"I resent that being brought out," Ponder said.

MRS. HARVEY FRANKLIN, defending Wallin, said, "Laurel School has really been good to my children. Mr. Wallin's family has meant a lot to my children. It seems really cruel to have our school system publicized as being bad."

School board attorney Larry Leake told Gosnell and the petitioners, "This board has not assigned anyone to any school. It can't tell you it's going to do it (remove Ponder) or not do it. It will act on the recommendations of the superintendent."

County Commissioners Meeting

County Budget Requests Total Over \$2 Million

By NICHOLAS HANCOCK
Editor

Thus far, budget requests from county agencies total "well over \$2 million", according to county finance officer David Caldwell, and that's not including the sheriff's department and general county administrative offices, he said.

The \$2 million figure was revealed last week at the county commissioners meeting after several departmental heads submitted proposed 1982-83 budgets to the board.

Highest among the county agencies seeking local tax dollars was the Madison County Schools which have asked in excess of \$800,000 in combined local current expense and capital outlay funds. Commission Chairman James Ledford told the board the school figure amounts to 66 percent "over what we gave them last year,"

and he said, "the school system is going to have to tighten their belt, too."

Ledford said to meet all the submitted requests would mean raising the county tax rate to \$1.75 per valuation, but he added, "We've just had orders to keep the same as last year (75 cents per \$100 valuation) regardless of who gets cut."

Budget requests were submitted Friday night by Ed Morton, director of the county health department; Luanne Roberts, director of the daycare program; Mildred West, Emergency Medical Service director; and Anita Davie, Department of Social Services director.

Morton requested \$166,148 in local funds for the health department, and said that sum could be smaller if state and federal allocations for family planning and maternal and child health care were not cut too severely. But,

Morton said his department has already had to take some cuts in the two programs.

Morton said his overall budget figure reflected a 10 percent increase in pay scales.

The daycare budget of \$76,453 showed some increases in personnel, travel and supply costs, according to Ms. Roberts. Anita Davie said the \$373,548 county money figure for DSS is a \$26,000 increase (7 percent) over the 1981-82 budget. She said the increases are Medicaid vendors (\$23,000), daycare services (5,500), and in an increase for foster care services of \$3,579 which requires 25 percent in matching funds from the county.

Mrs. Davie said the DDS budget showed decreases in Aide to Families with Dependent Children staff (\$4,000) and Medicaid staff (\$6,000).

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Board Hears Details Of Program

By NICHOLAS HANCOCK

"The number one need in the program now is to get into the elementary schools,"

Harry Overby, Madison High band director, told the board of education last week in explaining details of expanding the school system's music program.

Overby and Madison High principal David Wyatt brought facts and figures before board members in an effort to get a larger slice of next year's school budget to offer band instruction to

elementary students.

After hearing the details of the program, as was requested at last month's board meeting, Chairman Bobby Ponder told Overby, "It's a very good program; it's a matter of whether we can come up with the money or not."

The board made no commitment, pending the county allocation to the board for the 1982-83 budget year.

Overby said he had conducted a countywide survey in the six elementary schools

and found that nearly 25 percent of the students were interested in participating in the band program. Overby said "considerable interest" has grown in music in the local schools.

Additional cost to the board would be approximately \$4,500 for the next year, Overby said. Plans call for him to travel to each of the schools "two or three times per week" to provide basic musical instruction primarily to seventh and eighth graders.

Cost of travel would amount

to \$2,400 and cost of printed sheet music would be approximately \$2,000, Overby said. Students would provide their own instruments.

Overby said he would like to see a countywide band boosters club formed to help defray the cost of the program in the future. He said the boosters club is a project he would be working on soon.

In other board business, the board:

• Rescheduled the June 2 board of education meeting to Friday, June 4.

Clarke Files For Congressional Seat



James McClure Clarke

State Senator James McClure Clarke (D-Buncombe) officially filed last week for the N.C. 11th District seat in the U.S. Congress now held by Republican Bill Hendon of Asheville.

Clarke, now completing his first term in the state Senate, was first elected to the General Assembly in 1976 where he served two terms in the N.C. House.

During his first N.C. House term, he served on the House Committee on Aging and the Interim Joint Study Committee on Aging. During the 1979 legislative session, Clarke was chairman of the House Committee on Law Enforcement and served on the Governor's Crime Commission.

In the N.C. Senate, Clarke was Chairman of the Committee on Constitutional Amendments and vice chairman of the Committee on Insurance and Higher Education.

He is currently secretary of the James O.R. McClure Educational and Development Fund, a trustee of the Southern Council of Foundations and an honorary trustee of the North Carolina

Symphony.

In the past, Clarke has held trusteeships for the N.C. School of the Arts in Winston Salem and Memorial Mission Hospital in Asheville. He is a former chairman of the N.C. Historic Sites Advisory Committee and former president of the Asheville Civitan Club. He has served as assistant to the President of Warren Wilson College and is a former associate editor of the Asheville-Citizen-Times. He began his public service career as a member of the Buncombe County Board of Education.

In a recent press release, Clarke said he will make reducing the federal budget deficit and getting people back to work a primary issue in his 1982 election campaign.

On other issues, Clarke said he feels the federal government "must return education to priority status." To prevent deterioration of education "especially in view of growing competition from Japan and West Germany in highly technical fields."

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By NICHOLAS HANCOCK

Clyde Shook of Bowman Funeral Home says he remembers when Red Rector used to bring a mandolin or guitar to school. "Red was always fooling around with music," Shook said recalling their early years when the two attended the same school near Leicester.

Red's still fooling around with music, but instead of catching the stern eye of some disapproving teacher, he's basking in the applause of enthusiastic folk and bluegrass music fans wherever he shows up with his old Gibson A-4 mandolin throughout the eastern United States.

Sunday, Red was teamed up with noted banjo picker Don Stover at the Stokley-Van Camp Folklife Festival at the 1982 World's Fair in Knoxville. Red now calls Knoxville home, but he recalled briefly his early days in Marshall and Madison County.

"I was born near Marshall, but we moved up near Washington, D.C. when I was six," he said. "Later, we moved back to Madison County and I went to school over near Leicester."

"I left home when I was 18 and came to Knoxville where I got a job playing music with Charlie Stover," Red said. "During Red's early musical career, he played with a

number of country and bluegrass notables including Carl Story and Hylo Brown. When the surge in popularity of bluegrass music occurred during the late '60s and early '70s, Red could be found at almost all the major bluegrass festivals from New England to Florida.

Red and Stover, who is perhaps best known for his banjo work with the Lilly Brothers, had been hired to perform for several days at the World's Fair Folklife Festival. The festival will feature folk, country, blues and bluegrass musicians every day through October 31.

Even though Red departed Madison County when only a youngster, he apparently hasn't forgotten his roots here. The title of the latest album on the Renovah label is "Back Home in Madison County." One cut, an instrumental, is named simply "Madison County."

The album, which includes Clarence "Tater" Tate on fiddle and Tom McKinney on banjo, was recorded at Wes Sound Recording Studio in Asheville. Some of the vocals include "Stack Up Blues," "Faded Love," and "Little Cabin Home."

Bluegrass or just plain Red Rector fans can write for a price list and order the album from Renovah Record, Box 217, Ferndale, N.Y. 12740.



MADISON PICKER — Red Rector, a Madison County native now living in Knoxville, performed with banjoist Don Stover on the Folklife Festival stage Sunday at the 1982 World's Fair in Knoxville. (See other World's Fair photos and stories on page 2.)