

April 17, 1985

Marshall Seeks Block Grant

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Community Calendar

Marshall VFD To Hold Dance

The Marshall Volunteer Fire Dept. will sponsor a dance on Saturday night at 8 p.m. in the Marshall Community Center. The Bounty Hunters Band will entertain.

Walnut Creek CD Club To Meet

The Walnut Creek Community Development Club will meet on April 22 at 7:30 p.m. in the fellowship hall of the Enon Church. Club president Ralph Ramsey invites all Walnut Creek residents to attend.

Mars Hill Lions Fish Fry

The Mars Hill Lions Club will hold a fish fry dinner from 11 a.m. until 7 p.m. Saturday, April 20 in downtown Mars Hill. All proceeds from the dinner will benefit the club's service projects.

Operation Child Find In Marshall

OPERATION CHILDFIND, a program to provide parents with fingerprints of their children, will be at the Marshall Presbyterian Church on April 27. Children to be fingerprinted must be accompanied by an adult. Parents will be provided with a permanent record of their children's fingerprints.

Coon Hunters Bench Show

The WNC Coon Hunters Association will sponsor a UKC-licensed bench show and night hunt on April 20. A drag race and treeing contest will be held following the bench show. Deadline for entries is Saturday at 2 p.m.

The hunt and show will be held at the American Enka Union Hall on Sardis Rd. south of Asheville. Take I-26 to Exit 12 and follow signs.

Job Search Class Offered

The Opportunity Corporation of Madison and Buncombe Counties is sponsoring a five-day training class in developing good job-searching skills and building self confidence at the Marshall Elementary School beginning on April 22. The sessions will be held daily through April 26 from 9 a.m. until 2:30 p.m. The classes are free and open to the public.

For more information, contact the Opportunity Corp. in Marshall at 649-3231.

Clean Streams Day Reminder

Group leaders for Clean Streams Day clean-up crews can pick up their trash bags and T-shirts beginning on April 23. Clean Stream Day is April 27.

Teachers Receive Layoff Notices

Eight Madison County school teachers received layoff notices last week as the county Board of Education prepared assignments for the upcoming school year. All eight are first-year teachers.

The layoff letters were sent because state law requires that teachers be given at least 30 days notice of termination. In the letter to the new teachers, school superintendent Robert L. Edwards held out hope that some, if not all, would be recalled.

Edwards told the April 3 meeting of the school board that the county will probably lose one full-time teaching position in its state allocation in the coming year. Edwards added that proposed changes in maximum

classroom size now being considered by the General Assembly might change that allocation.

The letters were sent to the new teachers, Edwards said, because the county has to be prepared to terminate their positions if changes aren't made in the teacher allocation formula.

The letters were sent to Allen Stines, Kathy Shelton, Sandra Reeves, Judy Grigg, Edith Cheek, Helen Norton, Melanie Blankenship and Anita Ward.

Following an executive session in their April 3 meeting, the school board also voted to hire Fred Sams for the remainder of the school year as an vocational instructor at Mars

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THE NEWS RECORD

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Harmony Fought At County Democrat Convention

Swan Huff Elected Chairman

By ROBERT KOENIG

Madison County Democrats were united behind Swan Huff Saturday at the annual county convention held at Madison High School.

Huff, a former Hot Springs mayor and school board member, was elected as the party's county chairman by unanimous acclamation. The 75-year old Huff succeeds Zeno Ponder as the county leader. Ponder, who had completed a second term as the local party chief, was prohibited from succeeding himself again.

Ponder will remain a powerful leader in county politics despite losing the chairmanship he had held for four terms, however. Ponder was unanimously elected as the party's second vice chairman moments after Huff was named to his post. Ponder was nominated by delegate Levi Hunter.

The convention selected Marshall Elementary School teacher Lutrelle Robinson as the county vice chairman. Democratic Party rules require that the vice chairman be a female if the county chairman is a man.

County commission chairman James T. Ledford nominated former Jim Hunt aide Wayne McDevitt as the party's third vice chairman. McDevitt, like the other officers, was

unopposed at the convention. The delegates also re-elected Christine Lister to serve as the county secretary and Hattie Nix was re-named as the party's treasurer.

Following the election of local party officials, Huff moved that Zeno Ponder continue to serve on the Democrats' state executive committee, a position normally reserved for the county chairman. Huff's motion was approved by acclamation.

Former State Senator Larry Leake delivered the convention's keynote address. Leake, who currently serves as counsel to both the Madison County Board of Commissioners and the Board of Education, reminded the convention of the organizing efforts of Zeno and E.Y. Ponder. Swan Huff, Judson Edwards and Bill Moore when Madison County was a Republican-controlled stronghold.

Leake told the delegates, "We owe it to those who worked so hard in the 40's and 50's to continue to elect Democrats in Madison County." Leake cited the county's Emergency Medical Service, improvements to county schools, senior citizen meal sites and improved roads as the result of Democratic leadership in the county.

Crediting the leadership of school

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SWAN HUFF, left, was elected as the Madison County Democratic Party's county chairman Saturday at the county convention. Lutrelle Robinson, right, was named the first vice chairman.

State Trooper Slain On I-40 Two-Day Manhunt Captures Suspect

By ROBERT KOENIG

A 26 year old North Carolina State Trooper was shot to death on Tuesday night in Haywood County after making a routine traffic stop on Interstate 40.

Trooper Giles A. Harmon of Arden was listed as dead upon arrival at Haywood County Hospital at 10:47 p.m. Harmon died from a single gunshot wound to the chest.

The shooting occurred at about 9 p.m. along a paved detour around the I-40 tunnels blocked by a March 18 rockslide. Harmon was on routine patrol at the time of his death. He was usually assigned to patrol duty in the Asheville area. Since the reopening of the I-40 detour however, the National Transportation Safety Board has required the state to keep two patrol cars at the detour to monitor speeding and keep the congested area clear.

Two truck drivers traveling I-40 at the time saw the trooper fall to the ground after being shot. Driver Larry Hedlund of Iowa told police he saw the trooper stagger backwards and heard a gunshot.

Gene Mull of Cherryville, a trucker who had been following Hedlund's rig, also saw Harmon fall and pulled his truck off the road to aid the fallen trooper.

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BILLY DENTON McQUEEN, Jr., center, covers his face as he is led to waiting police car following his arrest Thursday afternoon near I-40. McQueen was captured

following a two-day manhunt that involved more than 200 lawmen. He has been charged with the murder of State Trooper Giles Harmon.

Some Leaf Farmers Quit; Some Diversify; Others Hang On

BY JOAN OLECK

The News and Observer

Second in a series of articles dealing with the future of tobacco in North Carolina

Walter Hill quit growing tobacco last year and turned to a commodity unaffected by weather, pests and politics.

Giving up the golden leaf was not easy. Hill, yellow-haired and ruddy-faced, had sharecropped 30 acres of flue-cured tobacco in Green County for 14 years.

"The biggest reason I quit farming was, I anticipated the demise of the tobacco program," he said. "I was 35 years old, not owning any land to enable me to diversify into hogs or chickens...."

"I had to make a career decision, long-term. It was sort of like breaking up a family when I made the decision."

This spring, Hill is cultivating native hanes.

"We call them manufactured housing," he said one recent evening at the lot near Kinston where he is a

saleman. "Trailers' had a bad connotation."

Hill is one of thousands of Eastern North Carolina farmers who have found in recent years that they no longer can depend on tobacco to support their families. Federal quota cuts reduced the state's tobacco production 18 percent from 1978 to 1982 and helped push many farmers out of tobacco. According to the 1982 U. S. Census of Agriculture, North Carolina has lost 23 percent, 6,500, of its tobacco farms in that four-year span.

Some former tobacco growers, such as Walter Hill, are switching to non-farm jobs. Others are staying on the farm and diversifying into vegetables, hogs or poultry. Season by season, tobacco's share of the North Carolina farm economy is declining gradually.

"Diversification is not a suddenly new thing right now," said Douglas C. Sanders, extension specialist in vegetable crops at N. C. State University.

In 1950, tobacco accounted for 60 percent of all North Carolina cash farm receipts and 74 percent of all crop receipts. That share fell steadily in the next three decades. In 1980, tobacco's share had fallen to 31 percent of farm receipts and 52 percent of crop receipts. Meanwhile, a variety of commodities, including soybeans, corn and all categories of livestock, were increasing their share.

Tobacco reigned as the state's most valuable farm commodity from 1926 when it dethroned King Cotton until last year. Poultry took over in 1984 as the state's top agricultural commodity.

with total farm receipts estimated by the N. C. Department of Agriculture at \$1.125 billion to \$1.535 billion. Tobacco receipts amounted to \$1.055 billion. (The figures cannot be compared directly because for most categories of poultry income, the state figures the value of the birds in processing firms—which bear much of the initial production expenses—rather

than to the contract farmers who produce the birds for the processors.)

Although North Carolina's farm economy is diversifying as the world market and federal production quotas for tobacco decline, the state still depends heavily on tobacco and on the federal production controls and price supports that guarantee it as a lucrative cash crop. Many farm and government leaders share Hill's fears for the program's future, and they have worked hard for years to patch up and preserve the politically and financially threatened program.

Only recently have some of them begun to wonder aloud what North Carolina should do if the program ends.

"I think we'd take a look at anything the state could do to help our small tobacco farmers," James A. Graham, the state agriculture commissioner, told the N. C. House Agriculture Committee in February. He said he was open to suggestions on how to help farmers who would lose their acreage allotments—exclusive

government franchises to grow tobacco—if the program ended.

Former State Rep. H. Parks Helms of Charlotte says he is convinced the tobacco program will die sooner or later. When that happens, the state may not be prepared.

"I really don't believe it's a question of 'if-it's a question of when,'" Helms said in an interview. Last summer he sponsored a bill to set up a "North Carolina in Transition" study group, but it was killed in committee.

"It seems to me long past the time when we should be planning for this transition" to an unregulated tobacco economy, he said.

The only tobacco-related legislation offered so far in the General Assembly is designed to give farmers tax deductions on the increasing assessments they pay to finance the tobacco program. Helms lost his bid for re-election last year, and no one in the legislature has picked up his call to plan for tobacco deregulation in North Carolina, the major tobacco state.

But Kentucky, the major burley tobacco state, has begun planning for a tobacco transition. Preserving the federal program is the primary concern of a task force set up by the Kentucky legislature last year, but the group also is considering what Kentucky should do if the program dies.

"The reason we got it passed was that I pointed out that the tobacco industry cannot be replaced in Kentucky," state Rep. Ward "Butch" Burnette of Fulton County, the Kentucky task force chairman, said in a telephone interview.

"And if we bury our heads in the sand and do not take a look at this issue, it could destroy us, destroy our industry," he said. The Kentucky group is still working on its study, and Burnette said he thought North Carolina should start now.

One North Carolina agency is starting to look ahead in desperation. The Department of Community College and Technical Education is