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# NEWS RECORD

December 26, 1985

SERVING THE PEOPLE OF MADISON COUNTY SINCE 1901

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25¢

## MHC Trustees Named

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## Community Calendar

...Please Don't Drink And Drive

## Former Marshall Mayor Becomes A Republican

Former Marshall Mayor Betty Wild became a Republican on Nov. 20, two weeks after her defeat in the municipal elections.

Madison County election officials confirmed that the former mayor switched her voter registration from Democratic to Republican on Nov. 20. The timing of the former mayor's change of party would appear to eliminate her as a candidate in next year's county-wide elections.

Since her defeat in the Nov. 5 election, Mrs. Wild had been rumored to be considering entering the county commission race. A frequent critic of Sheriff E.Y. Ponder, the former mayor was also rumored to be considering a challenge to the sheriff. However, her change in party

registration bars her from entering the May primary elections for the county posts. In confirming Wild's change in party affiliation, election officials noted that state election law requires candidates for office to be a member of a party for at least 90 days.

The filing period for the State House and Senate, county commission, school board, sheriff and clerk of courts races opens on Jan. 6 at noon and continues until noon on Feb. 3. As a new member of the Republican Party, the election official noted, Mrs. Wild will be unable to enter the party's primary race.

The former mayor could not be reached for comment on Monday.

## State Asks Marshall To Improve Waste Plant

Marshall Mayor Anita Ward called a special meeting of the town's aldermen on Monday in response to a complaint from the state agency which monitors the town's waste treatment plant on the French Broad River.

The mayor had earlier received notification that the treatment plant was releasing too much untreated grease into the river from the plant located on Blannerhasset Island.

Max Haner of the North Carolina Department of Natural Resources and Community Development advised Mayor Ward that the town failed a

Nov. 26 inspection. Haner's letter said the town plant was releasing an unacceptable amount of total suspended solids into the French Broad.

Morris Tremble of Wastewater Treatment, Inc. who supervises the town's water and sewer system, said that the problem is caused by restaurants releasing grease into the town's sewer system. Both Tremble and engineer Gary McGill recommended that the aldermen consider a sewage ordinance requiring food service businesses to install grease traps

to prevent oils from entering the town's system.

McGill presented the aldermen with a sample of such a resolution and asked that they approve some form of the resolution at their February meeting.

Haner's report on the inspection also called for the town to install a water line to the treatment plant. The aldermen voted to have town crews install the line next week.

The aldermen asked McGill to prepare cost estimates for making other recommended improvements to the sewer system.

McGill recommended that the board give restaurant owners time to comply with the new ordinance, should they enact one in February.

In other business considered at the special meeting, the town awarded the Madison County Housing Authority a \$10,000 contract to handle administration of a Community Development Block Grant to provide water and sewer lines on Cody Rd. and Candler Rd.

The next meeting of the town board is scheduled for January 13 at 7:30 p.m.

## Sprinkle Pledges Cooperation Council Sets Public Hearing Dates

The Weaverville Town Council set dates for a series of public hearings next month concerning proposed zoning changes and the clean-up of Lake Louise. The board met on Friday to continue the meeting originally begun on Dec. 16.

The council set Jan. 13 at 7 p.m. for a public hearing on the Lake Louise clean-up project. Earlier, the council

committed \$100,000 to the project. The money will match federal funds to be used in the project.

The council also named Gary McGill to prepare a site plan for the proposed recreation center on the lakefront. A site plan will be presented at the Jan. 13 hearing.

The council also accepted a petition

for annexation presented by Larry Buckner on behalf of the owners of the Carroll Buckner property on Weaver Blvd. Buckner is also seeking a change in the town's zoning laws to permit development of a shopping center on the 22-acre site.

The council set a Jan. 27 date for a public hearing on Buckner's rezoning request. The council had earlier set

Jan. 6 as the date for another public hearing for a rezoning request on the south side of Weaver Blvd.

Prior to the meeting, outgoing town manager Larry Sprinkle released a statement pledging to co-operate with town officials during his remaining month in office. Sprinkle was fired effective Jan. 31 during the town meeting of Dec. 16.

## 1985: The Year In Review

News Highlights From The Front Pages Of The News Record

### JANUARY

The year began with news that Hot Springs would be forced to cash in the town's savings in order to pay a \$30,000 debt owed to the North Carolina Employment Security Commission. The debt was incurred for unemployment benefits paid to workers on a 1979 housing rehabilitation project.

A former publisher of The News Record, Jerue Babb, was found in a Spartanburg, S.C. motel room with his wrists slashed. Police believe Babb committed suicide after strangling his 31-year old wife in their Tuxedo home.

Madison County Commissioner James Ledford was elected as the chairman of the Land of the Sky Regional Council.

Marshall completed a \$1.3 million sewer project with some \$94,746 to spare and Contel announced plans for changes in the countywide telephone system.

A winter storm from Canada swept across the South, bringing record cold temperatures. Readings as low as 23 below zero were reported in Madison County, forcing the closing of schools and businesses. A elderly Grapevine woman, Alice Peck, was found dead in her home, a victim of the record cold temperatures.

A January 15 wreck on Hot Springs Mountain claimed the lives of Harold J. Ledford and Allie C. Mathis.

U.S. Agriculture Secretary John R. Block called for the gradual phase-out of the tobacco price support program, beginning a year of uncertainty for the nation's tobacco farmers. At year's end, Congress was still debating the future of the program.

### FEBRUARY

The bad news for tobacco farmers continued in February with the announcement that burley tobacco quotas would be cut 10 percent below the 1984 level.

The News Record conducted a poll of readers concerning toll-free telephone service. Response was overwhelmingly in favor of the service. Results of the survey were presented at a public hearing in Marshall. Later in the year, Contel officials announced that toll-free countywide service would be offered later this year when the installation of digital switching equipment was completed.

A Feb. 11 snowstorm which dropped up to two feet of snow on Madison County closed schools and delayed publication of The News Record for two days. A special "Snowstorm edition" was published on Feb. 15.

Marshall aldermen voted to suspend police chief Joe W. Griffey following a high-speed chase during which the chief fired nine shots at a fleeing motorist.

Sheriff E.Y. Ponder returned three missing youngsters who had left the county on a joyride with a Marshall Elementary School bus driver. The driver, Ronnie Ball, was later convicted on charges of contributing to the delinquency of a minor.

Rep. Lester B. Ramsey of Marshall was re-elected to a third term as speaker of the House. He is the first speaker ever elected to three terms.

Marshall and former police officer Charlie Gunter reached an out-of-court settlement in a \$350,000 lawsuit stemming from Gunter's dismissal in 1983. The settlement cost Marshall \$3,700 in payments made to Gunter and his attorney, Herbert Hyde of Asheville.

Assistant DA James Baker completed an investigation of the shooting incident involving former police chief Joe Griffey. Although the report stated that Griffey acted "without any basis for justification", no charges were filed.

Despite the DA's findings, Marshall aldermen John Dodson and Sammy Lunsford voted to fire the chief at a Feb. 25 meeting. The firing was opposed by board member Ed Niles and Marshall Mayor Betty Wild, who told reporters, "I think Mr. Griffey is getting the royal shaft. I'm not through fighting this."

Larry Davis was named as the town's acting police chief. Davis later resigned following a dispute with Mayor Wild.

In Mars Hill, the Cooper Construction Co. of Hendersonville was awarded the contract on the town's sewer construction project.

### MARCH

March blew in with news that the county commissioners had awarded \$8,000 to Team Madison, a group of Madison High basketball players who toured Europe in June. The commissioners also settled once and for all time the name of the road to be known as Grandview Road in the Alexander section bordering Madison County.

Plans for a unique facelift on the Marshall Glove Co. plant were announced. Sheldon Greene and crew later refinished the outer wall of the factory to reflect turn-of-the-century scenes at the former cotton mill.

In Mars Hill, the board of aldermen approved a contract with Cooper Construction Co. for the town's new sewer project. The aldermen also approved the hiring of two new policemen, Donald Sheppard and Richard Roberts.

March 13 saw the first of a three-part series examining James Ledford's business relationship with Madison County agencies. A check of receipts indicated that the commissioner's service stations had provided \$5,247.35 in goods and services to the county Transportation Authority and Emergency Medical Service during the 1984 fiscal year. State law limits the amount of business public officials may conduct with government agencies to \$5,000 per year.

Unofficial results of Democratic precinct elections indicated that Grapevine Democrats has selected G.D. Mace as the precinct chairman in a close vote. Mace's victory was later overturned, however, and Bobby Jean Rice was named as the winner.

Snowfall blanketed the county on the eve of spring's official arrival. French Broad EMC announced a five-percent increase in rates.

A Winston-Salem truck driver, detoured through Madison County on Interstate 40, was involved in a steep turn on U.S. 29-70 near the Springs

William LaMotte was the only fatality resulting from the detour which paralyzed Madison County roads while DOT crews worked to clear the wreckage of the March 5 rockslide near the Tennessee border.

Lawmakers in Raleigh approved a change in state law raising the legal drinking age to 21 in 1986.

### APRIL

Trouble involving the Marshall Police Dept. continued in April with the theft and destruction of one of the town's patrol cars. Vandals stole and set fire to the car after abandoning it at the rock quarry south of town. No arrests were ever made in connection with the theft.

Just the day before the patrol car was stolen, acting police chief Larry Davis submitted his resignation to Marshall Mayor Betty Wild.

Mars Hill attorney Bruce Briggs was elected as the Republican Party county chairman at the county convention. Briggs later accepted a post with the state parole board in Raleigh.

R.Z. Ponder was re-elected as chairman of the Madison County Board of Education at their April 3 meeting.

The first of two manhunts in the West Madison communities was begun when State Trooper Giles Harmon was found shot to death on Interstate 40 in Haywood County. The trooper was found while patrolling the I-40 section closed by a March rockslide. Two days later, police found Billy Denton McQueen near the sight of the shooting. McQueen was later convicted of first degree murder by a Haywood County jury.

A Sunday afternoon fire on April 21 destroyed the Petersburg home of Mr. and Mrs. Norman Littrell. The day before, some 335 members attended French Broad EMC's annual meeting at Madison H.S.

While many were attending the electric co-operative's meeting, another 573 volunteers waded into Madison County creeks and rivers for the first annual Clean Streams Day clean-up effort.

Marshall received word that the downtown business district had received approval for designation as a historic district. The designation could lead to Marshall's inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places.

### MAY

The merry month of May began with good news. The county commissioners approved the sale of a 3.9-acre tract in the Madison County Industrial Park to Kenpak Converters, Inc., packagers of medical supplies. Kenpak broke ground for the plant later in the year and is expected to begin production early in 1986.

A special report on Marshall finances noted that Marshall Mayor Betty Wild had purchased tickets for a political dinner honoring Speaker Lester B. Ramsey with town funds. Qualifying members of the police department and fire department had 25,000 while the town had 25,000. The town had 25,000 while the town had 25,000.