

## Court House Dome Removed

-Pictures On P.5

## Community Calendar

### DOE Hearings Set For Friday

The U.S. Department of Energy will conduct a series of public hearings on Friday in the Asheville Civic Center to receive comments concerning the proposed nuclear waste dump. Sessions will be held from 9 a.m. until noon; 2-5 p.m. and 7-10 p.m. More than 100 local residents have registered to speak at the hearings. Speakers will be limited to five-minute presentations.

Gov. James Martin is expected to be among the speakers addressing the Asheville hearing.

### Election Offices Open Saturday

The Madison County Board of Elections office on Main Street in Marshall will be open on April 5 from 10 a.m. until 4 p.m. for voter registration. Monday, April 7 is the deadline for residents wishing to vote in the May 6 primary and referendum.

### Lt. Gov. Bob Jordan Tours County

Lt. Gov. Robert Jordan will tour Madison County this morning before attending a hearing in Waynesville. Jordan will visit the Mars Hill Town Hall at 8 a.m. and the French Broad Electric Membership Corp. headquarters at 9 a.m. He will meet with officials in the Marshall Town Hall at 9:25 a.m. and depart for Hot Springs, where he is expected to arrive at 10:45 a.m.

After meeting with officials and residents in Hot Springs, Jordan will travel to the Sandy Mush Community Center before leaving for Haywood County.

### Leukemia Walk-A-Thon Planned

The annual walk-a-thon and bike-a-thon to benefit the Leukemia Society will be held on April 12 from 11 a.m. until 3 p.m. at Madison H.S. Sponsor forms are available at the Marshall Public Library or from Katherine Boone at Marshall Elementary School. For more information, contact Bea Banks at 649-2436. Prizes, including a grand prize of 20 books of trading stamps, will be offered.

### Laurel VFD Pig Roast Planned

The Laurel Volunteer Fire Dept. will sponsor a pig roast on April 6 from noon until 2 p.m. at the fire hall. Adults admission is \$3. Children can eat for \$2.50. Everyone is invited to attend.

### VFW Auxiliary To Meet

The Ladies Auxiliary of the Mars Hill VFW Post No. 5483 will hold a special election at their April 8th meeting to fill the position of treasurer. The meeting will be held in the Town Hall at 7:30 p.m. All members are urged to attend.

### Weaverville Library Reception

The public is invited to a reception at the Weaverville Public Library on Sunday from 2 until 4 p.m. marking the opening of an exhibit of portraits by Maria Lu Kelso. The library is located on Main Street in Weaverville.

# Open Burning Banned

## Dry Weather, Arsonists Blamed For 15 Fires Here

By WILLIAM LEE

The current dry spell and arsonists are blamed for 15 brush fires reported by the Madison County Forest Ranger over the past week. State officials have issued a ban on all open burning.

Three fires suspected to be the work of arsonists burned late Sunday afternoon in the Marshall area.

All three were contained to under two acres of damage, according to County Ranger Tony Webb. Two fires believed to be the work of arsonists along Panhandle Rd. were started within 15 minutes of each other, Webb reported. The third suspicious fire was set along Redmon Road.

"We occasionally have a few outbreaks of wood arson that are grudge fires," Webb said. "Someone has a grudge against a neighbor, or against us for some past citation, and will set these."

"Occasionally, though, we do run into that type who sets fires for kicks."

Webb said the two fires on Panhandle Road were probably the work of the same person, who waited for firefighters to put out one before starting the second one nearby.

Webb mentioned that the N.C. Division of Forest Resources is now offer-

ing an award of \$500 for information that leads to the arrest and conviction of any woodlands arsonist. He said he hoped the reward may make a difference with those previously reluctant to step forward with information.

The arson fires are particularly dangerous at this dry stage that is expected to continue for the next two weeks. With the isolated areas of Madison County, there is always a danger of any fire erupting out of control if not caught early.

"I'm very fortunate to have crew leaders in a number of communities, watching out for possible problems," Webb said. "We also have good response time from the six volunteer fire departments in the county, as well as drawing on assistance from the U.S. Forest Service."

Due to the dry conditions, a burning ban is now in effect for most of Western North Carolina including Madison, Buncombe and Haywood Counties. A similar ban was issued in Tennessee last week by Gov. Lamar Alexander.

Webb says that during this period any burning must be done in a screened container, within 100 feet of an occupied building, and be diligently watched.

"By an occupied building, we do not mean a barn or woodshed," Webb

pointed out, "but a house or place of business."

"So far, we have been fortunate that we have been alerted to brush

fires early, so they can be contained before they get out of hand and seriously threaten timber and farm land, and human lives."



CUPOLA OF THE MADISON COUNTY COURT HOUSE was removed by workers on Saturday afternoon. Several hundred spectators gathered to watch the dome removal. More pictures on Page 5.

## Aldermen Discuss Sign Ordinance

By ROBERT KOENIG

Mars Hill aldermen held a special called meeting Monday night to discuss the proposed sign ordinance, annexation and the town's spillway problems. The discussions will continue at next Monday's regular monthly meeting.

The Easter Monday meeting was called by Mayor Owen Tilson. Board member John L. Chandler told the mayor he cut short a vacation to attend the special meeting.

Mayor Tilson opened the meeting by informing the aldermen that they would have to appoint several new members to the town's Planning and Zoning Board at their next meeting. Four members have resigned recently and an additional four members' terms expire this year.

Resignations have been received from Ron Kiser, Dr. Reese Steen, Nancy Anderson and Mary Howell. The terms of Ruth Anderson, Jonas Chandler, Richard Croom and Ronnie Wallin are due to expire. Wallin was recently appointed as the board's chairman, succeeding Dr. Steen.

The Planning and Zoning Board has recommended that the members

whose term expires be re-instated. The board also recommended appointment of Dennis Wells, Ned Smith, Brenda Russell and Larry Burda and suggested the appointment of a member of the fire department and an administration representative from Mars Hill College.

Mayor Tilson suggested the aldermen appoint some younger people to serve on the board.

The aldermen discussed provisions of the proposed sign ordinance, but took no final action on the draft. Mayor Tilson recommended setting a flat fee for all sign permits, a change in the original draft which has already been approved. The latest draft of the proposal calls for a \$5 sign permit fee for all signs.

Tilson also suggested that the proposed height limit be raised from 25 feet to 65 feet.

Board member Augusta Jenkins said that the Planning and Zoning Board, authors of the proposal, want to meet with the town board once more before a final decision on the proposal is reached.

The board is expected to discuss

changes in the proposal at Monday's meeting, but a final decision on the proposed ordinance is not expected before May.

On Monday night, the aldermen are also expected to hear from Alan Lane of the North Carolina Dept. of Natural Resources and Community Development. Lane will outline steps the town must take to annex adjacent properties.

Town manager Dahryl Boone reported that he is still awaiting bids from engineers for a study of the

town's spillway. The study is required before the town can apply for an Appalachian Regional Commission grant to fund spillway repairs.

Mayor Tilson reported that he has reached agreement with Mars Hill College on a lease of the Main Street parking lot. The lot is currently shared by the college and town, but town officials want to pave the lot using Powell Bill funds. In order to do so, the lot must become town property. Mars Hill College has agreed to a

-Continued on Page 2

## Local Farmers Vote To Maintain Quotas

Madison County tobacco growers voted overwhelmingly in favor of marketing quotas for burley tobacco in a referendum last week.

According to Madison County director of Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Services, Bill Zink, Madison County farmers approved the measure by 96.7 percent. Of the 1,557 ballots cast, 1,506 were in favor

of the quotas.

"It will be a couple of days before we hear from the state offices how other counties voted," Zink said.

If the referendum passes by at least a two-thirds majority throughout the rest of the state, quotas will be in place for crops grown during the next three years. Price supports will also be in effect.

# State Report Says Area Is Unsuitable For Nuclear Waste Dump Site

## Ground Water, Rock Faults Cited

*"What they fail to realize is that we are between two faults, riding like a bucking horse,"*

—Garrett Smathers

A recently released report by the state Department of Natural Resources and Community Development (NRCD) claims that the proposed nuclear waste dump site in Western North Carolina may be unsuitable for nuclear waste storage due to deep circulating ground water and geological rock faults. A meeting was held last Wednesday in Hot Springs by local experts determined to prove the state's claim.

The report, prepared over the last three months by James Robert Butler, a professor of geology at the University of North Carolina, centered on thermal springs 11 miles north of the proposed site as indication of groundwater circulating at depths greater than 5,000 feet.

That now places a greater importance on the independent work of Garrett Smathers, chairman of the Canton Planning and Zoning Board and an expert in the field of terrestrial hydrology. Along with hydrologist Don Link of the North Carolina Dept. of Natural Resources and Community Development, and thermologist Don Slupka of Asheville, Smathers has centered his investigations in the Hot Springs

area just north of the proposed site, yet the DOE study makes no mention of them at all," Smathers said.

According to Don Link, the fracture system seen in Hot Springs probably has its beginnings somewhere in the Elk River region of the proposed dump at approximately 6,000 feet below the surface. That would place the fault just under the limestone rock bed that the DOE found so suitable.

"While these springs are not within the proposed site, and this area of a different rock structure, it does show the depth that some of the water travels in this area," Link said.

Butler seems to concur, believing that just under the Elk River limestone deposits lies a major fault line which could serve as a pathway for the hydrothermal water that sur-

faces in Hot Springs.

"The DOE study, however, doesn't show that fault because it simply didn't bother to extend deep enough," Butler said in an interview last week. "If they had gone down another 1,000 feet they would have discovered another flatbed of rock, similar to that found throughout the Tennessee River Valley."

In his report, Butler made mention of the fact that the DOE failed to recognize the existence of this major thrust extending beneath the limestone at about 6,000 feet.

Butler also believes that further study may also reveal major pockets of natural gas accumulations that companies may yet want to tap into.

"Their study is riddled with errors and omissions," Butler said of the DOE study. "If they had done more

than just looked at the geological survey maps, where they saw this large cross section of limestone, they would have also discovered that it interconnects with what is referred to as the Rector Branch Fault."

"As a scientific study, the DOE report is a poor piece of work, we know that," Smathers told some of the residents of Hot Springs last week. "What we need to do is take that study apart and show them the errors of their judgement."

"What they fail to realize is that we are between two faults, riding like a bucking horse," Smathers explained, "and they want to put a nuclear waste dump in the middle of it!"

Both Butler and Smathers produced data from the Southern Appalachian Regional Economic Network of the Tennessee Earthquake Labor-



RESIDENTS POINTED OUT suspected blowholes to geologists during last week's inspection tour in the Hot Springs area. Geologists are hoping to find evidence to cancel DOE plans for a nuclear waste dump here.

ation Center. That data indicated approximately 200 earth tremors have been registered since 1980 between the Valley Forge area of Tennessee and the Blue Ridge Mountains. All have been small, between 0.5 and 2.5 on the Richter scale, and all at depths between 10 and 100 feet, and never for more than a few minutes. This data is available at the

DOE study. "Most people don't realize that these plates are constantly moving, a number of inches each year," said Don Slupka. "Stress points build and slip, resulting in earthquakes." Slupka's main line of expertise is in hydrology. He will be spending the next few weeks investigating the

-Continued on Page 2