



This section of the French Broad River was where Saturday's fatal accident occurred. The raft should have gone right of a large rock (solid line), but veered into the boulder, overturning (dotted line).

French Broad River Claims 1 Life In Rafting Accident

By BILL STUDENC
and ANNE KITCHELL
News Record Staff

A white water rafting trip on the French Broad River turned tragic Saturday when a woman drowned after her raft smashed into a large boulder and overturned, spilling its passengers into the river.

Frankie Long, 52, of Cary was killed when she became trapped in rocks about 7 feet below the surface of the river at 12:30 p.m. Saturday, according to rescue workers.

Long's life jacket, which apparently slipped over her head, was found a mile downriver about 20-30 minutes after the accident.

The fast-moving current apparently pushed Long under the water and beneath the boulder, where she got caught in a large hole in the rock, said

'Boats have had problems with that rapid before, but we've never had a problem with a person in that area.'

Michael Tousey
Carolina Wilderness Adventures

Jimmy Ramsey, chief of the Marshall Fire Department and head of the rescue operation.

'Her boat got off course and missed where they should have gone,' Ramsey said. 'It broadsided a rock and when it did, it threw everybody out. The water pulled her under, she got hung on a rock and that was it.'

Five other passengers in the raft — including the victim's husband, John F. Long — also fell into the water, but were able to reach safety.

Rescuers, approaching 100 in number, were unable to locate the

body until about 6:15 p.m. Saturday, nearly six hours after the accident. They could not remove the body from the river until late Sunday morning.

'Where she was at, there was a hole that was just unreal,' Ramsey said. 'You could stick the front end of a car in it, easy.'

Rescue crews had to wait for the water level in the river to drop before they could retrieve the body. Carolina Power & Light Co., with two dams located upriver, closed gates on the dams about 8 a.m. Sunday, allowing the river level to drop nearly 3 feet.

The river was closed to boaters during the operation.

Eddie Fox, director of Madison County Emergency Medical Services, estimated the river current at between 25 to 30 mph.

'They lowered the water level about three feet,' Fox said. 'Without that, we might still be down there.'

Rescue crews, working in cooperation with several of the white water rafting guides who regularly run the French Broad, used a series of ropes to position a boat in the river during the recovery of the body.

Fox commended the rafting companies for their assistance in the rescue effort. 'They were a super help,' he said.

Long was a passenger in a raft on a commercial white water trip with

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State To Probe DSS's Handling Of Chandler Case

By BILL STUDENC
Editor

State Social Services officials will investigate the way the Madison County Department of Social Services handled allegations of child sexual abuse that resulted in the conviction of Andrew "Junior" Chandler.

Madison County Social Services board members have agreed to ask David Flaherty, secretary of the N.C. Department of Human Resources, to determine if the county Social Services agency properly investigated the controversial child abuse case.

That decision came after board members met last month with a group of Chandler's relatives, friends and supporters from the Revere community who have continued to maintain that an innocent man was sent to prison.

Chandler, 29, was sentenced two consecutive life sentences plus 21

years after being convicted two months ago by a Buncombe County jury of sexually molesting several Marshall Day Care students from January to May 1986.

Charges against Chandler were filed after Social Services workers investigated complaints from parents of those children, then ranging in age from 2 to 5 years old. Prosecutors said Chandler, a van driver for the Madison County Transportation Authority, molested the children while driving them to and from the day care center.

Since that verdict, Chandler's supporters have organized and have obtained approximately 1,350 signatures on petitions calling for a re-investigation of the child sexual abuse case, said group spokesman Jerry Gunter.

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BILL STUDENC PHOTO

Madison County Sheriff Dedrick Brown tosses confiscated marijuana plants onto a bonfire behind the jail.

Drug Investigation Continues; More Marijuana Found

From Staff Reports

The Madison County Sheriff's Department has arrested four more people on drug-related charges and confiscated another \$350,000 worth of marijuana as its on-going "war on drugs" continued this week.

The arrests bring the total number of people arrested on drug charges in the past three weeks to 11 and the total estimated "street value" of confiscated marijuana to \$445,000.

'That wasn't a bad week,' said Madison County Chief Deputy Dal Peek.

Authorities last Wednesday charged a Hot Springs husband and wife with possession and manufacture of marijuana after finding 64 plants around their home. The plants, knee-to waist-high, were identified as marijuana and have an estimated street value of \$102,000, Peek said.

Another \$176,000 in marijuana was

discovered by accident Friday at the Madison Industrial Park near Marshall when a federal Drug Enforcement Agency airplane flew over several patches containing a total of 110 plants, according to authorities.

Officers in the DEA plane, in Buncombe County to assist authorities with the location of marijuana fields, spotted the Madison crop as they passed over the industrial park on a sweep across North Buncombe County, Peek said.

No arrests have been made in connection with the discovery, but the investigation is continuing, Peek said.

Madison authorities charged two brothers with manufacturing marijuana after discovering 40 plants in the Petersburg area of the county. The plants would be worth \$48,000 on the street, Peek said.

Fifteen more plants, worth approximately \$24,000, were found Monday afternoon in Hot Springs.

'Big Bad Wolf' Remembers Fighting Rum-Runners

By ELIZABETH D. SQUIRE
Feature Writer

At age 88, Dewey Foster of Sleepy Valley still sometimes wears the black hat that went with his nickname in his law enforcement days — "The Big Bad Wolf."

Foster was one of those enforcing the law in Madison County — and at times in nearby Haywood County and in Cocke County, Tenn. — back when a main rum-running route was from Cocke County into North Carolina and up Round Mountain by Max Patch, to Asheville by way of Junaluska, and on to Morganton, he says.

The blockaders or rum-runners, as those who dealt in illegal whiskey were called, could carry as many as

20 cases of liquor in a car. Each case was filled with fruit jars of moonshine. The rum-runners, who tried to slip through at night, were mostly men, but once Foster arrested two women.

Although Foster says he sometimes forgets the year an event happened, some details impressed him so that he can't forget.

A blockader from Hot Springs helped to start his "sheriffing" career in about 1917 when he was 19 years old, and then tried to end it in 1931, Foster said. Before 1917, Foster had been working in the mines in West Virginia.

On the day in 1917 before he was due to go down to Marshall to take a

service exam "for the war," he and a friend decided to buy some whiskey. He had never done that before, he recalls.

The blockader who sold him the whiskey met him in Hot Springs that same afternoon and accused Foster of exposing him. The man threatened to kill him, he says, adding that the man was known for having already killed three men.

So Foster and his friend went and got the friend's gun. Then Foster says he went on to the depot to get the train to Marshall.

Just as it was getting dark, the blockader, possibly not knowing that Foster was now armed, arrived at the station, threatened Foster again and

pretended to have a gun and to be about to shoot, Foster says.

Foster shot the man twice, he recalls. A train came through just in time for the doctor to put the man on board for the trip to the hospital in Asheville. That was the best way to get from Hot Springs to a hospital in those days, he said.

There was a rule, he recalls, that if you shot a man they kept you in jail until they knew if he would live or die. But Foster had trouble turning himself in. First he had to find the Hot Springs policeman. When he finally tracked down the policeman, the officer had no car to take him right down to jail in Marshall. He spent the night at the policeman's house.

After 16 days in the Marshall jail, with the blockader on the mend, Foster knew the sheriff and his staff so well that they hired Foster to run the jail, he said.

That was under either Sheriff R.R. Ramsey or Jim Bailey. Foster says he has worked under so many sheriffs that he finds it hard to remember exactly what events happened during whose term.

His daughter, Marie Osteen, also of Sleepy Valley, recalls that he was first deputy under R.R. Ramsey, Jim Bailey, Jeter P. Ramsey, Caney Ramsey, Guy English and Hubert Davis in Madison County.

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Dewey Foster
... 'Big bad wolf'

Countywide Chamber To Become Reality

By ANNE KITCHELL
Staff Writer

It's official — Madison County has a chamber of commerce.

A group of about 20 county residents met last week at Madison High School to finalize plans to start a countywide chamber of commerce.

'Our county is beautiful, but we're separated by topography,' said interim chamber Chairman Jeanne Hoffman. 'We need to unify to promote Madison County as a whole.'

Concerned area residents have been meeting and planning since April to find a way to promote the county's natural beauty and draw tourists off the interstate and bypasses.

The purpose of the chamber of commerce is to provide information about the county to visitors, to promote tourism and to attract business and industry to the area.

The group divided into three com-

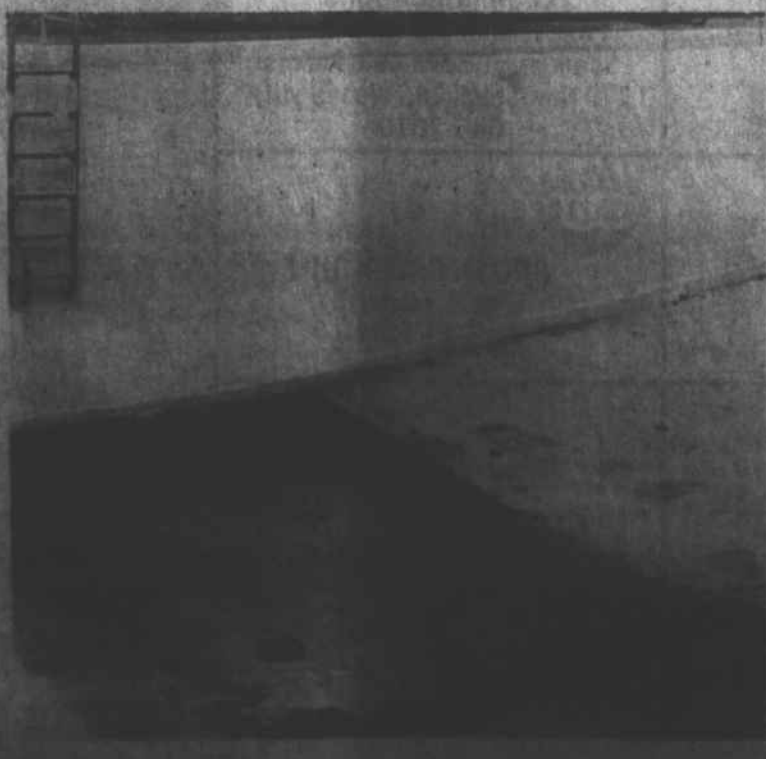
mittees — bylaws, membership and publicity and promotion. The individual committees will meet separately to discuss ideas and reconvene on June 30 to establish a charter and chamber bylaws.

'There are two areas we need to consider for development — tourism and retirement,' Hoffman said. 'We need to raise our tax base. As of now there is no money to play with.'

'We also need to focus on the importance of shopping in the county,' said Jerry Flemmons of the French Broad Electric Economic Development Committee. 'This is not only for the tax revenue, but for the jobs that could be created.'

Madison County real estate agent Bob Phillips told the group that representatives of the chamber should attend business fairs to get potential members.

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A lot of work remained to be done before the Marshall pool was opened next week.

Splash!

Marshall Board Agrees
To Open Swimming Pool

By BILL STUDENC
Editor

The Marshall Board of Aldermen, after receiving an OK from the Madison County Health Department, agreed Monday night to open the town swimming pool this summer.

That decision came after several residents presented the town board last month with petitions containing some 1,400 names asking that the pool be opened.

Marshall officials had previously expressed doubt that the pool could be opened this summer because of ongoing maintenance problems and the lack of adequate insurance coverage.

But, after checking the town's new insurance policy, officials announced that the pool is covered by the policy. Edward Martin, director of the Madison County Health Department, told the Marshall board it is a "good

that the pool could safely be operated as long as sufficient amounts of chlorine or other chemical agents are used to keep bacteria levels low.

A major concern with the swimming pool has been an underground spring — flowing beneath the recreation area — that leaks into the pool.

Jim Queen, the town's engineer, told Marshall officials that the leak could easily be stopped using a technique called the "French drain."

That work should be completed sometime this week, Queen said, paving the way for the opening of the Marshall pool sometime as early as August.

The board, upon a motion by Alderman ...

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