

Parents Oppose Longer Bus Routes

Nearly 200 Pack Hearing On Proposed County School Consolidation Plan

By H.D. KOONTZ III
The News Record Editor

The walls of the little theater inside Madison County High School echoed with impassioned pleas, angry accusations and determined threats from parents during a public hearing Monday night on the board's proposed school consolidation plan.

The Madison County Board of Education listened to two hours of speeches — some neatly written on clean white paper; others straight from the gut — presented by parents from Spring Creek, Walnut, Mars Hill, Hot Springs and Laurel.

Babies cried in the background. At times, it wasn't pretty.

Some parents threatened to take their children out of the public school system. Others said it would be "child abuse" to force elementary-aged children to ride long trips on school buses.

Some said drug abuse would increase at larger schools, and others said some children would be left out to become mere "numbers" if smaller schools were consolidated.

On the other hand, consolidation could be more economical and save taxpayers' dollars in the long run, and larger schools could provide bigger opportunities for enrichment to students.

Speakers from all communities in

Madison County spoke their piece, with the exception of Marshall.

And the most vocal in the crowd of nearly 200 jammed inside the little theater came from the Spring Creek area, where the board is considering closing the elementary school at the end of this school year.

If the consolidation plan, and hence the closing of Spring Creek School, is approved Sept. 13 when the board promised to announce its final decision, the children now attending Spring Creek next year would have to attend Hot Springs Elementary School.

And that makes some Spring Creek parents mad as hornets whose community nest has been stirred with a

broom handle.

Board of Education Chairman Jewel Church said, though, no final decision has been made, despite what some people in the audience believed Monday night.

Church said she has not reached a final decision and added she did not believe her colleagues on the board had either.

The parents from Spring Creek — 14 spoke out — filled half the theater. Just one said she favored the consolidation proposal.

Others protested what they believed would be longer bus rides through twisting mountain roads further away from their homes.

Bill Barutio, who has acted as spokesman for the Spring Creek opposition in previous meetings, claimed children from Max Patch near the Tennessee-Carolina border would be bused more than 40 miles to a school at Hot Springs under the consolidation proposal.

"All you have to do is get a calculator and add up the miles," he told the board.

Barutio said an earlier state study had recommended Spring Creek School remain open rather than bus children over "some of the most treacherous, narrow roads in North Carolina."

"The bottom line is the Spring

Creek children will not go to Hot Springs," Barutio said. "I have a petition with 96 signatures of parents who say they will not put their children on a bus to go to a Hot Springs school."

He said, as he has previously, that some parents might form their own private school rather than send their children to Hot Springs.

A long line of Spring Creek parents followed Barutio, with all but one in opposition to the proposed consolidation. Most objected to the longer bus rides, which many said made children ill.

But Larry Stern, a Mars Hill College professor, reminded those at the

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Literacy Program To Begin

By H.D. KOONTZ III
The News Record Editor

A new adult literacy program is set to begin Sept. 15 at Walnut Elementary School.

The program is available free for any parent, grandparent or guardian of a 3- or 4-year-old child who wishes to earn his or her GED.

The Madison County Family Literacy Program, explained teacher Allegra Aylward, offers an opportunity for adults who have not earned a high school diploma or a GED a chance to do so at the same time a pre-school program for 3- and 4-year-old children is made available.

The program, to be at Walnut Elementary, will be held three days

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Spring Creek Elementary School to close at end of school year.

Plan To Affect Elementary Pupils

The Madison County Board of Education's proposed school consolidation plan will affect school aged children at all but the high school level.

The proposal calls for:

- Consolidation of grades 6 through 8 throughout the county into one middle school to be built in the Walnut-Marshall area;

- The closing a Spring Creek Elementary School by the end of the 1988-89 school year;

- The consolidation of grades K through 8 at Spring Creek and Hot Springs into one school at Hot Springs.

- The grade 6 through 8 students at the proposed consolidated Hot Springs school to be eligible to attend the new proposed middle school at Walnut-Marshall upon request by parent or guardian;

- The reduction of enrollments at Marshall (K through 3), at Mars Hill, at Laurel, at Walnut and at Marshall (grades 4 and 5);

- The consolidation of all grades 6 through 8 in the county, except for Hot Springs-Spring Creek, into one consolidated middle school district or area.

The board is expected to announce its decision concerning the plan Sept. 13.

Federal, State Probe Nets Two Marshall Men

By H.D. KOONTZ III
The News Record Editor

Two Madison County men have been arrested and charged in connection with a massive, federal-state investigation into black bear poaching in the southern Appalachian mountains.

The two were among 43 arrested last week by state and federal wildlife officials in Western North Carolina and Tennessee and charged with bear poaching and illegally selling bear parts.

Eddie Franklin, 23, of 1 Franklin Mountain Rd., Marshall, was arrested and taken to Knoxville, Tenn., to be charged, said Asst. U.S. Attorney Max Gogburn.

Also, G.J. Burchfield, of Route 5, Marshall, was charged in Asheville with the illegal sale of bear parts, Gogburn said.

Gogburn said both men will face preliminary hearings next month, but he expects both cases to be continued.

The three-year undercover in-

vestigation — "Operation Smoky" — involved state and federal agents buying hundreds of poached bears and gall bladders, claws, hides and heads.

Gogburn said agents even bought a bear cub during the operation in the three-state area.

A bear's gall bladder, believed by some in the Orient to be an aphrodisiac, can bring as much as \$1,000 each on the illegal black market in the Far East.

Gogburn said poachers usually get between \$35 to \$75 for the gall bladders, which are dried and ground into a powder for use as health aids and aphrodisiacs.

"The price increases each step along the way," Gogburn explained, likening the black market for bear parts to that of illegal drugs smuggled from South America.

"A whole bear will bring from \$800 to \$1,000" here in the Smokies, he added.

The heads are used for trophies,

hides for rugs and the claws for jewelry.

Last week teams of state and federal wildlife agents fanned out over Western North Carolina, Tennessee and Georgia and arrested more than 30 people. One was arrested in Georgia and eight arrested in Tennessee.

Gogburn said all were arrested on federal charges. State warrants are expected in the next few weeks, he said.

Charges are included in more than 100 state and federal warrants involving a loosely connected illegal black bear poaching business in the southern Appalachian Mountains.

The bears were shot or trapped for their body parts, which were then sold on the illegal market.

Wildlife experts estimate that the number of black bears killed illegally equals or exceeds the number killed each year by hunters with legal hunting licenses.

The slaughter is thought to be one of the biggest threats to the dwindling population of black bear, which used to number in the thousands, in the Smokies.

"There are only about 500 or 600 left in the Smokies," said Gogburn. "There's a lot of hunting pressure and habitat intrusion. And it's not even a sport any more; the hunters have sophisticated radios and dogs."

"It's not a sport...it's just a kill. It's like shooting birds on a raft."

Last year 561 black bears were killed legally by hunters in North Carolina.

During the three-year operation, the agents bought 266 bear gall bladders, 385 bear claws, 77 bear feet, four heads, nine hides and one live cub.

The agents also bought two mounted ducks, a mounted hawk, one gallon of white lightning whiskey and three stolen vehicles in the probe.

Agents disclosed details of the investigation last week at simultaneous news conferences at Asheville and Knoxville, Tenn.

The persons arrested were charged under the federal Lacey Act, which prohibits transportation of illegally taken game across state lines.

A conviction carries a maximum prison sentence of five years and a fine up to \$50,000.



Farm tour attracted two dozen.



Brahma bull on Hal Edmond's farm

Farm Tour Held

By H.D. KOONTZ III
The News Record Editor

More than two-dozen persons participated in this year's Madison County Agricultural Extension Advisory Board tour.

The tour highlighted what County Extension Director Wally McAllister said was the first year of the county's long range program, "Pathways to a New Century."

The five-hour tour began with a drive to Shelton Laurel and a visit to Max Shelton's farm, where truck crops and drip irrigation was viewed.

The group also inspected Jimmy Shannon's henlock seedling production operation at Shelton Laurel.

The tour featured the latest technological innovations used in the production of vine-ripe tomatoes, winter tobacco, beef cattle, large

crops, and alternative crops such as commercial seedling production.

Also, the tour included a view of a retail nursery, commercial trout production, a 4-H exhibit, projects of the Upper Laurel community Development Club and Extension homemakers.

David Doan's tobacco farm and Jenkins' nursery were a part of the tour.

From the nursery the group went to Martin Fox's trout production farm, where Fox is expected to harvest his first commercial fish crop within a few months. It takes about nine to 10 months for the trout to mature for market.

An evening meal at "Century Dining" was served by the Upper Laurel Community Club at the end of the tour.

Weaverville Book Sale Saturday

'Real Finds' To Be Sold

By CHICK SQUIRE
Correspondent

There will be some real finds among the 30,000 books on sale this Saturday at the Weaverville Library because the library skipped its second-hand book sale last year.

The sale will be held from 9 a.m. until 5 p.m. Sept. 3.

About 10 Weaverville volunteers have been busy pricing and sorting the books into categories. Magazines, paperbacks and records will be available, as always.

Special features this year include a number of interesting art books and some unusual and rare books in the Collector's Corner.

A lot of current fiction came to the booksale with other stock from a defunct Asheville book store and has been very reasonably priced. There is also an unusual number of cookbooks.

Among Collector's Corner items is a book on hunting and fishing in the Western North Carolina mountains, one on birds of the Great Smokies, and an exceptionally broad collection of published versions of plays, including most of the best of Broadway during the 20's and 30's.

Another gem to be on sale is a portfolio of paintings of the flowers of Hawaii.

This year the sale — which takes place in the lower level of the library at the corner of Main and Pine streets in Weaverville — will have an exceptional collection of books on travel, nature, arts and crafts and literature and classics — the latter category especially rich in poetry, including verse by local poets.

In addition to a large number of magazines such as Smithsonian, Audubon, Antiques, Chambers and Gourmet, the sale will include National Geographic, never going back to the store and all arranged in numerical order by month and year. There are many rare books, including a collection of poems by John Keats.

Books are priced at 50 cents to \$1.00. Some special orders may be made. The sale will close at 5 p.m. on Sept. 3.

Madison Group Plans Cash For Trash Day

The Madison Environmental Alliance, a group of citizens working toward starting a recycling program in Madison County, is arranging for a "buy back" company to purchase recyclable materials Saturday, Oct. 22.

Several community groups currently do some recycling on a small scale, said C.J. Wilson, an MEA member.

In a survey taken last spring by the alliance, many other Madison County groups expressed interest in participating more in recycling, but the largest problem cited was how to get the materials to a market.

Asheville Waste Paper Company will buy separated aluminum cans, cardboard (not waxed), newspaper, aluminum, newspapers, mixed paper (excluding junk mail), and glass separated by color.

Wilson said the "Trash for Cash" day will be held at the parking lot

Arbee Manufacturing, behind the Ingle's grocery store on the U.S. 25-70 bypass.

When residents and business recycle materials, local communities benefit in many ways, Wilson said. The life of the county landfill is extended by reducing the amount of waste that goes into it, and all citizens pay taxes to support the landfill.

And the cost of a new landfill promises to be much greater when it is sited and built, she added.

Recycling can help beautify a community. When a community actively recycles materials such as glass and aluminum containers and paper products, less unsightly litter is found on the ground, she said.

That aluminum can that was thrown by the roadside is worth something in the marketplace.

Community groups can also make money recycling by separating trash.

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