

# The News - Journal

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RESULT: Death-- This car, borrowed from a friend, went out of control and collided with another on a knoll on Highway 211 west.

Both drivers were killed and one passenger was injured.

## Two Men Die, Another Hurt In Wreck Near Moose Lodge

BY LUCY GRAY PEEBLES

Two men were killed and a third injured last Wednesday afternoon when their cars collided three miles west of Raeford on N. C. 211. They were the third and fourth highway fatalities of the year in Hoke County.

Merle Richard Thompson, 22, who lived at the Oscar Barefoot residence on College Drive, was driving Barefoot's car in the direction of Raeford when he abruptly lost control on a knoll

and crashed into the other car. Thompson died soon after being admitted to Moore Memorial Hospital.

David Gilchrist, 52, of Fayetteville Rt. 4, driver of the second car, was killed instantly. Zack Locklear of Raeford Rt. 2, a passenger in the Gilchrist car, was injured and is in Moore Memorial Hospital. State Trooper E. W. Coen said Thompson's 1967 model car was traveling toward Raeford when it went out of control on the crest of a knoll. The

car slid broadside into Gilchrist's 1964 model vehicle, knocking the Fayetteville car off the side of the road. Thompson's car stopped crosswise on the highway center line.

Friends said Thompson was due in Raeford to keep an appointment five minutes after the time of the accident.

Gilchrist, who died on impact, was pinned in the car until patrolmen and members of the Hoke County Rescue Squad could pry him free.

The accident occurred in the

same vicinity at which Ann Tadlock of Raeford was killed when her car collided with a truck in January.

Thompson is a veteran of the Vietnam war, having returned from overseas about six months ago. He was honorably discharged from the Army soon afterward.

Funeral services were conducted at 11 a. m. Friday at Crumpler Funeral Chapel.

Burial was at his former home, Pompano Beach, Fla. in Forest Lawn Cemetery.

## Hoke Teacher Has Meningitis

A seventh grade teacher at Gibson School was hospitalized Thursday with a malady that later was diagnosed as spinal meningitis.

Mrs. Gladys Colson, about 45, is confined to Highsmith-Rainey Hospital in Fayetteville, where her condition was reportedly improved but still serious this week.

Members of her class were given sulfas and other precautionary and preventive measures immediately. Within hours after the diagnosis was made, local doctors had made arrangements for mass distribution of sulfas.

## New School Is Opened To Public

Open house will be held Monday night at recently completed Gibson School, across Bethel Road from Hoke High School, Lonnie Bledsoe, principal, has announced.

Parents of students and friends of the school have been invited to tour the new facilities between 7 and 9:30 p.m. The entire faculty will be on hand to serve as guides.

There will be instructional and informative activities in connection with the tour, Bledsoe explained, but its primary purpose is to display the physical plant for parents' inspection.

Refreshments will be served

in the school cafeteria at the end of the tour.

Raeford-Hoke Parent-Teacher Association will meet at the school at 7:45 and will take the tour in lieu of another program.

The new school, named in honor of former superintendent W.T. Gibson Jr., who died in December, has 19 classrooms, a cafeteria, gymnasium, library, and administrative offices. It is the most modern school in the county and the most integrated.

The complete sixth grade of Upchurch School is being transferred to Gibson School. In

fact, all but one section of the class already has been moved, along with all class records, and the remaining 30 students will join the other 60 transfers as soon as their classroom is completed.

The transfer was ordered by the county board of education in compliance with suggestions of federal officials, who came here last year to review Hoke's compliance with Title IV of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. The transfer was then scheduled to occur upon completion of the school and the county's accepting the job as being completed by the contractor and architect.

## Meeting Tonight

# Negroes To Revamp Registration Drive

## Precinct 5 Made Move Essential

A sweeping reorganization of Negro forces planning a voter registration drive here will be made tonight at a meeting for Raeford precincts 1 and 2, and particularly the county's new precinct, Raeford No. 5.

The Rev. Thomas Walker, one of the drive's leaders, said the meeting will be held at 7 p.m. at the masonic hall off Vass Road and U.S. 401 Bypass in the "Hill" section north of Raeford.

"This will be mostly a re-organizational meeting," the Rev. Mr. Walker declared. "We had progressed rather satisfactorily with our plans when the new precinct was created about a week ago. Since the new precinct contains a large percentage of Negro voters, our groundwork had to be discarded and we will now have to concentrate on instructing voters in the area how and where they can register."

Registration books will open March 31 in Hoke County, and all prospective voters will have to register again this year.

The new registration was ordered by the last General Assembly, which provided that every county in the state must have the "looseleaf" system of registration. Old registration books will be replaced by a looseleaf page for each voter. Pages can be added one at a time, and when a voter dies, moves away, or otherwise becomes ineligible to vote in the precinct in which he is registered, his "page" can be removed from the book immediately.

Under the present system, voters long dead sometimes remained registered until there was a general purge of the books.

The new registration will begin March 31, the first of four consecutive Saturdays on which registrars will be at polling places throughout the county. The fifth Saturday is set aside as challenge day.

As usual, prospective voters can register any day of the week

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MIDNIGHT FIRE--Volunteer firemen of the North Raeford and Raeford departments were routed out of bed between 1 and 1:30 a.m. Monday to fight the above fire at Richard McPhatter's residence at Vass Road and U.S. 401 Bypass. Pumpers from both departments streamed several loads of water on the blaze, but the house was beyond salvaging before they started. Their action did prevent the blaze from spreading. It was reported unofficially that McPhatter lost another house by fire at the same spot some 15 years ago.

## Medical Authorities Investigating Class

Medical authorities Wednesday morning were continuing an investigation begun the previous afternoon into the mysterious sleepy - headedness of several youngsters in an Upchurch School first grade classroom.

Dr. Harry H. McLean, regional consultant, N. C. Board of Health, rushed to Raeford yesterday afternoon after being called into the case by a state health inspector from Raleigh who examined the classroom for possible carbon monoxide or other dangerous fumes. When he found nothing in amounts sufficient to affect a child, he turned the investigation over to

medical authorities.

Dr. McLean was not available for comment Wednesday at noon, but school officials said Dr. McLean spent Tuesday afternoon examining the physical circumstances, double-checking for carbon monoxide and other atmospheric conditions. They said nothing significant was reported.

Donald Abernethy, superintendent of schools, said Dr. McLean indicated to him he would study the behavior of the children in an isolated environment Wednesday morning before planning further action.

The children -- part of a

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## Scott Names Managers

Lt. Gov. Bob Scott has named Palmer Willcox, James B. (Benney) McLeod, and John Balfour to manage his campaign for governor in Hoke County.

Willcox is a partner in the law firm, Hostetler, McNeill and Willcox. He is a member of the Raeford town board of commissioners and is president of Hoke County YDC.

McLeod is manager of the Hoke Cotton Warehouse and Storage Co. in Raeford.

Balfour, a farmer, is a former recipient of the DSA and Outstanding Young Farmer awards in Hoke County. He serves on the board of directors of Southern National Bank.



Puzzled Teacher, Mrs. Hazel Galbreath, Holds Up Sleeping Child

# School Officials Baffled By First Graders Who Fall Asleep And Are Hard To Awaken

BY JIM TAYLOR

School authorities took immediate steps earlier this week to isolate for investigation a first grade class at Upchurch School in which as many as a dozen youngsters are mysteriously going to sleep daily in the classroom and cannot be easily awakened.

Donald D. Abernethy, superintendent, learned of the mysterious circumstances Monday afternoon. He immediately ordered that the children be removed from the classroom, and that it be sealed off for inspection by N. C. Department of Health.

A health official arrived from Raleigh early Tuesday morning, inspected the room for possible carbon monoxide or other gases caused by improper ventilation and the furnace, but found nothing which would explain the mystery.

The youngsters were moved into an adjoining classroom while their room was awaiting inspection. Children in the adjoining room had experienced no drowsiness, school officials said. When children from the

neighboring room were moved in with them for a short time Tuesday morning, they still did not experience sleepiness, but the visiting first graders went to sleep, as usual.

Teachers and other school officials at Upchurch in closest touch with the situation said Tuesday a male student in the classroom last autumn went to sleep, as the other children are now doing, each third day. The child was removed from school by his parents, they said, and eventually sent to N. C. Memorial Hospital at Chapel Hill.

They did not know Tuesday what diagnosis was made at Chapel Hill, nor did they know the child's present condition. They could only say that the student has not returned to the classroom.

When the state health inspector found no evidence of gases in amounts sufficient to affect a young student, Abernethy immediately directed that the class be isolated in a vacant mobile classroom and kept there until medical authorities can take charge of the situation.

It was assumed that the re-

gional office of the State Board of Health would be notified immediately. The regional office was established recently in Fayetteville and is under the direction of Dr. Harry H. McLean of Raeford, who quit private practice here to take over the newly created regional health directorship.

Meanwhile, school officials were seeking answers to several baffling questions. Why are some students in the group affected, but not all? If the physical environment of the one classroom is to blame, why did the same students go to sleep when moved into a classroom which had never before experienced the mass drowsiness, and the same physical surroundings as the sleepy children, remained bright-eyed and responsive while some of the others drifted into sleep?

Teachers said that several of the children who are falling to sleep daily have been taken by their parents to their family doctors, but no alarming or unusual condition was reported.

Tuesday morning, as school officials, teachers, health department investigators, nurses,

and several other persons watched, three or four of the children drifted into sleep and could hardly be awakened.

Although the classroom windows were partially open, and the door wide open, one by one the children nodded and went to sleep. In most cases, the children closest to the sleepyheads remained wide awake.

Once they went to sleep, teachers and nurses took the children outside the classroom into the open air and there attempted to revive them. They awakened reluctantly, were not responsive, and lapsed back into sleep, even while being walked around to keep them awake.

The children appeared perfectly normal at the beginning of the school day, their teacher said. After a certain period of sleepiness they appear normal again.

One parent whose young son is among the children who have been going to sleep said the child appears normal while at home. He goes to bed around nine o'clock at night and sleeps soundly until between six and seven the following morning.

There was no answer immediately available to the layman, Abernethy said, and the situation calls for an immediate answer.

"We aren't about to experiment, even for a day," Abernethy said. "The health and welfare of not only this class, but the entire school, is a concern which transcends our obligation to instruct them. We insist that whatever needs to be done medically -- in the way of investigation, diagnosis, and safeguards for other students -- be begun immediately. If no medical problem is involved -- and certainly medical authorities will be able to determine this -- then the situation can be explored from whatever angle that might lead to a solution."

Aside from being asleep or sleepy -- much as if drugged -- the children showed no visible signs, discernible by a layman, of being ill. Their complexion did not pale, nor did they seem to have above-normal temperature. Only one child complained that her head ached and one said her legs hurt.