



*Bill Bailey*

**DAMP DECEMBER**--Rainfall last month totaled 5.3 inches, even though many misty mornings made the month seem much wetter, weather recorder 'Bill Bailey' explained. December, 1973, was much wetter, as 10.8 inches was measured then.

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**School Board Hires Teacher**

Substitute teachers for the second semester were approved and an instructor hired at Hoke High by the board of education, meeting Monday night at the new conference room.

Lockey MacDonald was approved to teach drafting at the high school, taking over the classes of Robert Gatlin, who is retiring.

The list of substitute teachers included: Jacquelyn Becker, Chenita Marie Blatcher, Addie Brown, Colleen Buchholz, Joann Conoly, Mary Lynn Currie, Linda Kay Hendrix, Mary Jo Lovette, Jacqueline McEachin, Nancy McNeill, Patricia Monroe, Dazarene Page, Mike Steadman, Lois Tew, Julia Beathea was hired as a lunchroom employee.

**Lions To Meet**

The Lions Club will hold a dinner meeting Friday, January 10, at the Hyland Hills Country Club in Southern Pines beginning at 7:30.

Featured speaker will be Frank W. Wilson of Yadkinville, director of the department of social services.

A popular speaker, Wilson is minister of Farmington Baptist Church and a faculty member of Wilkes Community College. Two of his comic routines are "The Man Who Wanted To Be Homogenized" and "Why the Depot Agent Wouldn't Say When the Next Train Left for Mudville".

**Plant Open Despite Gas Cutoff**

Knit-Away, Inc., which had faced shutdown last week when its supply of natural gas was suddenly cut off, was in full operation this week.

Emergency allocations of natural gas and a hurried switch to alternate fuels enabled the large textile plant to open Sunday as scheduled after the Christmas season holiday.

"We are reasonably optimistic that we can continue to operate," Joe Rackley, plant engineer, said Tuesday. "We have no plans to curtail."

Rackley said he was notified at 12:20 on Dec. 30 that as of two hours from that time, all natural gas services at Knit-Away would be cut off.

Shut-offs were announced that date for many of the eastern North Carolina industries that depended on natural gas. Rackley and other Knit-Away officials attended emergency meetings in Raleigh with state officials, industry executives and officials of Transco, the only supplier of natural gas to the state.

Tuesday Rackley said changes had been made at the plant to enable Knit-Away to operate on propane and oil.

The gas curtailment has had other effects in the county, primarily on the sale of soybeans.

The Cargill plant in Fayetteville, where many of the beans harvested in Hoke are sold, was abruptly cut off

from natural gas on Dec. 30. However, the effect here has been less drastic than was originally forecast.

Tom Jones of Dundarrach Trading Company, said Tuesday that this was partly due to the fact that few beans had been cut since then due to wet weather.

"Also, it's right on the tail end of the season. If it had been in the peak of the season, it might have been different."

However, since the announcement, prices have dropped about 40 cents a bushel, according to Alfred K. Leach of Farm Service Company.

The supply of nitrogen fertilizer is also expected to be affected, since two major nitrogen plants in the state were also cut off last week.

Leach said this week that while he expected to be able to furnish nitrogen, the supply was likely to be short. However, he said, he expected the county to be in a better position than the state as a whole because he obtained most of his nitrogen from out-of-state plants and only about two percent of his supply from the Wilmington factories. Leach is one of the major suppliers for the county.

Several other firms in Hoke County who use gas on an interruptible schedule have been without natural gas since early fall.

Burlington was cut off in September, according to Bob Gentry, personnel manager at Burlington-Worsted-Raeferd plant; the plant has equipment to operate on both coal and oil.

Hoke Concrete, which manufactures concrete building blocks, has been out of gas since Oct. 2, according to Clyde Upchurch, Jr.

The blocks are now cured with oil, which costs about three-eighths of a cent more per block to use, he said.

The natural gas supply to the one school building heated with gas is expected to remain steady, according to Raz Autry. The other buildings are heated with fuel oil, except for the Gibson building, which is heated electrically.

**S.C.S. Activities**

F.O. Clark  
District Conservationist

The Public Advisory Committee on Soil and Water Conservation, meeting in Washington, has urged a high priority on land inventory and monitoring for the U.S. Department of Agriculture, it was disclosed today by Jesse Hicks of Raleigh, who heads the Soil Conservation Service in North Carolina. Hicks said: "The objectives this well-qualified and public spirited group have set out are excellent, and I hope USDA can implement them."

Some key objectives include urging:

1. USDA to support efforts toward energy self-sufficiency.
2. Work of agencies in surface mine reclamation to be fully coordinated.
3. USDA to intensify efforts to complete and publish the National Cooperative Soil Survey.
4. USDA to seek more effective ways to expand its resource conservation and development program.

"Here in North Carolina we are concerned with all of these matters, and have two very active programs underway now--work toward providing soil surveys of the entire state, and active RC&D projects with new application in every part of the state," Jesse Hicks added. "But I'm glad to see this new national emphasis on these matters."

When the advisory group met, Secretary of Agriculture Earl Butz opened the session, while Assistant Secretary Robert W. Long served as chairman of the sessions--which included people from every part of the nation. SCS Administrator Kenneth E. Grant was alternate chairman.

**Meeting Canceled**

The January meeting of the Bicentennial committee has been canceled and rescheduled for Feb. 12. Dr. Larry Wheeler, state chairman of Heritage Horizons, will speak then.

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The U.S. Department of Agriculture land inventory and monitoring program seeks to identify prime areas for production of food and fiber, to delineate flood plains, to study land use changes and trends, to study erosion and sediment damage, and to detect degradation of the environment caused by improper use of natural resources.

Among specific areas that the advisory group examined were:

- Nonstructural approaches to watershed and flood plain management.
- Problems surrounding land use planning.
- Potential difficulties concerning non-point pollution sources.
- Manpower needs related to acceleration of soil surveys and resources conservation and development projects.

"These are all matters that should concern responsible people involved in land use decisions," Hicks commented, "and we are certainly ready to work with them to seek the best solution, as we have done through the years."



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