

## Around Town

BY SAM C. MORRIS

For the past two years during the school session Terri Tucker has been writing the Hoke Highlights for the paper. She was in the 1975 graduating class and will not be with us next year. Terri has done a fine job and we appreciate the work she did.

I don't know what Terri's future plans are but all at the paper wish for her the very best in the years ahead. Thanks Terri.

A couple of weeks ago we wrote in this column about the tomatoes growing in a potato vine. This past week Linda Scott brought in a vine with a potato as the roots and what looks like tomatoes growing on the vine.

The plant was grown on the farm of Metrah Spencer of Ashley Heights. Both Scott and Spencer are employees of Raeford Plumbing & Heating Co.

The picture below shows the potato and tomatoes.



I asked Wendell Young, farm agent, about this and he stated that it was seeds growing on the vine and not tomatoes. Ken McNeill, local front porch farmer, concurs with what Young says.

Now Robert Gatlin, gentleman gardener and Clayton Buoyer, local expert, state that they haven't ever seen anything like this in all their years of gardening.

I don't have anything to add to the above, but would be glad for someone to clear up the matter.

Stranger things than this have happened.

The following letter was left on my desk last week by Robert Gatlin. Read the letter and if you have any information be sure to send it to Gatlin.

Dear Sam,  
I just wanted to say thank you to Mrs. Flora Johnson Lee, a resident of New York, but spending the summer with her brother, Pat Johnson, in Montana. I had written Mr. Pat Johnson, who, with his sister Mrs. Lee were Hoke County citizens, about a history of the Johnson family and Philippi Church. This week I received a complete history of both and it will make a contribution to our documents on file for the heritage room in the new bicentennial library.

This sort of information is very desirable and anyone having an authentic history of a Hoke County family, business, church, etc. should forward a copy of the same to me for permanent recordation.

Thanks also to the Philippi Homemakers Club for inviting me to talk to them last Monday night about heritage during the bicentennial. I was impressed with the devotional opening of their meeting presided over by Mrs. Rogers.

Robert Gatlin

This letter is self-explanatory:

Dear Sam:  
This is late, but I think you already know how much we, here at Raeford Elementary School, appreciate you and your staff's cooperation when we call upon you. As ever you all have been most  
See AROUND TOWN, page 11



**DIDN'T IT HAIL?**—Johnny Boyles points out hail damage estimated at \$12,000 caused during last week's storm. This field off N.C. 211 was one of the most heavily damaged in the county, farm agent Wendell Young reported. Most fields that were struck suffered about three to five per cent damage, Young said. Some losses in corn were caused by the storm, he said.

## Council Ups Sewer Rate To 100%, Wrestles With Salaries Hike Bid

The city council raised the water and sewer rate to 100 per cent in an effort to increase revenues in next year's budget, and then spent most of their public hearing Thursday wrestling with a request from city employees for restoration of the five per cent cost of living raises.

The move to increase the sewer rate was carried unanimously by the council. City manager John Gaddy calculated the increase would generate \$80,000, including surplus, to next year's fund.

The action is a boost from the present 75% rate city customers have been paying as sewer charges, and next year's bills for sewer and water will be identical.

Gaddy announced the city had received approval of a federal grant for street and drainage repairs. About \$60,000 in federal funds and \$21,000 from the state is to be spent with the city's share of \$15,000.

The announcement of the grant award sparked criticism by councilman Sam C. Morris, who told Gaddy "You can find money for that, but not for raising salaries."

The bid for a five per cent pay hike for city employees was presented to the council in a letter signed by city tax collector Betty Smith, finance officer Helen Huffman, and personnel and purchasing clerk Rhonda Cameron. The employees claimed a five per

## Inflation Hits Court, Jails

As the cost of living increases, so will the cost of going to court and going to jail, as fees go up effective July 1.

There is no change in Superior court criminal cases, but costs for district court cases will go from \$16 to \$25 under the new law ratified by the legislature last Friday.

The daily jail fee has been raised, from \$3 to \$5.

New citation forms listing the higher fees will not be available before Sept. 1, and court officials acknowledged "there are bound to be mix-ups and irate citizens" when officers change the \$16 to \$25 on the forms.

cent pay hike would amount to a little less than \$13,000, and that the fund balance left over from this year's budget could absorb the cost.

Gaddy disputed the claim, telling council members the fund balance has already been appropriated for next year, and pay raises would have to raise the tax rate. Gaddy put the total cost of pay increases at \$16,000.

Mayor John K. McNeill asked what the increase in the tax rate would be if salary increases were made, but Gaddy said he would have to calculate it and report the figure later.

Opposition to a tax hike was voiced by councilman Graham Clark. "We've raised the sewer rate and I'm not raising the tax rate," Clark said.

The board discussed possible budget cuts which could be made to fund the salary request, but Gaddy disagreed.

"It's (the budget) set as close as I can do it. If we're going to build Raeford and get in on these federal projects and all, we've got to have the money and we won't have it if we cut here, and cut there," Gaddy declared.



**LIBRARY IN USE**—Construction of the new library at Hoke High is moving ahead of schedule, although it is not quite as far along as student Dave Barrington seems to be indicating. The building is now scheduled for completion Jan. 1, and will serve 1,500 students with 30,000 volumes. Costs are \$301,139.01.

## D.A., SBI Making City Garage Check

An investigation by the district attorney's office into operations at the municipal garage was begun Monday following allegations that city manager John Gaddy had misused city property.

Assistant district attorney Duncan McFadyen confirmed Tuesday that the investigation by SBI agents was continuing. Already several persons have been questioned.

The city council decided to look into charges by a former city employee made last week to The News-Journal. Councilman Sam Morris, who is also general manager of The News-Journal, and Councilman Benny McLeod began the inquiry Friday after reporters started checking claims of losses at the garage.

On Thursday, Billy Barefoot, who worked at the city maintenance garage from February, 1970 until April of this year, accused Gaddy of billing the city for an automobile engine and having work done on his personal vehicle that was billed to the city. Barefoot said he knew of other losses that had occurred at the garage.

Gaddy said Tuesday that he was not involved in any misappropriations. "I don't know why he is saying these things to hurt me and my family" Gaddy said. "What he's doing is accusing me of the same things that he has been doing."

Gaddy said that Barefoot resigned in April after garage supervisor David

Scull uncovered evidence that Barefoot had bought parts for his personal vehicle and had charged the costs to a city water truck. The parts amounted to about \$87, Gaddy said.

"Everybody who works for the city knows what's going on, but nobody will talk," Barefoot said.

Barefoot said Bullard's charge that six large truck tires disappeared from the garage in March was correct.

"(City manager) Gaddy said they were put on a truck, but I was there and they were not put on a truck. They were stolen," Barefoot said.

"One of the workers noticed the tires were gone, and he wanted to call the police. I told him before you do that, check with John Gaddy, he knows where they are", Barefoot said.

"He came back and said 'You were right, Gaddy bought them for a friend! I told him there'd be a lot of things you'll find out if you work here'."

### 'Makes Me Mad'

"This is what makes me so mad. I spent five years working for the city of Raeford, and my only fault was finding out what was going on. I couldn't help it, because I handled the maintenance bills and I saw it."

"I'll go down there to city hall with anybody and pull the bills if they'll let me. I can show you exactly what is what, and the numbers of the trucks."

"I can prove it, if city hall doesn't burn down, or he doesn't destroy the records."

Barefoot said the first thing he noticed was about four years ago.

"They've got it listed down there for a 327 Chevrolet engine going into a Ford truck. That truck has the same engine it always had. That engine went into a red '67 Chevy Nomad, which was Gaddy's son's car."

Barefoot said about six months ago there was a maintenance order for work from the Red Springs Motors Co. and he said the work was not for a city vehicle, but it was done on a pickup truck Gaddy's son drives.

Referring to the same pickup, Barefoot estimated about \$550 of city money was used to fix the vehicle before its sale.

"I remember one order for \$399, then it went about another \$25 or so for miscellaneous stuff. I'd say labor would come to about \$125."

## A&R Depot To Close

Plans to close the A&R depot in Raeford have been announced by Aberdeen and Rockfish Railroad president Willard Formyduval.

In a notice posted on the station door, Formyduval said the railroad would apply to the state utilities commission sometime between June 26 and July 6 to close the agency in Raeford.

"I was just finishing it up when Chris (Gaddy) came in and put the tags on it. I looked at the registration and it was 'John Gaddy'."

"About a week after that, Gaddy says to me, I sold it to Gene Thacker, and Chris bought it from him."

"It's not true. The very day we backed it out of there, the name on the registration was John Gaddy."

Barefoot said he was told to do work on Gaddy's own truck.

"Gaddy paid for the parts as far as I know, but he told me 'when you have time', do the work. I overhauled the engine, I'd say me and David (Lunsford) spent about eight hours on that."

Barefoot said Gaddy had city workers use one of the city trucks to do personal work for Gaddy.

"I was letting him keep his rabbit dogs at my place, and Gaddy wanted his pen moved from William Grace's to my place. He had a street department truck come in, and me, David (Lunsford) Dewey Inman, there was about six of us, we had to stop what we were doing, go out there, dig it up, load it on the truck and carry it out to my place and set it up," Barefoot related.

"That took about half a day of city time."

"After I quit, I told him to come and get it. I wasn't home, but the people that were there told me it was a city truck that came and got it."

Barefoot claimed Gaddy had charged the city expenses for a trip to the Institute of Government at Chapel Hill, but Gaddy never made the trip.

"Along in January, something like the 14th, 15th, or 16th, you can check, Gaddy got the money from the girl in the office. I heard it was \$100," Barefoot said.

"They, Gaddy and some others, spent the time going hunting. I know he was not at Chapel Hill", Barefoot said.

### Disgusted

Barefoot said he left the job because he had become disgusted, and he said Gaddy wanted "to get rid of me".

"What it all boils down to, I knew so much stuff on him, he had to get rid of me. He made it so tough for me, I just quit."

Barefoot related the circumstances.

"I was already peeved about the tires, and I just up and quit."

Continued on page 11

Hoke customers would then be served by a mobile agent. Formyduval explained, using a radio equipped car to call at the user's firms.

The station itself will be maintained, he said, for other train service.

"We certainly aren't going to abandon the facility," Formyduval said. "We're going to keep it in line with the rest of the community."

The recently planted flower garden would also be maintained, although, he said, many of the plants have already died.

Formyduval said he called personally on railroad users in Raeford and that no one had objected to the elimination of the agent here.

"We hate to take this economic step," he said. "But our business in the Raeford area has deteriorated to about one car per day."

Mrs. Truman Austin, A&R agent since 1965, is presently on vacation.

## Sidewalk Sale Set July 5

Raeford merchants will hold their third annual sidewalk sale on July 5. Most stores will be closed for the Fourth of July, Raeford Merchants' Association announced.

James Wood, formerly vice-president, was appointed acting president upon the resignation of Paul Solomon, whose store is moving to another city.