

Around Town

BY SAM C. MORRIS

The Christmas holidays are at an end and the New Year is upon us. I hope that everyone had a very Merry Christmas as was the case at this writer's home. All the family was home for Christmas dinner and everyone was in the best of health. I don't believe you could ask for anything more than that for your household.

A call from Mrs. Joe Hoffman, nee Patsy Blue, Christmas Eve afternoon stated that everyone wasn't observing the holidays with the give spirit as should be. She said that the holiday flowers that were put on the graves of her parents and brother a day or two before had been stolen. How low can anyone get?

If you can't put flowers on the grave of a loved one without having to lock it to the ground, then this country is getting in a sad state of affairs. What must be done to stop this kind of thing can lead to something besides freedom and rights.

Think about this!

I received a letter from Bill Williamson of Hamlet last week and thought it would be of interest to some of the readers of this column.

The letter follows:

Dear Sam:
Are you the Sam Morris that I know? If you have a Brother named "Spec" then you're the correct one. If you're not, then I imagine that you are my friend Spike Morris's brother; consequently, you and all the other Morris's are fine folks.

I went to Camp with Battery "F" 252nd Coast Artillery; most naturally was Raeford's National Guard. I had the best time during those two weeks, especially that every afternoon at the Isle of Palms and Charleston or a Dance every Nite. I was the Bugler, so I sounded all of the calls while I was in Camp; then Colonel Rube Poole thought I was over worked.

Enclosed is my \$5.20 for the News Journal for another year. I also want to thank you for printing the American Legion Story about me last week. The Bill Williamson of Laurinburg and the Bill Williamson of Hamlet are both the same Person. I got married in 1962, for 10 years I kept a Home in Hamlet and Laurinburg, but 3 years ago I sold the Home in Laurinburg. I really like both Towns.

Well, I'll now give you a break and close.

Your fellow Veteran,
Bill Williamson

Bill also listed some names of members of Battery "F" 252nd Coast Artillery that he remembers going to camp with in 1938.

They are: Younger Sneed, Sam Sneed, Bill Lamont, T.B. Lester, Alfred Cole, Sam C. Morris, Hartman Yarborough, Bill McInnis, Ed Newton, Snookie Clark, Bill Lentz, DeAd W. Yarborough, Ebb Barrington, W.E. Blue, James M. McDiarmid, James Gordon Currie, Willie B. McFadyen, Carlton Niven, Ralph Parks, Ernest Collier, Tom Conoly, Bill Folks, Carl English, Ed McGougan, James McMillan, Hector McNeill, the 2 Bethune cousins, Brother Spec Morris, Paul Dickson, Sgt. Gulledege. The last line on the sheet with the list of names is as follows: "You have to have the memory of an Elephant to remember those; however, they are worth remembering."

I will say Amen to that, Bill.

I want to wish a Happy New Year to all the readers of this column and hope that 1976 will be the best yet.

So as to set the record straight, a special greeting to the following that have worked with me over the past few years and omitted from the list last week.

Jim Taylor, now working in Washington, D.C., Peter B. Young of New York, Lawrence Maddrey of Norfolk, Va., Jay Woodard of Hoke County and working with the Fayetteville Observer; Mike O'Hara of Siler City and last but not least, the new Mayor of Havelock, N.C., Eugene P. Smith. And to any others that I can't remember.

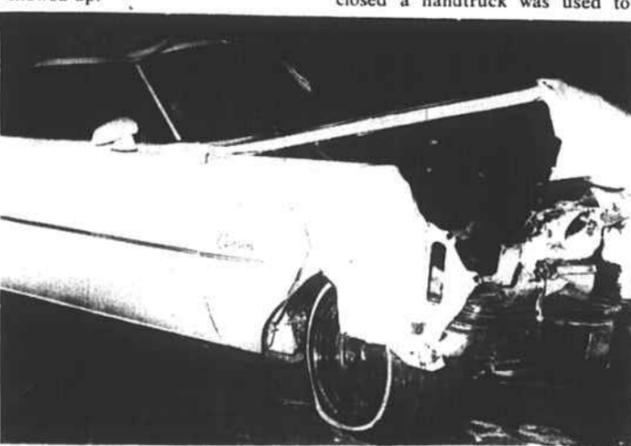


Welcome 1976 with bells and whistles! We hope the New Year is happy and prosperous for everyone and full of good health and good cheer.

The News-Journal Staff

Knit-Away Target Of Thieves

Police recovered thousands of dollars worth of fabric taken out of the Knit-Away plant here sometime Tuesday night but about \$1,200-\$1,500 in fabric is missing in what authorities believe to be an employee-related heist.



JUDGE'S CAR--The 1976 Buick Century which Judge Joseph E. Dupree was driving when he struck a light pole and overturned Wednesday was termed a total loss. Dupree escaped with minor injuries.

Second Car Blamed For Dupree Wreck

District Court Judge Joseph E. Dupree was admitted to Cape Fear Valley Hospital early Wednesday evening after his car clipped a telephone pole and overturned on Prospect Avenue near the corner of Green Street.

Police theorize a truck of some type was used to haul the goods from the Knit-Away building to the railroad tracks behind the complex. Two cases were found about 75 yards down the tracks in the direction of town, and Wiggins said investigation at the scene disclosed a handtruck was used to

move the loot down the tracks. "We believe it was an inside job", Wiggins said. "We're setting up a meeting with the Knit-Away people later today."

Knit-Away spokesman Dick Lovett said Monday indications are the theft was planned because the plant shut down for the holiday.

"It had to be someone who was familiar with our operation. There were just a few people here at that time and no supervisor in the area where the theft occurred", Lovett said.

Lovett said a security guard was posted, but that "anyone familiar with the guard's rounds" could avoid being seen.

Lovett refused to confirm that Knit-Away employees are under suspicion, but hinted employee pilferage has been detected in the past.

"There's no question that fabric is being taken, and we fully prosecute those who are caught. We're taking preventive steps, and we are going to see that this stops", he said.

The Tuesday theft was the largest single larceny reported at the Raeford plant.

Three men have been charged with breaking and entering and larceny and receiving in connection with the 5:10 A.M. break-in of the Curtis McNeill store on north Main Street Friday, Dec. 26.

Alvator McGregor, 47, Willie J. Ray, 61, and James Smith, 38, all of Rt. 1, Raeford, were jailed Friday morning.

Approximately \$125 in merchandise was taken from the store and was recovered at the home of Ray shortly after the break-in, according to Sheriff D.M. Barrington.

Barrington said deputies J.K. Riley and J.E. Tindall made the recovery and the arrest with the aid of Raeford police officers L.J. Beatty and H.E. Young.

He said the three offered no resistance.

Smith was released under \$1,000 bond. McGregor was arraigned in Cumberland County Monday morning and bond reduced from \$6,000 to \$1,000, according to a sheriff's spokesman. Ray is being held in lieu of \$1,000 bond.

A Jan. 9 hearing was set for the trio.

Hotel Closes, Repair Slated

The Raeford Hotel, a downtown landmark which has been criticized for deteriorating in recent years, has closed to guests and is not expected to re-open until major renovations are made by the new owner, realtor Julian H. Wright, according to sources.

Several shops located on the ground floor of the building, including a barber and beautician, will not be affected by the hotel closing and are expected to remain open.

Attempts to reach Wright for comment Monday were unsuccessful, but a spokesman in his office confirmed the ownership of the hotel was transferred back to Wright, effective Monday.

Residents have been vacating the hotel for the past month, and some were seen leaving with their belongings on Christmas Eve. The last resident was to have moved Monday, Wright's spokesman said.

The spokesman said re-painting and major repairs will be made to the guest rooms before the hotel officially re-opens, but exact plans were not learned.

"He hasn't decided anything definite yet," the spokesman said.

The hotel had been owned and operated by Robert Webb, who was also a resident. A shopkeeper within the hotel reported Webb planned to leave for South Carolina for the holidays and would be unavailable for comment.

Glass in the door to the main entrance on Central Ave. had been shattered earlier this month in an accident and sometime late last week, the rest of the glass was knocked out by some object.

The spokesman in Wright's office said an order has been put through to have the glass replaced.

Two Eye Board Slot

Jimmy Morrissey and Mabel Riley have expressed interest in the vacant seat on the board of county commissioners, according to Sam C. Morris, chairman of the Democratic executive committee here.

Morrissey, president of the local chapter of the NAACP, has been backing of the full NAACP according to a letter Morris received from the NAACP officials, urging consideration for Morrissey.

Morris said that Mrs. Riley, a Hillcrest resident, had "contacted" him about the post.

Mrs. Riley, who is the wife of ABC officer Kermit Riley, is an auto mechanic and co-operator of a repair shop. She ran unsuccessfully

in the last election for county commissioners.

Morris said the full executive committee will meet sometime in January to choose nominees for consideration by the four-member county commissioners board to replace commissioner J.A. Webb.

Webb, who had one year left in his term, died in December following lengthy illness.

According to law, the county commissioners are required to consult with the executive committee of the political party affected before naming a new commissioner. They have 60 days from the time the vacancy occurs to choose a successor.

Jail Full For Yule

A record number of people spent Christmas in jail this year.

Sheriff D.M. Barrington said that the jail was packed over the holidays with as many as 25 people in there at one time.

He said Wednesday, Christmas Eve, that the total of 20 was a record number of people to be in the jail during Christmas since the new building was erected.

"Most of the people in jail were caught before the holidays," said Barrington.

Though it was Christmas, visiting

hours were observed Thursday as scheduled.

Barrington said Christmas Eve and Christmas day were not nearly as busy as Dec. 26.

He said the Sheriff's Department is expecting a rash of daylight break-ins in January.

"We are expecting a rash of daylight break-ins during January due to the economic situation and the post holiday season and I want to caution the citizens to be on the look-out and to be extra careful," he said.

City Tags Go On Sale

City car tags and dog licenses for 1976 go on sale at the municipal building Jan. 2 and residents are reminded old tags expire Feb. 15, tax

collector Betty Smith announced.

Car tags, which are required on vehicles owned by city residents, cost \$1. Dog tags cost \$2.50.

Rose's Office Here

The mobile office of Congressman Charles G. Rose will be in Raeford Friday, Jan. 9 from 10 A.M. to 3 P.M.

Rose's administrative assistant, Rip Collins, will be on hand to answer questions. The van will be parked at the post office lot on W. Elwood Ave.

Vacationing Pupils

Attendance Lags

Attendance in three of the county's schools, including the high school, was considerably off Monday, although school officials quickly discounted it was an indication of any rebellion from students having to return to classes before the New Year holiday.

"Attendance is way off today", Emma Mims at the high school reported. "We have almost three times as many out as usual".

Miss Mims attributed the poor attendance to students who are out of town on vacation trips.

Hank Richards at Raeford Elementary reported he had 73 pupils absent Monday, compared to last week's average of 35 absent.

"I don't know what kind of conclusions you can make from one day. Maybe they all came down

with measles", Richards joked.

Earl Oxendine, principal at Upchurch junior high, said 156 students were out Monday. Absences last Monday were 64.

Superintendent G. Raz Autry said there may be some resentment with the new Christmas schedule, but it was necessary. In past years, schools remained closed until after Jan. 1.

"I'm sure some of the kids had vacations planned, but we're doing this so they can get out earlier at the end of the year", Autry said.

"If that's what they want, a two week Christmas vacation, they won't get in summer school, too. Businesses and industries don't close for two weeks, seems to me the schools are going to have to start operating the same way", he said.