

## Around Town

BY SAM C. MORRIS

The long range weather prediction that was made last year, about this was going to be a cold winter is holding true these days. We have already had more cold weather this year than was had in my estimation all last winter.

The forecast for the remainder of the week calls for the cold weather to remain. Maybe the ground hog will give us a break in February.

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While on the weather, the editor, Paul Dickson, says that it rains every Wednesday except when the papers come out on Tuesday. Then it rains on Tuesday.

We deliver the Fort Bragg paper and Paul seems to think that the rain comes the day that we print it. Maybe some good weatherman could explain the reason to him.

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Clarence Lytch called last week and informed me that his pickup truck was damaged only \$15 instead of the estimate of \$250 made by the police and published in The News-Journal. We regret the error but in this day and time it is hard to tell what anything will cost until you have it fixed.

I am just glad that only the pickup was damaged and that Mr. Lytch was not hurt in any way.

I hope that the error didn't cause him any bad moments.

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Be sure to look at the weather charts by Robert Gatlin this week. It will surprise you at the amount of rain we had in 1975.

The average rainfall for this county is around 50 to 54 inches per year. This year we had over 72 inches.

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The letter that was in this column last week from Bill Williamson of Hamlet has brought forth some comments from former members that were omitted from the list that Bill remembered.

Carson Davis said that 65 men were in the unit that went to Fort Moultrie, S.C. in 1938. He also said that he had a picture and names of the battery. If I can get this from Carson I will run it in the paper and then everyone will be mentioned and Bill Williamson can complete his list.

If anyone else can come through with the 1938 camp group please send it in.

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Until next week, if the weather doesn't freeze us up, keep the New Year going in the right direction.



STAMP LICKING—Post office patrons were doing more stamp licking than usual last Wednesday as new rates went into effect on first class mail. Many people were caught short and supplies of three cent stamps ran out early.

## Post Office Swamped

Raeford post office employees were swamped with hordes of stamp buyers last Wednesday, the first day of the new 13 cent rate on first class mail.

Eight thousand and seven hundred three cent stamps were sold Wednesday and the supply ran out by afternoon, James Currie reported.

"This is very unusual, in the past, when there have been increases, it wasn't anything like this," Currie said.

Most of the sales were in three cent stamps, although sales of the

new 13 cent issue were also brisk and they ran out.

The Raeford post office normally requisitions stamps once a month, but due to the crush last week emergency requisitions for 1,000 stamps were put in. 10,000 three cent stamps arrived here Friday and by 5 P.M., only about 1,000 were left.

"We're just about out of the 13's, but we're expecting 1,000 tomorrow," Currie said.

## Dems Meet Saturday On New Commissioner

Five names are expected to be discussed by county Democratic party officials Saturday morning when they meet to recommend choices for the vacant seat on the Hoke County Board of Commissioners.

Danny McCollum, Neil McPhatter, and Charlie Pendergrass have joined Jimmy Morrissey and Mabel Riley in a bid for the seat, Democratic executive committee chairman Sam C. Morris said.

The full committee will meet at 10 A.M. in the courtroom. Voting, which is generally by secret ballot, is expected to narrow the field to three candidates for consideration by the county commissioners. Under the law, the commissioners

## City, County Request Phone Link Election

The city council followed the action of county commissioners Monday night and agreed to seek an election among Raeford telephone subscribers which, if approved, would link Raeford exchange with the Fayetteville-Ft. Bragg exchanges in extended area telephone service.

The vote of the council, passed unanimous, means only subscribers here and in Fayetteville will be able to choose by mailed ballots if they

want the changeover. The council members did not actually give their endorsement to the extended service, which will mean a rate increase which could be a maximum of \$2.90 monthly, according to J.H. (Buddy) Blue, Jr., backer of the proposal.

The rate increase, which would be set by the state utilities commission, would go into effect immediately, although toll-free calls between the cities would not start for about two years, Blue said.

"Is it not true that they already have the necessary equipment (to begin service)?" councilman David Lovette asked.

"I don't feel they do, because of the increased volume of calls this would bring, they say they will have to add equipment to handle it," Blue said.

The motion, made by councilman Benny McLeod, stated the council was only "going on record as favoring the vote."

After taking up a ten item agenda, an executive session was called to discuss applicants for the vacant city manager position. Mayor John K. McNeill, Jr. said before the session the list of applicants was narrowed to four.

After re-opening the meeting to the public, no announcement of a decision on the applicants was made. A motion made by Lovette, which directs the new city manager to hire a foreman for the city garage and also a full-time fireman, passed unanimously.

During the regular meeting, a public hearing on the proposal to return Knit-Away Dr. to control by Knit-Away drew no comment and the council unanimously approved the formal abandonment.

Bill Bizzell, of Moore Gardner and Associates, briefed members on progress of the water treatment complex and named Mar. 1 as date for the system to be fully operational.

Bizzell also advised the city to explore the possibility of acquiring a separate site at the landfill under a lease agreement to use for dumping liquid waste. Bizzell claimed this could eliminate the controversy over dumping the waste into a sanitary landfill, which comes under the regulations of the Department of Human Resources, Division of Health.

"The town of Robbins has a

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## City Hall Fights Back

The monthly record of complaints to city hall on trash and garbage pickups produced a new twist on the old saying "you can't fight city hall."

The December report listed 38 complaints by name and address. Complaint number 23 was made Dec. 16 regarding trash. The complaint? City Hall, N. Main St.

## Morrison Gives Up Ambulances, County, New Owner Dickering

In an unannounced move, the county ambulance service operated for the past six years by Danny Morrison has been taken over by a

new owner and the county commissioners agreed to decide whether to negotiate a new contract or allow the old contract to run out during their regular monthly meeting Monday morning.

James R. Harris, a former highway patrolman, told the board he and Morrison had agreed on terms of the sale and further agreed that Harris would take over effective last Thursday, Jan. 1.

Harris told the board the only change he requests in Morrison's old contract is a provision the county subsidy be paid monthly. The subsidy, \$20,000 in the current contract, was being paid quarterly.

"I intend to operate it in the proper manner and use qualified and trained people. I just want to make an honest living in Hoke County and be able to live here", Harris said.

County attorney Charles Hostetler told the board any modification in the existing contract would be the same as releasing Morrison from legal obligation, and recommended a new one be drawn to cover the change in disbursement of funds.

Hostetler also emphasized the contract calls for full and complete disclosure regarding income and expenditures, and said this accounting should be given before the regular county payments are made.

"I'll do it the way it should be. My wife will keep the books, it probably would be better to keep all the records monthly", Harris said.

"What I know about how it's been run in the past is strictly hearsay. If it is true, though, it won't be that way," he continued.

Harris said he was purchasing all of Morrison's ambulances, but told the board he may make a change in the ambulance which is kept at Bue's Funeral Home.

"My thinking is it's bad. It appears to me one is being operated for blacks and one for whites. Whether anybody has ever made an issue of it, I don't know, maybe it has come up before to you", Harris said.

The commissioners took no action on the matter at the meeting.

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## UF Goal Nears Top

The United Fund has nearly topped its goal with a \$5,614.84 contribution from the Knit-Away plant, according to treasurer Sam C. Morris.

The total now stands at \$21,778.78, just \$141 short of the \$21,920.61 target.

"I'm confident we will pass the mark," UF co-chairman Gene Carter said. "Anyone who has not yet been contacted can turn in their contribution either to me at the Bank of Raeford, or by stopping by the News-Journal," he said.

## 1975 In Review - A Year Of Events

1975-Unemployment lines growing, welfare rolls swelling, rising costs pinching every pocketbook made gloomy news as the year began. It was a year of startling events, tornado, UFO scare, mounting drug arrests. The court overturns the high school dress code, ending years of tradition and stunning parents and educators. The city is thrown into turmoil by an investigation into corruption which is to drag on for months before climaxing in the resignation of the city manager.

It was also a year of change and accomplishment and pride. Kathy McMillan's feats make international headlines and establish her as a leading contender for the Olympics. The Bicentennial Library grows from dream to reality as ground is broken in an all-day celebration and the structure takes shape before the year is out. The long-awaited half-million dollar county office building is completed, and work continues on a new and larger library for the high school.

January brought layoffs to some 300 workers at the turkey plant as the shortage of live birds became critical. Five high school students are arrested for possession of marijuana but the principal insists it was not smoked on school grounds. Lacy Dickson McFadyen, a member of one of the county's oldest families, is dead at 84.

Farmer's Home Administration announces a freeze on loans until April, blaming the money shortage. The shortage of physicians attracts

the concern of the Chamber of Commerce, who begin a recruitment drive.

A big infusion of federal money from the public service employment program opens up jobs within the city, county, and schools. Complaints are made about all day waits at the food stamp office. By the end of the month, more federal money comes and more jobs are created, as the food stamp rolls jump to 22 per cent.

In February a push for public housing begins and the city council agrees to hear from HUD officials, but backs off from re-activating the old Raeford Housing Authority. Work on a downtown parking lot is abruptly halted while red-faced Bank of Raeford officials go get the necessary permit. Beware of Dog Warden is the word for loose dogs as the city hires its first dog catcher.

The Hoke High Bucks wrap up the title to the Southeastern 3-A conference with a 19 game winning streak. School officials open hearings in preparation for an anticipated \$36,000 in federal Indian school funds, but it is months later before the disclosure is made about the refusal for funds. The United Fund achieves its goal, topping the mark with Knit-Away's donation.

The appeal continues for the library fund, which is lagging, while plans for the Heritage Room move along with tape recordings of early history. A free lunch program for senior citizens starts through a grant. The Bucks' hopes for a

chance at the state championship are dashed by a heartbreaking one point loss to Wake Forest - Rolesville.

The community is shocked at the brutal shooting of health worker Jessie Nicholson who narrowly escapes death and her assailant is still to remain at large by the year's end. A legal battle erupts when an irate St. Pauls Drive resident files suit against the city in the next stage of a 20 year squabble over water lines.

Attention is focused again on public housing as The News-Journal surveyed poverty in the county and spotlighted housing needs, and a public hearing is scheduled by citizens backing the idea.

March blew ill winds, as final figures on farm income for the previous year are announced and the drop is put at one million dollars. Jesse Luckie is returned to the county jail after he is ruled competent to stand trial for the murders of W.T. McAllister and his wife. Plans for the Bicentennial library hit a snag over zoning and parking requirements and officials scramble to apply for a variance.

Kathy McMillan places fifth at the AAU indoor field championship meet in Maidson Square Garden, the youngest jumper there, while the Bucks open their baseball season with a tie.

City motorists are confused when a downtown street became one-way, and police are irked when the confusion is still continuing a week later. School officials are confused

and baffled by a federal court which includes Hoke County is a HEW probe into possible racial discrimination.

March did not go out like a lamb, but with the fury and destruction of a tornado which touched down almost without warning and hopped over the county, demolishing mobile homes and farm buildings. Damage is put at over \$100,000 and community agencies pitch in to assist dozens left homeless by the wreckage.

Deputy George McGuire, under routine suspension after fatally wounding a man in a gun battle, is cleared of any fault by a coroner's jury and returned to duty.

April brought the retirement of longtime A&R Railroad president Forrest Lockett and William R. Formyduval is named president. Manda Johnson, believed to be the oldest person in the county, dies a month from her 105th birthday.

April brought showers - showers of lights seen in the skies as the newest wave of UFO sightings kept deputies here and in neighboring counties chasing for several nights in a row. The city finally agrees to re-activate the old Housing Authority after months of prodding and the county looks to the future with the creation of a planning board. Trial for Jessie Luckie looms closer and a Cumberland County jury is ordered.

Footsore walkers in the Jaycee walkathon for cerebral palsy raise nearly \$11,000 in a community-wide turnout for a worthy cause. A

new consumer protection unit funded under a federal grant is announced for the Cumberland - Hoke district within the District Attorney's office, attracting little notice, and ironically the unit was to have major consequences for the city of Raeford in just two months.

Jessie Luckie pleads guilty to second degree murder, escaping the threat of a Death Row cell, and receives two concurrent life terms.

Juvenile court here gets its first full-time probation officer in the appointment of Watson McNeill. Kathy McMillan led the girls track team on to an undefeated season.

May brings the conference title to the Bucks in baseball and the trackmen are runner-up for the conference championship. The county is cool to an appeal from the Chamber of Commerce for more money to hire a full-time manager and the city is aghast to learn of a \$24,000 cost overrun on a curb and guttering project. Knit-Away employees are evacuated after a telephoned bomb threat which was a hoax.

Records crumbled like summer dust as the girls track team captured the state title for the fourth consecutive year. Kathy McMillan jumped 20-2½ to beat her Junior Olympics and Madison Square Garden marks earlier.

The celebration was short-lived for the school as a lawsuit by an eleventh grader results in a restraining order barring officials

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## Heating Bill Draws Heat

A \$1,000-plus electric bill for the county office building, along with complaints from workers the heating still does not work properly, had county commissioners heated Monday.

"That's the biggest mistake we ever made," commissioner John Balfour grumbled, referring to the electric heat.

Wendell Young, farm agent, said the system just didn't seem to be working right.

"It's continually a problem out there. Sometimes it'll run an hour or two, then it'll run all day. When the elements go off, cold air keeps coming continuously. If you're sitting under it, it can really give you a fit," Young said.

Social services director Benjamin Niblock also voiced displeasure.

"This morning is the first time it has functioned properly," Niblock said.

"What is the new library got? Electric heat?" commissioner Tom McBryde interjected.

The bill from Carolina Power & Light, covering a 32 day period, was \$1,090.00, with a good portion of that due to the fossil fuel charge, county manager T.B. Lester said.

Lester explained the electric charge is calculated on a daily "demand" rate, which is more advantageous, but unless the system is working properly, the bills will go skyhigh.

Chairman Ralph Barnhart promised to contact Hayes Howell Associates, the building's architects, for help in straightening it all out.